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

Almonds – The initial forecast for the 2007 California almond production is 1.31 billion pounds, up 17 percent from last year's revised production of 1.12 billion pounds. Estimated bearing acreage for 2007 is 615 thousand. There was no difficulty accumulating chill hours over the winter, and there was a sufficient bee presence in orchards during pollination. In general, California weather cooperated during pollination. Almond tree limbs were reported to be bowing and splitting under the weight of the heavy set. Throughout the Central Valley, the set of the popular Nonpareil variety was uniformly heavy.

Peaches - The 2007 California Freestone peach crop forecast is 390 thousand tons, up 10 percent from the 2006 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 36.0 thousand, resulting in a yield of 10.8 tons per acre. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours, thus benefiting the Freestone crop. The bloom period was fairly quick, with above-average temperatures and no rain. The crop was reported to be of excellent quality with good sizes. Harvest began during the middle of April with the April Snow and Snow Angel varieties. The 2007 California Clingstone peach crop forecast is 450 thousand tons, up 25 percent from the 2006 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated at 26.3 thousand, resulting in a yield of 17.1 tons per acre. The Clingstone crop also received an adequate number of chilling hours this year. Overall, the bloom was good on all varieties. The crop was reported to be in excellent condition, with good size and uniform growth. Harvest is expected to begin in late June in the Kingsburg area.

Wheat - The 2007 winter wheat production forecast is 630 thousand tons, 45 percent above last year. Harvested acres are estimated at 300 thousand, resulting in a yield of 2.10 tons per acre. The 2007 Durum wheat production forecast is 257 thousand tons, up 33 percent from 2006. Harvested acres are estimated at 90.0 thousand, with a yield of 2.85 tons per acre. The wheat growing season in California has been very dry. Much of the dry-land wheat was lost to drought. However, the arrival of warm weather encouraged good growth and strong development of the irrigated crop. Disease pressure has been low this year, due in large part to the dry weather conditions. Stripe rust was observed, but appeared late enough into the growing season that growers were hopeful yields would remain unaffected. Growers were anticipating yield levels at or above normal. Harvest of Durum wheat will begin in the next two to three weeks.

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

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