The 1964 Fresno County grape season was characterized by a lower Thompson Seedless crop than in 1963 with a fairly good balance of utilization into the raisin and wine industry segments. Utilization in terms of acres of Thompson Seedless harvested for each segment was quite similar to last year, and resulted in a smaller winery crush of Thompson Seedless. This strengthened winery prices for Thompson Seedless grapes above last year's levels. Some wineries actually had difficulty meeting their needs of this variety.

Although ripening in the Thompson Seedless variety was slower than expected, the picking for raisin drying got well underway about five days earlier than normal. This operation was briefly interrupted by an August 31 rain which delayed raisin harvest several days to allow the soil surface to dry. Good drying weather soon followed and damage to raisins was only minor. The weather was favorable during the wine grape harvest except for the brief delay of the August 31 rain. Average soluble solids readings of grapes delivered at the winery shortly after the rain dropped temporarily, apparently the result of moisture uptake by the vines and fruit. Generally, the crush proceeded very rapidly. Most all of the Thompson Seedless were crushed by the third week in October.

Thompson Seedless table grapes and other varieties such as Ribier experienced a good season, but the August rain reduced late holding of some grapes on the vines and created some split-berry problems. Clear weather during most of the Emperor harvest period enabled a very heavy movement of fruit into storage. There were a few vineyards, however, which were slow in fruit color development and were only partly picked before the late October rains.
The important factor in trends of the immediate future continues to be the size and utilization of the Thompson Seedless variety which was planted particularly heavy in the late 1950's. The wine varieties Rubired and Royalty continue to be among the more popular wine varieties for planting with approximately 1500 acres planted in Fresno County since 1958. Increased planting of Carignane are anticipated in 1964 apparently because of relatively good 1964 prices for the variety. There is also increased interest in planting of varieties more suitable for table wine production such as French Colombard and Ruby Cabernet.