

CITRUS

MARCH FORECAST
MATURITY TEST RESULTS AND FRUIT SIZE

March 11, 1997

TOTAL ORANGES NOW 222.0 MILLION BOXES

The 1996-97 Florida all orange forecast, released today by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Board, is 222.0 million boxes, 2.0 million more than last month's forecast. All of the increase is in the early and midseason portion, now at 135.0 million boxes. The late type (Valencia) portion remains at 87.0 million boxes.

The total forecast is one percent above the 220.0 million box forecast held since October 1996. If realized, the total will be a record crop, surpassing by seven percent the 206.7 million boxes in 1979-80 and nine percent more than last season's 203.2 million boxes. At this point in the season, with the early and midseason crop nearing completion and the volume harvest of Valencias just starting, the forecast is primarily Valencias and remaining amounts of early-mid seasons.

EARLY-MIDSEASON PORTION UP TO 135.0 MILLION BOXES

The early and midseason orange forecast is increased from 133.0 million boxes last month, to 135.0 million boxes, based on estimated utilization through February 27, 1997 and the remaining rows on the route survey (row count) of the same date. This amount is four percent above the 130.0 million box forecast made initially in October 1996. The forecast includes Navels, at a record 6.5 million boxes, unchanged since October. The major factor in the increased utilization of the crop is the record low fruit droppage loss through

Citrus production, March 1, 1997
 forecasts by varieties and states, with comparisons

Crop and State	Production		Forecast	
	1994-95	1995-96	Feb 12, 1997	Mar 11, 1997
Early, Midseason, and Navel Oranges:	--- 1,000 boxes ---			
FLORIDA	119,700	121,200	133,000	135,000
California	35,000	38,000	39,000	39,000
Texas	950	830	1,300	1,300
Arizona	400	700	550	550
Total Above Varieties	156,050	160,730	173,850	175,850
Valencias:				
FLORIDA	85,800	82,000	87,000	87,000
California	21,000	28,000	26,000	26,000
Texas	105	110	150	150
Arizona	650	950	850	850
Total Valencias	107,555	111,060	114,000	114,000
All Oranges:				
FLORIDA	205,500	203,200	220,000	222,000
California	56,000	66,000	65,000	65,000
Texas	1,055	940	1,450	1,450
Arizona	1,050	1,650	1,400	1,400
Total All Oranges	263,605	271,790	287,850	289,850

FORECAST DATES 1996-97 SEASON

April 11, 1997	May 12, 1997
June 12, 1997	July 11, 1997

January. Other factors are the maximizing of harvest and excellent fruit size/weight relationships. The final estimate will depend on certifications of the remaining volume.

The estimated utilization through March 9, 1997 was 134.2 million boxes (including 1.0 million boxes of uncertified gift fruit and other use allocated pre-season). Weekly utilization is decreasing as many processing plants are changing over to Valencias and grapefruit.

VALENCIAS REMAIN 87.0 MILLION BOXES

The late type (Valencia) orange forecast is unchanged at 87.0 million boxes. The monthly fruit size and loss survey indicates that the average fruit size is only slightly below the mean of the past 11 seasons; however, the current average size is smaller than three of the past five seasons. At the time of the February survey, a very small percent of groves had been harvested. The accumulated loss from fruit droppage was below the average of the past five seasons and only slightly above last season's record low loss. There appears to be no correlation between this season and any season when freezing weather occurred in January.

FCOJ REMAINS 1.54 GALLONS PER BOX

The estimated final yield for all fruit going into FCOJ is unchanged from last month at 1.54 gallons per box of 42.0 degrees Brix concentrate. The early and mid portion is now forecast to be 1.52 gallons per box, up from 1.50 last month. Report number 22 from the Florida Citrus Processors Association shows over 100 million boxes of fruit used in the early portion of FCOJ which includes some Valencias processed since the cold weather of January 19.

The yield for the remaining late season portion is estimated to be 1.60 gallons per box, unchanged from last month.

After five days return to
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 National Agricultural Statistics Service
 1222 Woodward Street, Orlando, Florida 32803

Official Business
 PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

SEEDLESS GRAPEFRUIT REMAIN 58.0 MILLION BOXES

The all seedless grapefruit forecast is unchanged from last month and October at 58.0 million boxes. White seedless remain at 26.5 million boxes and colored varieties at 31.5 million boxes.

Fruit size increased from the previous month but at a very low rate. Sizes for all varieties are near the historic mean, but much smaller than the previous two seasons. Loss of fruit from unharvested trees in the Indian River area continues to be the lowest in many seasons. Droppage, however, in the interior is increasing in those groves affected by the January 19 freezing weather.

The March 1 row count survey, conducted February 26-27, indicated the lowest percent rows fully harvested in many seasons to this date. These indicators, based on a weighted average that accounts for productivity differences between age groups of trees and areas of the State, fully support the forecast.

Utilization to date, including an allocation for gift fruit, is lagging the previous seasons to March 1 with only an estimated 8.7 million boxes of white seedless harvested. Last season, about 12 million boxes had been utilized. Colored varieties utilization is estimated at 17.3 million boxes compared to over 18 million last season. Weekly harvest of field-run grapefruit is increasing as processors allocate more time between orange harvests.

Citrus production, March 1, 1997 forecasts by varieties and states, with comparisons

Crop and State	Production		Forecast	
	1994-95	1995-96	Feb 12, 1997	Mar 11, 1997
--- 1,000 boxes ---				
Grapefruit:				
FLORIDA-All	55,700	52,350	59,000	59,000
Seedless	54,400	51,300	58,000	58,000
White	25,700	23,200	26,500	26,500
Colored	28,700	28,100	31,500	31,500
Seedy (Other)	1,300	1,050	1,000	1,000
Texas	4,650	4,550	5,500	5,300
Arizona	1,400	1,200	1,000	1,000
California	9,300	8,100	9,000	9,000
Total Grapefruit	71,050	66,200	74,500	74,300
Lemons:				
California	20,000	21,000	22,000	22,000
Arizona	3,600	5,100	4,000	4,000
Total Lemons	23,600	26,100	26,000	26,000
Limes: Florida				
	230	300	300	300
Temples: Florida				
	2,550	2,150	2,500	2,500
Tangelos: Florida				
	3,150	2,450	4,000	4,000
K-Early: Florida				
	120	160	150	150
Tangerines:				
FLORIDA-All	3,550	4,500	6,200	6,300
Early ¹	2,350	2,900	4,500	4,600
Honey	1,200	1,600	1,700	1,700
California	2,500	2,600	2,700	2,700
Arizona	650	1,000	750	750
Total Tangerines	6,700	8,100	9,650	9,750

¹ Robinson, Fallglo, Sunburst, and Dancy.

SEEDY GRAPEFRUIT 1.0 MILLION BOXES

The seedy (Duncan) grapefruit forecast remains at 1.0 million boxes. Harvest has been very limited but will increase rapidly this month as processors allocate more time to grapefruit. Last season, slightly over 1 million boxes of seedy were certified.

ALL TANGERINES NOW 6.3 MILLION BOXES

The all tangerine forecast is increased by 100,000 boxes to 6.3 million boxes. The increase is in the early category (Robinson, Fallglo, Dancy, and Sunburst). Sunburst utilization accounts for over 75 percent of fresh shipments of these early tangerine varieties. Most processing tangerines have been packing house eliminations, but limited amounts of Sunburst and Dancys have been field run.

The Honey tangerine portion is unchanged at 1.7 million boxes. Although this is down slightly from the January forecast, it is still more than anticipated in October. Droppage has been extremely low even with the cold weather of January 19. Utilization is estimated at 1.1 million boxes, slightly ahead of last season. Fruit that is not shipped fresh will be harvested for processing.

TEMPLES 2.5 MILLION BOXES

The Temple forecast is maintained at 2.5 million boxes. Fruit sizes are near average and droppage was low through the January survey period. Droppage has increased, however, following the January 19 cold weather. Most utilization is to processing plants. Total utilization is near the same as last season at 1.7 million boxes.

TANGELOS 4.0 MILLION BOXES

Tangelo harvest is near completion with estimated utilization over 3.9 million boxes. The row count survey indicated some rows still unharvested. This is the largest harvested crop since the 1987-88 season.

K-EARLY CITRUS FINAL

The K-Early Citrus Fruit estimate of production is final at 150,000 boxes. Last season's utilization was 160,000 boxes.

Unadjusted maturity tests: Average of regular bloom fruit from sample groves, 1995-96 and 1996-97 seasons

Fruit type (No. groves) test date	Acid		Solids (Brix)		Ratio		Unfinished juice per box		Solids per box		
	1995-96	1996-97	1995-96	1996-97	1995-96	1996-97	1995-96	1996-97	1995-96	1996-97	
	Percent		Percent				Pounds		Pounds		
Juice and solids per box are unadjusted and not comparable to plant test results.											
ORANGES:											
Late (150-139)											
Oct	1	2.39	2.41	8.61	8.94	3.65	3.75	47.66	46.16	4.10	4.13
Nov	1	1.78	2.00	8.68	9.32	4.99	4.74	52.65	49.66	4.58	4.63
Dec	1	1.56	1.65	9.54	10.29	6.23	6.33	53.37	53.24	5.10	5.48
Jan	1	1.38	1.44	10.44	11.11	7.66	7.81	54.23	53.97	5.67	6.00
Feb	1	1.21	1.29	11.37	11.88	9.52	9.34	54.68	54.12	6.23	6.44
Mar	1	1.12	1.11	11.86	12.30	10.76	11.23	54.23	54.17	6.44	6.67

NOTICE: All samples were run through an FMC 091 machine using mechanical pressure only. This machine utilizes a .040 short strainer and standard 5/8-inch orifice tube. The beam settings are also identical to past tests and no restrictors are used.

Maturity test averages by areas, March 1, 1997

Fruit type	Groves sampled	Acid	Solids (Brix)	Ratio	Unfinished juice per box	Solids per box
	Number	Percent	Percent		Pounds	Pounds
ORANGES:						
Late						
Indian River Dist.	24	1.19	13.12	11.19	56.47	7.42
Other Areas	115	1.10	12.13	11.24	53.69	6.52

FRUIT SIZE COMPARISONS BY TYPES TO PREVIOUS SEASONS

Size frequency distributions from the February size survey are shown in the table below. The distributions are by percent of fruit falling within the size range of each 4/5-bushel container. Fruit sizes were measured on trees in sample groves during the period February 10 through 25, 1997. Comparable sizes for 1995 and 1996 are also shown. These measurements are of fruit from spring bloom and exclude summer bloom in all seasons.

FLORIDA CITRUS: Size frequency distributions from February measurements

Type of fruit and size in 4/5-bushel containers	1995	1996	1997
	--- Percent ---		
Valencia oranges:			
64 and larger	10.4	8.4	8.0
80	29.6	29.9	23.7
100	39.2	41.5	36.7
125	16.9	16.6	23.2
163 and smaller	3.9	3.6	8.4
White seedless grapefruit:			
32 and larger	31.3	49.6	24.7
36	28.5	23.4	26.7
40	15.9	11.8	21.4
48	11.6	7.0	14.7
56	5.8	4.0	5.8
63 and smaller	6.9	4.2	6.7
Colored seedless grapefruit:			
32 and larger	22.4	32.2	14.8
36	26.7	27.6	25.5
40	18.5	17.7	22.1
48	15.5	11.3	20.9
56	8.9	5.4	10.0
63 and smaller	8.0	5.8	6.7

The chart below compares the relationship of the February 1996 Valencia orange fruit size measurements with those taken in February 1997. The diameter measurements shown are the minimum values of each eighth inch range except for the smallest values.

CHART: Valencia size frequency by diameter from February measurements.

