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Lower date supply driven by unprecedented weather events

November 20, 2023

Several factors have had a negative impact on date grower volume throughout the Southwest. Tropical Storm Hillary and the subsequent rains that followed in late August have lowered estimates to a crop already reported lighter than average.

“This year is presenting the industry with many challenges,” said Albert Keck, chairman of the California Date Commission. “The cooler weather in the western U.S. during the growing season resulted in a lighter than normal pollination as well as one of the latest harvests in history. Other complications associated with the severe weather events we had in the late summer add to the overall difficulties the industry is facing. Volumes will be tighter across the board due to the time constraints associated with managing the harvest, grading and packing of this season’s crop.”

Date fruit size and skin separation qualities of the Medjool variety have met industry expectations with the 2023 harvest, but the industry is dealing with significantly lower harvest volume.

“Deglet Noor and other late-season varieties appear to exhibit even more challenges as we are on the front end of the harvest. The industry will not fully understand the volume availability of pitted and product grades until late December once the harvest is in the barn,” said Gordon Chuchian, vice chairman of the newly formed organization American Date Industry Export Trade Association.

The American Date Industry Export Trade Association is a generic marketing and promotion organization, which includes the major processors of Aziz Farms, Bard Valley Date Growers Association, Desert Valley Date/Joolies, Double Date, Hadley’s Date Gardens, Jewel Date, Pacific Date Corp., Sun Date and Woodspur Farms.

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