

# CALIFORNIA PRUNE INDUSTRY

Richard Peterson, CDPB, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The California prune industry consists of 20 processors and about 900 growers that are all represented by the California Prune Board (Board), a state marketing order that operates under the authority of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

California's bearing prune acreage was estimated by the California Agricultural Statistics Service at 26,000 hectares, the same as the prior two years. Non-bearing acreage was last reported in 2007 at less than 3,000 hectares.

Prune tree sales reported by nurseries declined by 16% in 2009 to 324,000 but are expected to increase by 1% next year.

2009 prune production is estimated at 154,000 MT, up 33% from last year's 116,000 MT.

Inventory carryover should be about 40,000 MT compared to 31,000 MT last year. That would make next year's total supply about 194,000 MT, a 32% year-to-year increase and the largest in six years.

CASS reported the acreage return per ton increased by 5% in 2007 to \$1,455.

Total shipments increased by 6% in 2007 to 131,000 MT but are down by 14% year-to-date. Domestic shipments increased by 13% last year while exports declined by 2%.

Strategic planning resulted in a mission statement for the CPB of protecting and supporting the health, growth and integrity of the California prune industry.

Nutrition research and generic public relations continue to be the cornerstone of the Board's U.S. marketing program.

A four-year digestive health campaign established California dried plums as a leading fruit for digestive health due to their sorbitol, fiber, antioxidants and potassium.

The 2008 publicity campaign bridged from just digestive health to a Superfruit campaign promoting all dried plum benefits.

Dried plums top the Superfoods list in Woman's Day magazine, and 40% of women considered dried plums to be a Superfruit.

Over 128 million impressions have been achieved including Dr. Oz on the Oprah Winfrey Show touting California dried plumes for their antioxidant properties.

The consumer target audience is 64 million women ages 25 to 54 who are motivated by wellness with active lifestyles.

We also target healthcare professionals who influence consumer food purchasing decisions.

In 2009/10, the CPB will heighten awareness of California dried plums as the sensational superfruit that promotes improved health, is familiar unlike some superfruits and a good value for the money.

Our nutrition research objective is to provide an objective, scientific database to increase awareness of the importance of dried plums in digestive health, bone health, heart health, satiety, immune function and reduction of oxidative stress.

The CPB's industrial program will increase awareness that dried plums can raise the value of meat cuts with higher profit margins, demonstrate dried plums' effectiveness as an ingredient and achieve adoption in new and existing products.