

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 710 thousand bales, up 27 percent from the 2005 crop, but down 2 percent from last month's forecast. Harvested acreage is estimated at 274 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 1,244 pounds per acre. Upland cotton is forecast at 750 thousand bales, unchanged from last month's forecast, but down 30 percent from last year. With harvested acreage of 283 thousand, the resulting yield is 1,272 pounds per acre. Defoliation was underway in cotton fields across the State as growers anticipated the beginning of harvest. Many cotton growers were also treating to control aphid and white fly infestations. The whitefly populations were about normal this year, but much worse than last year when very little acreage was treated. The July heat wave created a lot of variability in cotton fields. The American Pima cotton crop is later than normal, whereas the Upland crop is relatively on time.

Grapes - Production of all grape varieties for the 2006 season is forecast at 5.75 million tons, down 5 percent from the August forecast and down 18 percent from last season. Wine-type variety grape production for California is forecast at 3.00 million tons, down 6 percent from the August forecast and 21 percent below last year. The table-type grape production is expected to total 750 thousand tons, down 5 August forecast and down 13 percent from last year. The California raisin-type variety grape forecast is 2.00 million tons, down 2 percent from the August forecast and down 13 percent from 2005. Harvesting of grapes for fresh use remained underway in the Kern District and other areas of the San Joaquin Valley. Some grapes for raisins were still being harvested and dried. Dried-on-the-vine raisin grape growers were cutting canes and bunches were drying. Early varieties were being harvested. Wine grape harvest is approximately 10 days to two weeks behind in the central and north coastal areas. Some growers began harvesting in Napa, Sonoma, Lake, and Mendocino counties in early September, but harvest was not expected to be in full swing until early to mid-October. Harvest began in the San Joaquin Valley in mid-August. Many red wine grapes such as Merlot and Cabernet are expected to go un-harvested due to the surplus from last year's crop and the increased imports of bulk wine from overseas. Excellent quality has been reported of grapes that have already been harvested.

Oranges - The 2006-07 California orange crop is forecast at 92.0 million cartons, down 20 percent from last season. California's Navel orange forecast is 66.0 million cartons, down 27 percent from the previous season. The Navel orange harvest was expected to start late this year, creating a gap between the Valencia and Navel seasons. This gap should drive up consumer demand. The 2006-07 Navel crop was also expected to be light. Many orchards were frost damaged last spring and growers were reporting light sets and small sizes. California's Valencia orange forecast is 26.0 million cartons, up 8 percent from last season. The Valencia crop has developed normally thus far, with no major problems reported. The 2006-07 fruit set appeared to be heavier than the previous season. Acreage pullouts continued to increase due to market pressures. Irrigation and pest treatments were ongoing as needed.

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Prunes (Dried Plums) - California's 2006 prune production is forecast at 170 thousand dried tons, up 17 percent from the June 1 forecast and 89 percent above the heat damaged 2005 crop. This year's prune crop experienced an unseasonable rainy period during bloom, which hampered pollination and led to a small fruit set statewide. As the season progressed, the crop prospects improved.

Others - The grapefruit forecast is 11.4 million cartons, down 5 percent from last season; lemon forecast is 39.4 million cartons, down 6 percent from last year; tangerine forecast is 7.60 million cartons, up 5 percent; pecan production forecast is 3.20 million pounds, down 18 percent. The corn for grain production is 490 thousand tons, down 8 percent; alfalfa hay forecast is 7.10 million tons, up 3 percent; other hay production is 1.78 million tons, down 12 percent; dry edible beans production is 1.24 million cwt., down 11 percent; and the rice crop is 40.0 million cwt., up 3 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 9, 2006.

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