

Crop Production



USDA
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Record Large Orange Production

All oranges production for the 1996-97 season is forecast at a record large 12.7 million tons, up 1 percent from the previous forecast in March, mainly due to increases in California. The forecast is up 9 percent from a year ago. This year's crop is 8 percent larger than the previous record of 11.8 million tons set in the 1979-80 season. Florida's production amounts to 221 million boxes (9.95 million tons), down less than 1 percent from March's forecast but 9 percent above last season. Early and midseason varieties were reduced to 134 million boxes (6.04 million tons), 1 percent below last month but 11 percent above last year. Florida's Valencia crop forecast remained 87.0 million boxes (3.92 million tons), 6 percent above last season's crop. The California all orange production forecast, at 71.0 million boxes (2.66 million tons), is up 9 percent from the previous forecast in January and 8 percent from last season. The Navel orange forecast is 43.0 million boxes (1.61 million tons), up 10 percent from January and 13 percent from last year's production of 38.0 million boxes. The California Valencia forecast is 28.0 million boxes (1.05 million tons), up 8 percent from January and equal to last year.

Florida frozen concentrated orange juice (FCOJ) yield for the 1996-97 season is forecast at 1.57 gallons per box at 42.0 degrees Brix, up from 1.54 in March. The forecast projects the final yield as reported by the Florida Citrus Processors Association. The final 1995-96 yield for all fruit used in FCOJ was 1.52 gallons per box at 42.0 degrees Brix. The projected average yield for 1996-97 early and midseason varieties is final at 1.52 gallons per box, unchanged from last month's forecast and up from last season's final of 1.45. Valencia yield is projected at 1.66 gallons per box, up from 1.60 last month but down from 1.67 last season.

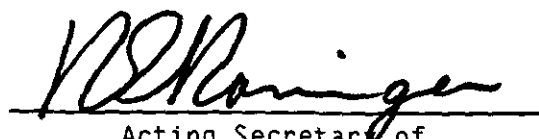
Crop Summary: Production, United States,
1995-96 and Forecasted 1996-97

Crop	Utilized Production		
		Mar 1, 1997	Apr 1, 1997
Crop Year 1/	1995-96	1996-97	1996-97
	1,000 Tons		
Citrus Fruits			
Oranges	11,723	12,542	12,726
Grapefruit	2,718	3,056	3,062
Lemons 2/	992	988	950
Tangerines	348	428	432
Temples (FL)	97	113	113
Tangelos (FL)	110	180	178
K-Early Citrus (FL)	7	7	7
	Metric Tons		
Oranges	10,634,930	11,377,910	11,544,830
Grapefruit	2,465,730	2,772,360	2,777,800
Lemons 2/	899,930	896,300	861,830
Tangerines	315,700	388,280	391,900
Temples (FL)	88,000	102,510	102,510
Tangelos (FL)	99,790	163,290	161,480
K-Early Citrus (FL)	6,350	6,350	6,350

1/ Crop year begins with the bloom of the first year and ends with the completion of harvest the following year.

2/ March 1 estimate carried forward from January 1 forecast.

This report was approved on April 11, 1997, by the Acting Secretary of Agriculture and the National Agricultural Statistics Service's Agricultural Statistics Board.



Acting Secretary of
Agriculture
Richard E. Rominger



Agricultural Statistics Board
Chairperson
Rich Allen

Crop Summary: Area Planted and Harvested, United States,
1996 and Forecasted April 1, 1997
(Domestic Units)

Crop	Area Planted		Area Harvested	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
	1,000 Acres			
Peanuts 1/	1,401.5	1,395.5	1,380.0	
Potatoes				
Winter	14.5	15.6	14.5	15.4
Spring	93.4	87.1	90.0	85.5
Summer 1/	77.9		74.7	

1/ 1996 revised.

Crop Summary: Yield per Acre and Production, United States,
1996 and Forecasted April 1, 1997
(Domestic Units)

Crop and Unit	Yield per Acre:			Production	
	1996	1997	1996	Mar 1, 1997	Apr 1, 1997
	1,000				
Peanuts 1/	Lb	2,653	3,661,205		
Potatoes					
Winter 2/	Cwt	226	205	3,273	3,225
Spring	"	249	263	22,417	22,457
Summer 1/	"	259		19,375	

1/ 1996 revised.

2/ March 1 forecast carried forward from January 1.

Crop Summary: Area Planted and Harvested, United States,
1996 and Forecasted April 1, 1997
(Metric Units)

Crop	Area Planted		Area Harvested	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
	Hectares			
Peanuts 1/	567,170	564,740	558,470	
Potatoes				
Winter	5,870	6,310	5,870	6,230
Spring	37,800	35,250	36,420	34,600
Summer 1/	31,530		30,230	

1/ 1996 revised.

Crop Summary: Yield per Hectare and Production, United States,
1996 and Forecasted April 1, 1997
(Metric Units)

Crop	Yield per Hectare:			Production	
	1996	1997	1996	Mar 1, 1997	Apr 1, 1997
	Metric Tons				
Peanuts 1/	2.97		1,660,690		
Potatoes					
Winter 2/	25.29	22.99	148,460	146,280	143,200
Spring	27.92	29.44	1,016,820		1,018,630
Summer 1/	29.07		878,840		

1/ 1996 revised.

2/ March 1 forecast carried forward from January 1.

Grapefruit: Acreage, Yield, Utilization, Price, and Value,
California and United States, 1995-96 1/

State	: Bearing : Acreage	: Yield : per : Acre	Utilization of Production		
			: Fresh	: Processed	: Total
	: Acres	: Boxes	----- 1,000 Boxes 2/ -----		
CA	: 18,800	: 431	: 5,619	: 2,481	: 8,100
US Total	: 174,570	: 379	: 32,244	: 33,956	: 66,200
	: Price per Box 3/ 4/		: Value of Production		
	: Fresh	: Processed	: All	: Fresh	: Processed: Total
	: ----- Dollars -----		: ----- 1,000 Dollars -----		
CA	: 10.06	: -0.44	: 6.84	: 56,527	: -1,092 55,435
US Total	: 7.28	: 2.19	: 4.63	: 237,739	: 72,526 310,265

- 1/ California estimates of production and price by utilization were reviewed based on available new data. Revisions were not necessary; therefore, estimates were carried forward from the "Citrus Fruits 1996 Summary" released in September 1996.
- 2/ Net lbs per box: 67.
- 3/ Equivalent packinghouse-door returns.
- 4/ U.S. marketing year average prices are derived by weighting the state marketing year average prices per box by the respective box weights.

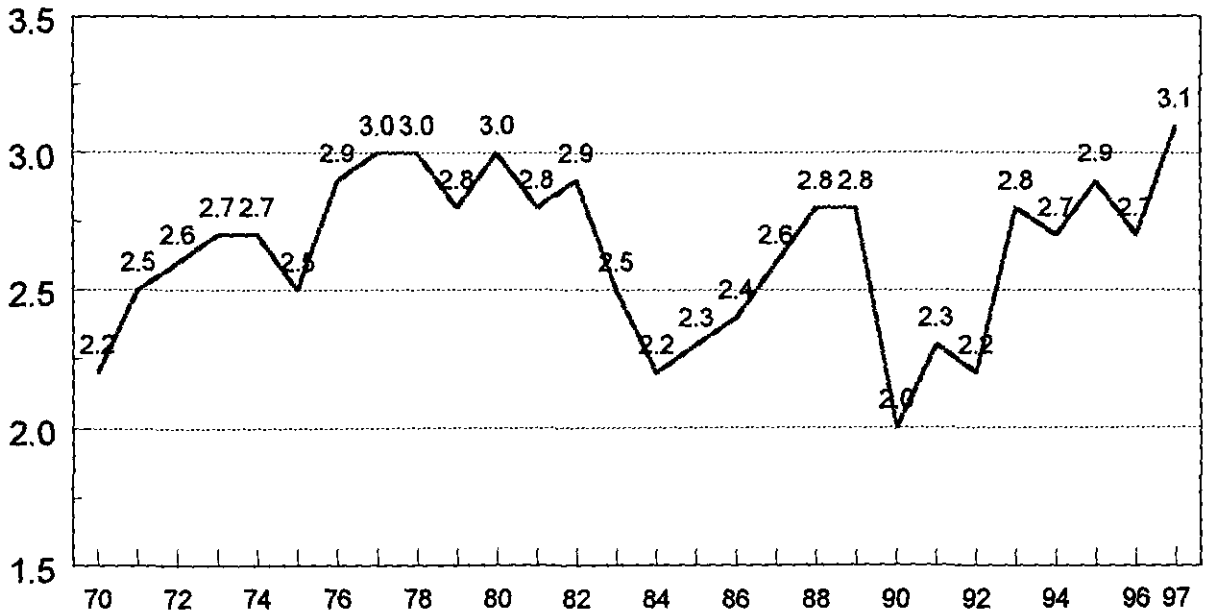
Total Citrus: Acreage, Production, Utilization, and Value,
California and United States, 1995-96 1/

State	: Bearing : Acreage :	: Production:	: Utilization of Production :		: Value : Of : Production 2/
			: Fresh	: Processed	
	: Acres		----- 1,000 Tons -----		1,000 Dollars
CA	: 269,800	3,643	2,547	1,096	828,317
US Total	: 1,103,620	16,009	4,569	11,440	2,606,274

- 1/ California estimates of grapefruit production and price by utilization were reviewed based on available new data. Revisions were not necessary; therefore, estimates were carried forward from the "Citrus Fruits 1996 Summary" released in September 1996.
- 2/ Based on equivalent packinghouse-door returns.

U.S. Grapefruit Production 1970-1996 and Forecasted 1997

Million Tons



Up 13% from last season
Up less than 1% from March
Record large production

Citrus Fruits: Utilized Production by Crop, State, and United States,
1995-96 and Forecasted April 1, 1997 1/

Crop and State	Utilized Production			Utilized Production		
	Boxes			Ton Equivalent		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
	1,000 Boxes 2/			1,000 Tons		
Oranges						
Early Mid & Navel 3/						
AZ	400	700	500	15	27	19
CA	35,000	38,000	43,000	1,313	1,426	1,613
FL	119,700	121,200	134,200	5,387	5,454	6,039
TX	950	830	1,300	40	35	55
US	156,050	160,730	179,000	6,755	6,942	7,726
Valencia						
AZ	650	950	800	24	36	30
CA	21,000	28,000	28,000	788	1,051	1,050
FL	85,800	82,000	87,000	3,861	3,690	3,915
TX	105	110	120	4	4	5
US	107,555	111,060	115,920	4,677	4,781	5,000
All						
AZ	1,050	1,650	1,300	39	63	49
CA	56,000	66,000	71,000	2,101	2,477	2,663
FL	205,500	203,200	221,200	9,248	9,144	9,954
TX	1,055	940	1,420	44	39	60
US	263,605	271,790	294,920	11,432	11,723	12,726
Temples						
FL	2,550	2,150	2,500	114	97	113
Grapefruit						
White Seedless						
FL	25,700	23,200	26,500	1,092	986	1,126
Colored Seedless						
FL	28,700	28,100	31,500	1,220	1,194	1,339
Other						
FL	1,300	1,050	1,000	55	45	43
All						
AZ	1,400	1,200	1,000	47	40	34
CA 4/						
Desert	3,300			111		
Other Areas	6,000			201		
Total	9,300	8,100	9,200	312	271	308
FL	55,700	52,350	59,000	2,367	2,225	2,508
TX	4,650	4,550	5,300	186	182	212
US	71,050	66,200	74,500	2,912	2,718	3,062
Tangerines						
AZ	650	1,000	650	25	38	24
CA	2,500	2,600	2,900	94	97	109
FL	3,550	4,500	6,300	168	213	299
US	6,700	8,100	9,850	287	348	432
Lemons						
AZ	3,600	5,100	3,000	137	194	114
CA	20,000	21,000	22,000	760	798	836
US	23,600	26,100	25,000	897	992	950
Tangelos						
FL	3,150	2,450	3,950	142	110	178
K-Early Citrus						
FL	120	160	150	5	7	7

Citrus Fruit Footnotes

- 1/ The crop year begins with the bloom of the first year shown and ends with the completion of harvest the following year.
- 2/ Net lbs. per box: oranges-AZ & CA-75, FL-90, TX-85; grapefruit-AZ & CA-67, FL-85, TX-80; lemons-76, tangelos, K-Early Citrus & Temples-90; tangerines-AZ & CA-75, FL-95.
- 3/ Navel and miscellaneous varieties in AZ and CA. Early and mid-season varieties in FL and TX, including small quantities of tangerines in TX.
- 4/ California Desert and Other Areas Grapefruit forecasts combined to All Grapefruit beginning in 1995-96.

Potatoes: Area Planted, Harvested, Yield, and Production
by Seasonal Group, State, and United States, 1995-97

Seasonal Group and State	Area				Yield		Production		
	Planted		Harvested						
	1996	1997	1996	1997	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
	1,000 Acres				Cwt		1,000 Cwt		
Winter									
CA	5.7	6.6	5.7	6.6	250	245	1,300	1,425	1,617
FL	8.8	9.0	8.8	8.8	210	175	1,173	1,848	1,540
Total	14.5	15.6	14.5	15.4	226	205	2,473	3,273	3,157
Spring									
AL	2.0	1.6	1.9	1.5	160	175	400	304	263
AZ	9.0	6.2	9.0	6.2	275	285	1,755	2,475	1,767
CA	20.1	18.6	20.1	18.6	375	385	6,230	7,538	7,161
FL	38.0	36.0	35.5	35.3	219	245	7,830	7,765	8,651
Hastings	28.5	27.0	27.5	26.5	230	270	5,940	6,325	7,155
Other FL	9.5	9.0	8.0	8.8	180	170	1,890	1,440	1,496
NC	17.5	17.0	17.0	16.5	190	190	3,053	3,230	3,135
TX	6.8	7.7	6.5	7.4	170	200	925	1,105	1,480
Total	93.4	87.1	90.0	85.5	249	263	20,193	22,417	22,457
Summer 1/									
AL	6.8		6.7		150		1,139	1,005	
CA	5.8		5.8		360		1,760	2,088	
CO	9.9		9.7		330		2,776	3,201	
DE	6.0		5.9		250		1,475	1,475	
IL	6.3		6.0		275		1,485	1,650	
IA	1.5		1.5		210		240	315	
MD	2.0		1.9		200		360	380	
MO	7.8		7.1		230		1,587	1,633	
NE	5.6		5.5		270		1,254	1,485	
NJ	2.6		2.5		265		702	663	
NM	3.9		3.9		360		1,344	1,404	
NC	1.2		1.2		90		124	108	
TX	10.5		9.5		240		1,645	2,280	
VA	8.0		7.5		225		2,040	1,688	
Total	77.9		74.7		259		17,931	19,375	

1/ 1996 revised.

Papayas: Area and Fresh Production, by Month, Hawaii, 1996-97

Month	Area				Fresh Production	
	Total in Crop		Harvested		1996	1997
	1996	1997	1996	1997		
----- Acres -----				-- 1,000 Pounds --		
Feb	3,720	3,530	2,265	1,495	3,530	3,145
Mar	3,650	4,310	2,145	2,115	2,990	2,935

Peanuts: Farm Marketing Percents by Month, State, and United States, 1995 and 1996 Crop Years

State and Crop Year	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
----- Percent -----							
1995 Crop							
AL	.3	59.4	35.8	3.8	.7		
FL	1.1	56.8	36.8	4.2	.9	.2	
GA	1.6	59.8	34.2	3.9	.4	.1	
NC		4.4	56.9	27.4	6.8	4.3	.2
TX	1.1	3.8	47.6	40.7	6.6		.2
VA		4.8	55.0	32.7	4.8	2.7	
US	1.0	40.4	40.7	14.6	2.5	.7	.1
1996 Crop							
AL		33.3	57.2	8.9	.6		
FL		45.7	49.7	4.0	.6		
GA		43.0	50.1	6.6	.2	.1	
NC		1.2	76.4	15.4	4.4	2.6	
TX		5.3	66.0	23.3	3.9	1.2	.3
VA		11.2	63.9	13.9	6.7	4.3	
US		27.7	58.0	11.5	1.9	.8	.1

Peanuts: Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production
by State and United States, 1995-96 1/

State	Area Planted		Area Harvested	
	1995	1996	1995	1996
	----- 1,000 Acres -----			
AL	213.0	192.0	212.0	191.0
FL	89.0	90.0	81.0	82.0
GA	595.0	535.0	592.0	533.0
NM	20.0	16.5	20.0	16.5
NC	144.0	125.0	144.0	125.0
OK	100.0	85.0	98.0	81.0
SC	11.5	11.0	11.0	10.5
TX	275.0	270.0	270.0	265.0
VA	90.0	77.0	89.0	76.0
US	1,537.5	1,401.5	1,517.0	1,380.0
	Yield		Production	
	1995	1996	1995	1996
	----- Pounds -----		----- 1,000 Pounds -----	
AL	2,280	2,355	483,360	449,805
FL	2,390	2,880	193,590	236,160
GA	2,390	2,690	1,414,880	1,433,770
NM	2,150	2,300	43,000	37,950
NC	2,410	2,940	347,040	367,500
OK	2,060	2,410	201,880	195,210
SC	2,800	3,100	30,800	32,550
TX	2,000	2,600	540,000	689,000
VA	2,325	2,885	206,925	219,260
US	2,282	2,653	3,461,475	3,661,205

1/ 1996 Revised.

Peanuts: Price and Value by State
and United States, 1995-96

State	Price per Pound		Value of Production	
	1995	1996	1995	1996
	---- Dollars ----		1,000 Dollars	
AL	.288	.264	139,208	118,749
FL	.271	.250	52,463	59,040
GA	.295	.271	417,390	388,552
NM	.336	.305	14,448	11,575
NC	.298	.261	103,418	95,918
OK	.298	.300	60,160	58,563
SC	.298	.245	9,178	7,975
TX	.287	.248	154,980	170,872
VA	.300	.269	62,078	58,981
US	.293	.265	1,013,323	970,225

March Weather Summary: A remarkably consistent weather pattern led to precipitation extremes, ranging from near-record to record wetness in the Northwest and from southern Texas to the Ohio Valley, to very dry weather from the Southwest into the central and southern Plains. Sub-normal rainfall was also observed in the Southeast, as the primary storm track remained well to the northwest. Several monthly temperature records were broken in the Southeast, where readings ranged from 4 to 8 degrees above normal. In contrast, monthly temperatures ranged from 1 to 5 degrees F below normal in New England. Cool weather also prevailed across snow-covered portions of the northern Plains and upper Midwest, keeping widely anticipated snow-melt flooding in check until month's end. In the Southwest, however, a mid- to late-month warm spell propelled monthly temperatures 3 to 7 degrees F above normal.

A fierce spring storm emerged from the Southwest on March 1, dumping 4 to 10 inches of rain from the northern Delta to the southern half of the Ohio Valley, and sparking a ferocious tornado outbreak--leaving 25 dead--in Arkansas. Ensuing floodwaters coursed through the Ohio River, generating one of the 10 worst floods on record from the Ohio-West Virginia border downstream to the confluence with the Mississippi. For much of the middle Ohio River, the flooding was the worst since March 1964. Some of the worst flooding unfolded in Kentucky, where March 1 totals included 10.48 inches in Louisville--breaking their all-time, 24-hour record set on March 9, 1964--and 5.56 inches in Lexington. Other storms perpetuated the region's wet spell, boosting totals by month's end to 17.52 inches in Louisville and 13.82 in Lexington. March-record precipitation was observed in the following locations:

Location	Total (In.)	Former Record (In.)/Year
Louisville, KY	17.52	14.91 in 1964
Astoria, OR	15.31	13.47 in 1956
Lexington, KY	13.82	10.38 in 1975
Olympia, WA	11.79	10.13 in 1950
Victoria, TX	11.61	7.91 in 1957
Galveston, TX	11.33	9.49 in 1973

Monthly rainfall of 5.95 inches in Brownsville, TX was 1,123 percent (%) of normal, and second only to a 6.46-inch total in 1903. In San Angelo, TX, January-March rainfall totaled 7.60 inches, their third-highest amount on record, and the most since 8.03 inches fell in 1923. In Tennessee, Nashville's total of 9.64 inches was their greatest in March since 1975.

Meanwhile, a broad area from California to the western Corn Belt, and on the central and southern Plains, received less than a quarter of the normal precipitation. Especially dry weather persisted in the Southwest and in winter wheat areas from Nebraska to Texas. For the first time since 1959, no rain fell in March at the L.A. Civic Center. Only a trace dampened Goodland, KS. March records included:

Location	Total (In.)	Former Record (In.)/Year
L.A. Civic Center, CA	0.00	0.00 in 1959 and earlier
Goodland, KS	trace	0.03 in 1929
Dodge City, KS	trace	trace on five occasions
Valentine, NE	0.01	0.01 in 1957

Only 0.01 inch fell in Amarillo, TX, their smallest total since only a trace fell in 1950. Farther west, recovery from the New Year's flood continued in northern California and western Nevada under mostly dry conditions. Only 3.00 inches (35% of normal) fell in the western Sierra Nevada foothills at Blue Canyon, CA. After 75.35 inches (329% of normal) pelted Blue Canyon in December-January, only 4.77 inches (26% of normal) has fallen since. Farther north, however, persistent storminess culminated in record flooding on the southern slopes of Washington's Olympic Mountains on March 18-19. March 16-19 rainfall reached 22.36 inches at the dam near the headwaters of the Wynoochee River. By

Lemons: The 1996-97 U.S. lemon crop is forecast at 950,000 tons, 4 percent fewer than last quarter and last year.

California's forecast for the 1996-97 crop is 22.0 million boxes (836,000 tons), the same as in January, but 5 percent more than in 1995-96. Grades throughout the state were fair to good. South Coast packing is at a peak. Grade defects were wind scar, tip injury, sunburn, botrytis bumps, and scale. Southern California lemons graded down due to coarse texture and heavy scar with some lots having high color. Arizona's lemon crop is expected to be 3.00 million boxes (114,000 tons), down 25 percent from January and down 41 percent from a year ago. Abnormally small sizes, due to heart rot dieback in the trees, reduced the forecasted production.

Tangerines: The 1996-97 U.S. tangerine crop is forecast at a record large 432,000 tons, 1 percent higher than last month's forecast and 24 percent above last season's crop. Florida's tangerine forecast is unchanged from the March 1 forecast of 6.30 million boxes (299,000 tons), but is up 40 percent from the 4.50 million boxes (213,000 tons) utilized in the 1995-96 season. The California forecast is 2.90 million boxes (109,000 tons), 7 percent above the previous forecast and 12 percent above the previous year. Arizona's tangerine production is expected to be 650,000 boxes (24,000 tons), 13 percent less than last quarter and 35 percent less than last year. Utilized production is down due to the cyclical nature of the crop and to the light freeze in December.

Tangelos: Florida's 1996-97 tangelo crop is 3.95 million boxes (178,000 tons), 1 percent less than last month's forecast, but 61 percent higher than last season's 2.45 million boxes (110,000 tons). This is the largest recorded tangelo crop since the 1987-88 season.

Temples: The Florida Temple forecast remains at 2.50 million boxes (113,000 tons), 16 percent higher than a year ago. Through March, almost 2.38 million boxes were picked.

Florida Citrus: Groves, trees, and fruit remaining for harvest were in very good condition during March. Rainfall for the month was just about normal with some locations receiving above average and other locations receiving below average precipitation. New growth and bloom were abundant as the citrus belt experienced a near normal bloom period. There was no adverse weather during the month. Harvest of early and mid-season oranges ended by mid-month as most processors started utilizing larger amounts of Valencia oranges and grapefruit. Harvest of Honey tangerines and Temples was slowed toward the end of the month as supplies ran low. Caretakers were very busy cutting cover crops, spraying orchards, and pushing and burning dead trees. Spring herbiciding and fertilizing started in all areas. Utilization of early and mid-season oranges, including Navels, was virtually complete with about 134 million boxes used by April 1, 1997. There were just over 20 million boxes of Valencias used. About 39.5 million boxes of all seedless grapefruit were used. Seedy grapefruit certifications were just about 420,000 boxes. Utilization of all tangerines through March was nearly 5.70 million boxes. Temple harvest was at 2.36 million boxes. Tangelo movement was at 3.90 million boxes.

Texas Citrus: March was a very wet month in many groves across the Rio Grande Valley. Harvest was slowed by these conditions. Grapefruit trees were in full bloom during March. Most orange trees have set fruit. Irrigation needs were alleviated by the March rains.

California Citrus: Citrus harvesting was active throughout the month of March. Grapefruit picking in the desert area was peaking while gaining momentum in other areas. Wind scar and sunburn were reported. Quality was good, but sizes were small. Lemon harvest in the South Coast was active with good grades. Some scar, windburn, and scale were detected. Approximately three fourths of the navel orange crop was picked by April 1. Quality was excellent with very large fruit size. Some puff and crease were reported. The Valencia orange harvest was active throughout the state. Volume picked was less than 5 percent of the total crop, but early reports indicate good to excellent quality. Tangerine picking was active with good quality and color.

California Fruit and Nut: Warm, dry weather throughout March was ideal for bees and pollination. A drier than normal February and March brought the need for early irrigation in many orchards. Stone fruit and almonds completed bloom, while walnut, pistachios, and pecans began bloom. Apple varieties were in various stages of bloom. The warm weather brought early and vigorous growth to grapes.

Winter Potatoes: Production of winter potatoes is forecast at 3.16 million cwt, down 2 percent from January and 4 percent below last year. Area for harvest, at 15,400 acres, is up 6 percent from last year. The average yield is forecast at 205 cwt per acre, down 21 cwt from last year. The January 19 frost in Dade County, Florida, killed some acreage and reduced early yields. Harvest is now active with good quality and volume expected through April. California's harvest is nearly completed, with harvested acreage up 16 percent. Yields are 5 cwt per acre less than last year.

Spring Potatoes: Spring production in 1997 is forecast at 22.5 million cwt, up less than 1 percent from last year and 11 percent above 1995. Area for harvest is estimated at 85,500 acres, down 5 percent from a year ago but 1 percent above two years ago. The average yield is forecast at 263 cwt per acre, a gain of 14 cwt over last year and 23 cwt above two years ago.

California's acreage is down from last year, primarily in russet and chip types. Kern County spring potatoes are in better than normal condition. Arizona's acreage is back to normal without french fry contracts. Acreage and yield expectations in Texas are above last year. The Hastings, Florida, spring crop is in good condition with no winter weather damage. Growers expect a mid-to-late April harvest start, continuing into June. Some freeze damage did occur in "Other" Florida areas in early planted fields. Harvest is underway. North Carolina's planted acreage is down from last year, but conditions for growth and development are ideal.

Summer Potatoes, 1996 final: The 1996 summer production estimate was revised down less than 1 percent from the preliminary estimate in January. Production now stands at 19.4 million cwt, up 8 percent from a year earlier and 11 percent above comparable State totals in 1994. Harvest covered 74,700 acres, up 6 percent from the previous year, while the average yield of 259 cwt per acre was up 5 cwt.

Papayas: Hawaii fresh papaya production is estimated at 2.94 million pounds for March, 7 percent lower than February and 2 percent lower than a year ago.

March weather conditions were mostly wet with intermittent periods of sunshine. Papaya ringspot virus continues to be a problem in infected fields.

Area devoted to papaya production totaled 4,310 acres, 22 percent higher than last month and 18 percent higher than last March. Harvested area, totaling 2,115 acres, was 41 percent more than February but 1 percent lower than a year ago.

Peanuts, 1996 Final: U.S. peanut production totaled 3.66 billion pounds in 1996, up 6 percent from last year's reduced crop. Area planted to peanuts totaled 1.40 million acres, down 9 percent from 1995 and the smallest planted acreage since 1982. Harvested area, at 1.38 million acres, fell 9 percent from a year ago. The U.S. yield per harvested acre averaged 2,653 pounds, up 371 pounds from 1995. Average yields in all peanut states showed an increase from a year ago.

Production in the Southeastern States (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina) totaled 2.15 billion pounds, up 1 percent from 1995. Production increased over a year ago despite a 9 percent decrease in plantings. Yields in the 4-State area averaged 2,636 pounds, up 267 pounds from one year earlier. Georgia remained the leading peanut producer with 39 percent of the total U.S. production.

Virginia and North Carolina growers produced 587 million pounds of peanuts in 1996, up 6 percent from last year's reduced crop and despite a 14 percent decrease in planted and harvested acreages. Yields averaged 2,919 pounds, 541 pounds above 1995.

The Southwest crop (New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) totaled 992 million pounds, 17 percent above the 1995 total. Texas output in 1996 was the largest on record at 689 million pounds. Area harvested in the 3-State area was down 7 percent from a year ago. Yields averaged 2,544 pounds per acre, 521 pounds above the 1995 average.

The 1996 marketing year average price received by farmers for peanuts was 26.5 cents per pound, down 2.8 cents from 1995. The value of peanut production for the 1996 crop totaled \$970 million, down 4 percent from a year earlier.

Report Features

The next "Crop Production" report will be released at 8:30 a.m. ET on May 12, 1997.

Listed below are the commodity specialists in the Crops Branch of the National Agricultural Statistics Service to contact for additional information.

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