



NEWS RELEASE

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January Freeze Had Significant Impact on California Citrus, USDA Reports

Washington, March 9, 2007 – As a result of freezing temperatures that hit California in mid-January, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has reduced its forecast of 2006-07 California orange production by 20 percent.

In the March *Crop Production* report, released today, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) estimates utilized production of all oranges in California at 37 million boxes (1.39 million tons), down 20 percent from the January forecast, and down 39 percent from the 2005-06 season.

NASS usually updates the California citrus forecast quarterly, with the next regularly scheduled report due out in April. However, in response to January's extended freeze, the agency surveyed California growers and packing houses a month early. NASS will update the numbers again in April as originally planned.

The March *Crop Production* Report shows the California grapefruit crop down 20 percent from the January forecast, and also down 20 percent from the 2005-06 season, to 4.8 million boxes (161,000 tons). NASS estimates the California tangerine crop at 2.6 million boxes (98,000 tons), down 32 percent from January and down 28 percent from 2005-06. The lemon forecast of 16.5 million boxes (627,000 tons) is down 20 percent from the January estimate and 21 percent from the previous season.

The next *Crop Production* report is scheduled for release at 8:30 a.m., ET, on April 10. All NASS reports are available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

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