

3. Agriculture

In certain areas of Northern California, agricultural production constitutes a significant portion of the economic base. The amount of agricultural production in an area can indicate the type of economy and businesses that are successful, as well as what kinds of jobs are available. Areas particularly dependent on a few agricultural crops can also experience considerable instability in their economic performance as product prices fluctuate.

El Dorado County depends on the production of wine grapes as one of its staple agricultural commodities, as well as other commodities, including apples, Bartlett pears, and peaches. Pasture for rangeland accounts for the largest percent of agricultural land use in the county, while wine grapes and apples are the crops with the highest amount of production as well as total value for the county.

All information for this section was collected from the California Agricultural Statistics Service. It should be noted that the California Agricultural Statistics Service compiles data from each county's agricultural commissioner, who in turn collects data from farmers. In some cases, crops are classified under varying titles from year to year and deadlines are not always met for reporting information; therefore, some discrepancies exist in historical analysis.

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Harvested Acreage

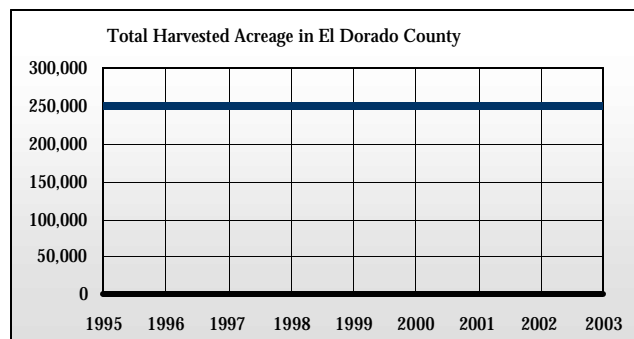
Overview

Total harvested acreage is the amount of land that is harvested for agricultural products in a given year. This includes field crops, vegetable crops, seed crops, and rangeland. Harvested acreage can fluctuate due to flooding, severe storms, fields that are left fallow for a season, government programs and regulations, pest control, and other factors. In some cases, certain orchards must grow for three to four years before being harvested and replanted again, creating a cyclical pattern in output. A decline in agricultural land availability may also occur when urbanization permanently removes land from the production cycle.

This section illustrates the total number of harvested acres in the county over time, as well as the dominant crops and/or rangeland that make up the harvest and the trends associated with these important commodities.

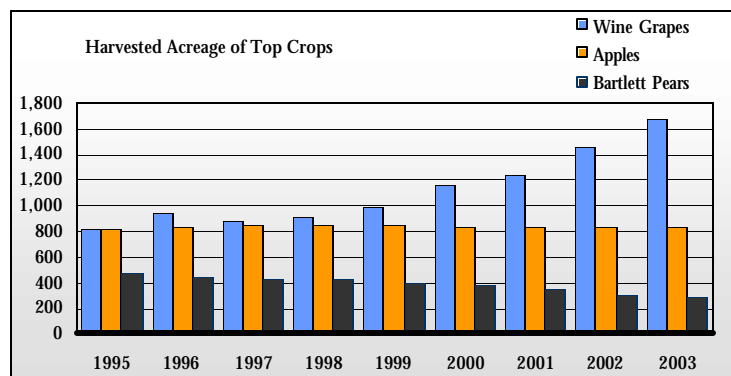
El Dorado County

A total of 249,716 acres of land was harvested in El Dorado County in 2003, which accounts for 23 percent of the land area in the county and 0.8 percent of the total harvested land in California. Pasture for rangeland made up 22 percent of harvested acreage. See the following illustrations for more detail on the county's harvested acreage by year, harvests of the most important crops, as well as rangeland.



Total Harvested Acreage		Percent of total land area
Year	Total acres harvested	
1995	250,354	22.9%
1996	249,744	22.8%
1997	249,733	22.8%
1998	249,777	22.8%
1999	249,539	22.8%
2000	249,404	22.8%
2001	249,341	22.8%
2002	249,533	22.8%
2003	249,716	22.8%

Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service



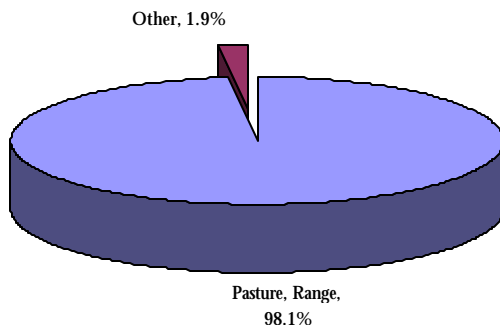
Wine grapes were the dominant harvested crop in El Dorado County, with 1,678 acres harvested in 2003. This accounted for 0.3 percent of all wine grapes harvested in California. Apples made up the next most abundant harvest, with 835 acres in 2003, or almost 3.3 percent of the state total.

Top Crops Harvested Acreage

Crops	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Wine Grapes	817	937	876	917	981	1,165	1,244	1,464	1,678
Apples	810	840	850	855	845	838	835	835	835
Other Hay, Unspecified	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	380	350	350	354	348
Bartlett Pears	480	443	431	425	405	385	355	303	285
English Walnuts	220	220	215	n/a	216	216	216	253	249
Sweet Cherries	117	122	129	127	126	116	112	108	104
Peaches, Unspecified	70	100	102	110	110	110	110	97	102
Asian Pears	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	66	66	66	63	63
Plums	60	60	61	59	60	58	58	61	57
Pasture, Range	245,000	245,000	245,000	245,000	245,000	245,000	245,000	245,000	245,000
Pasture, Irrigated	2,100	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,350	1,100	995	995	995

Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service

Top Crops as a Percent of Total Harvested Acres, 2003



Top Crops Production

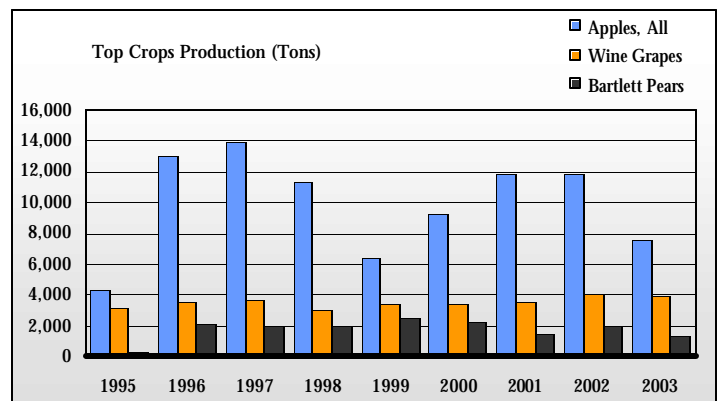
Overview

Similar indicators affecting a crop's harvest may also affect the amount of production during the year. For example, some crops may be produced, harvested, and marketed in the same season, while others may be harvested and released into the market at a later date. This may be apparent in high variations of production for specific crops, while the harvested acreage remains somewhat stable.

El Dorado County

Apples had the largest production in El Dorado County by far, with an average of 9,919 tons each year since 1995. In 2003, El Dorado County contributed 2.1 percent of the total reported production of apples in California.

Wine grapes and Bartlett pears had the next highest production rate in the county, with 3,953 and 1,354 tons, respectively, in 2003. The production of wine grapes remained relatively stable since 1995, while Bartlett pears peaked in 1999 with over 2,400 tons produced. Other varying fluctuations may be due to weather, crop resiliency, and market influences contributing to the amount of production each year.



Top Crops Production (Tons)

Crops	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Apples, All	4,313	12,936	13,913	11,269	6,422	9,300	11,857	11,774	7,487
Wine Grapes	3,186	3,532	3,638	2,961	3,345	3,400	3,570	4,060	3,953
Bartlett Pears	273	2,181	1,955	1,991	2,471	2,230	1,460	1,970	1,354
Other Hay	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	560	610	634	673	644
Asian Pears	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	205	264	413	560	504
Peaches, Unspecified	28	240	249	37	55	385	275	267	163
English Walnuts	60	122	110	n/a	132	86	134	139	154
Plums	29	140	146	99	109	116	168	98	88
Sweet Cherries	31	98	180	45	189	209	95	30	32

Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service

Value of Agricultural Production

Overview

Agricultural production affects many areas of a county's economy, including jobs, income, and the economic output of related industries. When agricultural production declines, so do purchases from local businesses. Decreasing purchases of seed, fuel, irrigation water, commercial nutrients, feed stuff, veterinary drugs and vaccines, fertilizer, equipment, transportation services, and other production inputs have spillover effects on the suppliers of those goods and services.

The crops of greatest value make a significant contribution to local income. Climate conditions and soil availability may give an area a comparative advantage in the production of a particular agricultural commodity.

Included are the ten most significant crops in the area, represented in terms of gross production value. This includes production value during the calendar year, regardless of whether it was sold on the market or used at the place of production. The data that reflects crops by top value includes fresh fruits and vegetables whose values are FOB (Free On Board) prices. This excludes the cost of transportation to a specified destination for distribution, which is paid for by the seller.

El Dorado County

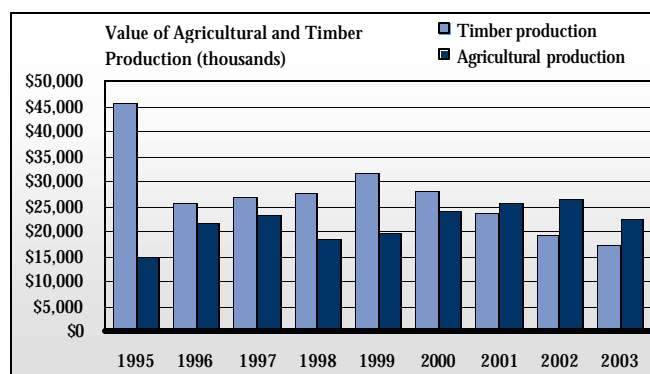
Agricultural production totaled \$40.1 million in El Dorado County in 2003. Timber production accounted for 44 percent of that value, which has been steadily decreasing since 1999.

The production of wine grapes, the most valuable crop in El Dorado County, generated \$4.4 million and made up 20 percent of the county's total agricultural value in 2003. Yet, El Dorado County produced less than half of 1 percent of the total value of that crop in California in the same year. The next most valuable crop in the county was apples, with a value of \$4.1 million in 2003, or 18 percent of the county's production value. Both wine grapes and apples are extremely important to the local economy of the county because their successful harvest contributes to the livelihood of the farming community.

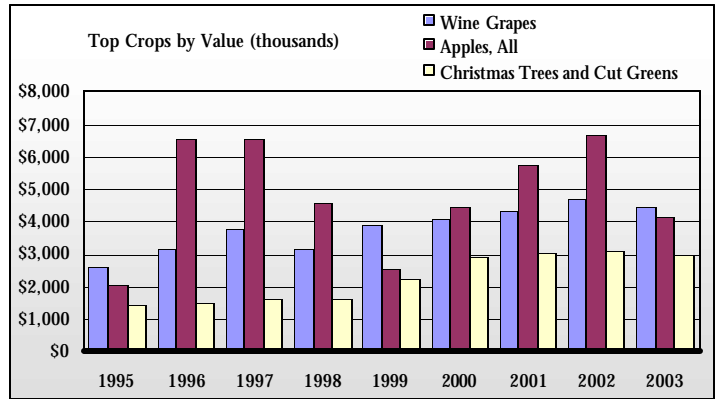
Agricultural and Timber Production (thousands)

Year	Agricultural production	Timber production	Timber as a percent of total production	Total Production
1995	\$ 14,872	\$ 45,800	75.5%	\$ 60,672
1996	\$ 21,567	\$ 25,676	54.3%	\$ 47,243
1997	\$ 23,193	\$ 27,050	53.8%	\$ 50,243
1998	\$ 18,724	\$ 27,640	59.6%	\$ 46,364
1999	\$ 19,677	\$ 31,771	61.8%	\$ 51,448
2000	\$ 24,166	\$ 28,208	53.9%	\$ 52,374
2001	\$ 25,544	\$ 23,665	48.1%	\$ 49,209
2002	\$ 26,544	\$ 19,445	42.3%	\$ 45,989
2003	\$ 22,698	\$ 17,442	43.5%	\$ 40,140

Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service



Pasture for rangeland and cattle are also highly valuable in El Dorado County, as well as Christmas trees and nursery products. Please see the following graphs for illustrations of El Dorado County's agricultural production value.



Top Crops by Value, 2003 (thousands \$)

Crop	Value
Wine Grapes	\$ 4,430
Apples, All	\$ 4,126
Christmas Trees & Cut Greens	\$ 2,995
Pasture, Range	\$ 2,940
Cattle & Calves, Unspecified	\$ 2,848
Nursery Flowers, Prop. Materials	\$ 1,465
Livestock, Unspecified	999
Nursery, Woody Ornamentals	\$ 590
Apiary Products, Bees Unspecified	418
Peaches, Unspecified	\$ 375

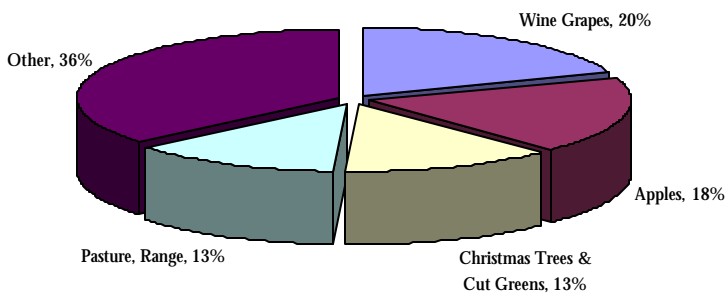
Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service

Historical Crops by Value (thousands \$)

Crop	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Wine Grapes	\$ 2,587	\$ 3,140	\$ 3,798	\$ 3,155	\$ 3,880	\$ 4,060	\$ 4,317	\$ 4,680
Apples, All	\$ 2,049	\$ 6,527	\$ 6,567	\$ 4,545	\$ 2,572	\$ 4,450	\$ 5,715	\$ 6,658
Christmas Trees and Cut Greens	\$ 1,407	\$ 1,522	\$ 1,607	\$ 1,634	\$ 2,208	\$ 2,933	\$ 3,019	\$ 3,106

Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service

Production of Top Crops as a Percent of Total Production, 2003



Top Crops Price per Unit

Overview

Although some crops may yield a high annual total value, certain crops bring in a higher price per unit. Price per unit is determined by crop availability and market demand. Information on price data includes the average price received by growers, excluding fresh market fruits and vegetables.

El Dorado County

Buyers paid \$3,200 per ton for sweet cherries in 2003, compared to an average \$3,022 in California. Although sweet cherries were the highest priced agricultural product in El Dorado County, wine grapes were more widely sold. Various types of peaches are also a prominent crop, as well plums and pears.

Top Crops Price per Unit (Tons)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Sweet Cherries	\$ 2,500	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,900	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,200
Peaches, Unspecified	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,534	\$ 1,541	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,540	\$ 1,600	\$ 2,200	\$ 2,300
Plums	\$ 466	\$ 470	\$ 700	\$ 720	\$ 800	\$ 800	\$ 960	\$ 1,100	\$ 1,235
Wine Grapes	\$ 812	\$ 889	\$ 1,044	\$ 1,066	\$ 1,160	\$ 1,194	\$ 1,209	\$ 1,153	\$ 1,121
English Walnuts	\$ 1,280	\$ 1,560	\$ 1,500	n/a	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,020	\$ 1,060	\$ 922
Asian Pears	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 418	\$ 467	\$ 570	\$ 560	\$ 573
Apples	\$ 475	\$ 505	\$ 472	\$ 403	\$ 400	\$ 479	\$ 482	\$ 565	\$ 551
Bartlett Pears	\$ 110	\$ 255	\$ 338	\$ 302	\$ 303	\$ 213	\$ 178	\$ 190	\$ 184
Other Hay	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 110	\$ 97	\$ 119	\$ 105	\$ 91

Source: California Agricultural Statistics Service

