



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 31, 2008

Franz Niederholzer, UCCE Farm Advisor, Sutter/Yuba Counties

Current Estimate for Prune Harvest, 2008

Franz Niederholzer, UC Farm Advisor, Sutter/Yuba Counties

Thursday, July 31, 2008

The 2008 dried plum harvest now looks to be headed for an early to normal timing (August 4 – 13) in the Sutter/Yuba region. As of Monday, August 28, fruit pressures in several area orchards were running between 5.2 and 7.1 pounds pressure and 17-21% sugars. Slightly higher pressures are reported by industry representatives in the area.

The current prediction of an early to normal harvest date is different from earlier reports. As recently as mid-July, our models predicted harvest would be the last week of August. We don't know why the predictive model is significantly off this year. It worked very well in 2006 and 2007. UC researchers will work to improve this important model.

Growers are urged to check pressures in each orchard. 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. 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. The second half of July was relatively cool, while current predictions for early August is for normal weather (highs in the mid 90's, lows in the upper 50's or low 60's).

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