

PRUNE PRODUCTS AND QUALITY

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Objectives:

To determine: 1) interrelationships between fresh fruit characteristics and dried fruits, 2) the effect of prune size upon quality of prune juice, and 3) nutritional composition of commercially-produced prunes and prune products; 4) to provide cooperation and analytical assistance to other CPAB projects, as necessary.

Results and Conclusions:

Planned cooperation with Pomology and Cooperative Extension has resulted in analytical assistance in the reference date size prediction study. Two to three persons have been involved from early August, 1974, when fruit samples were brought to the Department for fresh data compilation, and this staff is continuing to study dried prune samples from the same trees from which the fresh fruit was taken. Samples came from 10 trees from each of 65 orchards. Analysis of this data should be ready for presentation at Prune Day, 1975.

Work was done this past year on commercial samples, in cooperation with the Dried Fruit Association of California, to obtain information on nutritional labeling needs for prunes. Samples from DFA, and others purchased in retail markets, included small, large, and pitted prunes, and juices. After completion of analyses, recommendations for labeling requirements are to be formulated.

Work Planned:

Data collected from fresh and dried prune samples should be checked against earlier information (collected by Claypool and Miller) to see if indicated favorable relationships still hold true. Also, prunes from Tulare had not been included in earlier work but are in the latest study. 1974 samples still are to be subjected to standard size-grading for comparison with our weight-size data. Information from these studies will be of definite value in basing dried crop predictions on fresh fruit characteristics.

Nutritional data should be completed in the near future. Recommendations will be made for use by the industry and for transmission to the federal government for its nutritional data bank and its new foods composition handbook.

The effect of prune sizes on prune juice quality has not been started but is to be initiated this Spring. If sufficient quantities of fruit are available (commercial size lots) from the sizing work, this will give us fruit with known history to use in the juice studies.