

# California Farm News



USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service,  
California Field Office

Released: April 10, 2006  
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## CALIFORNIA CROP PRODUCTION REPORT

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

**Navel Oranges** - The 2005-06 Navel orange forecast is 84.0 million cartons, unchanged from the January 2006 forecast, but down 2 percent from last season. Wet weather has slowed Navel orange harvest throughout citrus producing areas of California. Cooler March temperatures slowed fruit maturation, which was helping the fruit remaining on trees to hold fairly well. Several locations were experiencing rind-breakdown. The crop was damaged in many southern California orchards by severe winds, which caused fruit scarring and injuries.

**Valencia Oranges** - The 2005-06 Valencia orange forecast remains at 22.0 million cartons based on the March Objective Measurement Survey. The crop is expected to be down 46 percent from last season. The Valencia orange harvest began mid-month in the Central Valley, but slowed due to wet weather. Harvest continued in the southern citrus growing areas as conditions allowed. This year's fruit set was erratic. Fruit was generally of good to excellent quality, although some splits were beginning to appear.

**Grapefruit** - The 2005-06 California grapefruit forecast is 12.0 million cartons, unchanged from the January forecast, but up 3 percent from last season. Pummelo variety grapefruit were harvested in the Central Valley. Exterior and interior qualities were good with slight blemishes. Fruit shape was normal with a smooth texture, and very good flavor and juice content. Rios variety grapefruit were harvested in the Coachella Valley. Quality was good to fair with some irregularity in color. Texture was smooth to pebbly in the smaller sized fruit, but coarse in the larger fruit sizes.

**Lemons** - The 2005-06 lemon forecast is 38.0 million cartons, unchanged from the January forecast and last season. Harvest continued as usual, with reports of very good quality and yields, though picking was occasionally interrupted by rains. No internal damage had been seen.

**Tangerines** - The 2005-06 tangerine forecast is 8.00 million cartons, up 29 percent from the January 2006 forecast and 43 percent above last season. The tangerine harvest has had consistent reports of good yields with good quality and flavor. Problems, however, arose in March due to frost. Quality at the time was reportedly as good to fair. Picking was occasionally interrupted by March rains.

**Strawberries** - The 2006 strawberry production is expected to be 21.8 million cwt., up 6 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 35,800, with a yield of 610 cwt. per acre. The season started slower than previous years because of heavy rains that passed through the State. Warmer weather is expected to bring shipments back to a pace ahead of normal. Despite many challenges, which growers are experiencing, the strawberry crop is expected to exceed last year's record-high crop.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued May 12, 2006.

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