

California Farm News



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CALIFORNIA CROP PRODUCTION REPORT

SACRAMENTO -- The USDA-NASS, California Field Office today released the crop production forecast for October. The latest survey, which was conducted during the last week of September and the first week of October, included the following commodities:

Cotton - American Pima cotton production in California is forecast at 630 thousand bales, down 8 percent from the 2004 Pima crop and unchanged from last month's forecast. Harvested acreage is estimated at 226 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 1,338 pounds per acre. Upland cotton is forecast at 1.20 million bales, unchanged from last month's forecast and down 33 percent from last year. With harvested acreage of 433 thousand, the resulting yield is 1,330 pounds per acre. Growers continued to experience problems with mites, whitefly, and lygus, resulting in a very expensive crop for farmers. Heat during the summer months and lygus pressure have decreased yield potential. The crop looks better in northern areas of the San Joaquin Valley than in southern areas. Very little harvesting has begun to date. Most picking will begin towards the end of the month or next month. Final irrigation was complete, and cotton defoliation was in full swing.

Grapes - Production of all grape varieties for the 2005 season is forecast at 6.24 million tons, up 3 percent from the August forecast, and up 11 percent from last season. Wine-type variety grape production for California is forecast at 3.15 million tons, up 7 percent from the August forecast and 12 percent from last year. The table-type grape production is expected to total 790 thousand tons, unchanged from the August forecast, but up 3 percent from last year. The California raisin-type variety grape forecast is 2.30 million tons, unchanged from the August forecast, and up 13 percent from 2004. Harvesting of table grapes continued during September for both foreign and domestic markets. Wine grape harvest also advanced. The quality of harvested wine grapes was reported as very high this year, despite concerns about mildew and rot. An early thunderstorm towards the latter part of September soaked raisin vineyards in the San Joaquin Valley, leaving puddles on the trays of drying grapes and threatening the quality of the fruit. Most growers were able to escape major rain damage, but some losses were reported. The vineyards that received the rain were hurt somewhat, but windy days followed which helped to dry the wet raisins.

Oranges - The 2005-06 California orange crop is forecast at 110 million cartons, down 10 percent from last season. California's Navel orange forecast is 84.0 million cartons, down 2 percent from the previous season. Reports from the field indicated that the Navel crop consists primarily of medium to small sized fruit. The exterior quality was excellent without much damage from wind or rain. Growers were hoping the recent rains will boost size as the season progresses. The 2005-2006 harvest will most likely begin around the second week of November. California's Valencia orange forecast is 26.0 million cartons, down 28 percent from last season. The Valencia crop has developed normally thus far, with a good set that developed during the Spring. No major problems have been reported, but higher than normal thrip damage has been noted. In general, the crop consists of good quality fruit. Acreage pullouts continue to increase due to market pressures. Irrigation and pest treatments were ongoing as needed.

Others - The grapefruit forecast is 11.6 million cartons, unchanged from last season; lemon forecast is 38.0 million cartons, unchanged from last year; tangerine forecast is 6.40 million cartons, up 14 percent; pecan production forecast is 3.90 million pounds, up 11 percent. The corn for grain production is 673 thousand tons, down 8 percent; alfalfa hay is 6.94 million tons, down 6 percent; other hay production is 1.77 million tons, up 7 percent; and the rice crop is 38.1 million cwt., down 25 percent from last year.

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 November 10, 2005.

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