



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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NEWS RELEASE



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REPORT SHOWS AGRICULTURE'S IMPACT ON ECONOMY, JOBS, ENVIRONMENT

A new report underscores how Santa Cruz County's agricultural sector supports local families and the region's economy and heritage but also provides value to the local environment and vital ecosystems.

According to the recently released "Economic Contributions of Santa Cruz County Agriculture" report, agriculture contributed more than \$1.5 billion to the local economy in 2023 and supported nearly 12,000 jobs, directly and indirectly. Commissioned by the Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner, the report goes beyond the traditional crop report to capture the full economic footprint of agriculture, including local food processing and economic multiplier effects. It is the first report of its kind in more than a decade.

While crop production alone generated \$654.7 million in 2023, local processing of those crops — such as berries, vegetables, wine grapes, and nursery products — adds hundreds of millions more in economic value. Visit www.agdept.com to review the report.

"Agriculture pumps more than \$4.2 million into the county's economy every single day," Agricultural Commissioner David Sanford said. "It's one of the most productive, resilient, and essential sectors in our region, and has been for generations."

In 2023, the industry directly employed 8,744 workers in farming and food processing, while generating an additional 3,220 jobs through supplier and consumer spending—making agriculture the source of approximately one in every 18 local jobs.

Agriculture's benefits extend beyond economics. Working lands in Santa Cruz County provided between \$206 million to \$583 million in ecosystem services such as carbon storage, aquifer recharge, soil health and erosion control, flood and wildfire protection, habitat protection and more. The report was compiled by Agricultural Impact Associates.

The report also finds that Santa Cruz County's agricultural sector is diverse and resilient to economic shocks like wildfires, drought, and pandemics.