



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

CONTACT: Pamela Bartholomew
615-837-5160
Pamela.Bartholomew@TN.gov

Wild Weather in U.S. Makes Tennessee Best Pick for Pumpkins This Fall

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - This year, the best place in the country to find a good pumpkin may just be on a Tennessee farm.

“Nationally, pumpkins are running extremely short,” says Stanley Trout, director of sales for Grow Farms, a major produce company that markets Tennessee produce throughout the eastern half of the United States. “In fact, we’re hearing that there’s a possible sellout by Oct. 15. If you wait until then to look for a pumpkin, you may be out of luck.”

“The thing is, you should feel encouraged that you’ll find great pumpkins at any local pumpkin patch in Tennessee,” said Trout. “I was out on a Tennessee farm yesterday, and the pumpkins are just beautiful.” A list of Tennessee’s pick-your-own farms and pumpkin patches across the state is available at www.picktnproducts.org, a site developed by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to help consumers locate area farms and locally grown products.

“Between droughts and hurricanes, very few pumpkins survived, particularly in Northeastern states like New York and Pennsylvania, where the bulk of pumpkins are grown,” says Trout. The reach of recent Hurricane Irene wiped out many types of produce from Delaware to Maine.

To the south of Tennessee, the opposite problem produced the same result. Long term drought in neighboring states like Georgia guaranteed slim crops for all but those willing and able to irrigate their fields.

Ironically, it was another tropical storm that saved Tennessee’s autumn produce. “Tropical Storm Lee came just in time to give Tennessee an absolutely great crop of pumpkins,” says the produce marketer. “The same goes for ornamental gourds. So basically, best place to look for pumpkins and fall décor this year is going to be out on a farm in Tennessee.”

Will pumpkin prices go up in retail stores? “Probably not,” says Trout, “since most pumpkin crops are contracted out for a set price at the beginning of the season. Retail

- MORE -

ELLINGTON AGRICULTURAL CENTER
BOX 40627, NASHVILLE, TN 37204
www.picktnproducts.org

Wild Weather in U.S. Makes Tennessee Best Pick for Pumpkins 2 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 2

stores could try to raise prices because supplies are low, but there's only so much the public is going to pay for a pumpkin. The problem won't be the price: the problem will be that they're not there at all."

Trout recommends that "people probably shouldn't wait around to go out to the pumpkin patch this year. Just choose your farms, then call ahead to make sure the pumpkins are there and that you can get into the fields.

"You usually think 'orange' when you think about pumpkins," says Trout, "but this year, they're pure gold."

Find Tennessee pick-your-own farms, pumpkin patches, corn mazes and other fun farm activities, farmers markets, and seasonal recipes featuring Tennessee farm products at www.picktnproducts.org.

###