



# F r e s h ALERT

**Please Distribute to:**  
Executive Chef  
General Manager  
Kitchen Manager  
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F&B Manager

January 16, 2007

## THE BIG C H I L L

Much of California's citrus, avocados, strawberries and many row crop vegetables have been lost in what many growers are calling the worst cold weather to freeze the state since 1990. The last time such cold hit California's agricultural industry was in 1998, when a four-day freeze in December destroyed 85% of the state's citrus crop, a loss valued at about \$700 million. The January freeze of '07, however, is far more widespread, affecting many more crops in many growing regions, from the San Joaquin Valley in the north to Yuma and even into Baja and Mexico. Thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables will be discarded in the wake of this freeze. The four-day cold snap sent temperatures plunging to record lows. In fact, it was warmer in Juneau, Alaska than in many parts of California's growing regions. The devastation of this freeze was not only how low temperatures fell, but also the length of time. Many growing regions felt 27 degree temperatures for 6 – 7 hours a day, for 3 – 4 consecutive days. It brought heartache to growers.



Ventura County Avocado grower inspects young trees damaged by recent record cold temperatures.



Citrus growers used warm overspray irrigation to ice the trees and fruit in an attempt to keep fruit temperatures at 32 degrees, preventing damage.

California's San Joaquin Valley has 210,000 acres devoted to citrus and is the No. 1 producer of fresh Navel Oranges. More than 70% of the region's crop was still hanging on the trees when old man Winter turned a cold shoulder to California's billion dollar citrus industry and many other crops. A billion dollars — 93 to 94 million cartons — of fruit was hanging on the trees when the cold hit. CDFA officials said, "It's safe to say the losses will be in the hundreds of millions of dollars."

Ventura County has 101,000 acres of fruits and vegetables. Their crops grossed \$1.22 billion in 2005. The crops hit hardest by this freeze — strawberries first at \$328.5 million, lemons third at \$179.2 million and avocados sixth at \$54.8 million.

It could take several weeks to see the full extent of damage to Oranges, Lemons, Tangerines, Strawberries, Avocados, Lettuce, Celery, Broccoli and Cauliflower. This freeze will particularly hurt supplies and price for Valentine's Day demand. We're expecting much higher prices, much tighter supplies and limited quality. For citrus, the damage could affect crops over the next two years as well.



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