

MEDIA RELEASE

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Riverina navels looking good

The Riverina Citrus industry is preparing for a promising navel orange season with predictions of an increase in fruit numbers and higher fruit quality than in recent years.

Riverina navel oranges will begin to hit the domestic market in mid-May 2008 and will provide consumers with a high quality Australian grown option when buying their fruit.

The 2008/2009 preliminary forecast prepared by Riverina Citrus estimates that the Riverina will produce 56,000 tonnes or 2,450,000 cartons of navel oranges this season. This represents a 14% increase from last season and a 5% increase on the five year average.

The Riverina's positive crop forecast contrasts other citrus growing regions in Australia, such as the Sunraysia and Riverland regions in Victoria and South Australia, who are expected to have a decline in fruit quantity due to cuts in water availability and poor seasonal conditions.

Peter Morrish, CEO for Riverina Citrus said the citrus growers in the region are looking forward to a good navel season and providing high quality fruit to Australian consumers.

"Our regions growers have struggled over past seasons due to climatic pressures and limited market opportunities."

"Despite this they have continued to improve their production and packing methods to produce a high quality product," Peter said. "At last it looks like their commitment to improving sustainable practices and quality assurance will pay off. "

"The latest crop forecast is positive news for both the Riverina Citrus industry and Australian consumers."

The Riverina Citrus industry includes 550 registered growers producing 30% of Australia's citrus, providing produce to 45 citrus packers and seven citrus juice manufacturers.

For more information on the Riverina Citrus industry visit www.riverinacitrus.com.au.

Contact: A&A Communications, E: aacommunication@bigpond.com
Alyssa Schembri M: 0437 377 423
Annette McCaffery M: 0427 091 296

Images and interviews available on request.