



California Farm News

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

Navel Oranges - The 2006-07 Navel orange forecast is 54.0 million cartons, unchanged from last month, but down 43 percent from last season. Packers continued to find good quality Navel oranges. The drying of frost-damaged fruit became more evident, and packinghouses were using mechanical frost separators to separate damaged fruit from good fruit.

Valencia Oranges - The 2006-07 Valencia orange forecast remains unchanged from March at 20.0 million cartons. The crop is expected to be down 26 percent from last season. The full extent of frost-damage to the Valencia orange crop was yet to be realized. A few packinghouses were scheduled to begin working the first week of April.

Grapefruit - The 2006-07 California grapefruit forecast is 9.60 million cartons, unchanged from the March forecast, but down 20 percent from last season. Subsequent to the January freeze, a number of measures were taken to assist recovery to trees affected by the cold. Damaged limbs were pruned and foliar nutrients applied in many orchards. New trees were planted. As a result of the freeze, grapefruit and pummelo harvests remained slow. Sales of Desert Rios were, nonetheless, steady in a range of sizes and supplies of smaller sizes were especially good. Pummelos had been picked for the season and sales were good. Oroblanco sales were limited and inventories were low.

Lemons - The 2006-07 lemon forecast is 33.0 million cartons, unchanged from the March forecast but 21 percent below last season. Recovery to citrus trees affected by the January freeze continued, though flowering and fruit set appeared to be lost for next year's crop in parts of Imperial County. Packinghouses exhausted their lemon supplies in the desert areas of California. Elsewhere, lemons were still being picked and packed, though volumes from the Central Valley were low. Inventories in the south coastal regions of the State were also low, but more supplies will be available as harvest gains momentum in that part of the State. Quality of south coastal lemons was reportedly excellent in a variety of sizes; however, volumes were somewhat lighter than the previous season.

Tangerines - The 2006-07 tangerine forecast is 5.20 million cartons, unchanged from the March forecast and down 28 percent from last season. Harvesting of tangerines slowly increased after the January freeze and began to wind down in early April. The recovery process for surviving trees continued. Frost damaged limbs were being pruned, and new trees were being planted. Murcott harvest picked up speed in March, and inventories were still being packed. Murcotts were proving to have good quality.

Strawberries - The 2007 strawberry production is expected to be 20.6 million cwt., down 3 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 35,500, with a yield of 580 cwt. per acre. The season began more slowly than normal due to the January freeze followed by a slight drought. There was sporadic damage in southern locations. Warmer weather was expected to bring shipments back to a pace within normal ranges. Despite the many challenges growers have experienced, a high quality strawberry crop is expected.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued May 11, 2007.

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