



News Release

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1996 ALMOND PRODUCTION FORECAST UP 41% FROM 1995 ACCORDING TO CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

SACRAMENTO — California almond production for 1996 is expected to be 41% higher than last year, at 520 million pounds, according to crop production estimates released today by the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) California Agricultural Statistics Service (CASS).

Last year, the California almond crop suffered significant losses resulting from the winds, rains and storms in the beginning of the year. The 1995 crop was 370 million pounds, down from 735 million pounds in 1994.

Estimated almond bearing acreage for 1996 is 410,000. These estimates are based on a survey of almond growers which ended May 1. Statewide bloom reports varied from good to excellent, while cold weather and intermittent rain storms during February and March hampered pollination. A low crop of early and mid-season varieties is expected, while the late varieties appear to promise better results. The best crop conditions are reported to be in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Other production forecasts for this report include:

Wheat - California farmers are expected to produce 1.44 million tons of *winter wheat* this year, the largest crop since 1986. This is 85% more than last

year's flood-damaged crop. The 600,000 acres expected to be harvested for grain are 41% above last year. Yield is expected to average 2.40 tons per acre, up 31% from last year. California's *Durum wheat* production is forecast at 393,000 tons, 93% above 1995. If realized, this would be the second largest crop on record, exceeded only by 1981's output of 441 thousand tons. Acreage expected for harvest, at 138,000, is more than double last year's acreage. The expected yield of 2.85 tons per acre is down 5% from 1995.

The CASS conducted a survey to update the *almond*, *walnut*, and *prune* acreage in California. The survey was designed to operate on a two-year rotational basis with half the almond/walnut/prune growers contacted each year. This year, more than 7,000 California growers updated the acreage data on these three crops.

Almonds - The survey results indicate the 1995 *almond* acreage in California at 456,600. Of that, 399,700 acres are bearing and 56,900 are non-bearing. The *Nonpareil* variety accounted for the majority of *almond* acreage planted at 45% of the total acreage. The Carmel variety comprises 18% of the total. The counties with the largest acreage planted are: Kern, 19% of total; Merced, 18%; and Stanislaus, 16%.

Walnuts - *Walnut* acreage for 1995 totaled 195,100 acres; 168,500 bearing and 26,600 acres non-bearing. The *Hartley* variety accounted for 29% of total acreage. Survey results show the *Chandler* variety, with 57%, has the highest percentage of non-bearing acreage. San Joaquin County represents 16% of the total walnut acreage, followed by Tulare with 12% and Stanislaus with 11%.

Prunes - The 1995 California *prune* acreage is 98,800 acres; 78,800 bearing and 20,000 acres non-bearing. The *French* variety accounted for 98% of the total acreage. Sutter County shows the largest acreage planted to prunes with 25% of the total acreage, followed by Yuba County with 14% and Butte County with 13%.

MAY CROP PRODUCTION ESTIMATES

CROP	PRODUCTION	% CHANGE FROM 1995
	<i>Thousand Pounds</i>	
ALMONDS	520,000	+41
	<i>Thousand Tons</i>	
WHEAT		
Winter Wheat	1,440	+85
Durum Wheat	393	+93