The 1979 growing season was one of the best in history for Fresno County. Record yields and excellent quality have helped to ease some of the bitter memories caused by the rains of 1976 and 1978.

The seasonal deliveries for natural Thompson Seedless raisins was in excess of 260,000 tons with total deliveries for all raisin varieties of over 300,000 tons. Along with this record crop of raisins, the table and wine grape industries also praised the 1979 growing season for its production and quality.

With all of the rejoicing about the 1979 season, it was not without its problems. The Kerman, Biola, and Sanger riverbottom areas which have experienced a build up of Phomopsis cane and leaf spot disease were plagued by additional damage due to the dormant sprays applied to control this disease. Several vineyards developed only about fifty percent bud break and the yields in these vineyards were substantially reduced. The populations of the Western Grapeleaf skeletonizer exploded this past season with over thirty-five verified commercial infestations. For many vineyard owners, the prolonged heat spell in combination with other physiological factors resulted in severe waterberry production which drastically reduced the overall crop yield. Nematodes continue to be a severe problem in the sandier areas and a good preplant fumigation has become more important now than ever before.

The planting boom is continuing in Fresno County. Approximately seventy percent of the ten thousand acres planted this past year were of the Thompson variety with the bulk of the remaining acreage having been planted to white varietals and table grapes. Plantings for the coming year should equal or surpass those of 1979.