FRESNO COUNTY

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Vine growth was better than average for the early months of the season. This lead was later lost due to the heavier than normal crop. Some vineyards showed the effects of moisture stress and mites in mid to late season.

Heavily cropped vineyards are showing a greater than normal number of frozen canes. This will result in reduced crops in some instances. Many vineyards have a few more poorly matured canes than normal, but probably not enough to substantially reduce the crop in '74.

This year's medium to large crop with good prices made it an excellent season for everyone. Some wine vineyards had problems with maturity, but otherwise the quality was good. The raisin crop was large, 220,000 tons, with quality being good. A small percentage of the total crop was hit by an unusually heavy rain on October 7. This created an additional work load for the effected growers and the industry with problems of high raisin moisture readings. These were finished off by commercial dehydrators, growers on the farms or by the raisin packers in their plants.

Table grape growers generally had a good season with quality better than average and particularly good color in Emperors.

Sixty-eight hundred acres were planted to wine grapes in Fresno County in 1973, down from the high of 8400 in 1972. An even greater decline in the rate of wine grape plantings is anticipated in 1974. The most recent plantings have been heaviest in the colored varieties.

The rate of raisin variety plantings has been quite stable -- around 1,000 acres net increase each year -- in Fresno County over the past 4 years. However, a greater increase in plantings of these varieties, notably Thompson Seedless, might be anticipated in 1974 because of favorable 1973 prices.

Little change has been seen or is anticipated in table grape acreage trends. New plantings only slightly exceed pull outs.