

## Prune Situation in Selected Countries

**In marketing year 1999/2000, prune production is forecast at 149,686 tons, up 53 percent in the United States, the world's largest prune producer. Poor weather conditions in 1998/99 dramatically reduced U.S. prune production to 97,976 tons, down 50 percent from the 1997/98 crop. Production in France, the second largest prune producer, is forecast up 61 percent in 1999/2000 after two consecutive years of small prune crops. However, production in France remains below the record 64,813 tons produced in 1996/97.**

### United States

The 1999/2000 (August 1999 to July 2000) prune crop is forecast at 149,686 tons, up 53 percent from the previous year. However, this is a 9 percent decline from the 163,293 tons initially forecast by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in June 1999. An unexpected heat wave in July 1999 caused fruit to drop from the trees, decreasing the size of the 1999/2000 crop. The 1998/99 prune crop was 97,976 tons, the smallest since 1986/87, due to adverse weather conditions from El Niño. According to NASS, total 1999 bearing acreage is estimated at 83,000. The French prune variety accounts for more than 98 percent of all prunes grown in California.

Most of the 1999/2000 prune crop is in manufacturing sizes and cannot be exported as consumer packs. Consequently, exports are expected to decline by 9 percent in 1999/2000. In 1998/99 prune exports rose a modest 1 percent to 71,202 tons compared to the previous year as a result of the small prune crop that year. Japan is the largest consumer of U.S. prunes accounting for 19,696 tons or 28 percent of total U.S. prune exports during the 1998/99 marketing year. Other major markets include Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada and the Netherlands. Prune imports are expected to fall 53 percent to 300 tons in 1999/2000, a return to a more normal import level.

### France

Prune production is forecast up 61 percent in 1999/2000 (September 1999 to August 2000) to 45,000 tons. In 1998/99 French prune production amounted to 33,000 tons, 25 percent below expected production levels as a result of rain and hail during the summer months. France is the world's second largest prune producer after the United States.

France is expected to remain a large exporter of prunes. In 1999/2000 exports are expected down slightly as a result of very low stocks to draw upon. France's major export markets for prunes in 1998/99 were Algeria, Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany. In 1998/99 prune imports came

from Spain, Yugoslavia, and Argentina. Industry experts project there may be a higher demand for imported prunes in 1999/2000 as stock levels drop.

### **Yugoslavia**

Prune production declined from 5,700 tons in 1996/97 (October 1996 to September 1997) to 3,700 tons in 1998/99. Exports in 1998/99 declined by 10 percent to 900 tons. The decline in exports is mainly attributed to two problems, a shortage of credit in Yugoslavia and the inability of the government to provide financial support to prune exporters. In addition, the severe economic crisis in Russia, the largest consumer of Yugoslavia's prunes, has also contributed to the shortfall in exports in 1997/98 and 1998/99. An update report containing forecasts for the 1999/2000 marketing year is expected in January 2000. For reporting purposes, Yugoslavia includes the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro.

### **Chile**

Prune production in 1998/99 (January 1999 to December 1999) is estimated at 17,000 tons, up 10 percent from 1997/98 as a result of better weather conditions. Industry sources have indicated that good economic results obtained by most producers during the last few years have encouraged many farmers to increase the planted areas, by planting additional orchards or replacing older, low producing trees. Industry sources forecast total yearly production to reach 24,000 tons in 4 to 5 years as a result of increased plantings. The 1999/2000 forecast will be available in April 2000.

Chile's prune exports are estimated to reach 16,500 tons in 1998/99, down 12 percent from the previous year. Major markets for Chile's prunes in 1997/98 included Brazil, Mexico, Spain, Peru and Germany.

*(The FAS Attache Report search engine contains reports on the Dried Fruit industries for 8 countries, including South Africa, Turkey and Australia. For information on production and trade, contact Karina Ramos at 202-720-6877. For information on marketing contact Kelly Strzelecki at 202-690-1341)*

**Prunes: Production, Supply and Distribution  
Marketing Years 1996/97 - 1999/2000**

Country/ Marketing Year 1/	Beginning Stocks	Production	Imports	Exports	Domestic Consumption	Ending Stocks
METRIC TONS						
<b>France</b>						
1996/97	26,620	64,813	650	18,566	30,337	43,180
1997/98	43,180	28,500	400	21,514	26,426	24,140
1998/99	24,140	28,000	500	20,000	28,500	4,140
1999/2000	4,140	45,000	500	19,000	29,000	1,640
<b>United States</b>						
1996/97	65,705	202,302	464	67,051	103,893	97,527
1997/98	97,527	194,138	200	70,241	101,141	120,482
1998/99	120,482	97,976	638	71,202	90,794	57,100
1999/2000	57,100	149,686	300	65,000	87,086	55,000
<b>Yugoslavia</b>						
1996/97	1,100	5,700	0	1,000	4,800	1,000
1997/98	1,000	3,800	0	1,000	2,800	1,000
1998/99	1,000	3,700	0	900	2,800	1,000
1999/2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Chile</b>						
1996/97	160	24,000	0	17,216	1,170	5,774
1997/98	5,774	15,500	0	18,840	1,170	1,264
1998/99	1,264	17,000	0	16,500	1,170	594
1999/2000	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

1/ Marketing years begin August in the United States, September in France, October in Yugoslavia, and January in Chile.

Sources: U.S. Agricultural Attaches, USDA/NASS estimates, Industry data and U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**U.S. Prune Exports  
Marketing Years 1995/96 - 1998/99**

<b>Country</b>	<b>1995/96</b>	<b>1996/97</b>	<b>1997/98</b>	<b>1998/99</b>
METRIC TONS				
Japan	13,183	14,980	20,271	19,696
Germany	11,492	10,237	11,139	9,878
United Kingdom	5,489	5,473	4,794	6,957
Italy	6,593	5,676	6,489	5,592
Canada	4,167	4,246	4,175	4,369
Netherlands	2,878	1,959	1,451	4,097
Taiwan	731	891	876	1,701
Singapore	756	3,292	1,949	1,514
Denmark	2,494	1,614	1,613	1,499
Sweden	1,734	1,812	1,784	1,467
Finland	1,565	1,768	1,739	1,393
Poland	445	951	1,057	1,337
Israel	893	1,082	1,132	1,261
Spain	1,221	1,337	1,206	1,123
Norway	1,156	1,103	1,006	1,103
Other	6,872	10,630	9,560	8,215
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>61,669</b>	<b>67,051</b>	<b>70,241</b>	<b>71,202</b>

**U.S. Prune Imports  
Marketing Years 1995/96 - 1998/99**

<b>Country</b>	<b>1995/96</b>	<b>1996/97</b>	<b>1997/98</b>	<b>1998/99</b>
METRIC TONS				
Argentina	0	0	15	402
Taiwan	169	137	76	84
China	35	103	43	65
Chile	20	1	2	40
Mexico	3	0	0	20
Hong Kong	15	9	28	14
Turkey	4	63	5	7
France	3	34	2	3
Singapore	8	32	5	3
Pakistan	0	8	6	1
Other	1	77	18	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>639</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.