

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

San Mateo County Agriculture Production Near \$100 Million

Half Moon Bay – San Mateo County’s agricultural production in 2021 totaled nearly \$98 million, a 5 percent bounce from the prior year, according to the [2021 Agricultural Crop Report](#).

A strong year for floral and nursery crops and forest products – fueled by timber harvesting in the [CZU Lightning Complex](#) burn area – helped growers reverse a downward trend that began in 2019.

Crop values totaled \$97,969,000 in 2021, an increase of 5.17 percent from 2020. This comes after a steep 28.5 percent fall in production value in 2020 due to the drought, CZU Lightning Complex fire, pandemic and other challenges.

“Our local agricultural industry has been hit hard by drought and other factors beyond the control of most farmers,” said Don Horsley, president of the Board of Supervisors whose [District 3](#) includes most of the county’s farmland.

“A strong local agricultural industry provides high-quality food that we can all enjoy while productive farms help to balance development with preserving the coast we all know and love. We will continue to do what we can to help strengthen the industry whenever and wherever we can,” he said.

The county’s most valuable agricultural products are floral and nursery crops with a value of \$60.2 million in 2021: \$43.9 million grown in greenhouses and \$16.3 million grown outdoors. This represents a 3.79 percent increase in value, a positive trend for area growers.

Brussels sprouts remained the vegetable with the highest production value at \$8.88 million, down from \$9.5 million in 2020. Forest products saw a jump of 618 percent from 2020 due to the harvesting of timber from the CZU complex fire burn area – to \$4.9 million in 2021.

“We expect to see an increase in timber harvesting into 2022 as post-fire timber salvage activities continue,” said Koren Widdel, the County’s agricultural commissioner.

The ongoing drought continues to pressure the local industry. Monthly rainfall totals for Half Moon Bay in 2021 averaged about 50 percent of normal. Two major rainstorms or atmospheric rivers, meanwhile, flooded fields and led to rotting vegetables late in the year.

The report’s good news is that downward trends in several categories have mostly stabilized. Floral and nursery crops, for instance, had a value of \$106.9 million in 2018, \$90 million in 2019 and \$58 million in 2020 before rebounding to \$60.2 million in 2021.

The County began publishing annual crop reports [starting in 1940](#), when total production value stood at \$7.7 million (flowers even then were the most valuable crop, followed by vegetables). The reports are used by the agricultural industry as well as planners and policy makers.

San Mateo County [ranks 56 out of 58 in California](#) in terms of area (larger than only Santa Cruz and San Francisco counties) but ranks 38th in total agricultural production.

Horsley said the challenges faced by the agricultural industry – drought, inexpensive imports, the high cost of doing business in the Bay Area – point to a need for additional policies that promote local food production.

The County’s [Agricultural Advisory Commission](#) will use the report to make policy recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The County is also launching the first [Farmworker Advisory Commission](#) in the state.

GROSS PRODUCTION VALUE		
Commodity Group	2021	2020
Floral and Nursery Crops	\$60,268,000	\$58,065,000
Vegetables	\$21,167,000	\$22,275,000
Livestock	\$5,697,000	\$5,585,000
Forest Products	\$4,908,000	\$684,000
Fruit and Nut Crops	\$2,648,000	\$3,520,000
Field Crops	\$1,877,000	\$1,624,000
Livestock Products and Apiary	\$1,404,000	\$1,403,000
Total	\$97,969,000	\$93,156,000

