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- Weather Watch: Week of August 21

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Weather Watch: Week of August 21

It looks like it could rain next week. Rain just before or during harvest can be a bad thing for almonds and stone fruit.

How much rain we'll get is uncertain. What is certain is that growers should keep an eye on the weather and make orchard decisions based on the real chance of showers 5 to 7 days from now. The following information are based on University of California research and/or industry experience.

Prunes:

Fruit brown rot is the major concern with rain in the forecast at or near harvest. Carefully applied fungicides can reduce fruit brown rot under infection (preharvest rain) conditions. Complete control shouldn't be expected, especially when fruit is damaged by insects or skin cracks. Research by Dr. Adaskaveg, supported by the CA Prune Board, provides the following information to help growers most effectively control brown rot with registered fungicides. **Consult with a licensed, experienced PCA regarding rates, treatments, and timings. Always read the label.**

Fungicides: The most effective fruit brown rot control is delivered by FRAC 3 fungicides (Tilt and generics; Tebucon and generics; Cevya, Quash, etc.) and pre-mixtures containing FRAC 3 (Miravis Duo, Quadris-Top, etc). See all the fungicide ratings on page 67 of the free publication [2022 UC IPM Fungicide Timing and Efficacy](#). Find this page in the [prebloom, 2023 newsletter](#). **Fungicides must be applied BEFORE rain to be effective.**

Application: In UC research, fruit brown rot incidence was reduced using higher spray volumes (130-140 gallons/acre) and 415 oil or Nufilm-P as adjuvant compared to 80 gallons/acre spray volume and non-ionic surfactant. Tractor speeds should be slow enough (2 mph or grower tested speed) to allow good spray penetration into the tree canopy allowing good fruit coverage. (The spray must reach and cover the fruit for brown rot protection.)

Rapid processing: Fruit from an orchard with brown rot infections should be harvested and processed as soon as possible, certainly in less than 48 hours, to avoid brown rot spread/damage in the bins.

Final Decision: Growers should talk with their PCA and packer when deciding whether to apply a fungicide ahead of the forecast rain. Please note the following and adjust your expectations. The best fungicide, carefully applied, will not eliminate fruit brown rot in an orchard with damaged fruit (cracks, insect damage, etc.) under wet, warm conditions ahead of harvest. However, significant reduction in damage can result from a careful fungicide **ahead** of rain, especially in a well-managed orchard with minimal damage or injured fruit.

Almonds:

Rain at almond harvest is manageable. However, there are many different steps in almond harvest and the recommended practices vary with those steps and the amount of rainfall. To help growers make a sound decision, the following information was developed by Larry Reinhart, former manager, North State Hulling Cooperative in Butte County and included in the 1996 publication Almond Production Manual (Table 36.1; UC ANR pub. 3364).

The most important point is to review the options listed below and decide ahead of forecast weather. The worst decision is to pick up wet nuts (incompletely dried or rain wet), put them in a stockpile, and move on to the next task.

Protecting the almond harvest from rain.				
(Table 36.1 in Almond Production Manual, UC ANR pub. 3364)				
Orchard conditions	Prescribed action when 5-day forecast predicts			
	Dry, windy, or normal weather	High Humidity	Showers	Rain
No rain has occurred, nuts are:				
On tree	Knock	Knock	Knock	Wait
Knocked	Harvest normally	Harvest normally	Open*	Open
Opened and raked	Harvest normally	Harvest normally	When dry, windrow	When dry, windrow
Windrowed	Stockpile or pick up	Stockpile or pick up	Stockpile or pick up	Stockpile or pick up
After 0-¼ in rain, almonds are:				
On tree	Knock	Knock	Wait	Wait
Knocked	Harvest normally	When dry, open	When dry, open	Wait
Opened and raked	Harvest normally	When dry, windrow	When dry, windrow	1. Wait or windrow or 2. Pick up and machine-dry
Windrowed	When dry, pick up	When dry, pick up	1. When dry, pick up or 2. Pick up and machine-dry	1. when dry, pick up or 2. Pick up and machine-dry
After ¼ - ½ in rain, almonds are:				
On tree	Knock	Wait	Wait	Wait
Knocked	Harvest normally	Harvest normally, windrow	Harvest normally	Open
Open and raked	Harvest normally	Harvest normally, windrow	Harvest normally	1. Wait or windrow or 2. Pick up and machine-dry
Windrowed	Drop-Chute†	1. Drop-chute or 2. Pick up and machine-dry	1. Drop-chute or 2. Pick up and machine-dry	1. Wait and drop-chute or 2. Pick up and machine-dry
After more than ½ in rain, almonds are:				
On tree	Knock	Wait	Wait	Wait
Knocked	Open	Harvest normally	Harvest normally	Open
Opened and raked	Harvest normally	1. Pick up and move nuts to dry area or 2. Machine-dry	1. Pick up and move nuts to dry area or 2. Machine-dry	1. Pick up and move nuts to dry area or 2. Machine-dry
Windrowed	Drop-chute	1. Pick up and move nuts to dry area or 2. Machine-dry	1. Pick up and move nuts to dry area or 2. Machine-dry	1. Pick up and move nuts to dry area or 2. Machine-dry

*To "open", in this context, is to sweep almonds off berms but not gather them into windrows.
 †To drop-chute is to run nuts through the pickup machine and drop them from an open cart. This process removes leaves and promotes quick drying by laying out a wide swath of almonds. This process is also known as "conditioning" nuts.