

SIERRA *News*

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

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October 2011



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Out in the Field

I am very happy with the condition of all trees under Sierra Pacific and Somis Pacific's care. Fruit is larger than normal at this point in time mainly due to our short season and the fact that we picked earlier than we would usually pick. Our trees have had about 60 days of good weather where they have had no competing crop on the trees, which allowed them to use most of their energy in sizing fruit and this is quite evident when you walk the groves. Pest control against such pests as Persea Mite



and Brown Mite, appears to be in very isolated areas and no real need to spray on most of our groves. Our growth from our last fertilizer applications is 12- 18 inches; this is important because this is your bloom for next year.



Lemons

We are finishing up our picks and the yearly pools are going to be closing October 31. We will be looking at starting to pick in the early part of December. We may be doing some defensive picks for frost and wind, although I am projecting a slightly better year next year for lemons. This is mainly due to



the freeze in the Coachella Valley and the much-better size and quality of fruit at this point in time. We are finishing up our pruning programs, pest control is finishing up and I am happy with the condition of the trees, and especially the quality of fruit at this particular time of the year.



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Sierra Pacific News Cont...

In the Marketplace



Just as we finish up, the global market goes down the drain mainly due to the influx of Peruvian fruit. The Peruvian growers who were acting a bit on the greedy side, held their fruit way too long and came in without markets established and paid the price. With only 4 million pounds in inventory, no one was buying Peruvian fruit. Their first choice was Chile which was very cheap (you are all well aware of my rant on Chilean quality; it still stinks.) Our normal local stores, such as Vons, have Chilean fruit. It doesn't ripen, it is purple/reddish in color and since it is picked before maturity, when it becomes soft, it is watery and fibrous. It is just poor from a consumer point of view. I don't think they are ever going to get the quality issue, but definitely the stores are beginning to get it. Mexico is coming

in as normal with better quality fruit and will continue on through the winter time. Peru will play a different role next year when they come in on a timely basis and are more concerned with their quality. The Peru crop is interesting because they already have an established European market that is very good. Any time the dollar is weak, they are going to send their fruit over to take advantage of the strong Euro for their profits. I will pass along more information on Peru as we get it. As far as a total crop for next year, the California Avocado Commission is projecting somewhere between 400 and 425 million pounds, however I am very excited about their projection for gross dollars – they are using \$1.20 per pound at this time. They have also put together some excellent budgets on spending more money on advertising than ever before. Their programs have been very successful and we have all benefitted from that last year with our incredibly high prices. All in all, with CAC's dollar projections and our volume projections, I think Sierra Pacific and Somis Pacific growers will have an excellent year next year.

Weather



We just received our long-term weather forecast from Scripps and NOAA and both have very conflicting views about the upcoming winter season. Scripps is predicting a true La Nina. This is where we get heavy rains in the early part of the year, November and December and dry through January to March with late March rains. NOAA has almost the opposite position with rains starting late December through January, drier than normal February and later rains in May and April. Both are calling for colder than normal temperatures this year. On the bright side, both are saying below-normal Santa Ana wind events since these storms are originating on a more southerly basis. So obviously, your guess is as good as mine on the weather! As of the date of this letter, we are experiencing our first rainfall and are making adjustments to all watering in light of that.

Until Next Time...

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