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April 6th, 2009 CALIFORNIA CHERRY CROP UPDATE

The Southern San Joaquin Valley (Edison, Arvin, Maricopa north to Fresno County) is down significantly in volume from 2008. A bloom period frost event around March 8-10th dramatically reduced the crop. Compounding the frost damage is a higher incidence of spurs and doubles in the Brook variety. The Tulare variety tonnage is down more than Brooks largely due to missing its pollination crossover due to late flower emergence and weak return bloom after its large 2008 crop.

Limited harvest volume of Brooks will likely begin the week of April 20th. Expect the south valley crop to have a flatter peak and a longer harvest period lasting until May 20th or after.

Volume estimates are very difficult to predict but consensus is 1.7 – 2.0 million boxes. 2008 produced approximately 3.5 million boxes originating in the south valley.

The Northern San Joaquin Valley (Stockton, Walnut Grove, Lodi and Linden) is just finishing up a long bloom period. Bloom conditions were pretty good around the region. Bloom was later so we expect to begin later and harvest longer than normal. Current thought is we have good sized crop but not a limb buster. That probably means 5+ million boxes of Bings if the weather is good. For reference, California produced about 5.2 million boxes of Bings in 2008.

Weather forecasts for the south valley the week of April 6th are for showers and near frost low temperatures. The north valley is expecting some rain and cool temperatures.