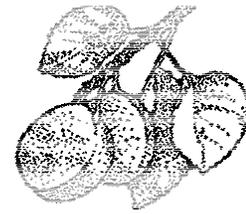


1999 California Prune Forecast



Released: June 4, 1999



CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL
STATISTICS SERVICE

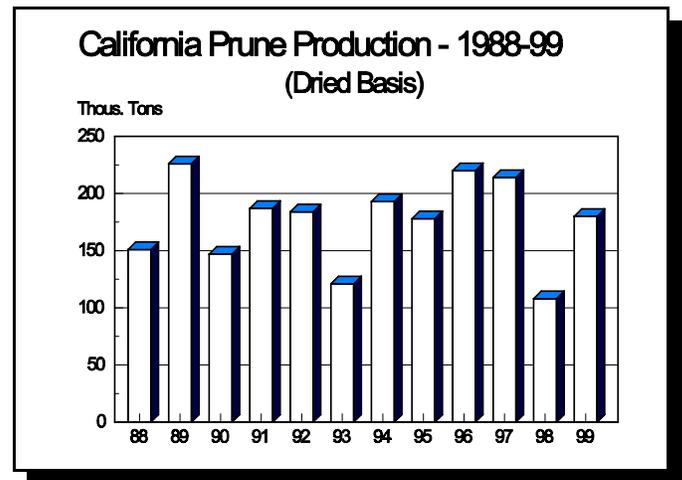
The 1999 California prune crop is forecast at 180 thousand tons, up 66 percent from the 108 thousand tons in 1998. Total 1999 bearing acreage is estimated at 83,000. The French prune variety accounts for more than 98 percent of all prunes grown in California. The production forecast is based on a survey of prune growers conducted by the California Agricultural Statistics Service (CASS) from May 4-28, 1999. The acreage estimate is based on a survey of prune growers conducted by CASS from January through May 1999.

most orchards had a heavy bloom and a good set was realized. However, a freeze in the Sacramento Valley on April 9 caused some damage and the production will not be as heavy as earlier expected. Growers have also reported heavy winds that have knocked fruit off the trees. In the San Joaquin Valley, the set was generally quite heavy and growers were thinning the fruit in hopes of having the remaining fruit reach a better size. The crop is generally one to two weeks later than normal throughout the State.

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 3, 1999 with return requested by May 14. Non-respondents were telephoned. Responses were received from 180 growers representing 34 percent of the total bearing acres.

Flowering of the prune crop was delayed by cool, wet conditions, while bloom was impacted by below-normal temperatures and strong winds. Fortunately,



PRUNE PRODUCTION AND ACREAGE 1988-1999

Year	Bearing Acreage	Yield Per Acre	Production
	Acres		Tons
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	83,000	1.46	121,000
1994	84,000	2.30	193,000
1995	83,500	2.17	181,000
1996	85,000	2.62	223,000
1997	82,000	2.61	214,000
1998	83,000	1.30	108,000
1999 (Forecast)	83,000	2.17	180,000