



Sierra News

April 2009

MARCH 4, 2009

Out in the Field

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As of the date of this letter, avocados are blooming like there's no tomorrow! In Santa Barbara, Ventura, Riverside and San Diego Counties I can actually say we are in full bloom, the trees are responding very well and shooting new red growth. The bloom flowers are still opening and I look forward to probably having them open well into the third week in May.

The bloom has been open since March 23rd and we've only received two real days of heat with one at 95 degrees and the other around 99 degrees and



have not seen any damage from those two particular days. Everyday that we get around 65 to 75 degrees pollination is occurring and so far we've had 17 days of this.

Being out in the field on a daily basis we've not seen any thrip, in fact down in San Diego County area some of the top entomologists have stated at several

public meetings, that this may be the first year we don't have a severe thrip outbreak. There is still the chance that individual groves may need to be sprayed but at this time it is very hard to find a single thrip in our groves and temperatures and humidity play a big role in this. We're headed into another warming trend around the first week in May which should also prevent the thrip from really multiplying.

LEMON MARKET



The market has been stable but not as exciting as it was last year mainly due to an overall increase of supply from Districts 1, 2 and 3. We are looking at an overall increase of over 20% in the market. Pack outs are still looking very good, we're still finishing up the

first pick on most of our groves and are optimistic about the summer months. As you all are well aware it isn't until the East Coast thaws out and spring really hits that lemon demand really starts in the entire United States.

Cultural Side of Lemons & Avocados

The first application of fertilizer was applied in April, we went to calcium

nitrate to get our nitrogen in the ground which was depleted during the win-

ter. The trees are responding very well with new growth.

Water Issues



MWD has made its ruling, 10% cutback is mandatory for everyone. This allows anybody who didn't opt out of the AG rebate program to stay at a 30% reduction. Right now with Rancho California a 7% savings will be needed, San Diego County will be anywhere from 8-13% depending on water district. We will be looking at groves individually and seeing what is necessary. To date we still haven't heard what the exact allocations will be per water districts for Ventura County.

This decision by MWD was driven mainly by politics this year when at the very last minute they received an increase in water from the state water projects due to the late rains in April, snow pack from the northern Sierra areas is about 95% of normal and in the Colorado Rocky mountains about 115% of normal. MWD will bank the extra water and refill reservoirs and get ready for the fourth dry year in a row.

Long range weather forecasts are calling for an El Nino but as you know things can change. We will keep you updated through out the year.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH