

MARCH 2018 CITRUS REPORT



Winter Blues in Spring

January and most of February was dry and warm, the kind of weather that gets you ready to put the jackets away. That all changed during the week of February 19th, when a cold and dry arctic front moved into California and delivered critically low temperatures into the low to mid 20's for multiple nights. At this point, most of the citrus still hanging on the trees was mature with enough sugars to withstand the bitter cold. The real threat was losing the new growth that the spring-like conditions has produced. If the grove was fortunate enough to have warm well water and wind machines, frost protection measures had a major effect in keeping the orchards warm and protected from frost-burning the sensitive little buds and save next years crop. In the event of a freeze event such as this, it is always good practice to contact your crop insurance provider.

Rain and Snow, Finally

During the week of February 26th, rain and snow finally found a path into Central and Northern California. Since October 1st, the Central Valley had a total of 1.75 inches of accumulative rain. The storm systems of the past week provided over 2" of rain, and 7' of new snow pack in the high Sierra Nevada mountain ranges. Normal rainfall for the citrus belt of California is 10.5 inches. This snow reservoir will certainly help farmers continue to irrigate throughout the hot months of the growing season in 2018.

Citrus Harvest

The harvesting season for fresh California Citrus begins in September, and normally ends in June. This year, the fruit is picking very nice with average fresh pack of 80% utilization. The navel crop is approximately 48-52% picked, and fruit sizes are on the larger side. Mandarins are 38% harvested. Lemons are 50% harvested. The returns back to the farm are strong, especially the Oranges that are sold for High-Brix & Exporting. South Korea and Japan are big buyers of California Citrus.

Citrus Notes



Size plays an important role in the value of an orange. Common sizes for Oranges is 48's, 56's, 72's, 88's, & 113's. These numbers refer to the amount of pieces packed into a 40-pound weight carton (or box). The orange in this picture is a 72, as indicated by the scale on the bottom of the measuring caliper. 48's are large, 113's are much smaller. 72's are an ideal size, as they are typically worth more money than fruit that is very small or very large.

For more information or questions on all things related to citrus, please send me an email to info@neufeldag.com.

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