



*Promoting sustainable agriculture
since 1974*

PRODUCE NOTES

March 25, 2002

CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE

California is the largest agricultural state in the U.S., producing over 350 commodities. It is the sole producer, (99% or more), of many commodities, including: almonds, artichokes, dates, figs, kiwifruit, olives, persimmons, pistachios, prunes, raisins, clover and walnuts.

The top five fresh produce crops are: grapes, lettuce, tomatoes, strawberries and oranges.

Fresno County is the leading agricultural producing county, followed by Tulare and Monterey.

Statistics specific to organic agriculture production are not easily accessible. Organic farming became one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture during the 1990's. The last census dates back to 1997. Certified organic cropland more than doubled from 1992-1997. The numbers offer an interesting view on how California, as the largest agricultural producing state, also leads the way in organic production. Organic vegetable crops were produced on 48,227 acres in the United States in 1997. California producers grew nearly half of the organic vegetables certified in 1997, with lettuce accounting for the largest share of acreage. California also had the most certified organic rice production and organic poultry production.

If you interested in reading more about organic production in the United States, go to the website www.ars.gov/is/AR.

UP AND COMING...

This week, we begin a series on the California growing regions. Often times, when talking about our growers and where our supply comes from, we refer to growing regions. The map provided this week breaks the state into growing regions and the counties contained within these regions. Each week, we will highlight one region and talk about the primary growers in that region, as well as, what crops are coming from that particular area. We will provide as comprehensive a list as possible of growers within that region as well as what they grow. We will also try to talk about the geography of the region as it pertains to its' agriculture and highlight any distinct or historic characteristics of the region.

It is our hope that this will help provide an understanding of the richness and diversity of organic agriculture within our state as well as helping to gain a better understanding of where our food supply is coming from within the state of California.

Karen Salinger
Sales Manager

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR MARKET

IT IS SPRING ... With the cold weather we have had these past two weeks, it may be hard to believe that last Thursday the 21st of March was the first day of spring. For those of us in the produce industry this means a shift in the growing regions of where our primary supply of fruits and vegetables is coming from. A shift of growing region generally implies a shift in quality as well as availability of product from different growers.

For several months, our primary supply of leaf and broccoli has been coming from what is commonly referred to as, "the desert". This is the south-eastern most part of California, and includes the Imperial Valley.

With a change in weather patterns, the Imperial Valley becomes too hot for leaf, broccoli and cauliflower.

Soon, we will begin to see arrivals on these commodities from further north, from the Bakersfield area all the way up to Salinas, and Monterey County. Product will increase in supply from the coastal regions of Santa Barbara and Ventura, regions that enjoy the coastal influence of cooler weather when most of the interior of the state heats up as we move from spring to summer.

This is an exciting time of year and we look forward to all the new items

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California Growing Regions



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