

US sweet cherry production forecast up 36% to 432k tons

According to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS), total sweet cherry production is expected to be 432,760 tons, up 36% from 318,000 tons in 2016.

In California, growers expect the best crop in recent years following several seasons of drought and low yields. Harvest began near the normal late-April timeframe after two years of early crops. The Golden State is expected to produce 99,000 tons, after only about 60,000 tons in both 2015 and 2016.

Washington, the nation's largest producer, is expected to weigh in with 255,000 tons after harvesting 195,000 tons this past year. Harvesting of the earliest varieties, such as Chelan, just began this past week.

In Michigan, growers are still assessing damage from an early May freeze event but expect an average crop, 18,760 tons. That would be down slightly from the 21,000 tons harvested in 2016.

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