

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: In this week's ET REPORT you will notice a slight change for COTTON and PISTACHIOS.

Virtually all COTTON fields have received their last irrigation anywhere from last week to a month ago. We note this in the upper section with "Irrigation Finished". But, as you know, the plants are still maturing bolls and will continue to use water stored in the root zone to make the carbohydrates needed to do this. So we are showing you an estimate of that water use, which will continue as long as reserve soil moisture storage is available. In a Shafter cotton field that might be as little as 6 inches after the last irrigation. For some low salinity Buttonwillow fields that could be 10-12 inches. So in the bottom section of WEEKLY APPLIED WATER we show a "0" application since irrigation is finished.

The same logic applies to PISTACHIOS. Harvest irrigation cutoff during September has already reduced stored soil moisture. But we want the trees to use this great fall weather for some additional photosynthesis to help replenish carbohydrate reserves necessary for the spring push. So to avoid major stress to early, we apply 1-3" of post-harvest irrigation (depending on the size of the trees and salt load in the soil) right after harvest and a little shot of nitrogen so that the trees don't completely run out of gas before the end of October. The goal is to start getting significant stress by the beginning of November so the trees "harden off" by mid-December. This is necessary to reduce the risk of damage from a hard, mid-December frost that can rupture actively growing cells in young shoots/trees – especially those < 9th leaf. So we continue to show you the estimated pistachio ET so you can track the depletion that will need to be refilled before the spring push.

Blake Sanden
University of CA Cooperative Extension