

California Crop Production Report

Released: June 10, 2005

The USDA-NASS, California Statistical Office today released the crop production forecast for June 1. The latest survey, which was conducted during the last week of May and the first week of June, includes the following commodities:

Apricots - The 2005 California apricot crop forecast is 85.0 thousand tons, down 10 percent from the 2004 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 14.5 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 5.86 tons per acre. Commencement of bloom was early this year because of the warming impact of a mild El Nino Southern Oscillation. Bloom occurred during a window when most of the growing areas had dry weather. Bloom was heavy, but growers reported heavy drop by mid-March. What initially promised to be a bumper crop is now just one of average size. Cool spring temperatures slowed fruit development and pushed harvest back to a more normal starting time. Unsettled late spring weather, including hail storms, caused some damage in the southern San Joaquin Valley. The wet spring weather resulted in some shot hole and brown rot problems. Generally the fruit was sizing out well. Harvest began the end of April, though was initially slow relative to recent years. Significant acreage has been pulled, particularly of the productive Patterson variety.

Cherries - The 2005 California sweet cherry crop forecast is 45.0 thousand tons, down 38 percent from the 2004 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 28.0 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 1.61 tons per acre. A series of heavy, late-season storms that swept through Tulare County and up the San Joaquin Valley wreaked havoc with this year's crop. The rains swept through the valley from April 28 through May 9, peak harvesting time in the southern portion of the valley. The excess moisture caused some splitting and cracking, making the fruit unmarketable. Some growers lost 60 to 100 percent of their crops.

Peaches - The 2005 California Freestone peach crop forecast is 410 thousand tons, unchanged from the May forecast and the 2004 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 36.0 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 11.40 tons per acre. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours, thus benefitting the crop. Bloom was delayed a bit due to cool weather. Cool temperatures during the spring allowed the fruit to size better than last year's crop. Harvest continued with Spring Snow, Crimson Lady, Brittney Lane, and Crown Princess varieties being picked. Quality is reported to be very good to date. The 2005 California Clingstone peach crop forecast is 510 thousand tons, unchanged from the May forecast, but down 5 percent from the 2004 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 30.4 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 16.80 tons per acre. California experienced ideal weather conditions during the bloom period. Full bloom was about a week ahead of last year, but harvest is expected to be delayed slightly from last year due to cooler than average temperatures experienced during April. Set is expected to be lighter than a year ago, but fruit size is excellent throughout the State. Harvest is expected to begin around June 23.

(Continued)

Pears, Bartlett - The 2005 California Bartlett pear crop forecast is 200 thousand tons, down 10 percent from the 2004 crop. The Bartlett crop is down considerably at this time due to the rains hampering progression in orchards that are typically dry at this time of year. The late season rains have caused a lot of the fruit to be unmarketable.

Prunes (Dried Plums) - The 2005 California prune crop forecast is 105 thousand dried tons, up 114 percent from the 2004 crop of 49.0 thousand tons. Bearing acreage is estimated at 67.0 thousand acres, down 4 percent from the previous year. The prune crop again suffered damage from high March temperatures during bloom. Hail damage was also reported in some areas. However, this year's crop is expected to be better than last year's, which was the smallest on record since official estimates began in 1920.

Wheat - California's Durum wheat planted and harvested acreage are estimated at 90.0 thousand acres and 82.0 thousand acres, respectively. The estimated average yield is 3.00 tons per acre, resulting in a total production of 246 thousand tons. Harvesting of the desert crop is still underway. Conditions are reported to be good to excellent. The unseasonable rains that affected planting are now assisting the crop with growth. California's wheat other than Durum planted and harvested acreage are estimated at 500 thousand acres and 265 thousand acres, respectively, for 2005. The estimated average yield is 2.01 tons per acre, bringing the total production down to 533 thousand tons. Wheat harvesting has commenced in some parts of the State. There have been concerns about the presence of rust in some fields throughout the State. In addition, the unusual late season rains brought down the overall quality of this year's crop.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. Late summer and fall harvests may change these estimates considerably. The next production forecast will be issued July 12, 2005.

USDA-NASS, California Statistical Office

P.O. Box 1258

Sacramento, CA 95812

Phone: (916) 498-5161

Fax: (916) 498-5186

E-mail: nass-ca@nass.usda.gov