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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## ***Free Risk Negotiation Education at Yuba City Prune Day***

**YUBA CITY, CA, February 16, 2006** – Not getting paid for a year’s worth of work is not a happy prospect. Yet that is what can happen if farmers are not careful in the contracts they sign with buyers. A group of prune farmers have learned from experience and hope to help others avoid some of the pitfalls that resulted in financial hardship. With that goal in mind, the Prune Bargaining Association in partnership with the USDA is offering free risk management education to help farmers reduce the risk of contract breach and non-payment for crops.

Experts in the field of marketing contracts will share their knowledge and instruct farmers on how to reduce risk when selling farm production. Prune growers and other interested farmers are encouraged to attend a morning seminar and a afternoon panel discussion on March 1 in conjunction with Prune Day and the annual meeting of the Prune Bargaining Association. The morning seminar will help growers identify the risks involved in marketing their crops and learn from the experience of farmers who suffered through broken contracts and non-payment in the recent past. An afternoon panel discussion will provide growers an opportunity to ask questions of the experts and learn from their backgrounds. Growers will be given concrete steps that they can take in order to reduce risk and to better insure that they receive the full price for their crops.

The seminar on *Negotiating Better Marketing Contracts to Reduce Risk for Prune Farmers* will be given as part of the University of California Cooperative Extension Statewide Prune Day in Yuba City in the morning of March 1, 2006. The free 30-minute program will be offered in the Veterans Memorial Community Building, 1425 Veterans Circle Dr., Yuba City at approximately 10:30 am. Following the prune day presentations in the morning, the panel presentation *Managing Your Financial Risk—Get Paid the Full Price*” will be given as part of PBA’s annual meeting in the afternoon at approximately 12:45 pm. Panel members include, Aggie D’Esterhazy, Chief, Market

Enforcement Branch, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Brian Hamman, Esq, Harris, Sanford & Hamman, and Mike Jura, Jr., President, Fig Garden Packing. Each panel member will speak on their experience in area of farm contracts and respond to questions from the audience.

Lunch is available for \$10 per person by reservation. Contact the PBA at 530-674-5636. More information is available from the Association's web site at [www.prunebargaining.com](http://www.prunebargaining.com).

The Prune Bargaining Association was selected by the Risk Management Agency of the USDA (RMA) as one of 32 recipients of the Commodity Partnerships for Small Agricultural Risk Management Education Sessions. The official title of the Association's project is 'Negotiating Better Marketing Contracts to Reduce Risk for Prune Farmers.' The education seminar is designed to help prune farmers reduce the risk of not getting paid for a crop. "We hope that by providing some of the nuts and bolts of when, what, and how of contract negotiation that farmers will be better able to protect themselves," said Greg Thompson, General Manager of the Association. "Lack of payment and/or broken contract terms are not uncommon in agriculture, and most farmers have had one or more negative experiences in this area over their years in business." The program is open to farmers and industry members of all commodities, although the focus will be on experiences in the prune industry.

One of RMA's strategic goals is to ensure that its customers are well informed as to the risk management solutions available. This educational goal is supported by the Federal Crop Insurance Act, which authorizes FCIC funding for risk management training and informational efforts for agricultural producers through the formation of partnerships with public and private organizations. The purpose of these partnerships is to deliver training and information on the management of production, marketing, and financial risk. Through these efforts, farmers will be better equipped to make sound risk management decisions.

The Prune Bargaining Association was formed in 1968 as a grower-owned cooperative to improve the economy of the California prune industry, encourage the production of a quality product and provide a forum for growers to exchange ideas regarding the industry. The PBA establishes the industry's raw product price for prunes.