



Ella Mae Zimmerman, Ephrata, was out picking cherries last Wednesday when the pick-your-own season began.

Cherries are ripe

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Prices this year range anywhere from 35 cents to 50 cents per pound.

Several orchards began "pick-your-own" last week, which is at least 10 days ahead of schedule. Cherry Hill Orchards, New Danville Pike, Lancaster, opened one location to the public last Tuesday. Cherry Hill is the largest cherry orchard in the state with 110 acres dedicated to the fruit.

Richard Haas, owner of the orchard, reported that this year marked the earliest he has ever put cherries on the market. Before he began the "pick-your-own" season last week, he had marketed cherries on May 31. His semi-sweet will be open to pickers today, and his sour cherries will be ready for picking in approximately two weeks.

While his trees were laden with fruit on Wednesday, Haas noted that he, like

other orchardists lost about one-third of his crop to the frost in April.

Another Lancaster County grower, Carlton Groff, Kirkwood, reported having "the best crop" in three or four years with his five or six acres of sweet cherries. His tart cherries, on the other hand, are almost nil this year, according to Mrs. Groff. They hadn't opened the orchard earlier this week, but expect to do so today or Monday.

Herr Fruit Farms, Lancaster R2, deals only in tart cherries and reports that this crop is of excellent quality with firm, sweet, and not waterlogged fruit. Peter

Alexhi, of Herrs, reports that the tart cherry crop is down by about 50 or 60 per cent of last year's.

Alexhi markets all his tart cherries through "pick-your-own" and may be opening up by the middle or the end of next week. Quite a bit rests on the extent of the cold, rainy, weather Lancaster experiences between now and then.

Blevins Orchard in York County opened to the public last week, also, for the few sweet cherries they raise. June 20 will be the date for "pick-your-own" on sour cherries at this orchard. Gene Blevins reports that he, also, experienced the light

their crop via roadside markets, and that harvesting began in the county in the beginning of last week. The tart cherry harvest is due to start around the 23rd of June, which he noted is about a week or 10 days early.

Ontelaunee Orchards, Leesport, hoped to begin picking for roadside marketing by today. While

their sweet cherries harvested by their own on sour cherries in 10 days.

Chester County, which not noted for a particularly large crop of cherries, even smaller crops usual due to the April Winter bud kill, decreased bee activity

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crop due to freeze damage, although he had a full crop of peaches and apples.

Thomas Piper, Adams County Extension agent, noted that most of the fruit growers in that particular area of the state market

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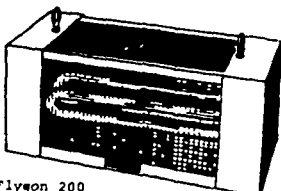
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