

California Crop Production Report

Released: January 12, 2004

The California Agricultural Statistics Service today released the crop production forecast for January. The latest survey, which was conducted during December 2003 and the first week of January 2004, includes the following commodities:

Cotton - American Pima harvested acreage is estimated at 149,000 acres. Production is set at 370,000 bales, a 39 percent decrease from last year, but unchanged from the December 1 forecast. The resulting yield is 1,192 pounds per acre. Upland harvested acreage is estimated at 545,000 acres. Production is set at 1.50 million bales, a 3 percent increase from last year, but unchanged from the December 1 forecast. The resulting yield is 1,321 pounds per acre, unchanged from December. After poor weather this spring, a warm summer helped the cotton crop to progress well. Cool, wet weather this spring caused many problems for cotton growers including some delays in planting and occasional replanting. Hot weather in July helped close the gap on how far the crop was behind normal. Defoliation had begun in a number of fields by late September, and harvesting was just underway during the first week of October in a few fields in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Harvest was essentially complete by the first week of December, with the exception of a few fields that were being second picked. Lygus and whiteflies came on strong toward the end of the season in some areas.

Oranges - The 2003-04 California Navel orange forecast is 78.0 million cartons, unchanged from October, but 5 percent below last season's crop. Recent rainfall has slowed harvesting, which has kept supply proportional to demand. Export demand has been good. Significantly lighter fruit sets have been observed in many areas, but the crop has exhibited good shape, texture, and color. Sugar content is expected to be enhanced from the high temperatures experienced over the summer. The 2003-04 Valencia orange forecast is 38.0 million cartons, down 5 percent from the October forecast and 10 percent below last season's crop. The Valencia crop has developed normally thus far, with no major problems reported. However, acreage pullouts continue due to market pressures and expanding development, with some Valencia growers planting Navels instead.

Lemons - The 2003-04 California lemon forecast is 46.0 million cartons, unchanged from October, but down 4 percent from last season. Harvest is active in the desert, Central Valley, and south coastal areas. The bulk of the volume is coming out of the desert area. Overall quality is good to excellent. Recent rains have slowed down picking crews in some locations.

Tangerines - The 2003-2004 California tangerine crop forecast is 5.00 million cartons, unchanged from the October forecast and last season's final estimate. Satsumas are being harvested in the San Joaquin Valley, while Fairchilds are being harvested from the desert region. Shape is normal, and overall quality is good to excellent.

Grapefruit - The 2003-04 California grapefruit forecast is estimated at 10.4 million cartons, down 5 percent from October and 7 percent below last year. Pummelo harvest was active in the Central Valley. Defects were scars, peel, minor grooving, and scale. Oro Blanco harvest was active in the Central and Coachella valleys. Quality was very good with smooth texture in all sizes.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued February 10, 2004.

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