

California's Crop Production Report

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The latest survey, which was conducted during the last week of March and the first week of April, includes the following commodities:

Navel Oranges - The 2002-03 Navel orange forecast is 80.0 million cartons, unchanged from the January 2003 forecast, but up 18% from last season. Harvesting continues, but the remaining crop has been heavily graded due to lower quality. Puff, crease, and rind breakdowns are among the problems noted.

Valencia Oranges - The 2002-03 Valencia orange forecast is 44.0 million cartons, unchanged from the January 2003 forecast, but up 7% from last season. Harvesting commenced in the southern desert earlier in the year, and by mid-March was well underway in the Central Valley. The southern crop has been heavily graded due to wind scarring and other defects, but eating quality is reported to be excellent. The Central Valley crop has exhibited good exterior and interior quality thus far.

Grapefruit - The 2002-03 grapefruit forecast is 11.2 million cartons, unchanged from the January 2003 forecast, but down 7% from last season. The Rio Red and Marsh Ruby grapefruit harvests continued in the desert area. Exterior quality is good with excellent color. Shape is uniform with only an occasional sheep nose shaped fruit. Texture is smooth in all sizes. Flavor and eating quality are excellent. The Pummelo variety harvest continued in the Central Valley with good exterior quality. Shape is normal with defects including light scars and sunburn.

Lemons - The 2002-03 lemon forecast is 46.0 million cartons, unchanged from the January 2003 forecast, but up 21% from last season. Quality, condition, color, shape, and texture are good in the Central Valley. However, high winds in the southern end of the valley caused considerable damage. Scarring, fruit drops, and injuries resulted from the winds. Picking volumes in the southern coastal area of the State varied from heavy to light. Fruit sizes are expected to increase due to recent rains. Color of fruit is varied. Quality has declined somewhat due to an increase of wind-damaged fruit. Harvest is virtually complete in the Desert region. Quality has declined since last period.

Tangerines - The 2002-03 tangerine forecast is 5.00 million cartons, unchanged from the January 2003 forecast, but up 14% from last season. The season is progressing with no major problems to date. Mild weather occurred during the bloom period. Shape is normal with overall quality and flavor reported to be very good. Defects consist of light scars and sunburn.

Strawberries - The 2003 strawberry forecast is 17.8 million cwt., up 5% from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 29,600, with a resulting yield of 600 cwt. per acre. Acreage is reported to be up in all major growing districts this year. December rains helped to strengthen the plants. Many fields in Southern California sustained fruit damage the first week of January as powerful Santa Ana winds roared through the area. However, disruption to the harvest cycle was short lived. Growing conditions turned ideal as mild temperatures prevailed. Production and shipping have been on a record pace, with early-season berries reported to have good size, color, and quality.

Production forecasts are released monthly and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued May 12, 2003.

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