



News Release

In Cooperation with Clemson University

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PEACH PRODUCTION

As of July 1, the SOUTH CAROLINA peach crop is forecast at 8,000 tons, equal to the June 1 forecast, but 87 percent below 2006, according to the USDA NASS, South Carolina Field Office. Damage from the Easter freeze covered the entire State with severe losses reported in the major peach growing areas. Production at this level would be the third smallest on record since estimates were begun in 1910.

The UNITED STATES peach production forecast is 1.03 million tons, up 2 percent from 2006 but 13 percent below the 2005 crop. Nineteen of the 28 Freestone peach estimating States expect decreases in production from last year, while six States increased their production from the previous season, and three States showed no change. Freestone production, at 576,845 tons, is down 11 percent from last season.

The California Clingstone crop is forecast at 450,000 tons, equal to the June 1 forecast but 25 percent above the 2006 crop. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours which benefitted the Clingstone crop. Overall, the bloom was reported to be good on all varieties. Thinning progressed slowly due to labor shortages and heavy fruit sets. Harvest began eight days earlier than last year. Fruit sizes are reported to be small, but quality is reported to be excellent.

Devastating cold temperatures in early April damaged peach orchards in the Atlantic States from New York to Georgia. Production in the southeastern States was affected the most. Georgia's peach crop is forecast at 13,000 tons, down 24 percent from the June 1 forecast and 68 percent below 2006. In addition to frost damage, the State's orchardists reported smaller fruit size because of the dry conditions. North Carolina's peach crop, at 1,000 tons, is down 82 percent from a year ago, while Virginia's crop is down 48 percent. Alabama's peach crop has suffered substantially due to untimely freezes in early April and abnormally dry weather throughout the spring and summer.