

# California Crop Production Report

Released: May 12, 2004

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

**Almonds** - The initial forecast for the 2004 California almond production is a record 1,100 million pounds. This is up 6% from last year's revised production of 1,040 million pounds. Estimated bearing acreage for 2004 is 550,000. Heavy wind and rain during the beginning of bloom raised concerns about bee activity and pollination. Bloom, however, was very intense and stayed on the trees for much longer than normal, resulting in an excellent set. Very warm weather then prevailed the first three weeks of March, advancing crop development at least two weeks ahead of normal. By early May, the kernels had already hardened in some varieties. Overall, the crop appeared to be fairly uniform throughout the State. The set is very heavy, with the exception of the Nonpareil variety which may be a little below last year.

**Peaches** - The 2004 California Freestone Peach crop forecast is 820 million pounds, up 3% from the 2003 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 37,000 acres, resulting in a yield of 22,200 pounds per acre. Freestone peach bloom was delayed this year, but a warm and dry spring shortened the bloom period making up for the delayed start. Some middle-to-late season varieties had problems with incomplete pollination. Also, high temperatures experienced during late summer last year put stress on the trees, resulting in some fruit doubles this season. The set in the other varieties, however, will most likely make up for the decrease in production of the middle to late season varieties. Harvest of Freestone peaches began during the first week of April in the Coachella Valley and around the middle of April in the Central Valley. The 2004 California Clingstone peach crop forecast is 1,150 million pounds, up 7% from the 2003 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 32,500 acres resulting in a yield of 35,400 pounds per acre. California experienced an adequate number of winter chilling hours, thus benefitting the Clingstone crop. Overall, bloom was reported to be good on all varieties. The crop is reported to be in excellent condition with good size and uniform growth. The peach trees are much further along than last year due to record-setting warm temperatures experienced this spring.

**Wheat** - The 2004 Winter wheat production forecast is 697.5 thousand tons, up 3% from last year. Harvested acres are estimated at 310,000 with a yield of 2.25 tons per acre. Most of the winter wheat crop was headed out, and in good condition overall. Non-irrigated wheat fields were thriving earlier in the year due to ample soil moisture, but insufficient rainfall in recent weeks caused the condition of many dryland fields to decline. Some concern regarding aphid populations in the Central Valley was noted. Feeding damage by the insects may have reduced yields. Durum wheat 2004 production is forecast to be 315.0 thousand tons, down 9% from 2003. Harvested acres are estimated at 105,000 with a yield of 3.00 tons per acre. Most of the durum wheat crop was in good condition overall. The crop year thus far was described as normal. Few disease or insect problems were reported.

The next production report will be issued on June 10, 2004.

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