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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 2008 apple crop forecast is 160 thousand tons, down 7 percent from 2007. Acreage is estimated at 19.5 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 8.21 tons per acre. California growers are expecting a good apple crop for the 2008 crop year. A frost in April hurt some growers, but overall quality and size are very good. The crop had low pest and disease pressure. Apple acreage continues to decrease, but new varieties and grafts are coming into production.

Cotton - Upland cotton production in California is forecast at 335 thousand bales, a decrease of 48 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 107 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 1,503 pounds per acre. California's American Pima cotton production forecast is 480 thousand bales, down 39 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 171 thousand acres, for a yield of 1,347 pounds per acre.

Grapes - Wine-type variety grape production for California is forecast at 3.40 million tons, up 6 percent from both the July forecast and from the 2007 crop. Wine grape growers reported improved yield prospects from last month's survey. The table-type grape production is expected to total 800 thousand tons, unchanged from the July forecast and from last year. The California raisin-type variety grape forecast is 2.20 million tons, up 7 percent from the July forecast and up 3 percent from last year. Harvest of table-type grapes for fresh market was complete in the Coachella Valley. Harvest continued for fresh use in the Kern District and other areas of the San Joaquin Valley. Flame and Thompson Seedless, Diamond Muscat, Black Emerald, Perlette, Red Globe, and Summer Royal varieties have started harvest. Fruit quality is excellent, although berry size is not as large as in some seasons.

Olives - California's 2008 olive crop forecast is 65.0 thousand tons, down 51 percent from last year. The bearing acres are estimated to be 31.0 thousand acres, resulting in a yield of 2.10 tons per acre. The 2008 California olive crop is turning out light. Lack of rain during the spring months caused some areas to be water stressed. There were also less than ideal weather conditions during the blooming period. The erratic temperature swings from hot to cold and high winds during bloom left many trees with a spotty set. The bloom period stretched out over approximately five weeks. An April freeze damaged crops, which became evident with new growth. Some growers were evaluating whether the spotty crop will make harvest costs prohibitive.

Pears - The forecast of the 2008 Bartlett pear crop in California is 200 thousand tons, slightly below 2007. The 2008 other pear forecast for California is 44.0 thousand tons, up 5 percent from last year. The California Bartlett began blooming in March. Harvest of Bartlett pears started in mid-July for Sacramento-San Joaquin regions and the first week of August for Lake-Mendocino regions. April's freeze resulted in less damage than earlier expectations. The most damage was found in the Mendocino-Lake regions.

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Others - The rice production forecast is 41.0 million cwt., down 7 percent from 2007; alfalfa hay is 6.56 million tons, down 8 percent; other hay is 2.24 million tons, down 2 percent; corn for grain is 1.05 million tons, up 5 percent; sugar beets are 1.16 million tons, down 21 percent; dry beans are 1.07 million cwt., down 12 percent from 2007.

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, 2008.

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