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Orange Production Down 1 Percent from February Forecast

The United States all orange forecast for the 2014-2015 season is 6.68 million tons, down 1 percent from the previous forecast and down 2 percent from the 2013-2014 final utilization. The Florida all orange forecast, at 102 million boxes (4.59 million tons), is down 1 percent from the previous forecast and down 2 percent from last season's final utilization. Early, midseason, and Navel varieties in Florida are forecast at 47.0 million boxes (2.12 million tons), down 2 percent from the previous forecast and down 12 percent last season's final utilization. The Florida Valencia orange forecast, at 55.0 million boxes (2.48 million tons), is unchanged from previous forecast but up 7 percent from last season's final utilization.

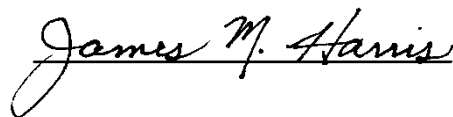
The California Valencia orange forecast is 10.0 million boxes (400,000 tons), unchanged from previous forecast but down 9 percent from the previous season. This results in a California all orange forecast of 50.0 million boxes (2.00 million tons), unchanged from the January forecast. Objective survey measurements taken during January and February indicated that fruit set per tree was lower than the previous year and the lowest since 2009, but the measured average fruit size was slightly larger than the previous year. The forecast for Texas is carried forward from January.

Florida frozen concentrated orange juice (FCOJ) yield forecast for the 2014-2015 season is 1.55 gallons per box at 42.0 degrees Brix, down 1 percent from the February forecast and down 1 percent from last season's final yield of 1.57 gallons per box. The non-Valencia portion is projected at 1.45 gallons per box, down 1 percent from last month and down 5 percent from last season's yield. The Valencia portion is projected at 1.65 gallons, down 2 percent from last month's forecast but up slightly from last season's final yield of 1.64 gallons per box. All projections of yield assume the processing relationships this season will be similar to those of the past several seasons.

This report was approved on March 10, 2015.



Secretary of Agriculture
Designate
Robert Johansson



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Sugarcane Area Harvested, Yield, and Production by Use – States and United States: 2013 and 2014

Use and State	Area harvested		Yield per acre ¹		Production ¹	
	2013 (1,000 acres)	2014 (1,000 acres)	2013 (tons)	2014 (tons)	2013 (1,000 tons)	2014 (1,000 tons)
For sugar						
Florida	400.0	395.9	34.3	39.2	13,720	15,519
Hawaii ²	15.5	16.8	87.2	82.0	1,352	1,378
Louisiana ²	410.0	385.0	30.5	30.0	12,505	11,550
Texas ²	34.1	31.5	42.4	37.9	1,446	1,194
United States	859.6	829.2	33.8	35.7	29,023	29,641
For seed						
Florida	16.0	16.1	42.5	42.6	680	686
Hawaii ²	2.2	2.2	20.5	20.4	45	45
Louisiana ²	32.0	25.0	30.5	30.0	976	750
Texas ²	1.0	1.6	37.0	37.9	37	61
United States	51.2	44.9	33.9	34.3	1,738	1,542
For sugar and seed						
Florida	416.0	412.0	34.6	39.3	14,400	16,205
Hawaii ²	17.7	19.0	78.9	74.9	1,397	1,423
Louisiana ²	442.0	410.0	30.5	30.0	13,481	12,300
Texas ²	35.1	33.1	42.3	37.9	1,483	1,255
United States	910.8	874.1	33.8	35.7	30,761	31,183

¹ Net tons.

² Estimates are carried forward from the *Crop Production 2014 Summary* released January 2015.

Utilized Production of Citrus Fruits by Crop – States and United States: 2013-2014 and Forecasted March 1, 2015

[The crop year begins with the bloom of the first year shown and ends with the completion of harvest the following year]

Crop and State	Utilized production boxes ¹		Utilized production ton equivalent	
	2013-2014	2014-2015	2013-2014	2014-2015
	(1,000 boxes)	(1,000 boxes)	(1,000 tons)	(1,000 tons)
Oranges				
Early, mid, and Navel ²				
California ³	39,000	40,000	1,560	1,600
Florida	53,300	47,000	2,398	2,115
Texas ³	1,400	1,670	60	71
United States	93,700	88,670	4,018	3,786
Valencia				
California	11,000	10,000	440	400
Florida	51,300	55,000	2,309	2,475
Texas ³	376	345	16	15
United States	62,676	65,345	2,765	2,890
All				
California	50,000	50,000	2,000	2,000
Florida	104,600	102,000	4,707	4,590
Texas ³	1,776	2,015	76	86
United States	156,376	154,015	6,783	6,676
Grapefruit				
White				
Florida	4,150	4,000	176	170
Colored				
Florida	11,500	11,000	489	468
All				
California ³	4,000	4,000	160	160
Florida	15,650	15,000	665	638
Texas ³	5,700	6,000	228	240
United States	25,350	25,000	1,053	1,038
Tangerines and mandarins				
Arizona ^{3 4}	200	220	8	9
California ^{3 4}	14,500	15,500	580	620
Florida	2,900	2,500	138	119
United States	17,600	18,220	726	748
Lemons ³				
Arizona	1,800	2,200	72	88
California	19,000	20,000	760	800
United States	20,800	22,200	832	888
Tangelos				
Florida	880	700	40	32

¹ Net pounds per box: oranges in California-80, Florida-90, Texas-85; grapefruit in California-80, Florida-85, Texas-80; tangerines and mandarins in Arizona and California-80, Florida-95; lemons-80; tangelos-90.

² Navel and miscellaneous varieties in California. Early (including Navel) and midseason varieties in Florida and Texas. Small quantities of tangerines in Texas and Temples in Florida.

³ Estimates for current year carried forward from previous forecast.

⁴ Includes tangelos and tangors.

Crop Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production in Domestic Units – United States: 2014 and 2015

[Data are the latest estimates available, either from the current report or from previous reports. Current year estimates are for the full 2015 crop year. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Crop	Area planted		Area harvested	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)	(1,000 acres)
Grains and hay				
Barley	2,975		2,443	
Corn for grain ¹	90,597		83,136	
Corn for silage	(NA)		6,371	
Hay, all	(NA)		57,092	
Alfalfa	(NA)		18,445	
All other	(NA)		38,647	
Oats	2,723		1,029	
Proso millet	505		430	
Rice	2,939		2,919	
Rye	1,434		258	
Sorghum for grain ¹	7,138		6,401	
Sorghum for silage	(NA)		315	
Wheat, all	56,822		46,381	
Winter	42,399	40,452	32,304	
Durum	1,398		1,337	
Other spring	13,025		12,740	
Oilseeds				
Canola	1,714.0		1,555.7	
Cottonseed	(X)		(X)	
Flaxseed	311		302	
Mustard seed	33.6		31.2	
Peanuts	1,354.0		1,325.0	
Rapeseed	2.2		2.1	
Safflower	181.5		170.2	
Soybeans for beans	83,701		83,061	
Sunflower	1,560.8		1,507.6	
Cotton, tobacco, and sugar crops				
Cotton, all	11,037.0		9,707.4	
Upland	10,845.0		9,518.0	
American Pima	192.0		189.4	
Sugarbeets	1,161.6		1,147.2	
Sugarcane	(NA)		874.1	
Tobacco	(NA)		378.4	
Dry beans, peas, and lentils				
Austrian winter peas	24.0		16.8	
Dry edible beans	1,718.9		1,665.7	
Dry edible peas	935.0		899.5	
Lentils	281.0		259.0	
Wrinkled seed peas	(NA)		(NA)	
Potatoes and miscellaneous				
Coffee (Hawaii)	(NA)		7.9	
Hops	(NA)		38.0	
Peppermint oil	(NA)		63.1	
Potatoes, all	1,061.1		1,049.5	
Spring	73.8		71.1	
Summer	50.4		48.9	
Fall	936.9		929.5	
Spearmint oil	(NA)		24.4	
Sweet potatoes	137.3		135.2	
Taro (Hawaii) ²	(NA)		0.4	

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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Crop Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production in Domestic Units – United States: 2014 and 2015 (continued)

[Data are the latest estimates available, either from the current report or from previous reports. Current year estimates are for the full 2015 crop year. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Crop	Yield per acre		Production	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
			(1,000)	(1,000)
Grains and hay				
Barley	bushels	72.4	176,794	
Corn for grain	bushels	171.0	14,215,532	
Corn for silage	tons	20.1	128,048	
Hay, all	tons	2.45	139,798	
Alfalfa	tons	3.33	61,446	
All other	tons	2.03	78,352	
Oats	bushels	67.7	69,684	
Proso millet	bushels	31.4	13,483	
Rice ³	cwt	7,572	221,035	
Rye	bushels	27.9	7,189	
Sorghum for grain	bushels	67.6	432,575	
Sorghum for silage	tons	13.1	4,123	
Wheat, all	bushels	43.7	2,025,651	
Winter	bushels	42.6	1,377,526	
Durum	bushels	39.7	53,087	
Other spring	bushels	46.7	595,038	
Oilseeds				
Canola	pounds	1,614	2,510,995	
Cottonseed	tons	(X)	5,314.0	
Flaxseed	bushels	21.1	6,368	
Mustard seed	pounds	930	29,004	
Peanuts	pounds	3,932	5,210,100	
Rapeseed	pounds	1,233	2,590	
Safflower	pounds	1,226	208,643	
Soybeans for beans	bushels	47.8	3,968,823	
Sunflower	pounds	1,469	2,214,835	
Cotton, tobacco, and sugar crops				
Cotton, all ³	bales	795	16,084.0	
Upland ³	bales	781	15,496.0	
American Pima ³	bales	1,490	588.0	
Sugarbeets	tons	27.4	31,386	
Sugarcane	tons	35.7	31,183	
Tobacco	pounds	2,316	876,415	
Dry beans, peas, and lentils				
Austrian winter peas ³	cwt	1,339	225	
Dry edible beans ³	cwt	1,753	29,206	
Dry edible peas ³	cwt	1,907	17,155	
Lentils ³	cwt	1,300	3,367	
Wrinkled seed peas	cwt	(NA)	618	
Potatoes and miscellaneous				
Coffee (Hawaii)	pounds	1,030	8,100	
Hops	pounds	1,868	70,995.9	
Peppermint oil	pounds	90	5,692	
Potatoes, all	cwt	426	446,693	
Spring	cwt	318	22,608	
Summer	cwt	322	15,756	
Fall	cwt	439	408,329	
Spearmint oil	pounds	114	2,784	
Sweet potatoes	cwt	219	29,584	
Taro (Hawaii)	pounds	(NA)	3,240	

(NA) Not available.

(X) Not applicable.

¹ Area planted for all purposes.

² Area is total acres in crop, not harvested acres.

³ Yield in pounds.

Crop Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production in Metric Units – United States: 2014 and 2015

[Data are the latest estimates available, either from the current report or from previous reports. Current year estimates are for the full 2015 crop year. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Crop	Area planted		Area harvested	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
	(hectares)	(hectares)	(hectares)	(hectares)
Grains and hay				
Barley	1,203,950		988,660	
Corn for grain ¹	36,663,700		33,644,310	
Corn for silage	(NA)		2,578,280	
Hay, all ²	(NA)		23,104,560	
Alfalfa	(NA)		7,464,510	
All other	(NA)		15,640,050	
Oats	1,101,970		416,430	
Proso millet	204,370		174,020	
Rice	1,189,380		1,181,290	
Rye	580,330		104,410	
Sorghum for grain ¹	2,888,680		2,590,420	
Sorghum for silage	(NA)		127,480	
Wheat, all ²	22,995,300		18,769,930	
Winter	17,158,450	16,370,520	13,073,110	
Durum	565,760		541,070	
Other spring	5,271,090		5,155,750	
Oilseeds				
Canola	693,640		629,580	
Cottonseed	(X)		(X)	
Flaxseed	125,860		122,220	
Mustard seed	13,600		12,630	
Peanuts	547,950		536,210	
Rapeseed	890		850	
Safflower	73,450		68,880	
Soybeans for beans	33,872,960		33,613,960	
Sunflower	631,640		610,110	
Cotton, tobacco, and sugar crops				
Cotton, all ²	4,466,560		3,928,490	
Upland	4,388,860		3,851,840	
American Pima	77,700		76,650	
Sugarbeets	470,090		464,260	
Sugarcane	(NA)		353,740	
Tobacco	(NA)		153,120	
Dry beans, peas, and lentils				
Austrian winter peas	9,710		6,800	
Dry edible beans	695,620		674,090	
Dry edible peas	378,390		364,020	
Lentils	113,720		104,810	
Wrinkled seed peas	(NA)		(NA)	
Potatoes and miscellaneous				
Coffee (Hawaii)	(NA)		3,200	
Hops	(NA)		15,380	
Peppermint oil	(NA)		25,540	
Potatoes, all ²	429,420		424,720	
Spring	29,870		28,770	
Summer	20,400		19,790	
Fall	379,150		376,160	
Spearmint oil	(NA)		9,870	
Sweet potatoes	55,560		54,710	
Taro (Hawaii) ³	(NA)		150	

See footnote(s) at end of table.

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Crop Area Planted and Harvested, Yield, and Production in Metric Units – United States: 2014 and 2015 (continued)

[Data are the latest estimates available, either from the current report or from previous reports. Current year estimates are for the full 2015 crop year. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Crop	Yield per hectare		Production	
	2014	2015	2014	2015
	(metric tons)	(metric tons)	(metric tons)	(metric tons)
Grains and hay				
Barley	3.89		3,849,230	
Corn for grain	10.73		361,091,140	
Corn for silage	45.05		116,163,190	
Hay, all ²	5.49		126,822,610	
Alfalfa	7.47		55,742,870	
All other	4.54		71,079,740	
Oats	2.43		1,011,460	
Proso millet	1.76		305,790	
Rice	8.49		10,025,980	
Rye	1.75		182,610	
Sorghum for grain	4.24		10,987,910	
Sorghum for silage	29.34		3,740,320	
Wheat, all ²	2.94		55,129,190	
Winter	2.87		37,490,110	
Durum	2.67		1,444,790	
Other spring	3.14		16,194,280	
Oilseeds				
Canola	1.81		1,138,970	
Cottonseed	(X)		4,820,780	
Flaxseed	1.32		161,750	
Mustard seed	1.04		13,160	
Peanuts	4.41		2,363,260	
Rapeseed	1.38		1,170	
Safflower	1.37		94,640	
Soybeans for beans	3.21		108,013,660	
Sunflower	1.65		1,004,630	
Cotton, tobacco, and sugar crops				
Cotton, all ²	0.89		3,501,880	
Upland	0.88		3,373,860	
American Pima	1.67		128,020	
Sugarbeets	61.33		28,472,900	
Sugarcane	79.97		28,288,740	
Tobacco	2.60		397,540	
Dry beans, peas, and lentils				
Austrian winter peas	1.50		10,180	
Dry edible beans	1.97		1,324,760	
Dry edible peas	2.14		778,140	
Lentils	1.46		152,720	
Wrinkled seed peas	(NA)		28,030	
Potatoes and miscellaneous				
Coffee (Hawaii)	1.15		3,670	
Hops	2.09		32,200	
Peppermint oil	0.10		2,580	
Potatoes, all ²	47.71		20,261,650	
Spring	35.64		1,025,480	
Summer	36.11		714,680	
Fall	49.24		18,521,490	
Spearmint oil	0.13		1,260	
Sweet potatoes	24.53		1,341,910	
Taro (Hawaii)	(NA)		1,470	

(NA) Not available.

(X) Not applicable.

¹ Area planted for all purposes.

² Total may not add due to rounding.

³ Area is total hectares in crop, not harvested hectares.

Fruits and Nuts Production in Domestic Units – United States: 2014 and 2015

[Data are the latest estimates available, either from the current report or from previous reports. Current year estimates are for the full 2015 crop year, except citrus which is for the 2014-2015 season. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Crop	Production	
	2014 (1,000)	2015 (1,000)
Citrus ¹		
Grapefruit tons	1,053	1,038
Lemons tons	832	888
Oranges tons	6,783	6,676
Tangelos (Florida) tons	40	32
Tangerines and mandarins tons	726	748
Noncitrus		
Apples 1,000 pounds	11,251.2	
Apricots tons	64.1	
Bananas (Hawaii) pounds		
Grapes tons	7,769.6	
Olives (California) tons	82.3	
Papayas (Hawaii) pounds		
Peaches tons	846.6	
Pears tons	808.2	
Prunes, dried (California) tons	95.0	
Prunes and plums (excludes California) tons	14.8	
Nuts and miscellaneous		
Almonds, shelled (California) pounds	1,870,000	
Hazelnuts, in-shell (Oregon) tons	36.0	
Pecans, in-shell pounds	265,370	
Walnuts, in-shell (California) tons	565.0	
Maple syrup gallons	3,167	

¹ Production years are 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

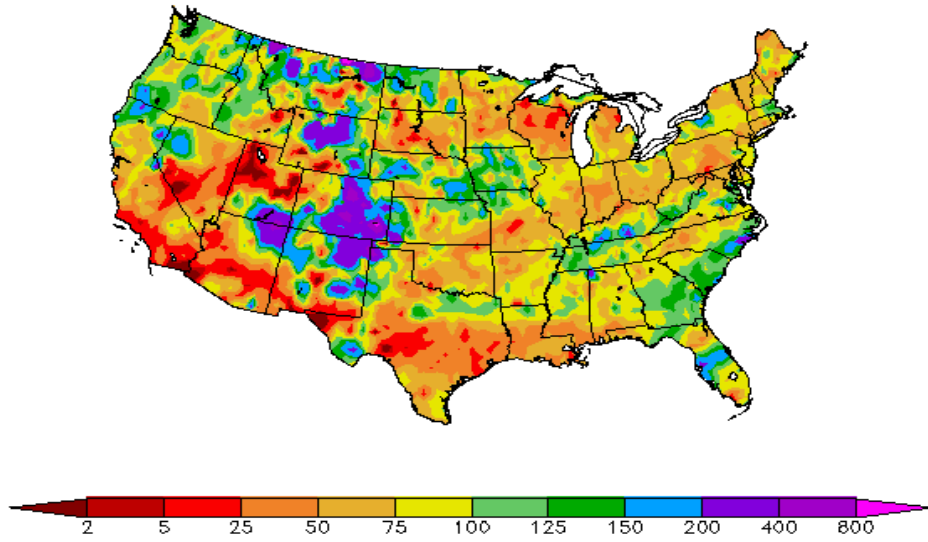
Fruits and Nuts Production in Metric Units – United States: 2014 and 2015

[Data are the latest estimates available, either from the current report or from previous reports. Current year estimates are for the full 2015 crop year, except citrus which is for the 2014-2015 season. Blank data cells indicate estimation period has not yet begun]

Crop	Production	
	2014 (metric tons)	2015 (metric tons)
Citrus ¹		
Grapefruit	955,270	941,660
Lemons	754,780	805,580
Oranges	6,153,430	6,056,370
Tangelos (Florida)	36,290	29,030
Tangerines and mandarins	658,620	678,570
Noncitrus		
Apples	5,103,460	
Apricots	58,180	
Bananas (Hawaii)		
Grapes	7,048,490	
Olives (California)	74,660	
Papayas (Hawaii)		
Peaches	768,040	
Pears	733,200	
Prunes, dried (California)	86,180	
Prunes and plums (excludes California)	13,430	
Nuts and miscellaneous		
Almonds, shelled (California)	848,220	
Hazelnuts, in-shell (Oregon)	32,660	
Pecans, in-shell	120,370	
Walnuts, in-shell (California)	512,560	
Maple syrup	15,830	

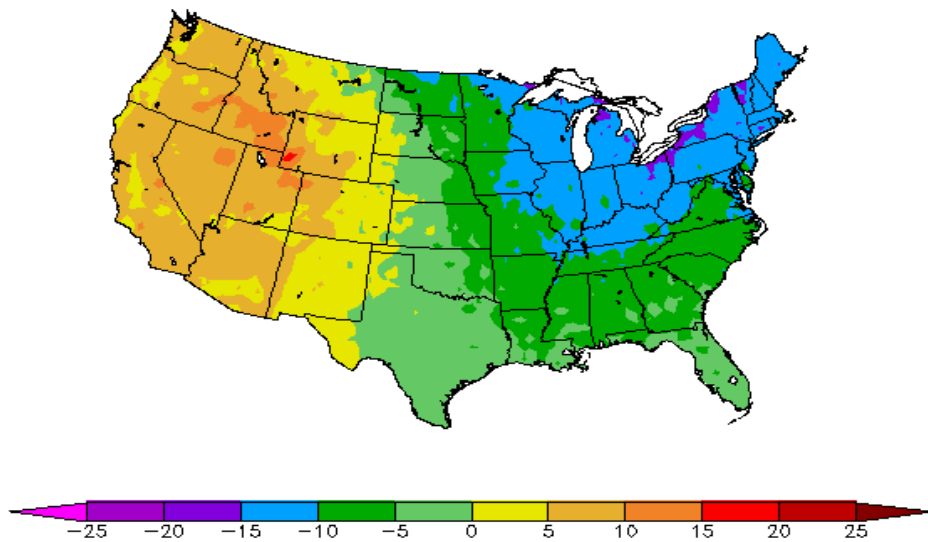
¹ Production years are 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
2/1/2015 - 2/28/2015



Regional Climate Centers

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
2/1/2015 - 2/28/2015



Regional Climate Centers

February Weather Summary

A remarkably persistent weather regime—featuring a Western ridge and Eastern trough—led to record-setting February temperatures on both sides of the Nation. The West basked in spring-like warmth, while the Great Lakes and Northeastern States suffered through the coldest weather in decades—even colder than February 2014. At the height of the Eastern cold wave, on February 20, producers as far south as Florida had to take protective measures to help guard against freeze damage to tender crops such as blueberries, strawberries, and vegetables.

In between warm and cold regions, the Plains were the battleground for competing air masses and saw wildly fluctuating temperatures. In areas with patchy, shallow, or non-existent snow cover, the Plains' weather extremes were detrimental to the health of winter wheat. As a result, the portion of the wheat crop rated in good to excellent condition declined during February from 58 to 44 percent in Montana and 58 to 49 percent in South Dakota.

Like January, February was a rather dry month across the majority of the Nation. However, there were notable exceptions, including an early-month snow storm from the Midwest into the Northeast; occasional heavy snow on the High Plains; and several Southern storms. During the second half of the month, some of the Southern storms produced disruptive amounts of snow, sleet, and freezing rain.

Meanwhile, California headed toward a fourth consecutive year of drought, despite a brief period of heavy precipitation from February 6-9. During February, conditions were especially dry in parts of the Great Basin, Intermountain West, and Desert Southwest, while snowpack remained close to record-low levels in the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada.

February Agricultural Summary

All areas in the United States east of the Great Plains recorded below average temperatures for the month. Areas of the Corn Belt, the Ohio River Valley, and New England recorded average temperatures more than 10°F below normal in February. Temperatures were above average for the month in the West with areas in the northern Rocky Mountains recording average temperatures more than 10°F above normal. Precipitation levels for the month were generally within 2 inches of normal across the Nation. Areas with precipitation levels more than 2 inches below normal were reported in California and along the Gulf of Mexico in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

Winter wheat conditions declined over the previous month in some northern locations due to lack of protective snow cover. In Montana, the percent of the crop in the good to excellent categories dropped 14 percentage points since February 1 to 44 percent on March 1. In South Dakota, winter wheat conditions decreased 9 percentage points over the month to 49 percent good to excellent. In Kansas, conditions decreased 2 percentage points in the good to excellent categories to 44 percent on March 1. Alternatively, heavy winter storms in Colorado improved winter wheat protection leading to a 10 percentage point increase for the month, with 48 percent in the good to excellent categories on March 1.

In Arizona, alfalfa conditions were mostly fair to excellent, depending on location. Sheep continued to graze on various alfalfa fields in many areas. Barley conditions were mostly fair and durum wheat conditions were mostly good. Storms at the beginning and the end of the month helped maintain soil moisture levels throughout the State. Rangeland conditions vary widely from very poor to good, depending on location.

California wheat, oats, and other winter forage crops continued to grow well in February. Despite some beneficial precipitation during the month, some growers were irrigating to make up for the lack of rain. Field cultivation for spring planting continued throughout the month. Alfalfa fields were being cultivated and planted near the middle of the month and by the end of the month field preparations were underway for the spring planting of corn and cotton. Pruning and shredding took place in tree fruit orchards. Grape vineyard pruning was in full swing at the beginning of the month. By the end of the month, grapes were developing a couple of weeks earlier due to warm conditions. Ranchers continued to graze sheep and cattle on rangelands but more rain is needed to help long term development of foothill grasses and forbs. Bee hives were delivered for orchard pollination.

Winter wheat conditions throughout Texas were rated fair to good during February. Producers in the Southern High Plains reported greenbug and winter grain mites in fields, while the Blacklands experienced fungal pressure and rust on small grains. Field preparations began for corn, cotton, and sorghum planting, with 4 percent of the corn crop planted by March 1, 3 percentage points behind both last year and the 5-year average. Producers delayed corn planting in several areas of the State due to cold, wet weather. Range and pasture conditions were rated fair to good, with supplemental feeding continuing across the State.

In Florida, fieldwork and soil preparation continued throughout the month in the Panhandle, with cold weather and saturated soil reported in the area. Sugarcane harvest continued through February in Glades, Hendry, and Palm Beach counties but slowed later in the month due to rain. Pastures across the State continued to be in poor condition due to freezing temperatures and saturated soils. Ranchers were providing supplemental feed due to the lack of forage crops. Several citrus processing plants finished with early and midseason oranges during February and have transitioned to grapefruit and Valencia oranges. By the end of the month, field workers across the citrus region noticed full bloom on all citrus varieties and feathery new growth in well cared for groves.

Crop Comments

Sugarcane: Production of sugarcane for sugar and seed in 2014 is forecast at 31.2 million tons, of which 29.6 million tons was utilized for sugar and 1.54 million tons for seed. Total production is up 1 percent from both last month and the previous year. Producers intend to harvest 874,100 acres for sugar and seed during the 2014 crop year, unchanged from the previous forecast. Expected yield for sugar and seed is forecast at 35.7 tons per acre, up 0.4 ton from the previous forecast and up 1.9 tons per acre from the previous season. Hawaii, Louisiana, and Texas sugarcane estimates were carried forward from the *Crop Production 2014 Summary* released in January 2015.

Grapefruit: The 2014-2015 United States grapefruit crop is forecast at 1.04 million tons, unchanged from last month's forecast but down 1 percent from last season's final utilization. In Florida, the row count survey conducted March 2-3 indicated 58 percent of the colored grapefruit was harvested, while 39 percent of the white grapefruit rows had been harvested. California and Texas grapefruit production forecasts are carried forward from the January 1 forecast.

Tangelos: Florida's tangelo forecast is 700,000 boxes (32,000 tons), unchanged from last month's forecast but down 20 percent from last season's final utilization. The Row Count Survey conducted March 2-3 showed 89 percent of the rows were harvested.

Tangerines and mandarins: The United States tangerine and mandarin crop is forecast at 748,000 tons, unchanged from the February forecast but up 3 percent from last season's final utilization. In Florida, harvest of early season varieties (Fallglo and Sunburst) is complete for the season, while the harvest of the Honey tangerine continues at a normal pace. Arizona and California tangerines and mandarins production forecasts are carried forward from January 1 forecast.

Florida citrus: Producers across the citrus growing region reported highs temperatures ranging from the 70s to 80s, while minimum temperatures were in the low 40s and upper 30s. A cold snap during the third week of the month brought temperatures below freezing in practically the complete citrus growing region. Temperatures below 30 degrees were sustained for less than two hours in nearly all places, causing minimal negative effects to citrus trees and fruit. Rainfall amounts were well above average in the Central and Northern areas of the citrus growing region with several counties receiving more than four inches of rainfall. Most of the Indian River District and Southern area counties received far less rainfall. As per the U.S. Drought Monitor, last updated February 24, 2015, abnormally dry conditions were present in Collier County, parts of Hendry County, and in the lower half of the Indian River District.

Processing plants were up and running at full capacity the first two weeks of the month, taking both eliminations and field run fruit. Several plants finished early and midseason oranges during the second half of the month and transitioned to grapefruit or began setting up to run Valencia oranges. Early variety fruit harvested for the fresh market included primarily Honey tangerines and colored grapefruit. A small amount of tangelos, white grapefruit, and early and midseason oranges also went fresh.

Grove activity included spraying, fertilizing, irrigating, and mowing in preparation for harvest. Field workers across the citrus region observed patchy pinhead bloom on oranges early in the month, and a full bloom on all varieties by the end of the month.

California citrus: Oranges, mandarins, tangelos, lemons, and grapefruit continued to be packed for domestic and foreign markets. Navel orange, Cara Cara, Moro Blood, and Minneola Tangelo exports continued to increase. Mid-month saw orange trees being topped in advance of the bloom. Seedless Mandarins and Murcotts were covered with netting to prevent cross pollination.

California noncitrus fruits and nuts: Pruning and shredding continued in tree fruit and nut orchards. Unseasonably warm temperatures caused a few early variety stone fruit orchards to bloom. Fungicide applications were done to protect the blooms. Grape vineyard pruning was in full swing and canes were being shredded and tied. Vineyards with cover crops showed good growth in between vines. Many vineyards continued to receive herbicide, fungicide, and miticide treatments. Mechanical and chemical pre-emergence herbicide applications continued in fruit tree orchards and vineyards throughout the month. Orchards were irrigated due to the lack of precipitation. Kiwifruit was packed and exported. Olive trees were dormant the first two weeks of February, then pruning began about the third week. Blooming was observed on peach, plum, and nectarine trees in orchards in the southern regions of California later in the month.

Statistical Methodology

Survey procedures: The orange objective yield survey for the March 1 forecast was conducted in Florida, which accounts for nearly 69 percent of the United States production. Bearing tree numbers are determined at the start of the season based on a fruit tree inventory conducted every year, combined with ongoing review based on administrative data or special surveys. From mid-July to mid-September, the number of fruit per tree is determined. In August and subsequent months, fruit size measurement and fruit droppage surveys are conducted, which are combined with the previous components to develop the current forecast of production. California and Texas conduct grower and packer surveys on a quarterly basis in October, January, April, and July. California also conducts objective measurement surveys in September for Navel oranges and in March for Valencia oranges.

Estimating procedures: State level objective yield estimates for Florida oranges were reviewed for errors, reasonableness, and consistency with historical estimates. The Florida Field Office submits its analysis of the current situation to the Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB). The ASB uses the Florida survey data and their analyses to prepare the published March 1 forecast. Reports from growers and packers in California and Texas were also used for setting estimates. These three States submit their analyses of the current situation to the Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB). The ASB uses the survey data and the State analyses to prepare the published March 1 forecast.

Revision policy: The March 1 production forecasts will not be revised. A new forecast will be made each month throughout the growing season. End-of-season estimates will be published in the *Citrus Fruits Summary* released in September. The production estimates are based on all data available at the end of the marketing season, including information from marketing orders, shipments, and processor records. Allowances are made for recorded local utilization and home use.

Reliability: To assist users in evaluating the reliability of the March 1 production forecasts, the "Root Mean Square Error," a statistical measure based on past performance, is computed. The deviation between the March 1 production forecast and the final estimate is expressed as a percentage of the final estimate. The average of squared percentage deviations for the latest 20-year period is computed. The square root of the average becomes statistically the "Root Mean Square Error." Probability statements can be made concerning expected differences in the current forecast relative to the final end-of-season estimate, assuming that factors affecting this year's forecast are not different from those influencing recent years.

The "Root Mean Square Error" for the March 1 orange production forecast is 2.8 percent. However, if the three abnormal production seasons (one freeze season and two hurricane seasons) are excluded, the "Root Mean Square Error" is 2.9 percent. This means that chances are 2 out of 3 that the current orange production forecast will not be above or below the final estimates by more than 2.8 percent, or 2.9 percent excluding abnormal seasons. Chances are 9 out of 10 (90 percent confidence level) that the difference will not exceed 4.9 percent, or 5.1 percent excluding abnormal seasons.

Changes between the March 1 orange forecast and the final estimates during the past 20 years have averaged 204,000 tons (211,000 tons, excluding abnormal seasons), ranging from 18,000 tons to 585,000 tons regardless of exclusions. The March 1 forecast for oranges has been below the final estimate 9 times and above 11 times (below 8 times and above 9 times, excluding abnormal seasons). The difference does not imply that the March 1 forecasts this year are likely to understate or overstate final production.

Information Contacts

Listed below are the commodity statisticians in the Crops Branch of the National Agricultural Statistics Service to contact for additional information. E-mail inquiries may be sent to nass@nass.usda.gov

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