



# California Farm News

Cooperating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture

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## CALIFORNIA CROP PRODUCTION REPORT

**SACRAMENTO** -- The USDA-NASS, California Field Office today released the crop production forecast for April. The latest survey, conducted during the last week of March and the first week of April, included the following commodities:

**Navel Oranges** -- The 2008-09 Navel orange forecast is 76.0 million cartons, a 10 percent increase from January, and down 16 percent from last season. Fruit quality remained good for all Navel varieties despite unfavorable temperatures at different times of the season. Larger fruit size did not offset the reduced fruit set per tree to impact yields per acre. Scattered freezing temperatures were a concern for growers in March, forcing growers to use wind machines and irrigation to keep temperatures up. Forecasted reductions in irrigation water delivery continue to remain a concern for growers.

**Valencia Oranges** -- The 2008-09 Valencia orange forecast remains unchanged from March at 30.0 million cartons. The crop is expected to be down 12 percent from last season. Harvest began on schedule during March. Fruit quality was good with a lighter-than-average fruit set per tree. Average fruit size did not stand apart from previous year sizes. Scattered freezing temperatures were a concern for growers in March, forcing growers to use wind machines and irrigation to keep temperatures up. Forecasted reductions in irrigation water delivery continue to remain a concern for growers.

**Grapefruit** -- The 2008-09 California grapefruit forecast is 8.80 million cartons, down 2 percent from the January forecast, and down 15 percent from last season. The Desert Rio Red variety grapefruit harvest continued. Sizes were reported to be small. Star Ruby variety grapefruit harvest is expected to begin in April.

**Lemons** -- The 2008-09 lemon forecast is 38.0 million cartons, unchanged from the January forecast, but 28 percent above last season. Fruit size was small, however, fruit quality remained good. Scattered freezing temperatures were a concern for growers in March, forcing growers to use wind machines and irrigation to keep temperatures up. Forecasted reductions in irrigation water delivery continue to remain a concern for growers.

**Tangerines** -- The 2008-09 tangerine forecast is 13.4 million cartons, down 4 percent from the January forecast, but unchanged from last season. The season finished up for W. Murcott as well as Fairchild mandarins. Harvest continued for Shasta Gold, Royal, Pixie, and Honey Mandarins, though some fruit drop occurred in the San Joaquin Valley. Early season frost coupled with freezing temperatures mid-March caused scattered freeze damage throughout the season. Forecasted reductions in irrigation water delivery remained a concern for growers.

**Strawberries** -- The 2009 strawberry production is expected to be 23.6 million cwt., up 4 percent from last year. Harvested acreage is estimated at 39,000, with a yield of 605 cwt. per acre. The 2009 strawberry crop volume was increasing as fields recovered from recent rainfall. With temperatures climbing, yields were following suit. Crop quality was good.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued May 12, 2009.

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