

Solano County

2016



Crop and Livestock Report

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To: Karen Ross, Secretary
California Department of Food and Agriculture

and

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Solano, California

Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 2279 and 2272 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, I am pleased to present the Solano County Crop and Livestock Report for 2016.

This report is the 67th annual report issued by the Agricultural Commissioner. Although overall production values dropped from last year in the face of a fifth year of statewide drought, farm gate values remained above pre-drought values. It is important to remember that this report lists farm gate values only. Processing capacity allows some growers to add or recapture value, but this report is not a measure of profitability, nor does it account for the re-spending and support multipliers generated by this production in the local economy.

The gross value of Solano County's agricultural production for 2016 was \$347,172,000, representing a decrease from 2015 values by \$6,697,000, or a 1.9% drop. The extended drought and lower meat prices contributed to reduced values in animal production and field crops. The top three crops for Solano County are Walnuts as number one with an increase in value by 18.2% to \$44,822,000, Nursery Products in second rank at \$39,754,000, an increase of 5.6%, and Almonds in third rank with an increase of 52.2% value to \$35,917,000. Tomatoes fell from first to fourth rank losing 19.7% to \$33,843,000. Alfalfa, Cattle and Calves and Wheat also dropped in ranking and value. Conversely, Wine Grapes, Sunflower (Seed) and Sheep and Lambs rose in both rank and value. It should be noted that for 2016, unlike prior years, value calculations for Sheep and Lambs included feeder lamb weight gain while maintained in pasture in Solano County that contributed to the 40% increase in value.

This year's cover story celebrates Solano County's agricultural diversity and spotlights its economic, cultural and historical importance. Each year's crop report provides data that statistically demonstrates how Solano's diversity has supported and maintained a strong and thriving agriculture economy, as some crops rise in value while others fall.

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all of the farmers, ranchers, boards, commissions, and agencies who contributed vital data to make this report possible. I also thank Michael Duncan for his efforts as our crop report editor and my staff for their dedication and efforts in compiling and producing this report.

To see this or any of the previous crop reports online or to learn about the programs and services provided by the Solano County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures, please visit at www.solanocounty.com/ag.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Allan
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures

A Diverse and Thriving Agriculture

This year's Annual Crop Report celebrates the diversity of Solano County Agriculture. Using numerous metrics, our county has been recognized as being the second most diverse county in California; this distinction applies to our agriculture as well. We grow more than eighty different crops. Our growers come from many different backgrounds. Our soils, weather and resources differentiate various parts of the county making each one ideal for a different crop mix. Just as having a diversified investment portfolio can help maintain value during times of fluctuation, a diverse agricultural system supports a strong agricultural economy in changing times. Land use policy decisions in Solano County have further supported the continued variability in our systems, although forces outside of the county threaten to mar key facets in our gem.

Many of my colleague commissioners wake up every morning knowing what their number one crop will be in the next year. Solano County has six contenders for that position. Our leading crops differ across broad categories, including Nursery Products, Seed Crops, Vegetable Row Crops, Fruits and Nuts, Livestock, and Field Crops each have at least one placement in the top ten. The decisions growers make on what to plant are largely financial ones. Availability of markets, processing, transportation corridors and inputs are all part of the calculus. Sugar Beets were once the second highest grossing crop in the county. As sugar mills began to shut down in the late 1990s, production dropped rapidly to the point where there were no beets being planted at all, down from 19,000 acres in 1987, to 11,000 in 1998 and then none at all in 2001. For many local economies, this loss would have been catastrophic, but the array of planting alternatives available in Solano County allowed the Ag industry to show great resiliency.

Our farming community is also diverse. In every part of the county, we have legacy farm families that have been here for generations. Some of their ancestors bought portions of former Spanish land grants during the gold rush era. We also have young men and women entering farming for the first time. Many of our newer growers plant for Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscribers, while others take their seasonal harvests to local farmer's markets. The Center for Land-Based Learning in the Dixon Ridge area gives aspiring farmers the skills and experience needed to enter the industry. Some of our new growers are recent veterans from foreign conflicts and some are new graduates from nearby University of California (UC) Davis. Our producers also represent many ethnic and cultural communities bringing traditional techniques and access to specialty markets to the industry.

Different crops require specific growing conditions to optimize quality and value. The 2008 Ag Futures Study commissioned from the UC Davis Ag Issues Center, identified ten production regions within the county. Each has a unique combination of soil, weather patterns and water infrastructure. These regions were recognized in the County General Plan for their specific contributions and needs. Two of the county regions, Suisun and Green Valley, are congressionally recognized American Viticultural Areas (AVA's) for the unique terroir each provides for the grapes grown there. An agricultural economic study completed this year assigned Solano County the second highest diversity index. Only Monterey, a county with an annual production exceeding \$4 billion, had a higher diversity score.

Farming needs space and isolation to grow crops without interference. Slow-growth measures approved by voters long ago and implemented by policy makers through the General Plan have assured a stable ag-urban interface that has mitigated conflict. Unfortunately, outside interests have identified Solano's agricultural open space as low-hanging fruit to mitigate for statewide water export projects. Hopefully, our agriculture systems will find a way to coexist with coming changes to the agricultural landscape.

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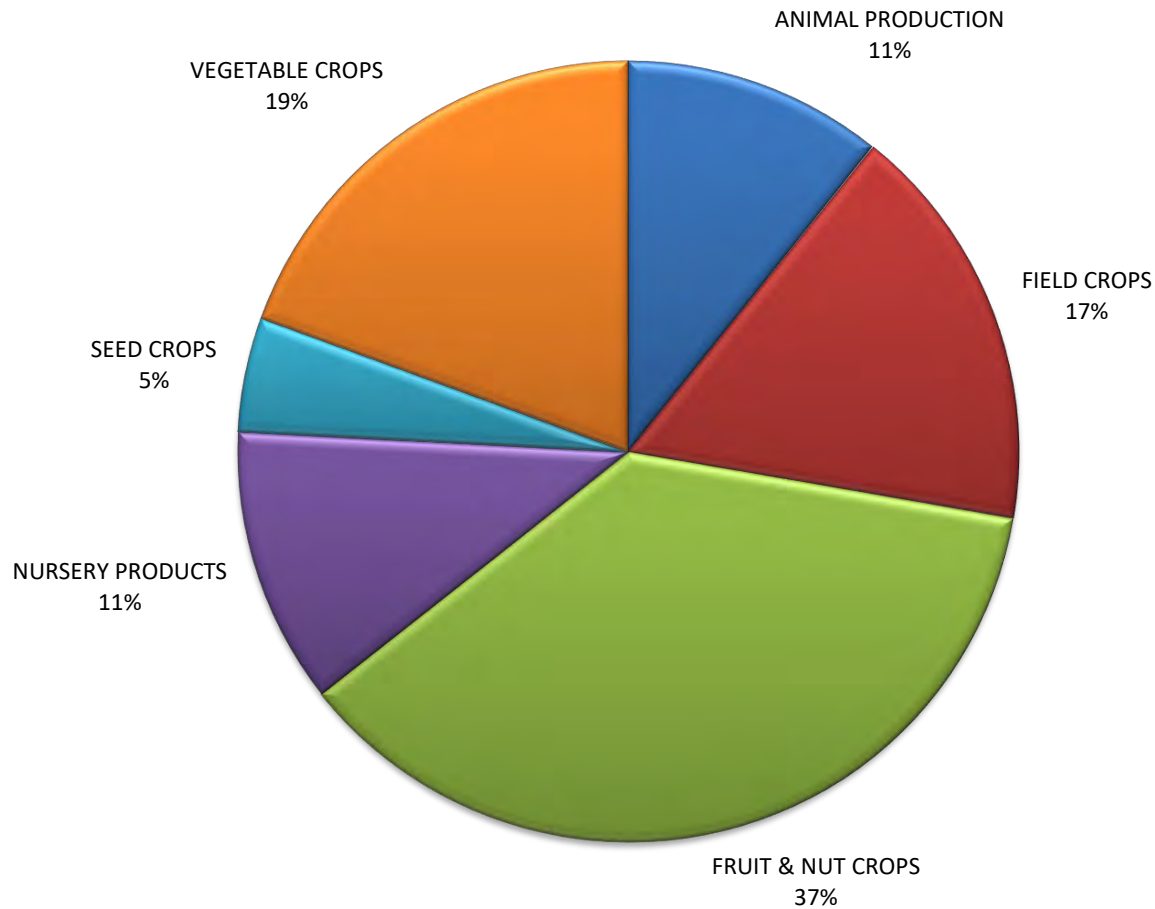
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2016 Value by Crop Group



Value Summary

YEAR	ANIMAL PRODUCTION ¹	FIELD CROPS	FRUIT & NUT CROPS	NURSERY PRODUCTS	SEED CROPS	VEGETABLE CROPS	TOTAL VALUE
2006	47,852,000	46,946,000	39,964,000	47,856,000	9,988,000	40,899,000	\$233,505,000
2007	54,820,000	54,812,000	43,430,000	56,611,000	10,821,000	47,762,000	\$268,256,000
2008	49,873,000	89,365,000	44,037,000	43,056,000	10,828,000	55,624,000	\$292,783,000
2009	40,116,000	50,073,000	48,191,000	33,499,000	15,859,000	64,184,000	\$251,922,000
2010	46,011,000	57,072,000	54,874,000	23,352,000	14,391,000	63,698,000	\$259,398,000
2011	52,458,000	83,812,000	63,420,000	23,630,000	14,671,000	53,668,000	\$291,659,000
2012	63,425,000	84,604,000	87,368,000	32,707,000	17,680,000	56,911,000	\$342,695,000
2013	51,340,000	88,744,000	97,150,000	35,144,000	16,628,000	59,209,000	\$348,215,000
2014	62,387,000	98,672,000	86,624,000	35,594,000	16,900,000	78,468,000	\$378,645,000
2015	57,277,000	78,454,000	87,741,000	37,648,000	11,729,000	81,020,000	\$353,869,000
2016	37,259,000	59,006,000	127,228,000	39,754,000	16,478,000	67,447,000	\$347,172,000

¹Includes livestock and poultry, livestock and poultry products, and apiary production.