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TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Tennessee Apple Orchards Get “Reprieve” Thanks to Recent Turn in the Weather

NASHVILLE - “We’ve had a reprieve,” says Dr. David Lockwood, fruit specialist and professor of plant science at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture. “Despite this year’s challenges, the state’s apple orchards are on target now to produce an average sized crop.”

Tennessee usually boasts a statewide apple yield between 7.5 and 9 million pounds, and the fruit crop specialist says he’s guessing this year’s commercial crop will fall within that range.

“High night time temperatures and persistent rain produce adverse effects in an apple’s sugars and color, but now that night time temperatures have dropped and the weather’s been dry, the crop is just getting better every day,” says Lockwood.

“We didn’t have a crop last year to speak of because of the heat, so that actually worked in our favor for this year,” says Lockwood, “causing the trees to produce an extra heavy fruit set. The trees did lose apples from the summer’s rainy weather, but they needed to for their optimal number of apples to reach their potential.”

Apple orchards dot the state, and many farmers invite the public to pick their own apples or purchase apples straight from the farm. Apple growers often make their own canned and baked goods from the apples they produce and sell them at the orchard along with a variety of items from other local farms and artisans.

Tennessee apples are available now at local orchards and farmers markets across the state through the end of October. Find local orchards at www.picktnproducts.org. Pick Tennessee Products is the state promotion to help consumers find local farms, farmers markets, local foods, seasonal recipes and other farm direct products. Follow Pick Tennessee Products on Facebook and Twitter.

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