Sugar beet farmers in Larimer County have jumped off to a fast start this year on what is expected to be a better-than-average harvest.

Lowell Giauque, Great Western agricultural manager of the Loveland district, said today that crops are expected to average about 20 tons of beets per acre, three to four tons above the norm for the past few years.

Beet collecting stations in the district opened this week, and because of the recent good weather, although considered slightly dry, the harvest is expected to reach its peak by the first of next week, pending more cooperation by Mother Nature.

About 200 farmers in the county will be digging nearly 10,000 acres of beets this year. With the above-average tonnage expected, plus a sugar content of about 2 per cent better than the average 16-16½ per cent, Giauque is expecting an "excellent" harvest.

The Loveland factory is now operating on a 24-hour basis, and will continue to do so until the end of the harvest, expected early in November. The operation slices beets from this area as well as from much of northeastern Colorado.

Pictures on this page are of farms north and east of here, and of the Sinnard dump station east of Fort Collins.