



California Farm News

Cooperating with the California Department of Food and Agriculture

California Field Office · P.O. Box 1258 · Sacramento, CA 95812 · (916) 498-5161 · www.nass.usda.gov/ca

Media Contact: Kelly Krug, 1-800-851-1127 · May 12, 2009

CALIFORNIA CROP PRODUCTION REPORT

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

Almonds - The initial forecast for the 2009 California almond production is 1.45 billion pounds, down 10 percent from last year's production of 1.61 billion pounds. Estimated bearing acreage for 2009 is 710 thousand. After a difficult spring, the 2009 almond set looks good. Bloom progressed slowly due to wet conditions, while wet weather hampered pollination. Cool temperatures did extend the almond bloom in parts of the Sacramento Valley. Freezing temperatures in March caused damage to some almond orchards. Mites were present on almonds across the state; however, control measures combined with some spring rains resulted in little damage to the crop. Almond growers were assessing how future water stress will impact their management problems.

Peaches - The 2009 California Freestone peach crop forecast is 370 thousand tons, down 13 percent from the 2008 crop. California experienced an adequate number of chilling hours that benefited the Freestone crop. Freezing temperatures hit California in early March, resulting in frost damage in some areas. This damage, along with a decrease in the bearing acres, has resulted in a lower-than-forecasted production for the 2009 crop. Harvest began during the middle of April with the Super Rich, Super Lady and Snow Angel varieties. The 2009 California Clingstone peach crop forecast is 430 thousand tons, up slightly from the 2008 crop. The Clingstone crop also received an adequate number of chilling hours this year that benefited the Clingstone crop. Full bloom, on a statewide basis, was declared on March 15, five days later than the 2008 full bloom timing. The 2009 bloom looked good to very good in all areas of the state. Freezing temperatures hit California in early March, resulting in slight frost damage in some areas. Following a series of rainstorms in early March, growers had good weather for pruning, spraying and tree planting activities. By the end of April, the fruit was starting to differentiate in size. The crop set appeared lighter than growers' initial expectations following bloom, but they are expecting a normal crop level. Thinning in most areas will start during the middle of May.

Wheat - The 2009 winter wheat production forecast is 672 thousand tons, 34 percent below last year. Harvested acres are estimated at 280 thousand, resulting in a yield of 2.40 tons per acre. The 2009 Durum wheat production forecast is 365 thousand tons, down 25 percent from 2008. Harvested acres are estimated at 135 thousand, with a yield of 2.70 tons per acre. Winter wheat growing season in California has been very dry. Some dryland wheat has been harvested as hay, or just lost from lack of available water. However, warm weather has encouraged good growth and strong development of the irrigated crop. Disease pressure has been low this year, due in large part to the dry weather conditions. Few incidences of stripe rust have been reported this year. Durum wheat is progressing normally this season, with good quality and few disease issues reported. Growers are hoping to see yields at normal levels, but low availability of water may prevent some growers from finishing their crop properly. Harvest is expected to begin mid-May.

Production forecasts are released on a monthly basis and do not reflect final production estimates. The next production forecast will be issued June 10, 2009.

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