



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service
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CITRUS

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MARCH FORECAST
 MATURITY TEST RESULTS AND FRUIT SIZE

March 12, 1998

ORANGES LOWERED TO 251.0 MILLION BOXES

The 1997-98 Florida all orange forecast (excluding Temples), released today by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Board, is 251.0 million boxes, 3.0 million less than last month's. This reduction is entirely in the early and midseason portion of the crop which is now estimated at 143.0 million boxes. The late type (Valencia) portion is unchanged at 108.0 million boxes.

The total forecast is one percent less than the initial forecast of 254.0 million boxes, carried forward since October. If realized, this crop will surpass last season's record high utilization of 226.2 million boxes by 11 percent and the 1995-96 crop by 23 percent.

EARLY AND MIDSEASON DOWN TO 143.0 MILLION BOXES

With a decrease of 3.0 million boxes from last month, the forecast of early-midseason oranges is now 143.0 million boxes. While two percent lower than previously forecast, this crop would exceed the record 1996-97 crop of 134.2 million boxes by over six percent. The forecast for the Navel portion of the crop is decreased to 6.3 million boxes from 7.0 million boxes last month. If attained, this would be the second largest crop on record and less than two percent smaller than last season's record 6.4 million boxes.

Citrus production, March 1, 1998
 forecasts by varieties and states, with comparisons

Crop and State	Production		Forecast	
	1995-96	1996-97	Feb 11, 1998	Mar 12, 1998
Early, Midseason, and Navel Oranges:	--- 1,000 boxes ---			
FLORIDA	121,200	134,200	146,000	143,000
California	38,000	40,000	44,000	44,000
Texas	830	1,300	1,400	1,400
Arizona	700	400	450	450
Total Above Varieties	160,730	175,900	191,850	188,850
Valencias:				
FLORIDA	82,100	92,000	108,000	108,000
California	20,000	28,000	30,000	30,000
Texas	110	120	150	150
Arizona	950	600	550	550
Total Valencias	103,160	120,720	138,700	138,700
All Oranges:				
FLORIDA	203,300	226,200	254,000	251,000
California	58,000	68,000	74,000	74,000
Texas	940	1,420	1,550	1,550
Arizona	1,650	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total All Oranges	263,890	296,620	330,550	327,550

FORECAST DATES 1997-98 SEASON

April 9, 1998
 May 12, 1998
 June 12, 1998
 July 10, 1998

At this point in the season, the route survey provides the primary indication of final utilization. Row Count, conducted March 2-3, 1998, indicated harvest is nearly complete and supports this lowering of the forecast.

The extremely wet season has had an effect on fruit quality, with some loads being turned down at plants. Estimated utilization through March 8 was 140.0 million boxes (including 1.5 million boxes of uncertified gift fruit and other use allocated at the beginning of the season). Weekly utilization of early and midseason varieties has decreased rapidly as plants are beginning to process Valencias and grapefruit.

VALENCIAS REMAIN AT 108.0 MILLION BOXES

The record forecast for the late type (Valencia) oranges is continued at 108.0 million boxes. This harvest would top the preceding season's record of 92.0 million boxes by 17 percent and would be 31 percent greater than the 1995-96 crop.

Monthly fruit size and loss survey recordings indicate that current average fruit size remains very near the mean of the past seven seasons while the measured drop continues slightly below the mean. Harvest of Valencias has begun and the Row Count indicated only a very small percentage of rows have been picked.

FCOJ HELD AT 1.56 GALLONS PER BOX

The projected all orange FCOJ yield is maintained at 1.56 gallons at 42.0 degrees Brix concentrate per box. The early and midseason fruit are projected to yield 1.50 gallons per box while the late type (Valencia) oranges are forecast at 1.65 per box.

As of February 28, the Florida Citrus Processors Association reported the season to date yield for the early and midseason portion of the crop at 1.49255 gallons per box. Report number 22 also states that 99.6 million boxes of fruit have been utilized for FCOJ.

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SEEDLESS GRAPEFRUIT NOW 49.5 MILLION BOXES

A 2.0 million box reduction is made in the total seedless grapefruit forecast of utilization. All of the reduction is in the white variety, now 21.0 million boxes. The colored varieties forecast remains at 28.5 million boxes. Both fresh and processed utilization of the white variety is lagging behind last season to the same date. Weather conditions have contributed to some grade problems in the fresh area. High winds have also accelerated droppage in some of the older interior area whites. Final recorded utilization of this variety will be dependent on the amount processors are willing to accept into inventory. Last season processors took 17.8 million boxes on a total white utilization of 23.5 million boxes, or over 75 percent of the crop.

The white forecast is now over 10 percent less than last season's crop. If realized, it will be the smallest crop recorded since the 1991-92 season and the third smallest in a twenty year series.

Colored seedless varieties are forecast at 28.5 million boxes, unchanged from last month. This forecast is nine percent less than the record crop utilized last season, but at the level of utilization in the 1994-95 and 1995-96 seasons. Estimated utilization of colored as of March 2, 1998, is about 0.3 million boxes ahead of last season to the same date.

Citrus production, March 1, 1998 forecasts by varieties and states, with comparisons

Crop and State	Production		Forecast	
	1995-96 ¹⁾	1996-97 ²⁾	Feb 11, 1998	Mar 12, 1998
--- 1,000 boxes ---				
Grapefruit:				
FLORIDA-All	52,350	55,800	52,000	50,000
Seedless	51,300	54,900	51,500	49,500
White	23,200	23,500	23,000	21,000
Colored	28,100	31,400	28,500	28,500
Seedy (Other)	1,050	900	500	500
Texas	4,550	5,300	4,600	4,600
Arizona	1,200	900	800	800
California	8,100	8,200	9,000	9,000
Total Grapefruit	66,200	70,200	66,400	64,400
Lemons:				
California	21,000	20,000	22,000	22,000
Arizona	5,100	2,600	2,600	2,600
Total Lemons	26,100	22,600	24,600	24,600
Limes: Florida	300	320	375	375
Temples: Florida	2,150	2,400	2,300	2,300
Tangelos: Florida	2,450	3,950	3,000	2,850
K-Early: Florida	160	150	40	40
Tangerines:				
FLORIDA-All	4,500	6,300	5,050	5,000
Early ³⁾	2,900	4,500	3,250	3,200
Honey	1,600	1,800	1,800	1,800
California	2,600	2,600	2,400	2,400
Arizona	1,000	550	500	500
Total Tangerines	8,100	9,450	7,950	7,900

¹⁾ Excludes 3.0 million boxes of economic abandonment of Florida colored seedless varieties. ²⁾ Excludes 6.0 million boxes of economic abandonment in Florida: 3.0 million white seedless and 3.0 million colored varieties. ³⁾ Robinson, Fallglo, Sunburst, and Dancy.

These forecasts are based on objective fruit count and measurement surveys in relation to the harvest patterns and utilization of the past six seasons. All citrus forecasts project certified utilization and include a preseason allocation of less than two percent for unrecorded usage. Certifications include only fruit actually shipped in fresh pack or recorded at a processing plant.

SEEDY GRAPEFRUIT FORECAST HELD

The seedy (Duncan) grapefruit forecast is continued at 500,000 boxes. As of March 2, 1998, about 200,000 boxes are estimated to have been utilized. Average fruit size is still well above the last seven-season average. However, loss from droppage accelerated last month, possibly the result of wind and rain. All seedy grapefruit is certified in processed form and records depend on load tickets.

**EARLY TANGERINES FINAL AT 3.2 MILLION BOXES
HONEY TANGERINES MAINTAINED**

A reduction of 50,000 boxes is made in the early portion tangerines to a final estimate of 3.2 million boxes. Adjusted utilizations of the combined Robinson, Fallglo, Sunburst, and Dancy varieties required the slight revision.

The Honey tangerine (late portion) is held at 1.8 million boxes. The remaining Honey average fruit size in February exceeded all others in the past seven seasons with the fruit drop averaging slightly below 50 percent. Estimated utilization is about 50,000 boxes ahead of last season, when 1.8 million boxes were recorded, reflecting slightly advanced maturity.

TEMPLES HELD AT 2.3 MILLION BOXES

The Temple forecast is continued at 2.3 million boxes which is 100,000 boxes less than utilized last season. Although harvest of this crop started earlier than last season, estimated certifications as of March 2, 1998, are at last season's level to the same date.

TANGELOS ADJUSTED DOWNWARD

The estimate of tangelo utilization is reduced 150,000 boxes to 2.85 million boxes. Weekly utilizations have declined steadily. The route survey indicated some rows still remaining, mostly in small blocks or as pollinators. Last season's recorded crop of 3.95 million boxes was the largest since 1987-88.

K-EARLY'S FINAL AT 40,000 BOXES

Original survey indications were for 130,000 boxes but only 40,000 boxes have been certified. There has been very limited demand for this fruit and virtually none for processing.

Unadjusted maturity tests: Average of regular bloom fruit from sample groves, 1996-97 and 1997-98 seasons

Fruit type (No. groves) test date	Acid		Solids (Brix)		Ratio		Unfinished juice per box		Solids per box		
	1996-97	1997-98	1996-97	1997-98	1996-97	1997-98	1996-97	1997-98	1996-97	1997-98	
	Percent		Percent				Pounds		Pounds		
Juice and solids per box are unadjusted and not comparable to plant test results.											
ORANGES:											
Late (150-149)											
Sep	1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Oct	1	2.41	2.11	8.94	8.85	3.75	4.27	46.16	47.86	4.13	4.24
Nov	1	2.00	1.81	9.32	9.45	4.74	5.30	49.66	51.05	4.63	4.83
Dec	1	1.65	1.46	10.29	10.24	6.33	7.17	53.24	53.14	5.48	5.45
Jan	1	1.44	1.25	11.11	11.03	7.81	8.96	53.97	53.89	6.00	5.95
Feb	1	1.29	1.11	11.88	11.85	9.34	10.80	54.12	54.88	6.44	6.50
Mar	1	1.11	1.04	12.30	12.62	11.23	12.26	54.17	54.02	6.67	6.82

NOTICE: All samples were run through an FMC 091 machine using mechanical pressure only. This machine utilizes a .040 short strainer and standard 5/8-inch orifice tube. The beam settings are also identical to past tests and no restrictors are used.

Maturity test averages by areas, March 1, 1998

Fruit type	Groves sampled	Acid	Solids (Brix)	Ratio	Unfinished juice per box	Solids per box
ORANGES:	Number	Percent	Percent		Pounds	Pounds
Late						
Indian River Dist.	25	1.14	13.11	11.69	55.36	7.27
Other Areas	116	1.03	12.52	12.38	53.73	6.73

FRUIT SIZE COMPARISONS BY TYPES TO PREVIOUS SEASONS

Size frequency distributions from the February size survey are shown in the table below. The distributions are by percent of fruit falling within the size range of each 4/5-bushel container. Fruit sizes were measured on trees in sample groves during the period February 17 through 27, 1998. Comparable sizes for 1996 and 1997 are also shown. These measurements are of fruit from spring bloom and exclude summer bloom in all seasons.

FLORIDA CITRUS: Size frequency distributions from February measurements

Type of fruit and size in 4/5-bushel containers	1996	1997	1998
--- Percent ---			
Valencia oranges:			
64 and larger	8.4	8.0	8.0
80	29.9	23.7	24.3
100	41.5	36.7	39.4
125	16.6	23.2	22.2
163 and smaller	3.6	8.4	6.1
White seedless grapefruit:			
32 and larger	49.6	24.7	32.0
36	23.4	26.7	26.8
40	11.8	21.4	16.7
48	7.0	14.7	11.3
56	4.0	5.8	5.9
63 and smaller	4.2	6.7	7.3
Colored seedless grapefruit:			
32 and larger	32.2	14.8	19.7
36	27.6	25.5	24.8
40	17.7	22.1	22.9
48	11.3	20.9	16.5
56	5.4	10.0	7.9
63 and smaller	5.8	6.7	8.2

The chart below compares the relationship of the February 1998 Valencia orange fruit size measurements with those taken in February 1997. The diameter measurements shown are the minimum values of each eighth inch range except for the smallest values.

CHART: Valencia size frequency by diameter from February measurements.

