

Valley's low temperatures not severe enough to harm citrus

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Irrigation water, used in the winter to help combat freezing temperatures, stands in an orange grove off Academy Avenue north of Sanger on Thursday morning, Jan. 1, 2015. JOHN WALKER — THE FRESNO BEE | [Buy Photo](#)

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Valley citrus growers' worries about a crop-destroying freeze appear to be behind them after escaping cold temperatures Thursday morning without any measurable damage. And it's going to be warmer Friday morning, according to the National Weather Service.

"It was a long night, but a safe night," Joel Nelsen, president of Exeter-based California Citrus Mutual, said New Year's morning.

He said temperatures in most growing areas dropped to 30 or 29 degrees early in the morning but then the drop flattened. About 80% of growers ran wind machines and CCM had no reports of crop damage. Nelsen said he received isolated reports in some areas of temperatures as low as 27 degrees but the chill did not last long enough to hurt oranges and lemons.

There is a warming trend ahead for the central San Joaquin Valley, according to the National Weather Service in Hanford.



Meteorologist Kevin Durfee said the overnight cold temperatures should be 2 to 5 degrees warmer and that trend will continue with overnight lows climbing into the 40s by next week. Less frost is expected for Friday night, and freezing conditions are unlikely on Saturday.

Weather service meteorologist David Spector added Thursday evening that another winter scourge, fog, will begin to appear over the weekend and be ever more dense on Monday when many are headed back to work after holiday vacations.

Spector said a high-pressure system will slowly build above the Valley over the weekend. "The amount of moisture near the surface is going to increase, and we're going to fog up," he said.

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