

Network CONNECTION



..... Weekly updates and market insights from CTFA's PPN Network

April 23, 2007

News from the Network

Freeze Impacts National Peach Outlook

This season is finding almost every peach producing state in the East - with the exception of New Jersey - suffering from the effects of a devastating freeze that occurred just before and over Easter weekend. Based on interviews with multiple growers in each of the major peach-producing states, CTFA staff members have developed the following estimates of anticipated production.

Growers in South Carolina, the second-largest peach producing state in the nation, say the crop has been hit so hard that they will be fortunate to have 12 million pounds, representing 10% of a crop. Georgia growers state they're expecting 25-30% of a crop, which would be about 18 million pounds, down from 82 million pounds last year. North Carolina growers say they have been hit very hard by the freeze and do not believe any peaches will be harvested this year. In Virginia, 25% of a crop is expected, which would be about 2 million pounds, down from 8 million pounds last year. Alabama growers estimate they have 35-40% of a crop, which would project to about 8 million pounds, down from 18 million pounds last year.

In the mid-Atlantic, outcomes are mixed. In New Jersey, cold weather delayed bloom. Peach growers there believe they have escaped any serious injury to their crop. It is expected they will harvest 68 million pounds, the same as last year. Growers in Pennsylvania, however, say they suffered bud loss prior to the chill and flower kill afterward. It is thought they will harvest about 30 million pounds, down from 43 million last year.

In the Midwest, Michigan growers are optimistic that they have escaped serious freeze damage. While there is certain to be some damage, the crop is expected to be about 28 million pounds, about 75% of a crop.

In the west, growers in Texas state they think they will bounce back to an almost normal crop, with 27 million pounds expected, compared to 3.2 million pounds last year. Colorado growers expect they should have a good crop, about the same as last year's 28 million pounds. Washington has about 75% of a crop.

At this time, national production is expected to be just slightly over 1,000 million pounds, the shortest amount since the freeze-reduced crop in 1996. More details will be available in the 2007 Marketing Policy Statement for Peaches and Nectarines, available after the May 1 Committee meetings. Contact Gary Van Sickle for questions at gvensickle@caltreefruit.com or 559-638-8260.

POS Material Requests for 2007 Season Due Today



Industry members interested in placing orders for 2007 marketing materials should submit their requests by the close of business Monday, April 23. As in prior years, CTFA will provide industry members with printed versions of the standard materials made available on the PPN Network Download Center for use with retail customers. Materials will be printed to order and delivered directly to retailers by May 18.

Available materials include two versions of the "Are You a Cruncher, Leamer or In-Between" theme and accompanying "Did You Know?" cards, the "Which Peach/Plum/Nectarine is Your Peach/Plum/Nectarine?" theme and accompanying "Selection Tips" cards, as well as the new "Summer Passionates" cards and "Grill'n & Chill'n Sweepstakes" promotional material. The materials can be viewed and downloaded from the [Point of Sale](#) section of the [PPN Network Download Center](#). Contact Marketing Coordinator Carly Rodgers with orders and questions at crodgers@caltreefruit.com or 559-638-8260.

Regulatory News

Seasonal Regulations Interim Final Rule Issued; Comments Requested

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued an interim final rule with request for comments regarding California-grown nectarines and peaches and revised handling requirements for fresh nectarines and peaches. The full text of the rule can be viewed [here](#) via the Federal Register (PDF file).

This rule eliminates grade, size, maturity, pack, container and inspection requirements for all California nectarines and peaches except those packed in containers labeled "California Well Matured" or "CA WELL MAT." This rule also makes seasonal adjustments to the handling requirements applicable to well-matured fruit. Finally, this rule removes certain handler reporting requirements that are deemed no longer necessary. This rule should reduce handler costs while enabling handlers to continue to meet the demands of their buyers.

The rule was effective April 17, 2007. Comments received by June 15, 2007 will be considered prior to issuance of any final rule. Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this rule. Comments must be sent to the Docket Clerk, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 0237, Washington, DC 20250-0237; Fax: (202) 720-8938, or via the Internet at regulations.gov.

All comments should reference docket number and the date and page number of the issue of the Federal Register. For this IFR, that information is AMS-FV-07-0030; FV07-916/917-4 IFR, April 16, 2007, pp. 18848-18856.

For further information, contact Jennifer Garcia, Marketing Specialist, or Kurt J. Kimmel, Regional Manager, California Marketing Field Office, Marketing Order Administration Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA; Telephone: (559) 487-5901, Fax: (559) 487-5906; or E-mail: Jennifer.Garcia3@usda.gov or Kurt.Kimmel@usda.gov.

International News

Mexico Export Program Site Visits to Begin This Week

It has been confirmed that site visits by Mexican quarantine officials will begin the week of April 23 in advance of the 2007 export season for peaches, plums, nectarines and apricots. The border is anticipated to be open the first week of May for initial shipments.

Site visits are an integral component in the program registration process; it is important that all records are in order prior to the arrival of quarantine officials. *Failure to provide records or meet the compliance agreement requirements may result in removal from the program.* Prior to the arrival of inspection officials, please review your county compliance agreement and the work plans to ensure that you are aware of all of your responsibilities under the terms of this program.

For questions, contact Marcy Martin, Director of Trade Service for the California Grape & Tree Fruit League at (559) 226-6330 or via e-mail at mmartin@cgtfll.com.

Industry Involvement

Tree Fruit History to be Featured as Part of 75th Anniversary Event

Many California peach, plum and nectarine growers are their family's second or third generation in the business. The California Tree Fruit Agreement's 75th anniversary will occur in 2008, and CTFA staff are seeking photos of those founding generations for an anniversary celebration. The 2007 Grower Meeting and Dinner will include a look back at the industry's history through images and remembrances of industry veterans. Can your family or organization contribute? Photos of all aspects of the California peach, plum and nectarine industry are sought, with images from the 1930s through 1950s especially welcome. All materials will be treated with the utmost care and will be returned. If you have materials to lend, please contact Carly Rodgers at croddgers@caltreefruit.com or 559-638-8260.

Last Reminder: Subcommittee Applications Due May 1

Applications for CTFA subcommittees are now available and may be returned through May 1. Interested industry members are encouraged to apply and to encourage others they feel could make a positive contribution. Open positions exist on all CTFA subcommittees, including Domestic Market Development, International Market Development, Research, and Tree Fruit Quality. Subcommittees plan the direction of CTFA programs and are instrumental in providing the industry what it wants from its organization. Contact Corina Tamez at ctamez@caltreefruit.com or 559-638-8260 for questions or an application.

Meetings of Note

Tulare, Fresno & Stanislaus Peach, Nectarine and Plum Estimating Meeting to Take Place April 30

The peach, plum and nectarine estimating meeting for the Tulare, Fresno and Stanislaus districts will take place April 30 at noon at the CTFA office in Reedley. Contact Amy DeMoss at ademoss@caltreefruit.com or 559-638-8260 for questions.

Spring Committee/Board Meetings to Take Place May 1

The California Plum Board, California Tree Fruit Marketing Board, Peach Commodity Committee and Nectarine Administrative Committee will meet beginning May 1 at 1 p.m. at the Kearney Research and Extension Center in Parlier. The meeting will take place in the center's Nectarine Room. Contact Corina Tamez at ctamez@caltreefruit.com or 559-638-8260 for questions.

In Other News

Stemilt Announces Major Move to Organic Stone Fruit Production

Washington-based Stemilt Growers Inc. announced April 13 that it will transition 100% of its peach, plum and nectarine volume and about half of its nectarine volume to organic production methods. In a news

release distributed by Stemilt, Marketing Director George Pepperl noted that the planned change will cover volume of roughly 1.5 million packs of peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots and Pluots®, accounting for 70% of the total volume of those crops grown in Washington state. The transitional fruit will be packed under the company's "Artisan Naturals" label. Read [the full release](#) at FreshPlaza.