As of August 15, 2008, California’s contracted processing tomato production is forecast at 11.6 million tons, down 1 percent from the May forecast and 3 percent below the 2007 season. Processors expected this production to come from 276,000 acres producing an average 42.03 tons per acre.

This year’s processing tomato crop is about a week behind schedule. In January, processors were expecting acreage to fall due to water uncertainties and attractively priced alternative crops. The frosty weather in mid-April caused spot damage in tomato plants in some growing areas. Dry conditions and high winds during the spring delayed fruit setting. Some growers reported that the late July crop was slow in ripening and volumes were low which was unusual for that time of the year. In other areas, crop conditions have generally been excellent with no significant insect problems. Growers continued to apply spray applications when necessary. Growers reported that they have high to variable yields this year.

As of August 16 the total Statewide inspected tonnage of tomatoes delivered (4,439,504 tons) was 20 percent lower compared to the same time one year ago (5,567,988 tons).

This report is based on the results of a survey conducted in August. This particular survey asked processors for the amount of tomatoes they expect to process and the total harvested acreage required to achieve that amount.

The USDA forecast for U.S. processing tomato production will be issued on September 4.
California’s Harvested Processing Tomatoes
Weekly Cumulative Totals for 2004 through 2008

Source: Processing Tomato Advisory Board

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