

SIERRA News

News, notes and tips from your friends at Sierra Pacific Farms

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Weather



During February 26 and 27 we experienced (I'm sure you have all read about it by now in the local newspapers) a very unique cold spell for California, especially this late in the year. I am happy to say that we, for the most part, dodged a bullet. All areas reported a very nice 2 inches +/- rainfall before the cold

air hit and having the ground loaded with moisture helped keep temperatures up. We also had some cloud cover to trap some of the warmer air, as well as thunderstorms in some areas which also helped us get through the cold nights. Overall, I am very pleased because the rain came at a perfect time. It will help size lemons during the next month and also help in our avocado bloom which is just now showing in our groves. Long-range weather forecasters are calling for more rain during the month of March - keep your fingers crossed that this will keep meters off for another 30 days.

Market

In the Citrus industry the lemon market has firmed up with a late January frost that happened in the Coachella Valley and Yuma, AZ. It is estimated that about one million boxes of lemons were frozen and taken out of the market and that number could go higher. We are currently finishing up some of our first picks and are getting ready to go in for another size 9-ring and up pick on our lemon acreage. Market prices are just a little behind last year, although with these rains, we will look for increased size of the fruit which should lead to a better return for all of our growers. The avocado market makes me feel like I am in a dream! Prices as we speak are \$1.50 for 48's, \$1.40 for 60's. This is due

mainly to the current deep lack of fruit in the market. Chile is now sending its last boatloads and those are small quantities. Mexico is gearing up for its last push for Cinco de Mayo and overall inventories in the industry are hovering around 16-17 million pounds compared to last year of 24-25 million pounds. I personally believe this bodes very well for the future. We are getting ready to go in and complete a size pick. I really believe that this year's strategy will

be only two picks; one the first size-pick and second will be finishing up the crop. Larry Weaver and Doug O'Hara are beginning to contact growers now with your individual strategy.



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Sierra Pacific News Cont...

In the Field

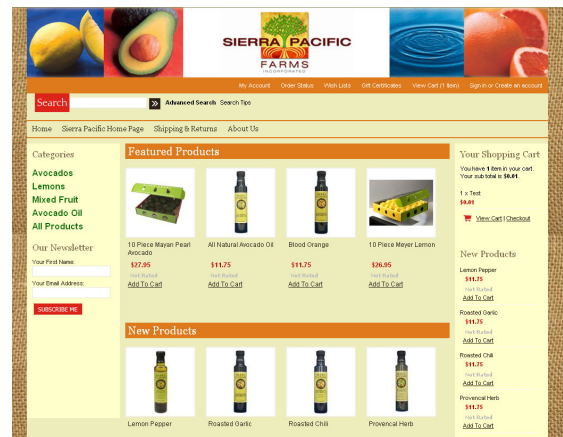
Topping is the main job we are finishing up presently, once we get that completed we will be doing some internal pruning on our medium-sized avocado trees and preparing our fertilizer programs. The only bad news on the horizon is with the increased cost of petroleum, we are more than likely going to see fertilizer prices rise. As always, we are going to try to fertilize at a time that gets us the biggest bang for our buck and are looking at starting off sometime late March. As of the date of this letter, there appears to be no pressure on both lemons and avocados for pest control applications, although we are watching very closely as we always do this time of year.



On-Line Shopping

Please visit our store at www.spfarminc.com and click on the "Shop Online" button to browse our products and place an order. We are selling Avocado Oils, Fresh Avocados and Meyer Lemons. Check it out today!

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UNTIL NEXT TIME...

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