What Makes San Diego County Agriculture Unique?

- San Diego County is the most southwestern county in the United States. San Diego County has a geographic area of 4,200 square miles, approximately the size of Connecticut, with a population of 2.9 million.
- San Diego County has the sixth highest urban population among counties in the United States, and the 12th largest agricultural economy.
- The U.S. Weather Bureau describes the San Diego climate as the most nearly perfect in America. The San Diego weather can be characterized as Mediterranean, with warm winters and cool summers.
- San Diego County’s varied topography creates a wide fluctuation of microclimates resulting in nearly 30 different types of vegetation communities. This diversity allows for San Diego to grow over 200 different agricultural commodities - from strawberries and tomatoes along the coast, to apples in the mountain areas, to citrus in the desert.
- Agriculture in San Diego County covers 266,434 acres and ranks 5th as a component of San Diego County’s economy.
- San Diego County has 5,255 farms, the third highest number of farms when comparing all counties within the United States.
- 63% of San Diego County farms are 1-9 acres, 37% are greater than 10 acres. The Median sized farm is 5 acres. In San Diego 92% of the farms are family owned with 77% of farmers living on their land.
- San Diego County ranks number one in both California and the nation in the production value of nursery, floriculture, and sod.
- The high cost of water (more than $600/acre foot) and land make farming in San Diego County expensive and encourages growers to raise products with a high dollar value per acre.
- San Diego County is also ranked number one in California and the nation in the production value of avocados.
- Statewide, San Diego County is in the top five in the production of chickens, fresh market tomatoes, lemons, mushrooms, grapefruit, tangerines, cucumbers, and squash.
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- San Diego County continues to be at the forefront of organic farming. The County boasts more than 300 registered organic growers, more than any county in the nation. Last year, San Diego organic growers produced over 140 different crops on 6,400 acres with gross sales topping $28.6 million.
- Additionally in 2005, 8445 shipments of San Diego County crops were exported to 62 foreign countries, ranging from Aruba to United Arab Emirates.

County of San Diego

2005 Agricultural Overview

Agriculture continues to be a vibrant component of the economy in San Diego County. In 2005 agriculture increased in both value and acreage. The total reported value for all agricultural commodities produced in the County for 2005 was $1,531,541,236, a 5% increase from 2004. This is the highest crop value ever reported for San Diego County.

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While mushroom acreage remained constant, mushroom production increased by 29%, and the value increased by 32% in 2005. Oriental vegetables increased significantly in both acreage (24%) and value (23%). Potato acreage continued a two-year gain increasing by 38% in 2005. The value of the potato crop also increased in 2005, by 29%.

Livestock and Poultry values decreased in 2005, as well as the value from Livestock and Poultry products. Much of this decrease can be attributed to livestock and poultry facilities continuing to either close or migrate out of San Diego County to the Central Valley in California. The number of chickens produced decreased by 23% and the number of head of cattle by 14% in 2005. Correspondingly, milk production was down 25% and value decreased 28% from 2004. Chicken eggs continued a downward trend with a reduction in dozens of eggs produced (4%) and total value (27%). The value of a dozen eggs was $0.50 compared with $0.49 in 1986.