

Crop Production



USDA
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Record Large Orange Production

All oranges: Production for the 1997-98 season is forecast at a record large 14.3 million tons, unchanged from the previous forecast in December and up 12 percent from a year ago, the previous record production year. Florida's all orange, early-midseason, and Valencia forecasts remained unchanged from last month and are each record large crops. The all orange production amounts to 254 million boxes (11.4 million tons), 12 percent above last season. Early and midseason varieties are expected to produce 146 million boxes (6.57 million tons), 9 percent above last year. The Valencia forecast is 108 million boxes (4.86 million tons), 17 percent above a year ago. The California all orange production forecast, at 74.0 million boxes (2.78 million tons), remains unchanged from the previous forecast in October and is 9 percent more than last season. The Navel orange forecast is 44.0 million boxes (1.65 million tons), the same as in October and up 10 percent from last year's production. The California Valencia forecast is unchanged at 30.0 million boxes (1.13 million tons), 7 percent more than last year.

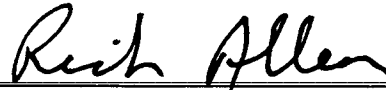
All cotton production is forecast at 19.0 million bales, up 1 percent from December, and 34,900 bales above 1996. This is the second largest crop on record. Yield is expected to average 686 pounds per acre, down 21 pounds from last year. Georgia's production was lowered 80,000 bales from last month, as heavy rainfall during the harvest season decreased yields from earlier expectations. Production was increased 90,000 bales in Arkansas and 80,000 bales in North Carolina, as the adverse weather early in the season didn't reduce yields as much as growers anticipated. Record yields are expected in Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.

Florida frozen concentrated orange juice (FCOJ) yield for the 1997-98 season is forecast at 1.55 gallons per box at 42.0 degrees Brix, unchanged from December. Last season's final yield, as reported by the Florida Citrus Processors Association, was 1.57 gallons per box at 42.0 degrees Brix. Projected average yield for early and midseason varieties is 1.48 gallons per box compared to last season's final of 1.52. Valencia yield is projected at 1.65 gallons per box compared to 1.68 last season.

This report was approved on January 9, 1998.



Acting Secretary of
Agriculture
Richard E. Rominger



Agricultural Statistics Board
Chairperson
Rich Allen

Crop Summary: Area Planted and Harvested, United States,
1996 and Forecasted January 1, 1998
(Domestic Units)

Crop	Area Planted		Area Harvested	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
	1,000 Acres			
All Cotton	14,633.5	13,818.0	12,868.1	13,283.5
Upland	14,375.5	13,566.0	12,612.2	13,032.5
Amer-Pima	258.0	252.0	255.9	251.0

Crop Summary: Yield per Acre and Production, United States,
1996 and Forecasted January 1, 1998
(Domestic Units)

Crop	Unit	Yield per Acre		Production		
		1996	1997	1996	Dec 1, 1997	Jan 1, 1998
		----- 1,000 -----				
All Cotton 1/	Bale	707	686	18,942.0	18,818.5	18,976.9
Upland 1/	"	701	679	18,413.5	18,285.5	18,439.9
Amer-Pima 1/	"	991	1,027	528.5	533.0	537.0
Cottonseed	Ton			7,143.5	7,217.8	7,278.0

1/ Yield in pounds.

Crop Summary: Area Planted and Harvested, United States,
1996 and Forecasted January 1, 1998
(Metric Units)

Crop	Area Planted		Area Harvested	
	1996	1997	1996	1997
	Hectares			
All Cotton	5,922,030	5,592,010	5,207,590	5,375,700
Upland	5,817,620	5,490,020	5,104,030	5,274,120
Amer-Pima	104,410	101,980	103,560	101,580

Crop Summary: Yield per Acre and Production, United States,
1996 and Forecasted January 1, 1998
(Metric Units)

Crop	Yield per Hectare		Production		
	1996	1997	1996	Dec 1, 1997	Jan 1, 1998
	Metric Tons				
All Cotton	0.79	0.77	4,124,140	4,097,250	4,131,740
Upland	0.79	0.76	4,009,070	3,981,200	4,014,820
Amer-Pima	1.11	1.15	115,070	116,050	116,920
Cottonseed			6,480,470	6,547,880	6,602,490

Crop Summary: Utilized Production, United States,
1996-97 and Forecasted 1997-98

Crop	Utilized Production		
		December 1, 1997	January 1, 1998
Crop Year 1/	1996-97	1997-98	1997-98
		1,000 Tons	
Citrus Fruits			
Oranges	12,827	14,309	14,309
Grapefruit	2,888	2,739	2,739
Lemons	859	935	935
Tangerines	418	370	370
Temples (FL)	108	104	104
Tangelos (FL)	178	149	149
K-Early Citrus (FL)	7	5	5
		Metric Tons	
Oranges	11,636,460	12,980,910	12,980,910
Grapefruit	2,619,950	2,484,780	2,484,780
Lemons	779,270	848,220	848,220
Tangerines	379,200	335,660	335,660
Temples (FL)	97,980	94,350	94,350
Tangelos (FL)	161,480	135,170	135,170
K-Early Citrus (FL)	6,350	4,540	4,540

1/ The crop year begins with the bloom of the first year shown and ends with the completion of harvest the following year.

Crop Summary: Area Planted, Harvested, Yield,
and Production, United States, 1997-98
(Domestic Units)

Crop	Area Planted		Area Harvested	
	1997	1998	1997	1998
	1,000 Acres			
Winter Potatoes	15.6	16.0	15.4	15.5
	Yield per Acre		Production	
	1997	1998	1997	1998
	----- Cwt -----		----- 1,000 Cwt -----	
Winter Potatoes	203	190	3,124	2,940

Crop Summary: Area Planted, Harvested, Yield,
and Production, United States, 1997-98
(Metric Units)

Crop	Area Planted		Area Harvested	
	1997	1998	1997	1998
	Hectares			
Winter Potatoes	6,310	6,480	6,230	6,270
	Yield per Hectare		Production	
	1997	1998	1997	1998
	Metric Tons			
Winter Potatoes	22.74	21.27	141,700	133,360

Crop Summary: Hay Stocks on Farms, United States, 1995-97

Date	1995	1996	1997
	1,000 Tons		
May 1	20,775	20,739	17,372
Dec 1	109,438	104,832	102,517
	Metric Tons		
May 1	18,846,760	18,814,100	15,759,610
Dec 1	99,280,480	95,101,990	93,001,860

Cotton: Area Planted and Harvested by Type, State,
and United States, 1995-97

Type and State	Area Planted			Area Harvested		
	1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
1,000 Acres						
Upland						
AL	590.0	520.0	535.0	578.0	516.0	440.0
AZ	365.0	315.0	320.0	364.0	314.0	319.0
AR	1,170.0	1,000.0	950.0	1,110.0	990.0	940.0
CA	1,170.0	1,000.0	880.0	1,165.0	995.0	875.0
FL	110.0	99.0	100.0	109.0	98.2	99.0
GA	1,500.0	1,340.0	1,440.0	1,490.0	1,336.0	1,430.0
KS	3.8	4.5	15.0	2.6	4.0	13.5
LA	1,085.0	890.0	630.0	1,075.0	885.0	625.0
MS	1,460.0	1,120.0	985.0	1,420.0	1,100.0	970.0
MO	462.0	390.0	380.0	453.0	385.0	375.0
NM	61.0	59.0	70.0	56.0	55.0	66.0
NC	805.0	721.0	670.0	800.0	710.0	665.0
OK	380.0	290.0	200.0	315.0	210.0	190.0
SC	348.0	284.0	290.0	342.0	282.0	285.0
TN	700.0	540.0	500.0	660.0	530.0	490.0
TX	6,400.0	5,700.0	5,500.0	5,750.0	4,100.0	5,150.0
VA	107.0	103.0	101.0	106.0	102.0	100.0
US	16,716.8	14,375.5	13,566.0	15,795.6	12,612.2	13,032.5
Amer-Pima						
AZ	48.6	42.0	22.0	48.1	41.9	22.0
CA	115.0	165.0	185.0	115.0	164.0	184.0
NM	15.0	14.0	13.0	15.0	14.0	13.0
TX	36.0	37.0	32.0	33.0	36.0	32.0
US	214.6	258.0	252.0	211.1	255.9	251.0
All						
AL	590.0	520.0	535.0	578.0	516.0	440.0
AZ	413.6	357.0	342.0	412.1	355.9	341.0
AR	1,170.0	1,000.0	950.0	1,110.0	990.0	940.0
CA	1,285.0	1,165.0	1,065.0	1,280.0	1,159.0	1,059.0
FL	110.0	99.0	100.0	109.0	98.2	99.0
GA	1,500.0	1,340.0	1,440.0	1,490.0	1,336.0	1,430.0
KS	3.8	4.5	15.0	2.6	4.0	13.5
LA	1,085.0	890.0	630.0	1,075.0	885.0	625.0
MS	1,460.0	1,120.0	985.0	1,420.0	1,100.0	970.0
MO	462.0	390.0	380.0	453.0	385.0	375.0
NM	76.0	73.0	83.0	71.0	69.0	79.0
NC	805.0	721.0	670.0	800.0	710.0	665.0
OK	380.0	290.0	200.0	315.0	210.0	190.0
SC	348.0	284.0	290.0	342.0	282.0	285.0
TN	700.0	540.0	500.0	660.0	530.0	490.0
TX	6,436.0	5,737.0	5,532.0	5,783.0	4,136.0	5,182.0
VA	107.0	103.0	101.0	106.0	102.0	100.0
US	16,931.4	14,633.5	13,818.0	16,006.7	12,868.1	13,283.5

Cotton: Yield and Production by Type, State,
and United States, 1995-97

Type And State	Yield			Production 1/		
	1995	1996	1997	1995	1996	1997
	----- Pounds -----			----- 1,000 Bales 2/ -----		
Upland						
AL	409	734	600	492.0	789.0	550.0
AZ	1,046	1,189	1,234	793.0	778.0	820.0
AR	635	793	883	1,468.0	1,636.0	1,730.0
CA	953	1,153	1,207	2,312.0	2,390.0	2,200.0
FL	472	637	655	107.2	130.4	135.0
GA	625	747	638	1,941.0	2,079.0	1,900.0
KS	185	492	601	1.0	4.1	16.9
LA	614	697	756	1,375.0	1,286.0	985.0
MS	622	819	896	1,841.0	1,876.0	1,810.0
MO	544	737	742	513.0	591.0	580.0
NM	609	733	640	71.0	84.0	88.0
NC	479	677	671	798.0	1,002.0	930.0
OK	187	306	505	123.0	134.0	200.0
SC	528	774	674	376.0	455.0	400.0
TN	527	611	643	724.0	675.0	656.0
TX	372	509	494	4,460.0	4,345.0	5,300.0
VA	620	748	667	137.0	159.0	139.0
US	533	701	679	17,532.2	18,413.5	18,439.9
Amer-Pima						
AZ	720	852	982	72.2	74.4	45.0
CA	937	1,098	1,096	224.5	375.0	420.0
NM	605	651	628	18.9	19.0	17.0
TX	756	801	825	52.0	60.1	55.0
US	836	991	1,027	367.6	528.5	537.0
All						
AL	409	734	600	492.0	789.0	550.0
AZ	1,008	1,150	1,218	865.2	852.4	865.0
AR	635	793	883	1,468.0	1,636.0	1,730.0
CA	951	1,145	1,188	2,536.5	2,765.0	2,620.0
FL	472	637	655	107.2	130.4	135.0
GA	625	747	638	1,941.0	2,079.0	1,900.0
KS	185	492	601	1.0	4.1	16.9
LA	614	697	756	1,375.0	1,286.0	985.0
MS	622	819	896	1,841.0	1,876.0	1,810.0
MO	544	737	742	513.0	591.0	580.0
NM	608	717	638	89.9	103.0	105.0
NC	479	677	671	798.0	1,002.0	930.0
OK	187	306	505	123.0	134.0	200.0
SC	528	774	674	376.0	455.0	400.0
TN	527	611	643	724.0	675.0	656.0
TX	375	511	496	4,512.0	4,405.1	5,355.0
VA	620	748	667	137.0	159.0	139.0
US	537	707	686	17,899.8	18,942.0	18,976.9

1/ Production ginned and to be ginned.

2/ 480-Lb. net weight bales.

Cottonseed: Production by State and United States, 1995-97

State	Production			1/
	1995	1996	1997	
	1,000 Tons			
AL	162.0	273.0	192.0	
AZ	334.0	324.0	329.0	
AR	580.0	635.0	683.0	
CA	940.0	1,020.0	967.0	
FL	38.0	46.0	46.0	
GA	674.0	681.0	640.0	
KS	0.3	1.4	6.0	
LA	499.0	499.0	365.0	
MS	727.0	735.0	712.0	
MO	221.0	234.0	234.0	
NM	33.4	38.1	39.0	
NC	282.0	343.0	325.0	
OK	56.0	56.0	85.0	
SC	132.0	155.0	138.0	
TN	292.0	262.0	259.0	
TX	1,828.0	1,784.0	2,208.0	
VA	50.0	57.0	50.0	
US	6,848.7	7,143.5	7,278.0	

1/ Estimates based on 3-year average lint-seed ratio.

Potatoes: Area Planted, Harvested, Yield, and Production
by Seasonal Group, State, and United States, 1996-98

Seasonal Group and State	Area				Yield		Production		
	Planted		Harvested		1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
	1997	1998	1997	1998					
	----- 1,000 Acres -----				-- Cwt --		----- 1,000 Cwt -----		
Winter									
CA	6.6	7.5	6.6	7.5	240	200	1,425	1,584	1,500
FL	9.0	8.5	8.8	8.0	175	180	1,848	1,540	1,440
Total	15.6	16.0	15.4	15.5	203	190	3,273	3,124	2,940
Spring 1/									
AL	1.6		1.5		175		304	263	
AZ	6.2		6.2		275		2,475	1,705	
CA	20.7		20.7		400		7,538	8,280	
FL	34.5		33.3		199		7,765	6,641	
Hastings	25.5		24.5		210		6,325	5,145	
Other FL	9.0		8.8		170		1,440	1,496	
NC	17.0		16.5		200		3,230	3,300	
TX	8.3		8.0		195		1,105	1,560	
Total	88.3		86.2		252		22,417	21,749	

1/ 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	
Nov	3,500	3,105	1,400	1,920	2,940	3,085
Dec	3,445	3,515	1,470	1,715	3,140	3,040

Citrus Fruits: Utilized Production by Crop, State, and United States,
1995-96, 1996-97, and Forecasted January 1, 1998 1/

Crop and State	Utilized Production Boxes			Utilized Production Ton Equivalent		
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
	----- 1,000 Boxes 2/ -----			----- 1,000 Tons -----		
Oranges						
Early Mid &						
Navel 3/						
AZ	700	400	450	27	15	17
CA	38,000	40,000	44,000	1,426	1,500	1,650
FL	121,200	134,200	146,000	5,454	6,039	6,570
TX	830	1,300	1,400	35	55	60
US	160,730	175,900	191,850	6,942	7,609	8,297
Valencia						
AZ	950	600	550	36	23	21
CA	20,000	28,000	30,000	750	1,050	1,125
FL	82,100	92,000	108,000	3,695	4,140	4,860
TX	110	120	150	4	5	6
US	103,160	120,720	138,700	4,485	5,218	6,012
All						
AZ	1,650	1,000	1,000	63	38	38
CA	58,000	68,000	74,000	2,176	2,550	2,775
FL	203,300	226,200	254,000	9,149	10,179	11,430
TX	940	1,420	1,550	39	60	66
US	263,890	296,620	330,550	11,427	12,827	14,309
Temples						
FL	2,150	2,400	2,300	97	108	104
Grapefruit						
White Seedless						
FL 4/	23,200	23,500	23,000	986	999	978
Colored Seedless						
FL 4/	28,100	31,400	28,500	1,194	1,334	1,211
Other						
FL	1,050	900	500	45	38	21
All						
AZ	1,200	900	800	40	30	27
CA	8,100	8,200	9,000	271	275	302
FL 4/	52,350	55,800	52,000	2,225	2,371	2,210
TX	4,550	5,300	5,000	182	212	200
US	66,200	70,200	66,800	2,718	2,888	2,739
Tangerines						
AZ	1,000	550	500	38	21	19
CA	2,600	2,600	2,400	98	98	90
FL	4,500	6,300	5,500	213	299	261
US	8,100	9,450	8,400	349	418	370
Lemons						
AZ	5,100	2,600	2,600	194	99	99
CA	21,000	20,000	22,000	798	760	836
US	26,100	22,600	24,600	992	859	935
Tangelos						
FL	2,450	3,950	3,300	110	178	149
K-Early Citrus						
FL	160	150	100	7	7	5

See footnotes on next page.

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 (including Navel) and midseason varieties in FL and TX. Small quantities of tangerines in TX.
- 4/ Excludes economic abandonment in 1995-96 of 3,000,000 boxes of Colored Seedless; in 1996-97 of 3,000,000 boxes of White Seedless and 3,000,000 boxes of Colored Seedless.

Hay: Stocks on Farms, December 1 and May 1, by State
and United States, 1995-97

State	December 1			May 1		
	1995	1996 1/	1997	1996	1997 1/	1998
	1,000 Tons					
AL	1,270	1,489	1,489	106		193
AZ	265	82	167	28		28
AR	1,910	1,850	2,000	141		231
CA	2,250	2,594	1,624	361		160
CO	2,390	1,945	1,975	636		203
CT	78	97	57	11		13
DE	9	11	7	1		6
FL	397	437	400	29		31
GA	1,050	924	1,045	150		302
ID	2,794	2,285	2,986	660		286
IL	1,979	1,350	1,400	432		304
IN	1,584	1,131	1,213	216		162
IA	4,079	3,500	3,360	736		715
KS	4,590	5,600	5,600	787		841
KY	4,806	4,334	4,352	492		627
LA	513	502	541	15		126
ME	272	202	166	126		57
MD	265	433	360	55		84
MA	115	95	92	17		13
MI	3,166	2,514	2,000	754		460
MN	4,374	4,018	3,700	694		540
MS	1,368	1,620	1,522	50		160
MO	6,000	6,159	6,115	955		830
MT	4,931	4,674	5,042	858		492
NE	4,813	5,063	4,360	1,325		968
NV	750	752	711	166		60
NH	82	70	42	16		12
NJ	131	92	138	48		27
NM	600	590	540	40		80
NY	2,069	2,254	1,956	552		555
NC	900	970	990	116		115
ND	5,044	4,777	3,841	1,019		675
OH	2,421	2,074	2,400	323		173
OK	3,600	4,500	4,400	500		800
OR	2,310	2,108	1,653	264		97
PA	2,513	2,613	2,100	617		600
RI	6	7	8	1		1
SC	468	308	390	72		101
SD	8,960	8,530	8,180	3,077		1,570
TN	3,136	3,049	3,184	235		419
TX	7,322	6,252	8,632	570		1,400
UT	1,481	1,327	1,630	349		302
VT	391	330	267	100		86
VA	2,185	2,698	1,567	257		630
WA	1,410	1,162	1,373	426		283
WV	855	895	813	53		117
WI	4,900	4,600	4,000	1,569		1,150
WY	2,636	1,965	2,129	734		287
US	109,438	104,832	102,517	20,739		17,372

1/ Revised.

December Weather Summary: The Nation's weather patterns locked into a classic El Niño signature, featuring a split jet stream and an active storm track across the South. Monthly temperatures ranged from 5 to 15 degrees F above normal across the North Central States, but as much as 3 degrees F below normal in the Southeast. Heavy snow helped to suppress temperatures in the southern Rockies and southern Plains, where departures ranged from -2 to -9 degrees F. December-record rainfall drenched central and northeastern Florida, while near-record totals soaked parts of Texas. Snow occasionally fell into the Deep South. Farther north, however, the northern Plains' dry spell stretched to 3 months and the Northwest's drying trend persisted for a second consecutive month. California escaped any serious effects from El Niño-related storminess, although precipitation averaged above normal across southern and central-coastal sections.

In Texas, Waco's rainfall totaled 7.98 inches on December 20, breaking their 24-hour record of 7.18 inches set on May 11-12, 1953. On December 23-24, the next storm to emerge from the Southwest dumped 11.6 inches of snow on Dodge City, KS, eclipsing their 24-hour December record (11.4 inches) that had stood since 1923. A few days later, Tampa, FL netted 4.76 inches of rain on December 26-27, shattering their 24-hour December record.

Tampa received 1 inch or more of rain on 7 days during December (normal for an entire year is 13 days) en route to a record-setting monthly total of 15.57 inches (724% of normal). With 67.71 inches for the year, Tampa had their third-wettest year behind 1959 (76.57 inches) and 1957 (70.43 inches). Miami Beach's annual rainfall of 71.01 inches represented their highest total since 71.10 inches fell in 1959. Elsewhere in Florida, a few other December rainfall records were demolished by mid-month, with few breaks from the wetness thereafter:

Location	Total (Inches)	Normal	Former Record/Year
Tampa	15.57	2.15	7.36 in 1907
Orlando	12.63	2.15	5.67 in 1940
Jacksonville	9.77	2.72	7.76 in 1885

December rainfall records were approached in the Texas cities of Waco (9.81 inches, second to an 11.76-inch total in 1913) and Dallas-Ft. Worth (6.93 inches, third behind 8.75 inches in 1991 and 6.99 inches in 1971). For the third time this decade, annual rainfall placed among the ten highest values on record in Dallas Ft. Worth (45.02 inches, 10th all-time) and Austin, TX (47.06 inches, 8th). Victoria, TX (67.11 inches, 179% of normal) posted their wettest year on record, smashing the 1919 record of 59.57 inches. Farther east, Shreveport, LA measured 69.21 inches during 1997, second only to an 81.99-inch total in 1991.

Some areas that did not receive excessive precipitation still had to endure a lack of sunshine. St. Louis, MO recorded less than 80 hours of sunshine during the month (27% of possible). In Iowa, Des Moines' 11-day cloudy streak (December 1-11) was their longest since a 12-day stretch in December 1991 - January 1992. Albuquerque, NM had no sunshine on 4 consecutive days from December 20-23, their longest such stretch since December 1982.

The snow that fell in Albuquerque during that period boosted the monthly total to 8.8 inches, their fourth-highest on record and greatest December amount since 1959. By December 25, snow depths stood at 3 to 4 feet across parts of the Southwest. Hannagan Meadow, AZ reported 48 inches on the ground, while Cloudcroft, NM had 33 inches. With a 5-inch cover, Amarillo, TX reported its greatest December 25 snow depth since 1939. Earlier in the month, a rare Deep South snowstorm dumped 4.8 inches of snow (on December 14) on Jackson, MS and left up to 8 inches nearby.

The procession of storms northeastward from the Southwest contributed to above-normal snowfall across portions of the central Plains and Midwest. Monthly totals reached 14.9 inches in Dodge City, KS, 10.9 inches in Kansas City, MO, and 15.2 inches in Moline, IL. The storm's also helped to draw cold--but not Arctic--air deep into the South. On December 13-14 and again during the last week of the month, temperatures dipped to near-freezing levels as far south as Texas' Lower Rio Grande Valley. On December 26, Alamosa, CO notched a daily-record low of -23 degrees F.

Snow returned to much of the East on December 29-31 as a major storm moved southeastward into Tennessee before re-developing along the East Coast and turning northward. More than 2 feet buried isolated locations in the central and northern Appalachians, and 5.2 inches fell as far south as Greensboro, NC. In New York, the late-month storm and subsequent lake-effect precipitation raised monthly snowfall to 34.3 inches in Binghamton and 47.8 inches in Syracuse. Just a week earlier (December 22-23), another storm had dumped more than 20 inches on parts on New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Farther west, however, little precipitation accompanied the unusually mild weather across the North Central States. Monthly precipitation of 0.34 inches in Houghton Lake, MI and a trace in Helena, MT were the lowest on record during December. When 0.01 inches fell in Glasgow, MT on December 27, a 34-day dry spell ended, their longest such streak since 1973. For the first time on record, Glasgow escaped December with no sub-zero temperatures, posting an average monthly temperature that was 10.9 degrees F above normal. In North Dakota, Grand Forks' average temperature of 23.7 degrees F tied their December record set in 1959.

In southern California, early-month storminess yielded to only sporadic showers. The month's most impressive series of storms struck the region between December 4 and 9. The heaviest rain fell in Ventura County, northwest of Los Angeles, where December 6 totals reached 9.09 inches at Matilija Canyon and 9.45 inches on Old Man Mountain. Farther north, however, monthly rainfall in Eugene, OR was only 2.23 inches, their second-lowest December value on record after a 1.24-inch total in 1976.

General Crop Comments: A split jet stream, induced by El Nino, allowed farmers to finish fall crop harvest and tillage operations under mostly dry conditions across the northern United States. However, the weather pattern caused continued wetness during December across the Southern States and delayed harvest and fall planting activities. At the end of the month, soil moisture supplies in the major corn and soybean-producing States were mostly adequate. There was concern, though, about the lack of snow cover on winter grains and alfalfa fields. Grain movement in the Corn Belt was slowed by low prices. Some elevators in Nebraska continued to pile grain outside in emergency storage. Above-normal temperatures in the northern Plains benefited livestock producers after the especially harsh winter last year. Farmers in the northern and Middle Atlantic States were able to finish fall harvest, but hay supplies were short in several areas.

Continued rainfall and below-normal temperatures from California to Florida delayed fall crop harvest, and a few fields remained unharvested at month's end. However, the majority of the soybean, cotton, and sorghum acreages were harvested by the end of December. Snow in southeast Colorado further hindered sorghum harvest that was initially delayed by a late October blizzard. A small amount of Kansas sorghum acreage was not yet harvested at the end of December due to above-normal precipitation. Tobacco curing in Kentucky and Ohio was hampered by slow drying conditions later in the month. Record wetness in Florida hampered citrus and vegetable harvests.

The very mild weather across the northern United States promoted growth and development of the 1998 winter wheat crop but also melted snow cover on emerged fields. In Kansas, the crop was rated in mostly good to excellent condition at the end of December with little wind and freeze damage occurring during the month. Statewide, snowfall and rain combined with moderate temperatures resulted in on again/off again snow cover. To the north of Kansas, dry weather during the last 3 months in the High Plains has left fields with no snow cover and subject to damage by wind and freezing temperatures. In the Northwest, snow cover was absent in eastern Washington, while good snow cover in northern Idaho and mild conditions in the southern part of the State benefited winter wheat. Mild temperatures accompanied by snow and rain benefited fields in the southern Plains. In the Southeast, planting and crop growth were delayed by late fall crop harvests and above-normal precipitation.

Cotton: Upland cotton planted acreage is estimated at 13.6 million acres, down 6 percent from 1996 but harvested acreage at 13.0 million acres, is 3 percent more than last year because of the large abandonment in Texas in 1996. Producers planted 252,000 acres of American-Pima cotton in 1997, down 2 percent from 1996, and harvested acreage is also down 2 percent, at 251,000 acres.

Texas' harvest lagged behind the 5-year average until early November, and by late that month, harvest was 7 points ahead of the average pace of 77 percent. Texas' irrigated fields showed good progress this season, and unusual high amounts of rainfall in May caused the dryland acreage to develop ahead of the average pace. In the Plains, heavy rain and hail during June damaged fields and forced producers to replant, or plant alternative crops. In October, heavy rains during the season slowed harvest in the Upper Coast and the later crop showed quality damage. Objective yield survey data indicated the fourth highest boll weights since 1988. Planted acres in Texas is estimated at 5.50 million, down 4 percent from 1996, but harvested acreage is up 26 percent, at 5.15 million acres.

The Delta States' (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee) plantings lagged behind average due to wet soils and because other row crops were being planted, but seedings were completed in early June. Precipitation was above normal and cooler than normal temperatures prevailed during the early season, slowing crop development. October's beneficial temperatures and open weather allowed the bolls to finish opening, and yields were higher than had been expected earlier in the season. Harvest exceeded the 5-year average pace in Louisiana and Mississippi, and in early November Louisiana had 98 percent of the crop harvested, 6 points ahead of the 5-year average. Mississippi producers were 85 percent complete, 1 point above average. Harvest in the other States in this region was about three-fourths finished, slightly behind their normal pace. Boll weights ranked eighth in Arkansas, ninth in Louisiana, and seventh in Mississippi compared to the previous 10 years. Planted and harvested acreage in this region was down 13 percent from 1996, at 3.45 million acres and 3.40 million acres respectively.

Arizona's planted and harvested acres increased by 2 percent from 1996, but California producers decreased planted and harvested acreage by 12 percent. Early planting approval was again granted in Arizona to lessen effects of whitefly, and the crop also benefitted from good weather. California's seeding pace was well ahead of average most of the season as warm, dry weather prevailed. Eighty-nine percent of Arizona's crop was in good to excellent condition and 90 percent of bolls were opening in early September, which equalled the 5-year average. Cotton development in California remained ahead of average, with 80 percent of the crop showing open bolls compared to an average of 59 percent, in early September. Harvest was slightly behind the 5-year average in Arizona, but slightly ahead of the normal pace for California producers. California's boll weights were second highest since 1988.

In the Southeastern States (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina), cotton planted acreage was 2 percent more than in 1996, at 2.94 million acres. The planting pace was behind average early in the season, but a dry period in mid-May allowed producers to exceed the average pace. Early June storms in Georgia and Alabama replenished soil moisture and improved crop condition. Many fields in Georgia and Alabama were replanted due to seedling disease, cool temperatures causing poor stands, and soil crusting from the heavy rains. Alabama was subject to unusual heavy rainfall during the season, as well as cool temperatures. In addition, Hurricane Danny entered into the southwestern portion of the State in late July with torrential rains. All of these States were behind the average harvest progress during the season.

American-Pima production is forecast at 537,000 bales, up 2 percent from 1996's output, and up 4,000 bales from the December forecast. Yield is indicated at 1,027 pounds per harvested acre, up 36 pounds from last year. The California crop experienced virtually ideal growing conditions in June and July, with development nearly two weeks ahead of normal. However, lygus bug pressure eventually caused significant square shedding on some of the acreage in the San Joaquin Valley. The Texas crop also progressed well with irrigation and hot temperatures. California producers increased their seedings 12 percent from the previous year, to 185,000 acres, but Arizona's acreage decreased 48 percent from 1996 to 22,000 acres. Texas and New Mexico producers also reduced their plantings by 14 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

All cotton ginnings totaled 17,761,050 running bales prior to January 1, compared with 17,680,900 running bales ginned to the same date last year and 17,011,400 running bales in 1995.

Winter Potatoes: Production of winter potatoes in 1998 is forecast at 2.94 million cwt. This is down 6 percent from 1997 and 10 percent below 1996. Area for harvest is estimated at 15,500 acres, up 1 percent from a year ago and 7 percent above two years ago. The average yield is projected at 190 cwt per acre, 13 cwt lower than last year.

Florida potato planting is nearly completed. Some acreage was replanted because of wet soils. Harvest is expected in late January or early February. California's acreage is up, but yields are expected to be down from last year.

Spring Potatoes, 1997 Revised: Production of spring potatoes in 1997 totaled 21.7 million cwt, down 3 percent from a year earlier but 8 percent above 1995's output. Harvested area totaled 86,200 acres, down 4 percent from 1996, but the average yield of 252 cwt per acre gained 3 cwt from last year. Final 1997 estimates were higher than the May 1 forecast in California and North Carolina but lower in the Hastings area of Florida.

Papayas: December fresh papaya production from Hawaii is estimated at 3.04 million pounds, 1 percent lower than November and 3 percent lower than December 1996. Short days, cool temperatures, and cloudy skies characterized December weather conditions. Papaya ringspot virus continued to depress yields and shorten the life of infected fields.

Area devoted to papaya production is estimated at 3,515 acres, 13 percent higher than November and 2 percent more than last December. Harvested area, at 1,715 acres, was 11 percent lower than November but 17 percent higher than a year ago.

Grapefruit: The 1997-98 U.S. grapefruit crop is forecast at 2.74 million tons, the same as the December 1 forecast but down 5 percent from 1997.

The January 1 Florida all grapefruit crop is forecast at 52.0 million boxes (2.21 million tons), unchanged from the previous forecast but 7 percent less than last season's record utilization. Forecasted utilization for both the white seedless varieties, at 23.0 million boxes, and the colored seedless varieties, at 28.5 million boxes, are unchanged. These forecasts are 2 percent and 9 percent lower, respectively, than the final recorded utilization last season. The seedy grapefruit crop is expected to total 500,000 boxes (21,000 tons), unchanged from December and the smallest amount of this variety ever recorded.

The 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.

California's January 1 forecast of grapefruit production is unchanged at 9.00 million boxes (302,000 tons) but 10 percent more than last year. Weather conditions to date have been good. Picking has begun in the desert area with good size and quality. Production in Texas is expected at 5.00 million boxes (200,000 tons), unchanged from the previous forecast but down 6 percent from the 1996-97 season. Arizona's 1997-98 production of grapefruit is forecast at 800,000 boxes (27,000 tons), unchanged from the initial forecast but 11 percent fewer boxes than the 1996-97 crop.

Lemons: The 1997-98 U.S. lemon crop is forecast at 935,000 tons, unchanged from the October forecast and 9 percent more than last year. California production remains unchanged at 22.0 million boxes (836,000 tons), 10 percent more than last year. In the Central Valley area, export grades have been good to excellent, while domestic grades have been fair to good. In the South Coast area, grades remain fair to good. Defects include wind scar, tip injuries, and flatsides. The Arizona lemon crop is forecast at 2.60 million boxes (99,000 tons), the same as the initial forecast in October and the same as last year. Quality has been good for the most part, some fair. Defects include sunburn and windscar.

Tangelos: The 1997-98 Florida tangelo forecast continues at 3.30 million boxes (149,000 tons), 16 percent less than last season's crop, which was the largest crop in nine seasons. Harvest is slightly behind last year at the same time with 1.64 million boxes moved through the end of December.

Tangerines: The 1997-98 U.S. tangerine production forecast remains at 370,000 tons, down 11 percent from last year's crop. Florida's tangerine forecast is 5.50 million boxes (261,000 tons), 13 percent less than the previous season's crop. Fruit size is larger on average than last year and less droppage is expected. However, fewer trees and fewer fruit per tree have caused the decline in total production. Through December, just over three million boxes have been utilized.

California tangerine production is 2.40 million boxes (90,000 tons), the same level as forecast in October, but 8 percent lower than the previous season. Quality, color, and flavor are good in the majority of lots. Grades are good to fair. Grade defects include scar, sunburn, and coarse texture. Arizona's tangerine forecast, at 500,000 boxes (19,000 tons), remains unchanged from October and is down 9 percent from the 1996-97 season.

Temples: Florida's 1997-98 Temple production forecast remains at 2.30 million boxes (104,000 tons), down 4 percent from last year. Fruit sizes are about average, but larger than they were a year ago. Fruit loss from drop is at a seasonal low, but number of fruit is down, resulting in decreased overall production. Harvesting is just underway.

K-Early Citrus: Production of K-Early Citrus Fruit in Florida is expected to total 100,000 boxes (4,500 tons), unchanged from the December 1 forecast and 33 percent lower than last season. Fewer than 50,000 boxes have been recorded. Utilization of the remainder of the crop depends on fruit condition and processing use.

Florida Citrus: Last month was one of the wettest Decembers on record. Some counties recorded precipitation levels well above all-time records for the month. Most of the growers and caretakers were able to handle the excessive water with very few major problems. Extra ditching and plowing were necessary to help move standing water. Most groves and trees are in very good condition with very little new growth showing. Early and midseason fruit is being harvested at a rapid pace, weather permitting. All fresh fruit packing houses and processing plants were working long hours during December to move this season's large crop. Caretakers have been dirt banking young trees and placing heaters for cold protection. There was very little spraying or fertilization done during the month. Harvest of early and midseason oranges through December was almost 62 million boxes, over three million boxes more than last year at the same time. Utilization of Navel oranges was just more than five million boxes, slightly ahead of last year's pace.

Texas Citrus: Harvest activity moved ahead without much delay during December with good sizes and quality reported. Irrigation resumed in many groves as minimal precipitation was recorded in the Rio Grande Valley last month. Demand increased for both oranges and grapefruit.

California Citrus: Citrus crops suffered little damage from cold nighttime temperatures in the San Joaquin Valley. Picking of grapefruit began in the desert area with size and quality good. Harvest of lemons was active in the San Joaquin Valley and South Coast areas. Quality has been good. Navel orange harvest continued with excellent quality and large sizes. Approximately one-fourth of the crop had been picked by January 1. The Valencia orange crop continues to mature, with picking to begin in the desert area by mid-February. Tangerine harvest was active through December, with a good quality crop reported.

California Fruits and Nuts: Pruning, preplant preparation, and field fumigation activities were conducted during December as weather permitted. Kiwifruit and table grape harvests concluded, but avocado picking continued. Growers were digging bare root nursery stock and strawberry plants. Cold nighttime temperatures were beneficial to dormant tree and vine crops.

Hay Stocks on Farm: Stocks of all hay on farms December 1, 1997 totaled 103 million tons, 2 percent below the stocks on farms December 1, 1996. Stock decreases occurred in 26 of the 48 contiguous States, mainly in the upper mid-west States, New England States, mid Atlantic States, and California, Nevada, and Oregon in the west. The largest stock increases occurred in the Mountain States, eastern cornbelt States, and most of the Southern States.

Report Features

The next **"Crop Production"** report will be released at 8:30 a.m. ET on February 11, 1998.

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

C. Ray Halley, Chief	(202) 720-2127
Field Crops Section	
Bill Dowdy, Head	(202) 720-3843
Kevin Barnes - Soybeans, Minor Oilseeds	(202) 720-7369
Rhonda Brandt- Corn	(202) 720-7621
Doug Hartwig - Hay	(202) 720-8843
Rhonda Brandt - Oats, Sugar Crops, Weekly Crop Weather	(202) 720-7621
Roger Latham - Cotton, Cotton Ginnings	(202) 720-5944
Jerry Ramirez - Barley, Sorghum	(202) 690-3234
Barbara Rater - Peanuts, Rice	(202) 720-7688
Vaughn Siegenthaler - Wheat, Rye	(202) 720-8068
Fruit, Vegetable & Special Crops Section	
Vince Matthews, Head	(202) 720-3843
Arvin Budge - Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes	(202) 720-4285
Dave DeWalt - Citrus, Tropical Fruits	(202) 720-5412
Howard Hill - Cherries, Berries, Prunes, Plums, Cranberries, Grapes, Maple Syrup	(202) 720-7235
Dave Mueller - Fresh and Processing Vegetables, Onions	(202) 720-2157
Dave Ranek - Nuts, Floriculture	(202) 720-4215
Linda Simpson - Noncitrus Fruits, Mint, Dry Beans & Peas, Mushrooms, Hops	(202) 690-0270
Debbie Williams - Apples, Strawberries, Tobacco	(202) 720-4288

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