

California Crop Production Report

Released: June 11, 2003

The California Agricultural Statistics Service today released crop production forecasts on selected crops for June 2003.

Apricots - Apricot production for 2003 is forecast at 85.0 thousand tons, unchanged from the 2002 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 16,500. Cooler weather hampered fruit growth and maturity of early variety apricots. However, late rains increased the size of later varieties compared to last year's crop.

Cherries, Sweet - The 2003 California sweet cherry crop, at 60.0 thousand tons, is up 8 percent from the 2002 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 27,000. Cool, wet weather slowed crop development and delayed the beginning of harvest by a week. While the early crop in Tulare and Kern counties was hurt by the weather, growers in Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties reported scattered damage to their crops. Fruit quality is reported to be excellent. The Bing cherry harvest is ongoing at this time.

Peaches - The 2003 California Freestone peach crop forecast is 385 thousand tons, unchanged from the May forecast, but down 3 percent from the 2002 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 39,000. Fewer than adequate chilling hours during the winter resulted in a lengthy bloom period. Set in the early varieties looks good, while set in the middle-to-late season varieties is down slightly from last season. Harvest of Freestone peaches began during the first week of April. California's Clingstone peach crop is forecast to be 590 thousand tons, up 4 percent from the May forecast and up 5 percent from the 2002 crop. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 32,100. California experienced fewer than adequate chilling hours during the winter, which mostly affected the Stanislaus variety. Set is reported to be lighter in the Modesto area than in the northern area of the State. Growers reported some hail damage in the southern Modesto area. Harvest is expected to begin around the middle of June.

Pears, Bartlett - The initial forecast of the 2003 Bartlett pear crop in California is 235 thousand tons, down 11 percent from last season. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 12,500. Crop quality is reported to be good despite a cool, wet spring. Continued acreage pullouts are not expected to adversely affect overall production.

Prunes - The 2003 California prune crop forecast is 190 thousand dried tons, up 11 percent from last year. Bearing acreage is estimated to be 72,000. The crop encountered more rain and cooler temperatures during March and April than normal. Limited hail damage was reported in both the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. Favorable weather conditions prevailed during May.

Wheat - Winter wheat production for 2003 in California is estimated to be 787.5 thousand tons, up 7 percent from the May forecast and up 17 percent from the 2002 crop. The yield forecast is 75 bushels per acre from 350,000 harvested acres. Durum wheat production in California is estimated to be 285 thousand tons, up 11 percent from the May forecast and up 6 percent from last year. The yield forecast is 100 bushels per acre from 95,000 harvested acres. Late spring rainfall led to the rapid growth and development of wheat seedlings. However, wet field conditions were also favorable for the quick and widespread development of stripe rust on several wheat varieties. Many growers sprayed to protect their crops. The extent of the infestation will soon be known as farmers were beginning to harvest the crop.

The next production report will be issued on July 11, 2003.

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