



California Farm News

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In Cooperation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture

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CALIFORNIA CROP PRODUCTION REPORT

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

Navel Oranges – The 2006-07 Navel orange forecast is 54.0 million cartons, down 18 percent from the January 2007 forecast and down 43 percent from last season's updated utilization of 94.0 million cartons. The Navel orange crop was significantly affected by the January freeze, although not to the extent initially feared. Damage varied widely by location and elevation. A larger than usual percentage of oranges will be harvested for juice this year.

Valencia Oranges – The 2006-07 Valencia orange crop is forecast to be 20.0 million cartons, 23 percent below the previous forecast and 26 percent below last season's revised utilization of 27.0 million cartons. The January freeze also had a negative effect on the California Valencia orange crop. As with Navels, the damage to the Valencia crop was not as extreme as originally thought. Damage varied widely by location and elevation. The large amount of freeze damaged fruit this year will result in a higher than normal percentage of Valencia's harvested for juice.

Grapefruit – The 2006-07 California grapefruit forecast is 9.60 million cartons, down 20 percent from both the January forecast and last season's final estimate. The grapefruit crop was affected by the January freeze. The extent of the damage varied widely by variety and location. The Oro Blanco variety grapefruit harvest neared completion in the Central Valley. There was heavy elimination due to ice marking from the freeze. The Rio Red variety harvest was on-going in the desert areas. Rio Reds seemed to escape damage from the freezing temperatures in most areas. Quality was generally good with downgrading due to wind scar and sheeppose. The Pummelo harvest continued in the Central Valley. Pummelo fruit with ice marking was eliminated.

Lemons – The 2006-07 lemon forecast is 33.0 million cartons, 20 percent below the January forecast and 21 percent below last season. Lemons were hit hard by the January freeze, as about 72 percent of the crop remained on trees at the time of the cold spell. Consequently, a smaller percentage of lemons will be harvested this season than previously expected. Packing houses moved all fruit picked before the freeze, and picking activities have since slowly increased.

Tangerines – The 2006-07 tangerine forecast is 5.20 million cartons, down 32 percent from the January 2007 forecast and 28 percent below last season. Tangerines also suffered the effects of the freeze in January that hit all of California's citrus crops. Clementines suffered less as the bulk of the crop was picked before the cold spell. Picking of other varieties was put on hold while growers inspected their groves and searched for marketable fruit. The damage to unharvested fruit varied by location. Harvesting activities have since slowly increased.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued April 10, 2007.

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