

California Crop Production Report

Released: May 12, 2005

The USDA-NASS, California Statistical Office 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 2005 California almond production is 850 million pounds, 16 percent below last year's revised production of 1.01 billion pounds. Estimated bearing acreage for 2005 is 550 thousand. Weather during bloom was less than ideal this year due to continued instances of rain. Bloom was rapid with an extremely poor set and numerous orchards displayed early petal fall. In addition, rain decreased the ability of the bees to successfully pollinate many orchards. The Nonpareil variety has displayed one of the weakest blooms in years. The set in other varieties is also down, but not to the extent of the Nonpareil variety. Sizes are reported to be good, but the kernels are solidifying slower than normal due to the cooler than average spring temperatures. There have been some reports of Phytophthora Root Rot resulting in tree loss.

Peaches - The 2005 California Freestone peach crop forecast is 410 thousand tons, unchanged from the 2004 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 36.0 thousand, resulting in a yield of 11.4 tons per acre. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours, thus benefitting the Freestone peach crop. Bloom was slightly delayed due to cool weather, but the cool spring temperatures allowed the fruit to size better than last year's crop. Early variety harvest dates were similar to last year's, but it was expected that the middle and late season variety harvests will be somewhat delayed due to cool April temperatures. Harvest of the Early Treat variety began in the Arvin area around the middle of April, and thus far, the quality is reported to be very good. The 2005 California Clingstone peach crop forecast is 510 thousand tons, down 5 percent from the 2004 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 30.4 thousand, resulting in a yield of 16.8 tons per acre. California experienced ideal weather conditions during the bloom period. Full bloom was about a week ahead of last year, but harvest was expected to be delayed slightly from last year due to the cooler than average temperatures during April. Set was expected to be lighter than a year ago, but the industry was expecting better sizes as a result of the lighter set.

Wheat - The 2005 Durum wheat production forecast is 258 thousand tons, down 3 percent from 2004. Harvested acres are estimated at 82.0 thousand, with a yield of 3.15 tons per acre. Most of the Durum wheat crop was in good condition overall. The unusual rains encouraged vigorous growth, increasing the yields. Although yields were up, the rains made field conditions unfavorable for harvest resulting in a decrease in harvested acres. Few disease or insect problems had been reported. The 2005 production forecast for wheat other than Durum is 604 thousand tons, 26 percent below last year. Harvested acres are estimated at 265 thousand, resulting in a yield of 2.28 tons per acre. Most of the wheat crop was headed out nicely with the abundance of rain and was in good condition overall. Non-irrigated wheat fields were thriving due to ample soil moisture, but the rain caused poor field conditions for harvesting. Thus far, few disease and insect problems had been reported.

The next production report will be issued on June 10, 2005.

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