

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 August. The latest survey, conducted during the last week of July and the first week of August, included the following commodities:

Apples - California's 2006 apple crop forecast is 180 thousand tons, up one percent from 2005. Acreage is estimated at 24.0 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 7.50 tons per acre. California growers are expecting an apple crop similar in size to last year. Overall fruit size and color are good. Harvest of the Gala variety began on August 3. The size was down from what was originally anticipated due to the heat wave that struck the State the latter part of July. It was too early to tell the effects of the heat wave on later maturing varieties.

Cotton - Upland cotton production in California is forecast at 830 thousand bales, a decrease of 22 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 308 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 1,294 pounds per acre. California's American Pima cotton production forecast is 790 thousand bales, up 42 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 288 thousand acres, for a yield of 1,317 pounds per acre.

Grapes - Wine-type variety grape production for California is forecast at 3.20 million tons, unchanged from the July forecast, but down 16 percent from 2005. The table-type grape production is expected to total 790 thousand tons, up 5 percent from the July forecast, but down 9 percent from last year. The California raisin-type variety grape forecast is 2.05 million tons, unchanged from the July forecast, but down 11 percent from 2005. Raisin and table-type grapes for fresh use were harvested in the San Joaquin Valley, while table grape harvest in the Coachella Valley was complete. Flame Seedless, Black Emerald, Zante Current, and Thompson Seedless were among the varieties being harvested. Table grape sugar maturity tests have been high, and an increase in berry size occurred due to a light berry set. Raisin vineyards were cultivated between rows in preparation for harvest. Wine grape growers around the State reported that quality looked excellent as vines reach the final stages of development. The heat wave during July delayed berry sizing, and the smaller grapes will add intensity to the flavor. Yields in red grape vineyards appeared about average, but were lighter than normal among white varieties. Cultural operations such as irrigation, cultivation, vine suckering, and fungicide application continued in grape vineyards. Vine cutting was underway to allow sunlight penetration to enhance berry color.

Olives - California's 2006 olive crop forecast is 50.0 thousand tons, down 65 percent from last year. The bearing acres are estimated to be 31.0 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 1.61 tons per acre. Olive growers across California reported that the 2006 olive crop is the worst crop in many years. If realized, the crop forecast of 50,000 tons would be the smallest since 1981, when 44,900 tons were produced. From northern counties to the Central Valley, reports of little to no crop are consistent. Both areas were heavily impacted by uncooperative winter and spring weather conditions. Extremely warm weather in January followed by freezing temperatures in February damaged fruit buds. Heavy rains and cool temperatures arrived in April and May, during the peak of olive bloom, knocking blossoms off trees and destroying any opportunity for proper pollination.

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Pears - The forecast of the 2006 Bartlett pear crop in California is 195 thousand tons, up 17 percent from 2005. The 2006 other pear forecast for California is 40.0 thousand tons, up 11 percent from 2005. The Bartlett bloom period was lengthened, particularly in the Sacramento River and Mendocino areas, due to rain and cool temperatures. Small fruit sizes were expected. Harvesting of other pears continued. Pear orchards were treated to control the leaf-footed bug, worms, aphids, and hoppers.

Others - The rice production forecast is 40.3 million cwt., up 4 percent from 2005; alfalfa hay is 7.10 million tons, up 3 percent; other hay is 1.78 million tons, down 12 percent; corn for grain is 490 thousand tons, down 8 percent; sugar beets are 1.54 million tons, down 10 percent; dry beans are 1.25 million cwt., down 10 percent from 2005.

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 September 12, 2006.

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