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**FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE**



CITRUS

**MARCH FORECAST
MATURITY TEST RESULTS AND FRUIT SIZE**

March 11, 1999

ORANGES NOW 192.0 MILLION BOXES

The 1998-99 Florida all orange forecast (excluding Temples), released today by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Board, is decreased 2.0 million to 192.0 million boxes. If realized, this crop would be less than the previous four crops and 21 percent smaller than last season's record 244.0 million boxes. In the past 10 non-freeze seasons the March forecasts have differed from the final production by an average of 1.3 percent with four seasons higher and six seasons lower.

The reduction is in the early and midseason portion of the crop now forecast at 114.0 million boxes. Harvest is nearing completion for these varieties while volume harvest is getting underway for the Valencias. The forecast for Valencia oranges is unchanged at 78.0 million boxes.

EARLY AND MIDSEASON ORANGES REDUCED TO 114.0 MILLION BOXES

Very few rows of early-midseason oranges remain unharvested based on the Row Count survey conducted March 1 and 2. The high rate of harvest combined with an estimated utilization through March 7 of 111.5 million boxes (including the preseason allocation of 1.5 million for uncertified gift fruit and other use) support this reduction of nearly two percent. If realized, this crop will be smaller than four of the past five seasons and almost 19 percent below the 1997-98 record of 140.0 million boxes.

Citrus production, March 1, 1999
forecasts by varieties and states, with comparisons

Crop and State	Production		Forecast	
	1996-97	1997-98	Feb 10, 1999	Mar 11, 1999
Early, Midseason, and Navel Oranges:	--- 1,000 boxes ---			
FLORIDA	134,200	140,000	116,000	114,000
California	40,000	44,000	19,000	19,000
Texas	1,300	1,350	1,300	1,300
Arizona	400	350	450	450
Total Above Varieties	175,900	185,700	136,750	134,750
Valencias:				
FLORIDA	92,000	104,000	78,000	78,000
California	24,000	30,000	19,000	19,000
Texas	120	175	140	140
Arizona	600	650	550	550
Total Valencias	116,720	134,825	97,690	97,690
All Oranges:				
FLORIDA	226,200	244,000	194,000	192,000
California	64,000	74,000	38,000	38,000
Texas	1,420	1,525	1,440	1,440
Arizona	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Total All Oranges	292,620	320,525	234,440	232,440

FORECAST DATES 1998-99 SEASON

April 9, 1999
May 12, 1999
June 11, 1999
July 12, 1999

The Navel portion of the crop is raised to 5.0 million boxes which compares with 6.3 million boxes last season. Certifications through March 7 (including pre-season allocations) total 5.0 million boxes.

VALENCIA ORANGES REMAIN 78.0 MILLION BOXES

The forecast for the late (Valencia) portion of the crop is unchanged at 78.0 million boxes. Objective counts and measurements made in the field support this continuance. Fruit volume is below but approaching the average of the past eight seasons and fruit loss from droppage continues to be above average. While this crop is the smallest since 1993-94, it is following the two largest crops on record.

The Row Count survey shows that fewer than five percent of the rows are harvested. This indicator will strengthen as harvest progresses.

FCOJ INCREASED TO 1.62

The all orange FCOJ yield is increased to 1.62 gallons per box of 42.0 degrees Brix concentrate. This season's early and midseason orange yield through February 27 is at an all time high of 1.581811 gallons per box. The early and midseason fruit is now projected to reach 1.59 gallons per box. Expected yield for the late (Valencia) portion of the crop has also been increased to 1.68 gallons per box, up from 1.67 gallons last month. Maturity Test results for Valencia oranges are on page three. Pounds solids at 7.00 are at a record level for March 1.

There has been very little adverse weather this winter. It has been very dry in most areas, however growers and caretakers have been irrigating to maintain good tree condition. There is an abundance of new growth and bloom showing in all well cared for groves.

TOTAL SEEDLESS GRAPEFRUIT DOWN 1.0 MILLION BOXES

The total seedless grapefruit forecast is lowered by 1.0 million boxes to 48.5 million boxes. The white seedless is held at 19.0 million boxes. The colored varieties forecast is reduced to 29.5 million boxes. The objective count surveys on the remaining crops were down only slightly from the preceding month's observations. However, the Row Count (route survey) conducted on March 1 and 2, 1999, which relates the tree row harvest to estimated utilization at the end of the period, indicated the 1.0 million box reduction.

The Row Count survey supported the 19.0 million box forecast of white seedless, which had been increased last month. The estimated utilization of the white seedless is ahead of last season, whereas the colored varieties are lagging last season to date. Through February 28, 1999, it was estimated that 7.9 million boxes of whites and 17.2 million boxes of colored have been certified compared with certifications last season to the same date of 7.5 million boxes of whites and 17.5 million boxes of colored.

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.

Citrus production, March 1, 1999 forecasts by varieties and states, with comparisons

Crop and State	Production		Forecast	
	1996-97 ^{1/}	1997-98 ^{2/}	Feb 10, 1999	Mar 11, 1999
--- 1,000 boxes ---				
Grapefruit:				
FLORIDA-All	55,800	49,550	50,000	49,000
Seedless	54,900	48,900	49,500	48,500
White	23,500	18,300	19,000	19,000
Colored	31,400	30,600	30,500	29,500
Seedy (Other)	900	650	500	500
Texas	5,300	4,800	5,000	5,400
Arizona	900	800	700	700
California	8,200	9,000	8,000	8,000
Total Grapefruit	70,200	64,150	63,700	63,100
Lemons:				
California	22,600	22,000	18,000	18,000
Arizona	2,600	2,600	3,200	3,200
Total Lemons	25,200	24,600	21,200	21,200
Limes: Florida	320	440	450	450
Temples: Florida	2,400	2,520	2,000	2,000
Tangelos: Florida	3,950	2,850	2,700	2,600
K-Early: Florida	150	40	80	80
Tangerines:				
FLORIDA-All	6,300	5,200	4,600	4,650
Early ^{3/}	4,500	3,200	3,000	3,050
Honey	1,800	2,000	1,600	1,600
California ^{4/}	2,600	2,400	1,600	1,600
Arizona ^{4/}	550	600	700	700
Total Tangerines	9,450	8,200	6,900	6,950

^{1/} Excludes 6 million boxes of economic abandonment in FL: 3 million white seedless and 3 million colored. ^{2/} Excludes 6 million boxes of economic abandonment in FL: 5 million white seedless and 1 million colored. ^{3/} Robinson, Fallglo, Sunburst, and Dancy. ^{4/} Includes tangelos.

SEEDY GRAPEFRUIT MAINTAINED

The seedy (Duncan) grapefruit forecast is continued at 500,000 boxes. Estimated certification to March 1, 1999, is ahead of the past two seasons. The objective count surveys of the remaining crop indicated that it would require close to 90 fruit to make an 85 pound equivalent weight box as compared with 67 fruit last season. Loss from droppage accelerated. The route survey indicated sufficient remaining rows to easily attain the forecast. All seedy grapefruit is certified in processed form and records are dependent on load tickets.

EARLY TANGERINES FINAL

The total early tangerine estimate for the 1998-99 season is 3,050,000 boxes up 50,000 boxes from last month's forecast. The estimate includes Robinson, Fallglo, Sunburst and Dancy. Fewer than 150,000 boxes of gift fruit and unrecorded use are in this estimate.

HONEY TANGERINES UNCHANGED

The Honey tangerine forecast is held at 1.6 million boxes. The remaining crops during February indicate loss from droppage since mid-August was almost 70 percent. This is very close to projections made in October for this factor. The route survey of March 1 and 2 indicated over 50 percent row harvest which is comparable with the utilization estimate to that date.

TEMPLES STAY AT 2.0 MILLION BOXES

The Temple forecast at 2.0 million boxes is the smallest non-freeze indication since the series began in the 1954-55 season. Both the objective survey observations of fruit size and loss from droppage expansions and the route survey of March 2, 1999, regression analysis indicated the forecast level. As of March 1, 1999, the estimated certification showed only about half the crop harvested, which is a very small level of harvest. Most of the remaining crops will go into processing.

TANGELOS REDUCED TO 2.6 MILLION BOXES

The tangelo forecast is lowered 0.1 million boxes to 2.6 million boxes. The route survey shows about 94 percent row harvest and compared with estimated certifications indicates the reduction.

K-EARLY'S FINAL AT 80,000 BOXES

The K-Early Citrus Fruit estimate for the 1998-99 season is 80,000 boxes. Last season only 40,000 boxes were recorded.

Unadjusted maturity tests: Average of regular bloom fruit sample groves, 1997-98 and 1998-99 seasons

Fruit type (No. groves) test date	Acid		Solids (Brix)		Ratio		Unfinished juice per box		Solids per box		
	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99	1997-98	1998-99	
	Percent		Percent				Pounds		Pounds		
Juice and solids per box are unadjusted and not comparable to plant test results.											
ORANGES:											
Late (149-144)											
Oct	1	2.11	2.45	8.85	8.66	4.27	3.60	47.86	45.65	4.24	3.95
Nov	1	1.81	2.02	9.45	8.98	5.30	4.50	51.05	50.58	4.83	4.54
Dec	1	1.46	1.59	10.24	9.91	7.17	6.33	53.14	53.31	5.45	5.28
Jan	1	1.25	1.33	11.03	10.79	8.96	8.16	53.89	54.17	5.95	5.85
Feb	1	1.11	1.24	11.85	11.91	10.80	9.67	54.88	55.32	6.50	6.59
Mar	1	1.04	1.15	12.62	12.65	12.26	11.25	54.02	55.21	6.82	7.00

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, 1999

Fruit type	Groves sampled	Acid	Solids (Brix)	Ratio	Unfinished juice per box	Solids per box
ORANGES:						
Late						
Indian River Dist.	24	1.19	13.03	11.08	57.94	7.57
Other Areas	120	1.14	12.58	11.28	54.66	6.88

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 26, 1999. Comparable sizes for 1997 and 1998 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	1997	1998	1999
--- Percent ---			
Valencia oranges:			
64 and larger	8.0	8.0	6.9
80	23.7	24.3	25.0
100	36.7	39.4	38.6
125	23.2	22.2	22.6
163 and smaller	8.4	6.1	6.9
White seedless grapefruit:			
32 and larger	24.7	32.0	24.3
36	26.7	26.8	23.7
40	21.4	16.7	19.0
48	14.7	11.3	16.1
56	5.8	5.9	7.6
63 and smaller	6.7	7.3	9.3
Colored seedless grapefruit:			
32 and larger	14.8	19.7	14.3
36	25.5	24.8	20.1
40	22.1	22.9	20.7
48	20.9	16.5	19.9
56	10.0	7.9	11.1
63 and smaller	6.7	8.2	13.9

The chart below compares the relationship of the February 1999 Valencia orange fruit size measurements with those taken in February 1998. 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.

