



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA ≈ COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
SUTTER/YUBA COUNTIES,
142A GARDEN HIGHWAY, YUBA CITY, CA 95991
TEL: (530) 822-7515 ~ FAX: (530) 673-5368



POMOLOGY NOTES

E-MAIL EXTRA: JULY 17, 2009

Franz Niederholzer, UCCE Farm Advisor, Sutter/Yuba Counties

Current Information on Sutter/Yuba Region 'French' Prune Harvest, 2009

Franz Niederholzer, UC Farm Advisor, Sutter/Yuba Counties

Thursday, July 16, 2009

Pressures and sugars were checked in four mature, well maintained 'French' prune blocks around Sutter/Yuba Counties.

Pressures averaged over 10 pounds in all blocks. In two blocks, all fruit was over 11 pounds pressure – the highest pressure my gauge would measure.

Sugars ranged from 12.5 - 16.5% soluble solids. Highest sugars were from a block thinned in May.

Growers are urged to check pressures in each orchard as early as late July to best prepare for a high quality harvest. Fruit pressure testing is the best way to test fruit maturity and plan harvest. Optimum prune harvest timing is when fruit is between 3-4 pounds fruit pressure. When sampling fruit for maturity testing, look for late season pests – especially **brown rot**, rust, and mites.

Fruit pressures generally drop 1-2 pounds per week, while sugars increase about 2% per week. Cooler weather results in a relatively rapid pressure drop, while hot weather slows the rate of fruit softening. Long-term weather forecasts (<http://www.accuweather.com>) suggest warm to hot weather for the next two weeks. Highs are predicted in the upper 90's to low 100's. Lows are predicted to range from 60-67°F.

When planning harvest timing, growers must balance fruit sugar, fruit firmness, and dryer space to maximize their income while delivering a high quality product.