



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO  
Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

multiplying effect  
x 3-6%

**Crop Statistics for 2010 for San Luis Obispo County Released:**  
**2010 Production, Valued at \$ 712,808,000, Increased 14% over 2009,**  
**Setting a New Record**

**SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA** April 1, 2011—The San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures is pleased to announce the release of annual production statistics for the local agricultural industry for 2010. Statistics can be found on the Department's website at [www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm). Hard copies of the Annual Report will be available in June.

Total crop values for 2010 are estimated at a gross value of \$712,808,000 compared to \$623,095,000 for 2009. This increase in value sets a new record according to Marty Settevendemie, County Agricultural Commissioner. "The mild summer and winter temperatures and ample rainfall provided ideal growing conditions in 2010 for many of the county's crops. Increased acreage and high returns for strawberries and other crops helped keep the local ag economy strong, reflected in the record-breaking combined value," said Settevendemie. However, Settevendemie cautioned, "the Annual Report only reports commodity gross values and does not include the ever increasing costs of production such as transportation, labor and fuel costs that affect profit margins."

The strawberry industry showed significant expansion in 2010. An additional 525 acres over 2009 levels were planted for a total of 2,418 acres. Prices for strawberries going to the fresh market were strong resulting in an increase of 74% in total value over 2010. The fresh market and processing strawberry industry combined was valued at \$123,542,000, an increase of approximately 69% over 2009. Raspberry acreage also increased and growers were able to produce high quality fruit under plastic hoop-style greenhouses.

Wine grapes continue to hold the top position in overall value. Favorably mild weather conditions for red varieties helped contribute to an 18% increase in yields overall compared to 2009 tonnage totals. Yield levels of local red varieties of wine grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Melot were far higher than statewide averages. Wine grapes, valued at \$173,558,000, represent 24% of the combined value of the County's entire agricultural industry.

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Coastal Hass avocado groves rebounded dramatically from extremely hot weather conditions during 2009 and freeze damage which occurred in 2008. Yields improved by 527% over 2009 levels, resulting in 22,640 tons of avocados harvested in 2010. However the price for avocados was only 62% of 2009 levels, yielding \$35,862,000. Lemon yields were down from 2009, however the price per ton was high, resulting in a 33% increase in value over 2009. Dry-land farmed walnuts benefitted from the ample rainfall in 2010 with production increases of 48% over 2009 levels.

The number of harvested acres of vegetable crops decreased overall by 3% over 2009 due to the conversion of some of the historic vegetable acreage to strawberry production. Sugar pea production benefitted from the cool weather conditions in the coastal valleys, reflected in a 166% increase in total production yields over 2009. Other vegetable crops such as bell peppers and squash were negatively impacted by the cool weather in 2010, with reduced yields. Leaf lettuce growers planted half as many acres but realized almost twice the production due to converting from two row beds to four rows per each bed. Fewer total acres were planted in vegetables in 2010 resulting in a 6% decrease in overall value.

The local cattle industry saw higher than normal prices and the ample rainfall improved grazing conditions compared to the past three years of drought conditions. This led to heavier weights but herd sizes were reduced due to the previous droughts resulting in fewer cattle going to market. Total production for 2010 was valued at \$53,374,000 compared to \$51,992,000 in 2009, an increase of 3% in value.

The downturned economy and lack of new housing construction continued to hit the local bedding plant and outdoor ornamental nursery producers hard in 2010. However, the total value for the nursery industry reported at \$94,708,000, increased by 1% overall compared to an 8% decrease in value in 2009. The demand from throughout the state for locally grown vegetable transplants held steady. The indoor decorative category increased in value by 26% to \$23,289,000 compared to a 12% decrease in 2009 as greenhouse growers found more efficient ways to produce high quality plants and consumer demand improved.

Growing conditions for field crops such as barley, grain hay and alfalfa were very favorable due to above normal rainfall during the critical production window. Overall the value of field crops combined was 22% above 2009 levels.

The Annual Report provides current and historical production and value statistics of the local agricultural industry. Annual Reports from 1968 through 2010 can be viewed at [www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm).

For more information about the Annual Report contact Marty Settevendemie, Ag Commissioner or Lynda Auchinachie at 805-781-5910. To request a hard copy when the printed copies are available in June contact the Ag. Commissioner's office in San Luis Obispo by calling 805-781-5910.

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