



# Plum Good News

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## 2004 CROP YEAR POLICY SET

The Prune Marketing Committee, at its June 23, 2004 meeting, unanimously approved a 2004 crop estimate of 70,000 natural condition tons which would represent a 60% decrease from 2003. This estimate was based on the California Agricultural Statistics Service projection and would represent the smallest crop in 86 years (45,000 tons in 1918). The non-salable content in the 2004 crop was estimated at 1.5%, which would leave 68,950 salable tons.

Prune inventories as of July 31, 2004 were projected at 73,497 N.C. tons which would represent a 7% decrease from last year. Adding the estimated marketable content of 68,950 N.C. tons would yield a total 2004 available supply of 142,447 tons, a decrease of 40% from 2003.

Total trade demand for 2004 was set at 169,454 N.C. tons (177,927 processed condition tons) including a 10% market expansion factor. The desirable inventory level was set at 39,105 N.C. tons which would be 34,392 N.C. tons below the 73,497 N.C. estimated inventory at July 31, 2004. With this inventory adjustment, total demand on the new crop would be 135,062 N.C. tons (141,875 P.C. tons).

CASS' 2004 forecast of bearing acreage was 70,000 acres, which was down 3% from the 2003 estimate. Non-bearing acreage for 2003 was estimated at 8,000 acres by CASS, which represents an 11% decline from the 9,000 acre 2002 non-bearing estimate.

The California Dried Plum Board nursery survey projects 2004 prune tree sales at 173,000, down 42% from 2003's 297,000 trees. Nursery sales of prune trees are projected to decrease by 23% in 2005 to only 133,000 trees.

The Committee unanimously recommended the following to the Secretary of Agriculture:

100% of the marketable content of the 2004 prune crop should be made salable with no reserve pool and no green diversion. (Reserve pool and green diversion authority has been suspended for five years.)

Minimum inbound quality standards currently in effect should be continued but outbound inspections and quality standards will be optional. (Mandatory outbound inspections and grade standards have been suspended for three years.)

- A Committee budget totaling \$275,800 and a handler assessment rate of \$4.00 per salable ton should be established.
- The PMC Supply and Disposition Report will continue to be distributed quarterly instead of monthly with less shipment detail included.
- Modified Grader Screen Size openings as shown below.

## MODIFIED GRADER SCREEN SIZE OPENINGS French Prunes

Screen	2003	2004
A	Overs	Overs
B	30/32	29/32
C	28/32	28/32
D	26/32	25/32
Undersized	23/32	23/32

## 2004/05 CDPB BUDGET

A total assessment rate of \$25.00 per salable ton was approved, up from \$14.00 in 2003/04. However, the approved 2004/05 budget of \$4,118,783 will be 40% less than last year due to the projected 59% decline in marketable production. The \$25.00 per ton assessment rate will be split \$16.75 per ton for producers and dehydrators and \$8.25 per ton for handlers.

The CDPB's approved budget is shown below.

Administration .....	\$313,670
Operating Expenses .....	156,700
Consulting Services .....	98,000
Research Coordinator .....	37,000
Production Research .....	162,000
Crop Forecast .....	4,800
Advertising .....	0
Consumer/Nutrition Research .....	100,000
Public Relations .....	403,000
Foodservice/Food Tech .....	50,000
In-House Marketing .....	40,000
Sampling .....	7,000
Export Marketing .....	700,000
C.D.F.A. Charges .....	61,000
Contingency Reserve .....	735,613
TOTAL .....	\$2,868,783

**2004/05  
DOMESTIC MARKETING PROGRAM**

As a result of the budget reduction approved by the California Dried Plum Board, the 2004/05 Domestic Marketing Program will again be limited to public relations, nutrition research, and a reduced food tech program.

**Public Relations**

In 2003/04, the California Dried Plum Board's "What's Your Core Score?" public relations campaign firmly planted a stake in the arena of digestive health through a partnership with the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA). Together, we laid the foundation to create awareness and educate consumers about the importance of building and maintaining good digestive health – through prevention – and the role dried plums play in a healthy diet.



The CDPB has outlined a three-year program that will continue to build on

this foundation. In the first year, the CDPB will focus on collecting an arsenal of research, as well as developing relationships that can be used to

continue to establish the CDPB's credibility in the field of digestive health. Years two and three will focus on building momentum, continuing to raise digestive health awareness and solidifying the essential role dried plums play in digestive health.

**Credibility Through Scientific Research**

Year One of the CDPB's PR program, will center on both scientific and consumer research because hard data is required to:

- Create news that the media will be interested in reporting
- Build the levels of consumer education and understanding to the point where there is a change in consumer behavior (i.e., the purchase and consumption of dried plums)

To achieve this, the CDPB will begin to build a sustainable body of science by leveraging the scientific investments of leading third party organizations (e.g. the AGA) and individuals, such as scientists/researchers and healthcare professionals, who are already targeting issues of digestive health.

The first step towards amassing these scientific facts will consist of the CDPB hosting a two-day Digestive Health Summit that will begin to open a dialogue about the state of digestive health in America, and possibly abroad. We'll invite the leading experts in digestive health to attend the Digestive Health Summit, where they'll share and discuss current research and learn more about how good nutrition, specifically the consumption of dried plums, can contribute to good digestive health. The Digestive Health Summit will allow the CDPB to develop relationships with researchers, ensuring that we're ahead of the news, not behind it. The CDPB will be the central source of the findings, and ultimately, the messenger of the news.

**Consumer Research**

Consumer research will also be a key component of the program. The CDPB will develop a national consumer survey of more than 1,000 Americans to determine the impact of poor digestive health on Americans' wellbeing – from both a physical and

mental perspective. The survey results, which will be publicized in Year Two of the program, will help to reveal the gap between knowledge and behavior in maintaining good digestive health.

### Creating a Resource

Once a body of scientific and consumer research has been collected, we will develop a central location where media and consumers can access it. Presently, there is no one organization dedicated to raising awareness of digestive health and wellness – most organizations focus on disease and cure, rather than prevention. The CDPB will create a “virtual” entity or micro-site (Web site), which will be devoted to digestive health knowledge sharing. The content development of this site will be the responsibility of an advisory board, which will be selected from the individuals who participated in the Digestive Health Summit and other experts, who are able to provide advice and disseminate information to key constituencies.

The micro-site will exist as a sub-site of the CDPB Web site ([www.californiadriedplums.org](http://www.californiadriedplums.org)), but will have its own home page that establishes the look and feel of authority on digestive health. It will serve as a forum for health professionals to talk to one another and to consumers about digestive health. An added benefit will be its functionality as a credible media resource.

### Staying in Touch

The CDPB will also continue to strengthen and build relationships with key influencers (e.g., gastroenterologists, registered dietitians, physician’s assistants). As was established in last year’s program, image-makers – or influencers – are essential to promoting key messages to our key constituencies –



including our target consumers. To position dried plums as the leader in digestive health and wellness and keep the product top-of-mind with registered dietitians and MDs, we will send these influencers an overview

of the Digestive Health Summit, as well as findings and outcomes.

### Nutrition Research

A primary objective of the Nutrition Research Program is to develop the objective database on which to build a credible consumer and health professionals’ communications program that promotes the role of dried plums and dried plum products in a nutritious diet. Since 1997, the Board has supported an active Nutrition Research Program to:

- Discover nutrients and bioactive compounds present in dried plums and dried plum products – research about dried plum **composition**
- Determine what these components do – research about the health benefits from eating dried plums – or **consumption** research

During these seven years of committed continuity to nutrition research, the Board has funded 24 studies involving over 50 scientific collaborators. Twenty-one studies have been completed resulting in numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals or abstracts, or presentations at scientific meetings.

Recently, Dan Gallaher, PhD, Professor, Department of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Minnesota and a member of the Board’s Nutrition Advisory Panel (NAP), presented his findings on the “Effect of Dried plum Consumption on the Development of Atherosclerotic Lesions in the ApoE-Deficient Mouse” at the meeting of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. His research discovered that mice consuming a diet approximately equivalent to consumers eating 10-12 dried plums daily developed significantly less atherosclerotic lesion than the animals on the control diet. Dried plums had a positive effect on the disease process that was not related to lowering blood cholesterol levels and the mechanism responsible for this effect remains uncertain.



**Dr. Dan Gallaher**

During the 2004/05 program year, these currently funded studies will be completed:

- The effect of dried plums on brain aging in rats
- The determination of the glycemic index of dried plums, prune juice and fresh plum juice
- The role of dried plums in oral health and the suppression of cariogenic bacteria
- The role of dried plums as a fat and carbohydrate replacer in bakery and confectionery products

New research for 2004/05 will focus on establishing dried plums as the number one fruit for digestive health among a target audience of generally healthy women who are motivated by wellness. The Board's Nutrition Advisory Panel is assisting in the development of research protocols on digestive health and in identifying influential institutions currently conducting research in this priority area. Nutrition Research Program updates are prepared monthly by the Nutrition Advisor and available to all interested industry members.

### ***Food Technology***

The proposed 2004/05 CDPB food tech program continues to pursue opportunities for industrial applications in many different food categories including meats, baked goods, confections, snack/energy bars and sauces. Such a wide array of applications is possible due to the many benefits and available forms of dried plums.

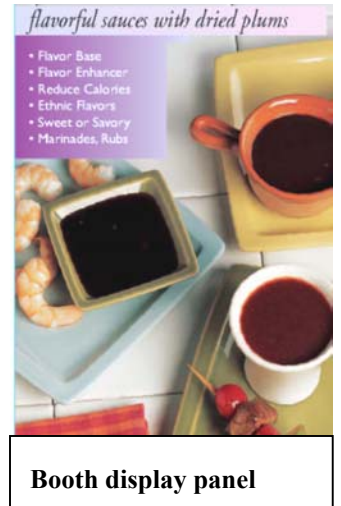
As the food industry remains focused on such health and nutritional related issues as the reduction of fat/saturated fat/trans fat, carbohydrates, calories and sugar all tied into weight control, dried plums' natural features are receiving new consideration as a natural food ingredient. The benefits of dried plums to address all of these concerns while achieving comparable or improved flavor and texture is an important differentiating dried plum characteristic.

Several dried plum capabilities were recently confirmed by an independent research study conducted for NASA by the NASA Food Technology Space Center Department of



Animal Science at Iowa State University. The study was focused on the processed meats for the international space station and concluded, *"Therefore the use of 2% plum extract is recommended to improve the mouthfeel and reduce the off-odor intensity of pre-cooked freeze-dried hamburger patties."*

Dried plum features and benefits were demonstrated at the recent Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) convention in Las Vegas in July using a new, more cost-effective trade show booth with traffic-stopping graphics. Food products sampled included ground lamb patties, low-carbohydrate breakfast bagel bars and low-carbohydrate flat breads all containing dried plums. This same trade show booth together with further examples of dried plums' ingredient capabilities will be employed again at the IFT show in New Orleans next summer. In addition, the Board will also be exhibiting at the annual Research Chef's Association in Montreal next March.



The Board published a Celebrity Chefs cookbook using many of the recipes developed over the years by famous restaurant chefs. The low-cost premium focuses on the many gourmet food applications that these chefs created using dried plums. Related to this gourmet use of dried plums is a student recipe contest conducted by Kendall College in Chicago. Students submitted new recipe and product ideas using prune juice concentrate as the base material. Winners will be announced in late August 2004.

### **INTERNATIONAL MARKETING**

The CDPB will receive \$2,271,000 in Market Access Program (MAP) funds in 2004/05, a decrease of 12% from last year. The program will again include brand funding in established Western European markets with participating packers contributing at least 50% of the total cost of advertising and promotion for their brands.

Due to the projection of only 70,000 tons of production, the industry's ability to satisfy export demand will be significantly reduced as will the CDPB budget. As a result, generic MAP activities will be concentrated in the priority markets of Japan, the United Kingdom and Italy while Germany, Spain, China and India will be shifted to maintenance mode in 2004/05.

Generic activities this year in the United Kingdom and Italy will rely on consumer promotion to continue the positioning of California prunes as a healthy snack to a target audience of women 25 - 65. Generic leaflets will be distributed to communicate the latest research findings about the nutritional attributes of prunes and their versatility as a snack or in cooking.

Continued emphasis will be placed on sampling new users to introduce them to California pitted prunes. Sampling activities will be conducted at venues where we can distribute product samples and nutrition leaflets to large number of potential new users. Generic point-of-sale materials will emphasize snacking, health and the product's California origin.



Spot television advertising in Japan will again be expanded from Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya to as many as eight major markets representing nearly 80% of Japanese households. Due to budget constraints only one flight of television advertising will air in March 2005 with no fall flight as in the past. California prunes will be promoted at retail as an "everyday" food offering convenience, taste, nutrition and safety through in-store promotions and materials. School lunch seminars will continue to educate nutritionists and students about California prunes.

## CDPB RESEARCH PROJECTS

Following is a brief description of the 2004 CDPB funded research program. Total funding for the CDPB Production Research budget is \$161,837. Contact Rich Peterson or Gary Obenauf for more details on any of these projects.

**Prune Cultivar Evaluation and Development/Ted DeJong.** Develops new dried plum varieties, through traditional horticultural breeding methods, with the following characteristics: A. Tree characteristics that reduce labor cost involved in producing dried plums. B. Increased fruit quality and characteristics that increase efficiency and quality of drying and processing. C. New specialty traits; with the dried product being equal or improved in quality to "Improved French", but differ in taste or color. D. Tolerance/resistance to disease. E. Earlier/later fruit maturity dates than "Improved French" dried plum. Test and evaluate advanced selections resulting from the current breeding program at UC and grower locations in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. Budget: \$79,279.

**Reducing Input of Dormant Sprays/Barry Wilson.** Assesses the efficacy and impact of alternatives to dormant season use of chlorpyrifos and diazinon and test practices that can mitigate through bioassays of target and non-target organisms. Budget: \$1,500.

**Reregistration of Pesticides/Gary Obenauf.** Reserved for registration of new materials or re-registration of existing materials needed by the California prune industry. Budget: \$10,000.

**Prune Aphids: Overwintering Biology and Biological Control/Nick Mills.** Complete the estimation of the initiation of the sexual phase of the life cycle for leaf curl plum aphids (LCPA) through rearing under controlled conditions at different photoperiods. Estimate the timing of termination of diapause and subsequent thermal requirements for egg hatch in early spring for both mealy plum aphid (MPA) and LCPA. Test the impact of a range of potential insecticides, for use in the fall or early spring treatments of aphids, on mummies and emerging adults of *Aphidius transcaspicus*. Continue to field release and monitor biotypes of *Aphidius transcaspicus* for control of MPA and to determine their climatic tolerance. Budget: 17,833.

**Integrated Prune Farming Practices (IPFP) aka Environmentally Sound Prune Systems (ESPS)/Franz Niederholzer.** Uses UC research to demonstrate best management practices for pest

management, fertilization, irrigation scheduling and other cultural operations. Develops and validates that these practices are commercially feasible, environmentally sound and cost effective and can be integrated into California prune production. Increases information flow to clientele by: conducting meetings, field days, tours, demonstrations, newsletters, use of electronic media, writing articles and generating publications on ESPS recommended practices. Provide statewide coordination for improved prune culture. Present the ESPS practices in Best Management Practices form to facilitate use in orchard management plans to storm and irrigation runoff discharge waiver. Budget: \$38,225.

**Feasibility of Precision Fruit Thinning**/Jim Thompson. Evaluates the capability of machine vision-based methods of counting immature fruit on a tree. Determine the capability of an electrically actuated shaker to remove precise numbers of green fruit. Budget: \$9,500.

**Pilot Projects, Field Testing, Adaptive Research and Problem Solving by CE Farm Advisors and Specialists and Other Interested Persons**/Steve Southwick. Applied research to support mission-oriented and demonstration efforts, which will be reported through the normal workgroup and industry liaison channels. Encourages experiment station personnel to work under the umbrella of this project when in search of seed money, prior to the development of full-scale projects. Budget: \$(23,020) carry over funds.

**Minor Crop Farmer Alliance.** Membership in a national organization to help educate EPA, USDA and others about the special needs of minor crops like prunes. Budget: \$5,000.

**Pesticide Policy Coalition aka Implementation Working Group.** Membership in a forum consisting of chemical manufacturers, agricultural organizations and food processors for issues associated with the implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). Budget: \$500.

## IPA CONGRESS IN AUSTRALIA

The 8<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the International Prune Association (IPA) will be held from November 8 – 11, 2004 in Adelaide, Australia. The Congress organizers have described Adelaide, which is the capital of South Australia, as a big country town that offers all the benefits of a large city.

The Congress will include tours of prune orchards, dehydrators and processing plants. Presentations will be given on the prune situation in each of the seven member countries: U.S., France, Chile, Argentina, Italy, Australia and South Africa.



Optional pre- and post- Congress tours will also be offered. For more information, visit the IPA website at [www.ipaprunes.org](http://www.ipaprunes.org) and click on Next Congress.

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