San Diego County is the most southwestern county in the United States with a geographic area of 4,200 square miles, approximately the size of Connecticut, and a population of 2.9 million.

The U.S. Weather Bureau describes the San Diego climate as the most nearly perfect in America, 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 - strawberries along the coast, apples in the mountains, and grapefruit in the desert.

San Diego County has the sixth highest urban population among counties in the United States, but the County also has the 12th largest agricultural economy.

Agriculture in San Diego County covers 315,000 acres and ranks 5th as a component of San Diego County's economy.

San Diego County has 5,255 farms, the second highest number of farms of all counties in the United States.

63% of San Diego County farms are 1-9 acres, 37% are greater than 10 acres. Median size farm in San Diego is 5 acres.

In San Diego 92% of the farms are family owned. 77% of the farmers live on their land. Native Americans hold 22% of the farmland in San Diego County.

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 ranks number one in both California and the nation in the production value of nursery, floriculture, sod and avocados.

Statewide, San Diego County is in the top five in the production of chickens, fresh market tomatoes, eggs, mushrooms, grapefruit, tangerines, and honey.

In 2006, the Agricultural Commissioner system celebrated its 125th anniversary. In 1881, the San Diego County Board of Supervisors established a three member Board of Horticulture. In 1911, the board was consolidated into a single Horticultural Commissioner, and in 1929, the title was officially changed to "Agricultural Commissioner."

Historically, one of the duties of the Agricultural Commissioner is to report on the state of agriculture in this county. For many decades, the Agricultural Commissioner has tallied information gathered from local farmers and compiled an annual crop report.

All the values for 2006 have been tabulated and the total value of San Diego County's agriculture was $1,461,665,261. Although this is slightly lower (-4.6%) than the 2005 value, it is apparent that agriculture still thrives and flourishes in our County, with over 47 crops worth at least $1 million.

In 2006, the value of Nursery and Flower crops was 69% of the total value of agriculture in San Diego County. Indoor Flowering and Foliage Plants remains the number one crop and has been the top commodity in San Diego County for over two decades.
For the past several years, value and acreage of Ornamental Trees and Shrubs has increased rapidly. In 2006, these crops showed a slight decrease in acreage (-4.4%) and a slight increase in value (0.2%) to $287,586,060. Overall acreage for all nurseries and cut flowers decreased in 2006 (-3.4%) while the total value remained essentially the same (0.0%).

Gains in the 2005 value (29%) of Fruit and Nut Crops declined (-32%) in 2006. Avocados remain the largest fruit crop, although the value decreased significantly (-45%), due to a drop in price and increased production. Citrus decreased in both acreage (-9%) and value (-10%). Navel Oranges contributed to this decrease due to a significant drop in pollination value.

The value of Vegetables and Vine Fruits grew (25%) while acreage decreased slightly (-3.8%). The biggest gains were in tomatoes, increasing in both production and price. Mushrooms also showed significant gains in value (43%) while acreage stayed the same. Some of this increase is attributed to shifting towards more lucrative varieties of mushrooms.

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Field Crops which includes grains, rangeland and irrigated pasture, decreased in value (-4%) while bee products increased (23%). The largest increase was due to the rise in pollination value.

Last year inspectors found 380 pests of significant economic importance (A rated) or of unknown economic importance (Q rated). Examples of finds are Giant African, Apple, and Cuban snails; diseases such as Chrysanthemum White Rust and Gladiolus Rusts and first-time finds of Bamboo mealy bug and Bougainvillea looper.

Just as the Horticultural Commissioner 125 years ago, today’s Agricultural Commissioner is committed to protecting and promoting the valuable agricultural resources of this county. Additional crop production information can be found at: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/awm/crop_statistics.html.