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COMMISSION

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News Release

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Record Fresh California Grape Crop in 2008

FRESNO, California – An all-time record volume of fresh grapes from California was shipped to markets throughout the U.S. and the world last year. The record crop saw a total of 99.1 million box units of fresh California grapes shipped during the 2008 season, May through January.

The previous record was in 2005, which saw a total of 97.4 million box units shipped. Over the past 10 years, fresh California grape shipments have increased by an average annual rate of three percent.

“With a strong worldwide demand, the steady increase in volume is good news for California and its fresh grape industry,” said Kathleen Nave, president of the California Table Grape Commission. The total fresh California grape crop in 2008 was valued at \$1.2 billion, increasing at an average annual rate of 6.7 percent since 2003. This is double the average annual growth rate of the entire California agriculture value during the same time period.

“This year also saw an increase in exports of California grapes, with 40 percent of the crop sent outside the U.S.,” said Nave. According to the USDA, a total volume of 38.7 million 19-pound box equivalents of fresh California grapes valued at \$608 million, an all-time high in value, was shipped to markets outside the U.S. through January last season.

It is expected that grapes from California will be in high demand during the upcoming 2009 season, which begins in May. Consumers value the quality of fresh grapes from California. The latest research shows that 93 percent of U.S. consumers prefer California grapes over all other grape origins.

Striving towards a healthier lifestyle, consumers are taking advantage of the significant health benefits related to eating fresh California grapes. Research has shown that grapes are a natural source of beneficial antioxidants, resveratrol and flavonoids, all of which have recently been shown to have significant benefits for human health.

The California Table Grape Commission was created by the California legislature in 1967 to increase worldwide demand for fresh California grapes through a variety of research and promotional programs. More information can be found at grapesfromcalifornia.com.

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