



# California Farm News

Cooperating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture

California Field Office · P.O. Box 1258 · Sacramento, CA 95812 · (916) 498-5161 · [www.nass.usda.gov/ca](http://www.nass.usda.gov/ca)

Media Contact: Jack Rutz, 1-800-851-1127 · July 11, 2008

## CALIFORNIA CROP PRODUCTION REPORT

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

**Grapes** - The California all grape forecast on 789 thousand bearing acres is 6.05 million tons, down 3 percent from last year's crop. Specifically, the wine grape forecast on 480 thousand bearing acres is 3.20 million tons, down 3 percent from last season. The expected table grape production on 82.0 thousand acres is 800 thousand tons, 1 percent higher than 2007, while the raisin grape production on 227 thousand bearing acres is forecast at 2.05 million tons, a decrease of 4 percent from last year's crop. The 2008 California grape crop is shaping up to be an average crop despite frost damage that occurred when unusually cold temperatures hit California during the middle of April. Bunch counts were reported to be good and comparable to last year. Crop development was about six to ten days behind normal. Lack of water was also a concern for many growers in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Raisin and table-type grapes for fresh use continued to be harvested in the Coachella Valley in early July.

**Almonds** - California's almond production is forecast at a record high 1.50 billion meat pounds, an increase of 8 percent from last year's crop. The forecast is based on 660 thousand bearing acres. The California 2008 almond set is very strong, and a record high yield per acre and production is forecast. This year's bloom arrived three weeks later than normal, but was nearly perfect. It progressed quickly, lasting only ten days as opposed to the average three weeks. Overlapping bloom between varieties was outstanding, resulting in good cross-pollination, and there was an adequate supply of bees to pollinate the crop. Almond tree limbs in many locations are bowing under the weight of the heavy crop.

**Peaches** - The 2008 California Freestone peach crop forecast is 430 thousand tons, unchanged from the June forecast, but 4 percent below the 2007 crop. Bearing acres are estimated at 36.0 thousand. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours, thus benefiting the Freestone crop. Weather during the bloom period was very accommodating, although cooler spring temperatures slowed maturity. The crop is reported to be of excellent quality, with good sizes. Harvest continued during July with the July Flame, Sierra Rich, Ice Princess, Rich Lady and Galaxy varieties. The 2008 California Clingstone peach crop forecast is 380 thousand tons, unchanged from the June forecast, but 24 percent lower than the 2007 crop. Bearing acres are estimated at 25.3 thousand. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours, thus benefitting the Clingstone crop. Weather during the bloom period was also favorable. However, unusually cold temperatures on April 19 and 20 have resulted in significant frost damage to the crop. The largest impact of the frost damage is in the northern growing areas, with some growers reporting 100 percent damage. There were also a large number of growers with loss in the Modesto area. However, fruit in the southern growing areas was not affected. During June, growers thinned and irrigated their orchards and took measures to control weeds, disease, and insects. The 2008 peach harvest began in Kingsburg on June 18, four days later than last year. Quality was reported to be very good for these initial deliveries.

**Apricots** - California's apricot production is forecast at 82.0 thousand tons, down 6 percent from the June forecast, but up 1 percent from the 2007 crop. Bearing acres are estimated to be 13.4 thousand. Nearly perfect weather during bloom raised hopes of record yields. A late frost in April dashed those expectations for some growers, while many others were unscathed. Quality is very good, but sizing expectations were not met for many in the San Joaquin Valley. Harvest began on time in mid-May and continued into early July.

*(Continued on next page)*

**Oranges** - The 2007-2008 California Navel orange forecast is 99.0 million cartons, unchanged from the April forecast, but up 43 percent from the 2006-2007 production. The California Navel orange season has come to a close. Harvest continued through the end of June with more picking than usual for that time of the season. Growers had an excellent year. Yield and quality were good to excellent. The Valencia orange forecast is 32.0 million cartons, unchanged from the April forecast, but up 39 percent from last season's crop. The Valencia season got off to an early but slow start, with the bulk of early picking going to the export market. As the Navel season came to a close, more demand shifted to Valencias. Picking for domestic sales has subsequently been on the rise. Fruit has been of good quality.

**Lemons** - The 2007-2008 California lemon forecast is 35.0 million cartons, up 3 percent from the April forecast, but down 5 percent from last season's crop. Harvest continues in the south coastal areas. Some south coast growers had been delaying harvest to make gains on growth. As a result, supplies were tight for some time. Demand remains strong and growers are now harvesting to keep up with demand. Fruit is of good quality.

**Grapefruit** - The 2007-2008 California grapefruit forecast is 11.2 million cartons, up 12 percent from the April forecast, and up 2 percent from last season. The Star Ruby variety grapefruit harvest continued with over half of the crop picked as of the end of June. Harvest of the Star Ruby variety is expected to continue through late July.

**Other Crops** - Barley production is forecast at 79.2 thousand tons, 38 percent more than the previous year. Oat production is forecast to be 50.4 thousand tons, 69 percent above 2007. Winter wheat production is expected to be 788 thousand tons, up 37 percent from 2007. Durum wheat production is forecast at 488 thousand tons, 128 percent above 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 August 12, 2008.

###