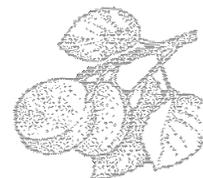


1997 California Prune Forecast



Released: June 4, 1997



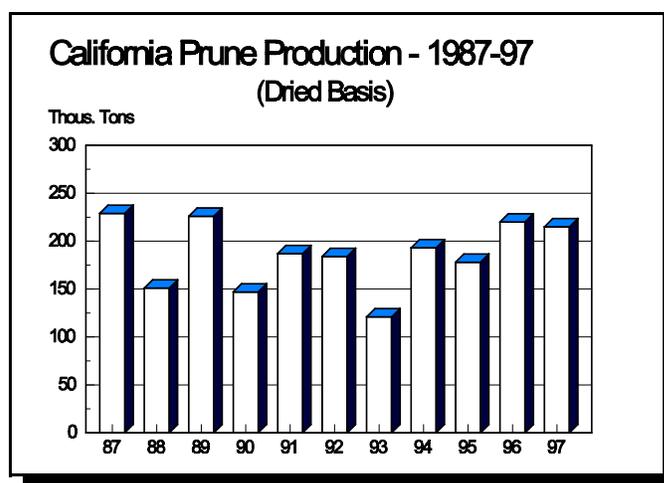
CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS SERVICE

The 1997 California prune crop is forecast at 215 thousand tons, down 2 percent from the 220 thousand tons in 1996. Total 1997 bearing acreage is estimated at 81,200. The French prune variety accounts for more than 98 percent of all prunes grown in California. The production forecast is based on a survey of prune growers conducted by the California Agricultural Statistics Service (CASS) from May 1 - 20, 1997. The acreage estimate is based on a survey of prune growers conducted by CASS from January through May 1997.

CASS designed the survey using a stratified random sampling scheme based on total prune acreage for each operator and analyzed the data. The sample is designed to give a State estimate of all growers.

Questionnaires were mailed to growers on May 1, 1997 with return requested by May 13. Non-respondents were telephoned. Responses were received from 223 growers representing 44 percent of the total bearing acres.

Weather was favorable during the critical pollination period. Growers indicated they are expecting a near normal crop. Prunes normally experience a "June drop," which may affect the final crop size depending on the extent.



PRUNE PRODUCTION AND ACREAGE 1987-1997

Year	Bearing Acres	Yield/Acre	Production
1987	75,600	3.03	229,000
1988	77,200	1.96	151,000
1989	77,400	2.92	226,000
1990	80,100	1.84	147,000
1991	80,200	2.33	187,000
1992	80,400	2.29	184,000
1993	78,200	1.55	121,000
1994	78,900	2.45	193,000
1995	79,200	2.29	181,000
1996	80,200	2.74	220,000
1997 (Forecast)	81,200	2.65	215,000