

# California Crop Production Report

Released: June 10, 2004

The California Agricultural Statistics Service today released crop production forecasts on selected crops for June 2004.

**Apricots** - The 2004 California apricot crop forecast is 90.0 thousand tons, down 3 percent from the 2003 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 16,000 acres. Weather during bloom was excellent with warm temperatures experienced throughout the apricot-producing areas of the State. This resulted in an excellent quality crop with a good set. Harvest for fresh use began at the end of April, while harvest for processed production commenced on June 3, approximately two weeks ahead of last year.

**Cherries, Sweet** - The 2004 California sweet cherry crop, at 65.0 thousand tons, is up 5 percent from the 2003 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 26,000. Adequate chilling hours and ideal weather conditions during bloom and the production period have resulted in a great year for cherry growers. Harvest began in late April and will continue through the second week in June. Fruit quality is reported to be excellent.

**Peaches** - The 2004 California Clingstone peach crop forecast is 575 thousand tons, unchanged from the May forecast, but up 7 percent from the 2003 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 32,500 acres. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours, thus benefitting the Clingstone crop. Overall, the bloom was reported to be good on all varieties. The crop is reported to be in excellent condition with good size and uniform growth. Harvest is expected to commence in the Kingsburg area by the end of the second week in June, approximately ten days ahead of last year. The 2004 California Freestone peach crop forecast is 400 thousand tons, down 2 percent from the May forecast, but up slightly from the 2003 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 37,000 acres. Bloom was delayed by cool, wet weather in February, but a warm dry spring made up for the delayed start. The Freestone peach harvest continues with excellent fruit quality. The early season varieties were sizing smaller than average, while the middle-to-late season varieties are sizing normally.

**Pears, Bartlett** - The initial forecast of the 2004 Bartlett pear crop in California is 215 thousand tons, up 7 percent from last season. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 13,000. Bartlett development is continuing normally, with harvesting to begin late this month. Ideal growing conditions and good cultural practices are expected to result in an ample crop this year.

**Prunes (Dried Plums)** - The 2004 California prune Crop forecast is 70 thousand dried tons, down 60 percent from last year's crop. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 70,000. The crop suffered significant damage from a mid-March hot spell. The heat occurred when trees were in full bloom which caused blossoms to mature too quickly for the pollination process to complete. If the forecast is realized, this year's crop would be the smallest on record since official estimates began in 1920. Yields would be the lowest since 1972.

**Wheat** - Winter wheat production for 2004 in California is estimated to be 697.5 thousand tons, unchanged from the May forecast and up 3 percent from the 2003 crop. The yield forecast is 2.25 tons per acre from 310,000 harvested acres. Winter wheat conditions are reported to be good for the most part. However, there have been concerns about the presence of aphids in some Central Valley fields, and the condition of many dryland winter wheat fields has declined due to insufficient rainfall. Durum wheat production in California is estimated to be 267.8 thousand tons, down 15 percent from the May forecast and 22 percent from last year. The yield forecast is 2.55 tons per acre from 105,000 harvested acres. Harvesting of the desert durum crop is nearly complete. Conditions were generally normal earlier in the year, but the harvested crop is showing the adverse effects of extremely high temperatures in March and April. The heat led to plant stress and greatly reduced yields in the desert region.

The next production report will be issued on July 12, 2004.

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