Battalion/Page 12 February 4, 1982

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Florida's losses are Texas' gains

United Press International PHARR — Texas citrus growers are reaping bigger profits from the woes of Florida fruit crops heavily damaged by harsh

winter freezes. Initial damage estimates showed early winter bouts of icy weather in Florida' may have destroyed up to 25 percent of the state's cirrus crop — as much as \$385 million in lost profits from orange juice sales alone. Florida growers say the ex-

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tensive freeze may make it im-possible for them to return to full production this year. But Texas growers in the Rio Grande Valley — one of the nation's top three citrus producing areas - were luckier than their Florida counterparts.

Although temperatures dipped below freezing several times in early January, the cold weath-er apparently did no damage to Texas' 70,000 acres of oranges, grapefruits, limes, lemons and

tangerines. "It had been a good season up until Christmas when the out-look was somewhat gloomy because of prices and overabundance of supplies," said Les Whit-lock, manager of the Texas Val-ley Citrus Committee, a regulatory arm of the U.S. Department

Different tastes explored

freeze and the decrease in sup-plies, it is looking the other way

it looks bright for us. Ed Boler, whose Boler Farms in Pharr has been producing and marketing citrus fruit for almost 40 years, was even more optimistic about the outlook for Texas crops.

"I'd say it's the best crop we've had in five years," Boler said. "Our quality is excellent, juice and sugar content is real good. There's not a thing but a bright future for us now.

"It (the citrus market) would have been very depressed if the freeze in Florida had not come. There would have been more fruit in the United States than could have been consumed." Whitlock said Florida's probof Agriculture. "But now with the Florida lems already are causing an in-crease in the price Texas grow-

ers are receiving for their fruit. He said grapefruit prices were up about 40 percent and oranges were selling for about 20 percent more than before the freeze. He said the higher selling prices were coupled with much higher production.

"In production volume, it's up probably 64 percent on grapefruit and about 40 percent on oranges," Whitlock said. "We had a freeze here ourselves in '78-'79, so for the last three years we've been down. Then we went through a hurricane last season when we still were recovering from the freeze. We're now just

returning to pre-freeze levels as far as production is concerned." Whitlock said Texas is second behind Florida in grapefruit production and third behind Florida and California in the

Texas supplies about 18 perc of the nation's fresh graph and about 6 percent of the tion's fresh oranges. Freezing weather can vin ly destroy entire groves of a

trees and Boler said ther growers can do to prese tremely cold temperature taking a heavy toll.

"Overall, the Valley is equipped to protect its - nothing compa crops Florida's (protection sures)," Boler said. "Th bigger interest in Flori cause it's controlled by panies that control acreages, where here in th ley it's owned by many p

'If it were to be severe he say 14, 16, 18, 20 degree quite a few hours - there very little that can be do

production of oranges. He said

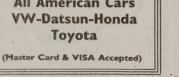
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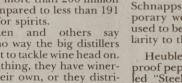
United Press International NEW YORK — Some of those in the liquor business are finding sweet ways to expand their market share, if not counter the

wine is enjoying increasing popularity," confirms Marvin Shanken, a knowledgeable observer of the industry. "And a certain amount of that is coming

Distillers sweeten market

from about 4 million cases in 1964 to over 13 million in 1980,





mum wage — a couple of bucks in the jeans at the end of the tastes they like, Wiley say. Cordials sales also are up ple today are impatient.