

California Crop Production Report

Released: January 12, 2005

The California Agricultural Statistics Service today released the crop production forecast for January. The latest survey, which was conducted during December 2004 and the first week of January 2005, includes the following commodities:

Cotton - American Pima harvested acreage is estimated at 214,000 acres. Production is set at 670,000 bales, an 81 percent increase from last year, and up 3 percent from the December 1 forecast. The resulting record yield is 1,503 pounds per acre. Upland harvested acreage is estimated at 557,000 acres. Production is set at 1.77 million bales, an increase of 18 percent from last year, and up 1 percent from the December 1 forecast. The yield calculates to a record 1,525 pounds per acre. Weather conditions were cooperative during the growing season, promoting rapid growth and steady development. Harvesting got underway in the San Joaquin Valley the last week of September. Rain, however, arrived in mid-October and delayed harvesting for many growers while they waited for fields to dry out. Two other large storms followed, as did concerns that the rain would cause some reduction in yield and quality. By the end of December, harvesting was essentially complete; only a few acres remained unharvested. Most harvested fields had been plowed down to meet the Pink Bollworm control requirements. A few cotton fields were prepared for spring planting where soil conditions allowed.

Oranges - The 2004-05 California Navel orange forecast is 88.0 million cartons, down 4 percent from the October forecast, but up 16 percent from last season's crop. The crop matured quickly over the summer, but sizing slowed somewhat in September. Freezing temperatures in several growing regions resulted in fruit drop in many areas. Harvesting remained underway at the end of December, but was slowed by rainfall as some growers sought to avoid bruising the wet fruit. Overall fruit quality was less favorable than last year, with puff and protruding ends among the major problems observed. The harvested fruit had generally fair tasting quality. The 2004-05 Valencia orange forecast is 33.0 million cartons, up slightly from the October forecast, and up 18 percent from last season's crop. The Valencia orange crop was reported to be of generally good quality. Fruit sizes were significantly larger than last year, and well above the five-year average. Acreage continued to decline due to pressure from development and other economic concerns.

Lemons - The 2004-2005 California lemon forecast is 39.0 million cartons, up 8 percent from last season, but unchanged from October. Harvesting of lemons was disrupted by rain, but continued in all three districts as weather permitted. Overall quality was very good to date. Citrus growers seemed to escape serious damage from freezing temperatures that pushed into the central valley in late November.

Tangerines - The 2004-2005 California tangerine forecast is 5.80 million cartons, up 7 percent from last season, but unchanged from October. Satsuma mandarin, tangerine, and clementine harvestings were slowed by rain, but continued as weather permitted in the San Joaquin Valley. Favorable yields and good fruit maturity were reported.

Grapefruit - The 2004-2005 California grapefruit forecast is 10.6 million cartons, up 2 percent from the October forecast, but down 2 percent from last season. Market conditions for the grapefruit crop continued to be very strong as a result of the extensive losses in Florida. Pummelos were harvested in the Central Valley. Exterior quality was reported to be excellent, texture was smooth in all sizes, and shape was normal. Rio Red variety grapefruit was harvested in the desert region. Exterior quality was reported to be fair, but flavor and eating quality were reported as excellent.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued February 9, 2005.

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