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News Release

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Exports of Fresh California Grapes Increased in 2008

FRESNO, California – Exports of fresh California grapes increased in 2008 according to recently released figures from the United States Department of Agriculture. 2008 was the second largest year for exports of fresh California grapes, behind 2005. A total volume of 26.6 million 19-pound boxes of grapes valued at \$430 million left California for international markets, not including Canada. The entire fresh California grape volume totaled over 94 million 19-pound boxes, compared to the 2007 total volume of 90.3 million 19-pound boxes.

In the last 10 years, exports of fresh California grapes have increased 52 percent, while the value of those exports has increased 124 percent. “The industry has not only increased the amount of grapes exported, the grapes are generating a higher value in markets all around the world,” said Kathleen Nave, president of the California Table Grape Commission. The commission’s international marketing program targeted over 40 countries, which accounted for a large majority of the fresh California grape exports. Tariff reduction is a key part of the effort.

The 2008 export volume is an increase of 19 percent over the previous year, in which 22.4 million 19-pound boxes were exported, and an increase of 24 percent in value. Record high export volumes were seen in a number of the largest export markets during 2008, including Mexico, Panama, Central America, Russia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Thailand and Australia.

The top three export markets for fresh California grapes in 2008 were Canada, Mexico and China, respectively. Exports to Canada remained relatively stable over 2007, whereas export volume and value to Mexico and China significantly increased in 2008 over the previous season.

To round out the top five, the fourth largest export market was Australia, followed by the fifth largest export market, Central America, which increased in volume by nine percent and value by 14 percent. Export volume and value both significantly increased, by about 32 percent, over 2007 to Australia, a market that the commission actively worked to open for more than 10 years. Since California grapes gained access to Australia in 2002, the commission has been involved in ongoing negotiations with U.S. and Australian trade officials, improving trade conditions to that country.

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.

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