

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.
- San Diego County produces the most dollar value per acre (\$5606/A) of any county in California.

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. 2005 is the 13th consecutive year of growth in value for the San Diego County agricultural industry. Acreage dedicated to agriculture in San Diego County also grew by 3%.



San Diego County's unique topography creates a wide variety 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 palm trees in the desert.

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.

2005 Agricultural Crop Highlights

Total Value	\$1,531,541,236
Estimated Economic Impact	\$5,360,394,326
Change in Value from 2004	\$69,423,495
Percent of Change	+5%
Total Acreage	273,176
Change in Acreage from 2004	6,742
Percent of Change	+3%
#1 Crop	Indoor Flowering & Foliage Plants
Crop with the Highest Value Per Acre	Indoor Flowering & Foliage Plants
Dollar Value Per Acre	\$603,981
Crop with the Lowest Value Per Acre	Oat Grain
Dollar Value Per Acre	\$3.62



San Diego County Agriculture

The Top Ten Crops of 2005



Indoor Flowering & Foliage Plants
\$311,050,300



Ornamental Trees and Shrubs
\$287,586,060



Avocados
\$251,452,135



Bedding Plants
\$215,366,320



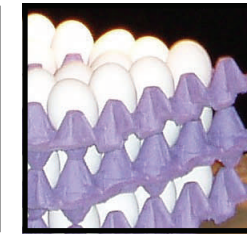
Cut Flowers and Foliage
\$76,432,320



Tomatoes
\$59,729,263



Poinsettia
\$38,127,200



Eggs
\$34,213,600

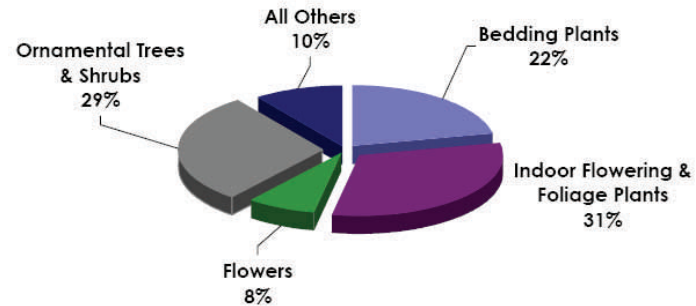


Strawberries
\$27,409,785



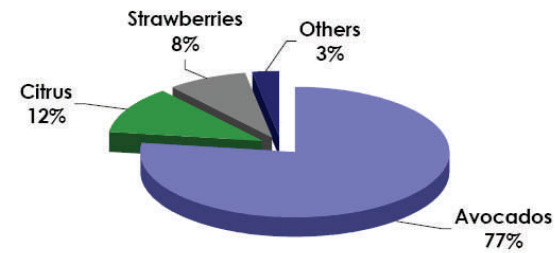
Herbaceous Perennials
\$19,869,200

Nursery and Flower Crops



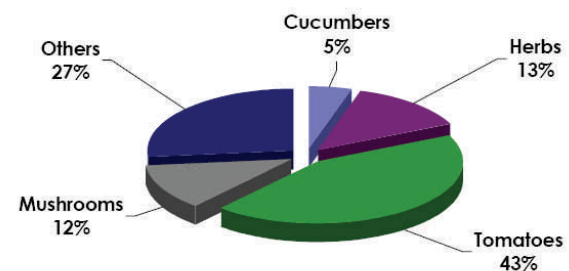
Indoor Flowering and Foliage Plants remains the number one crop with a value of \$311,050,300. This crop has been the top commodity in San Diego County for over two decades. Although the acreage and value of Indoor Flowering and Foliage Plants remained relatively constant from 2004, Ornamental Trees and Shrubs continued to increase in both acreage (4%) and value (5%) for a dollar value of \$287,586,060. While Cut Christmas Tree acreage remained constant, the value increased by 10%. Total nursery and flower production increased only slightly this year in acreage (1%) and value (2%).

Fruit and Nut Crops



Fruit and Nut Crops increased 29% in 2005 even though acreage decreased slightly. Favorable climatic conditions in late 2004 and early 2005 contributed to the significant increase in production of tree crops. The greatest gains were in apples, which rose in value 42%, and Hass avocados, which increased in value by 45%.

Vegetable Crops



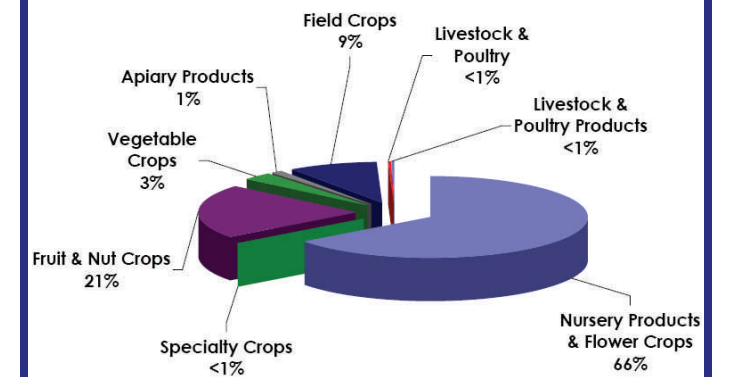
In Vegetable and Vine Fruits, melons, mushrooms, oriental vegetables, and potatoes showed the greatest gains in total value. Melons increased in acreage 61% and total value 46%.

While mushroom acreage remained constant, mushroom production increase 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

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 \$.50 compared with \$.49 in 1986.

Summary All Crops 2005



CROP	ACRES	VALUE
Nursery Products & Flower	10,221	\$990,900,400
Fruit & Nut Crops	42,815	\$325,988,273
Vegetable Crops	7,044	\$137,990,797
Livestock & Poultry		\$47,631,604
Livestock & Poultry Products		\$18,596,610
Field Crops	213,096	\$6,154,802
Apiary Products		\$3,323,750
Specialty Crops		\$955,000
TOTALS	273,176	\$1,530,586,236

Specialty Crops

Timber and firewood continued a multi-year upward trend with value of timber increasing by 34% and the value of firewood by 30%. This upward trend is a result of dead and dying trees being removed in the aftermath of the 2003 fires.



Information is from the 2005 Crop Statistics and Annual Report, Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures. A complete copy is available on-line at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/awm/docs/>

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