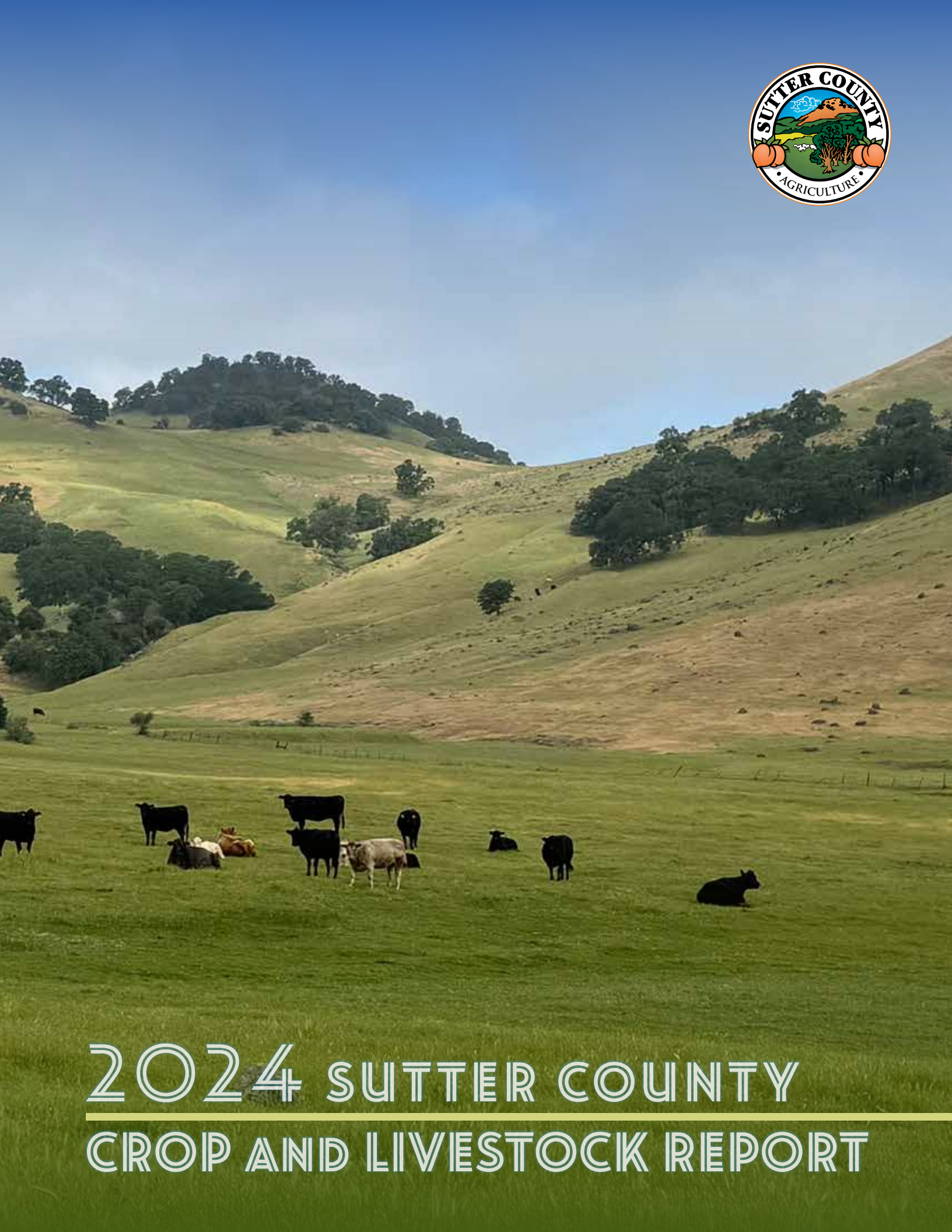

2024 SUTTER COUNTY CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORT

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to serve the public's interest by ensuring equity in the marketplace, promoting and protecting agriculture, assuring environmental quality and protecting the health, safety and welfare of Sutter County's citizens.

We fulfill our mission through the following programs: Pest Exclusion, Pesticide Use Enforcement, Pest Detection, Fruit and Vegetable Standardization, Egg Quality Control, Pest Management, Nursery Inspection, Pest Eradication, Seed Inspection, Weights and Measures Enforcement, Predatory Animal Control and other non-regulatory and special services programs.

PHOTO CREDITS:
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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OFFICE OF THE
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER
SEALER OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

LISA D. HERBERT
Agricultural Commissioner
Sealer of Weights and Measures

October 2025

Karen Ross, Secretary
California Department of Food and Agriculture
and
The Honorable Board of Supervisors of Sutter County
Dan Flores, District 2, Chair
Jeff Boone, District 1
Mike Ziegenmeyer, District 3
Karm Bains, District 4
Jeff Stephens, District 5

I am pleased to present the 2024 Crop and Livestock Report for Sutter County. The report is prepared pursuant to Section 2279 of the California Food and Agricultural Code and is a summary representing estimated acreage, yield, and gross values. The gross value of Sutter County agricultural production for 2024 was $683,508,000. This is a decrease of $88,312,000 or 11.4% from the 2023 total value.

Rice remains the top-ranking crop in 2024 with a total value of $201,309,000. Second was walnuts, due to a significant increase in price, to a total value of $106,471,000, which is a 106% increase from 2023. Processing tomatoes were third, with a total value of $74,980,000, which is a 36% decrease from 2023 due to decreases in harvested acreage, yield, and price. Almond meats rose to fourth due to increases in harvested acreage, yield, and price, with a total value of $70,448,000, which is an 83% increase from 2023. Clingstone peaches fell to fifth, with a total value of $66,356,000.

This edition highlights Organic farming in Sutter County, featuring the stories of Taylor Brothers Farms, Pleasant Grove Farms, and Park Farming Organics. How they each diversified from conventional farming, each with its own story, but for similar reasons: high costs of synthetic chemicals/fertilizers, emphasis on soil health, environmental impact, and employee safety/welfare.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the growers, organizations, and individuals who provided us with the data that enabled this report to be compiled. Thank you to all my staff, especially Becky Mendonza, for compiling and analyzing the data. This report represents gross values only and does not reflect net profits or losses to the producers.

To learn more about the Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the services we provide, including crop reports dating back to 1940, please visit our website at http://www.co.sutter.ca.us/doc/government/depts/ag/aghome.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa D. Herbert
Agricultural Commissioner

FRUIT & NUT CROPS

CROP	YEAR	ACRES HARVESTED	PRODUCTION PER ACRE	TOTAL	UNIT	VALUE PER UNIT	TOTAL
Almonds, Meats	2024	21,500	0.72	15,500	Ton	$4,545	$70,448,000
	2023	18,500	0.59	10,900	Ton	$3,533	$38,510,000
Olives	2024	1,100	2.16	2,380	Ton	1,079	2,568,000
	2023	753	5.37	4,040	Ton	1,047	4,230,000
Peaches, Clingstone	2024	7,140	14.86	106,000	Ton	626	66,356,000
	2023	7,050	15.62	110,000	Ton	615	67,650,000
Prunes, Dried	2024	12,800	2.29	29,300	Ton	2,060	60,358,000
	2023	12,600	2.03	25,600	Ton	2,416	61,850,000
Walnuts, English	2024	36,400	1.74	63,300	Ton	1,682	106,471,000
	2023	37,000	1.74	64,400	Ton	802	51,649,000
Miscellaneous [1]	2024	584		1,130	Ton	4,017	4,539,000
	2023	758		1,400	Ton	4,599	6,439,000
Orchard By-Product	2024				Ton		7,244,000
	2023				Ton		5,412,000
TOTAL	**2024**				**Ton**		**$317,984,000**
	2023				**Ton**		**$235,740,000**

[1] Includes Apples, Apricots, Berries (Blackberries, Boysenberries & Raspberries), Cherries, Chestnuts, Citrus (Grapefruit, Lemons, Limes, Mandarins, Oranges, Tangerines), Feijoa, Figs, Grapes, Jujubes (Chinese Date), Kiwifruit, Kumquat, Nectarines, Nectaplums, Peaches (Freestone), Peacotum, Pears, Pecans, Persimmons, Pistachio Nuts, Plums, Pluots, Pomegranates, Quince, Strawberries, Walnuts (Black) and other miscellaneous fruit and nut crops of a limited number of growers/processors in Sutter County.

BEARING & NON-BEARING ACREAGE

CROP	BEARING ACRES		NON-BEARING ACRES	
	2024	2023	2024	2023
Almonds	21,500	18,500	3,220	5,140
Olives	1,100	753	58	0
Peaches, Clingstone	7,140	7,050	1,070	836
Prunes, Dried	12,800	12,600	673	854
Walnuts, English	36,400	37,000	4,500	4,370
Miscellaneous [1,2]	584	758		55
TOTAL	**79,524**	**76,661**	**9,521**	**11,255**

[1] Includes Apples, Apricots, Berries (Blackberries, Boysenberries & Raspberries), Cherries, Chestnuts, Citrus (Grapefruit, Lemons, Limes, Mandarins, Oranges, Tangerines), Feijoa, Figs, Grapes, Jujubes (Chinese Date), Kiwifruit, Kumquat, Nectarines, Nectaplums, Peaches (Freestone), Peacotum, Pears, Pecans, Persimmons, Pistachio Nuts, Plums, Pluots, Pomegranates, Quince, Strawberries, Walnuts (Black) and other miscellaneous fruit and nut crops of a limited number of growers/processors in Sutter County.

[2] Miscellaneous Non-Bearing Acres not surveyed for 2024.

VEGETABLE CROPS

CROP	YEAR	ACRES HARVESTED	PRODUCTION PER ACRE	TOTAL	UNIT	VALUE PER UNIT	TOTAL
Tomatoes, Processing	2024	14,900	43.76	652,000	Ton	$115	$74,980,000
	2023	16,300	50.86	829,000	Ton	$142	$117,718,000
Miscellaneous [1]	2024	1,200		16,100	Ton		8,035,000
	2023	453		5,280	Ton		5,145,000
TOTAL	**2024**	**16,100**					**$83,015,000**
	2023	**16,753**					**$122,863,000**

[1] Includes Artichoke, Asparagus, Basil, Beets, Bitter Melons, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Cantaloupe, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chard, Cilantro, Collards, Corn (sweet), Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Gourds, Greens (incl. micro) Green Beans, Herbs, Honeydew, Jicama, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Melons (Mixed), Mustard, Okra, Onions, Parsnips, Peas, Peanuts, Peppers, Potatoes, Pumpkins, Radishes, Rhubarb, Rutabagas, Shallots, Spinach, Sprouts, Squash, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatillos, Tomatoes (Fresh), Turnips, Watermelons, Winter Squash, Zucchini and other miscellaneous vegetables of a limited number of growers/processors in Sutter County.

FIELD CROPS

CROP	YEAR	ACRES HARVESTED	PRODUCTION PER ACRE	TOTAL	UNIT	VALUE PER UNIT	TOTAL
Bean, Dried, Edible [1]	2024	3,120	0.79	2,470	Ton	$1,611	$3,979,000
	2023	4,870	0.66	3,200	Ton	$1,730	$5,536,000
Corn, Field Grain	2024	9,200	6.43	59,200	Ton	199	11,781,000
	2023	4,540	5.73	26,000	Ton	326	8,476,000
Hay, Alfalfa	2024	3,850	5.79	22,300	Ton	221	4,928,000
	2023	6,260	4.95	31,000	Ton	249	7,719,000
Hay, Grain	2024	2,830	3.47	9,820	Ton	149	1,463,000
	2023	4,440	3.60	16,000	Ton	252	4,032,000
Rice [2]	2024	119,000	4.36	519,000	Ton	370	192,030,000
	2023	125,000	4.33	541,000	Ton	488	264,008,000
Safflower	2024	3,380	2.98	10,100	Ton	428	4,323,000
	2023	2,780	1.38	3,840	Ton	650	2,496,000
Wheat, Grain	2024	7,290	2.83	20,600	Ton	238	4,903,000
	2023	15,000	4.33	65,000	Ton	485	31,525,000
Miscellaneous [3]	2024	70,100					7,407,000
	2023	70,500					5,636,000
TOTAL	**2024**	**218,770**					**$230,814,000**
	2023	**233,390**					**$329,428,000**

[1] Includes all varieties of edible Dried Bean, including Lima, Blackeye, Garbanzo, Light and Dark Red Kidney Bean and other miscellaneous beans of a limited number of growers/processors in Sutter County.
[2] Includes USDA Support Price.
[3] Includes Barley, Corn (Silage), Cotton, Grass Hay, Industrial Hemp, Oats (Silage), Pasture (Irrigated), Pasture (Range Dry), Popcorn, Triticale, Vetch, Sorghum and other miscellaneous field crops of a limited number of growers/processors in Sutter County.

2024
$230,814,000

2023
$329,428,000

APIARY PRODUCTS

ITEM	YEAR	PRODUCTION	UNIT	VALUE PER UNIT	TOTAL
Pollination	2024	22,000	Colony	$148	$3,256,000
	2023	24,500	Colony	$193	$4,729,000
Miscellaneous [1]	2024				2,078,000
	2023				911,000
TOTAL	**2024**				**$5,334,000**
	2023				**$5,640,000**

[1] Includes Package Bees, Queen Bees, Honey and Wax.

2024
$5,334,000

2023
$5,640,000

SEED CROPS

CROP	YEAR	ACRES HARVESTED	PRODUCTION PER ACRE	TOTAL	UNIT	VALUE PER UNIT	TOTAL
Cucumbers	2024	426	389	166,000	Lb	$7.55	$1,253,000
	2023	285	292	83,200	Lb	$6.80	$566,000
Pumpkins & Squash	2024	261	250	65,300	Lb	8.08	528,000
	2023	265	263	69,700	Lb	18.67	1,301,000
Rice	2024	3,990	9,690	38,663,000	Lb	0.24	9,279,000
	2023	3,860	8,920	34,431,000	Lb	0.24	8,263,000
Sunflower	2024	2,440	908	2,216,000	Lb	1.20	2,659,000
	2023	10,100	1,286	12,989,000	Lb	2.09	27,147,000
Watermelons	2024	819	290	238,000	Lb	18.94	4,508,000
	2023	908	205	186,000	Lb	22.47	4,179,000
Miscellaneous [1]	2024	1,621		5,610,000	Lb		2,012,000
	2023	1,020		1,281,000	Lb		2,968,000
TOTAL	**2024**	**9,558**					**$20,239,000**
	2023	**16,438**					**$44,424,000**

[1] Includes Alfalfa, Arugula, Basil, Fresh Beans, Dried Beans (Blackeye, Cowpea, Cranberry, Lima, Dark Red Kidney, Light Red Kidney), Broccoli, Cabbage, Cantaloupe, Carrots, Cauliflower, Coriander, Gourds, Kale, Lettuce, Onion, Peppers, Mixed Melons, Okra, Radish, Safflower, Sugar Peas, Swiss Chard, Tomato, Tomatillo, Triticale, Wheat, Wild Rice and other miscellaneous seed crops of a limited growers/processors in Sutter County.

NURSERY PRODUCTS

ITEM	YEAR	FIELD ACRES	QUANTITY SOLD	TOTAL
Trees and Vines (Fruit and Nut, Bareroot and Potted)	2024	260	2,881,000	$18,702,000
	2023	324	3,465,000	$27,455,000
Miscellaneous [1]	2024	0	0	0
	2023	0	0	0
TOTAL	**2024**	**260**	**2,881,000**	**$18,702,000**
	2023	**324**	**3,465,000**	**$27,455,000**

[1] Includes Ornamental Trees, Shrubs, and other Nursery Stock.

LIVESTOCK

ITEM	YEAR	NUMBER	LIVE WEIGHT	UNIT	UNIT VALUE	TOTAL
Cattle & Calves [1]	2024	2,720	22,800	Cwt.	$205	$4,674,000
	2023	2,640	22,200	Cwt.	$174	$3,863,000
Miscellaneous [2,3]	2024					2,746,000
	2023					2,407,000
TOTAL	**2024**					**$7,420,000**
	2023					**$6,270,000**

[1] Includes USDA Support Price.
[2] Includes Alpaca & Angora Fur, Aquaculture, Chickens, Chicken Eggs, Ducks, Fish Bait, Geese, Goats, Hogs, Milk (Market), Game Birds, Musk Oxen, Pheasants, Pigeons, Rabbits, Rabbit Hides, Turkeys, Water Buffalo, Wool and other miscellaneous livestock and poultry of a limited number of growers/processors in Sutter County.
[3] Livestock By-Products is now Included in Miscellaneous.

TEN LEADING CROPS

CROP	2024	CROP	2023
RICE[1]	$201,309,000	RICE[1]	$272,271,000
WALNUTS	$106,471,000	TOMATOES, PROCESSING	$117,718,000
TOMATOES, PROCESSING	$74,980,000	PEACHES, CLINGSTONE	$67,650,000
ALMOND, MEATS	$70,448,000	PRUNES, DRIED	$61,850,000
PEACHES, CLINGSTONE	$66,356,000	WALNUTS	$51,649,000
PRUNES, DRIED	$60,358,000	ALMOND, MEATS	$38,510,000
NURSERY PRODUCTS	$18,702,000	WHEAT, GRAIN	$31,525,000
CORN, FIELD GRAIN	$11,781,000	NURSERY PRODUCTS	$27,455,000
HAY, ALFALFA	$4,928,000	SUNFLOWER, SEED	$27,147,000
WHEAT, GRAIN	$4,903,000	CORN, FIELD GRAIN	$8,476,000

[1] Includes Seed, does not include Wild Rice.

SUMMARY

CATEGORIES	2024	2023
FRUIT & NUT CROPS	$317,984,000	$235,740,000
FIELD CROPS	$230,814,000	$329,428,000
SEED CROPS	$20,239,000	$44,424,000
VEGETABLE CROPS	$83,015,000	$122,863,000
NURSERY PRODUCTS	$18,702,000	$27,455,000
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS	$7,420,000	$6,270,000
APIARY PRODUCTS	$5,334,000	$5,640,000
TOTAL	**$683,508,000**	**$771,820,000**

GROSS PRODUCTION VALUE

YEAR	VALUE	YEAR	VALUE	YEAR	VALUE	YEAR	VALUE	YEAR	VALUE
1959	$50,707,000	1973	$159,204,000	1987	$216,183,600	2001	$264,673,000	2015	$538,147,000
1960	$50,536,000	1974	$179,719,000	1988	$201,345,800	2002	$291,061,100	2016	$514,408,000
1961	$55,585,000	1975	$187,517,000	1989	$243,940,200	2003	$307,322,300	2017	$583,996,000
1962	$57,322,000	1976	$178,554,000	1990	$217,400,000	2004	$299,219,300	2018[1]	$609,058,000
1963	$55,155,000	1977	$200,878,000	1991	$268,941,900	2005	$305,190,190	2019	$698,680,000
1964	$66,740,000	1978	$220,502,000	1992	$285,622,700	2006	$358,845,200	2020	$568,857,000
1965	$64,564,000	1979	$258,666,900	1993	$292,108,300	2007	$377,940,800	2021	$621,366,000
1966	$71,627,000	1980	$299,014,700	1994	$340,171,300	2008	$498,195,200	2022[2]	$568,572,000
1967	$69,313,000	1981	$316,465,900	1995	$330,170,500	2009	$475,691,100	2023	$771,820,000
1968	$80,275,000	1982	$247,784,100	1996	$302,706,400	2010	$521,640,570	2024	$683,508,000
1969	$74,006,000	1983	$205,335,300	1997	$277,169,700	2011	$518,198,460		
1970	$77,238,000	1984	$262,285,500	1998	$268,323,100	2012	$528,253,000		
1971	$82,209,000	1985	$255,449,600	1999	$347,939,000	2013	$597,530,000		
1972	$95,118,000	1986	$229,364,800	2000	$340,176,000	2014	$726,066,000		

[1] 2018 Total Value revised.
[2] 2022 Total Value revised.

STATISTICS

CROP STATISTICS

As required by the California Food & Agricultural Code, the gross production and value of the county's commodities are compiled and recorded in the annual crop report. This valuable information helps associated businesses while promoting the production and prosperity of agriculture in California.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 264

SEED LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CERTIFICATION

County staff perform seed inspections at both the retail and wholesale levels. This program protects not only retail and wholesale establishments but also urban and rural landscapers in the seed buying or selling business. Samples are drawn for germination and purity testing, and labeling is inspected for compliance with state requirements. Inspectors also attest to the "cleanliness" of harvesters, mills, warehouses, and other seed and grain companies for certification and quality standards. This program also provides certification services for growers and processors in cooperation with the California Crop Improvement Association.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 301

APIARY INSPECTION

This program emphasizes the registration and site location of honeybee colonies in the county. At the request of beekeepers or growers, the County Agricultural Commissioner inspects colonies for strength and health to ensure effective pollination.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 29

AGRICULTURE PESTICIDE CONTAINER RECYCLING PROGRAM

Funded by a grant from the Feather River Air Quality Management District, this program is operated by the Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, which contributed 196 hours of in-kind service in 2024. Multiple collection events are set up annually across Sutter County and are a cost-free way for growers and pest control businesses to recycle their clean pesticide containers in an environmentally friendly manner. In 2024, we recycled 87,758 pounds of pesticide container plastic. Since the inception of this program in 2007, a total of 1,598,353 pounds has been recycled.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 196

PESTICIDE USE ENFORCEMENT

This is a complex legislatively mandated program that provides for the proper, safe and effective use of pesticides essential for production of food and fiber and for protection of the public health and safety. It also protects the environment from potentially harmful pesticides by prohibiting, regulating or ensuring proper stewardship of pesticides. An important component of the program focuses on agricultural and pest control workers, ensuring safe working conditions, use of proper protective equipment and training for employees who work with or around pesticides. Other components of the program include pesticide use reporting, incident investigations, outreach activities promoting best management practices and monitoring applications in the field.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 11,558

FRUIT, NUT, AND VEGETABLE STANDARDIZATION

This program ensures compliance with California's minimum standards regarding quality and marketing of all produce commercially grown and/or marketed in the state. Staff are responsible for enforcing Direct Marketing and Organic laws and regulations that provide local protection to growers, marketers, and consumers. Program tasks involve inspecting and regulating over 20 certified producers and one certified market, ensuring organic producers are registered with California Department of Food and Agriculture, and local farm stands comply with laws and regulations enforced by the Development Services Department. Melons grown for fresh market are also inspected for maturity requirements, defects and tolerances, and that all containers are properly marked and packed accordingly.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 246

MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

County Weights and Measures officials ensure the accuracy of commercial weighing and measuring devices; verify the quantity of both bulk and packaged commodities and enforce the quality advertising and labeling standards for most petroleum products.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 2,378

PEST MANAGEMENT

The County Agricultural Commissioner is responsible for the management of nuisance pests in agriculture to protect crops. Despite the county's best efforts, pests can be introduced and established. This program also works to track, monitor, and control noxious weed populations within the county. Chemical, biological, and mechanical control methods are also used by staff to help control or eradicate noxious weed populations. In 2024, the County Agricultural Commissioner

continued efforts under a State weed grant to survey for and treat noxious weeds and weeds of concern. Staff surveyed 327 acres in the county looking for A, B, and C rated noxious weed species. Recently found noxious weeds that are of concern to the region include Russian knapweed, hoary cress, white horsenettle, artichoke thistle, and stinkwort.

When appropriate, biological control methods are used as part of an integrated approach to pest suppression. These efforts involve the use of natural enemies to reduce pest populations in an environmentally responsible manner, often leading to long-term, self-sustaining control and reduced reliance on chemical treatments.

To prevent the spread of glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS), Sutter County inspected 135 shipments of nursery stock arriving from infested areas in California. There were zero shipments of plant material rejected for the presence of GWSS egg masses or other life stages. There were 125 traps placed in nurseries and urban areas for the detection of GWSS, which were serviced a total of 1,037 times.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 978

ORGANIC FARMING

23 farms, totaling approximately 19,119 acres of cropland were registered as organic in Sutter County in 2024. These farms produce a wide array of commodities such as almonds, other nut crops, stone fruit, other fruit crops, broccoli, tomatoes, seed crops, beef, carrots, celery, lettuce, spinach, and citrus. The total estimated organic production value in Sutter County in 2024 was $16,557,245.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 14

NURSERY INSPECTION/ NURSERY SERVICES PROGRAM

Our mission is to prevent the introduction and spread of agricultural pests in nursery stock and to protect producers and consumers from losses due to the sale or purchase of inferior, defective, or pest-infested plants.

To operate in Sutter County, production, wholesale, or retail nurseries, and landscape contractors selling nursery stock must secure licensure from the California Department of Food and Agriculture CDFA. As part of our regulatory oversight, production nurseries undergo annual inspections to verify adherence to basic cleanliness standards and sound nursery management practices. While retail nurseries are not inspected yearly, they are still required to meet the same standards.

To ensure quality and compliance, the Sutter County Nursery program conducts multiple inspections throughout the year at wholesale nurseries. These inspections include pre-planting nematode certification, in-season disease monitoring, post-harvest grading, and overall nursery cleanliness inspections. In 2024, Sutter County inspections were carried out at 45 locations covering 135 acres and requiring a total of 56 hours.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 220

PEST DETECTION

The Pest Detection Program plays a critical role in protecting local agriculture and the environment by monitoring for invasive pests that could threaten California's crops and natural resources. To support early detection, traps are strategically placed throughout Sutter County in both urban and commercial areas ranging from outdoor retail areas to the front yards of local residents.

There were 528 traps placed for detection of exotic insect pests, including Mediterranean, Oriental and Melon Fruit Flies, Spongy Moth, Japanese beetle, European Pine Shoot Moth, Khapra Beetle, Vine Mealybug, European Grapevine Moth, Asian Citrus Psyllid, European Corn Borer, and False Codling Moth. Staff use common host plants favored by these pests to get optimal results. These hosts include citrus, pome and stone fruits, ornamental landscape, nursery stock, and backyard vegetable gardens. Additionally, surveys were conducted for European Stone Fruit Yellows which is a disease spread by insects such as the plum psyllid, ultimately causing lower yields and host death. Over the course of the season, a cumulative total of 4,702 trap servicings were performed and 50 disease sites were surveyed.

Total Hours Expended 2024: 1,623

PEST EXCLUSION

This program serves as the primary defense mechanism for California agriculture and the environment, protecting against the invasion of exotic pests. Inspections protect from the introduction of plant, animal, insect, and disease pests that may be introduced into the state through the movement of legal and illegal trade.

Additionally, this program involves the inspection of plant material being transported to other states and countries, along with the issuance of certificates that document adherence to entry requirements. Throughout 2024, 330 premises visits were conducted. Inspectors examined a total of 2458 shipments of plant material during these visits. The inspections took place at express carriers, nurseries, and other farms. There were 5 shipments of plant material that were found to be in violation and were rejected. Rejected plant material may be returned to the shipper, reconditioned, and then released, or destroyed. As a service to the industry, 1617 federal phytosanitary certificates for international shipments and 31 state phytosanitary certificates for interstate shipments were issued.

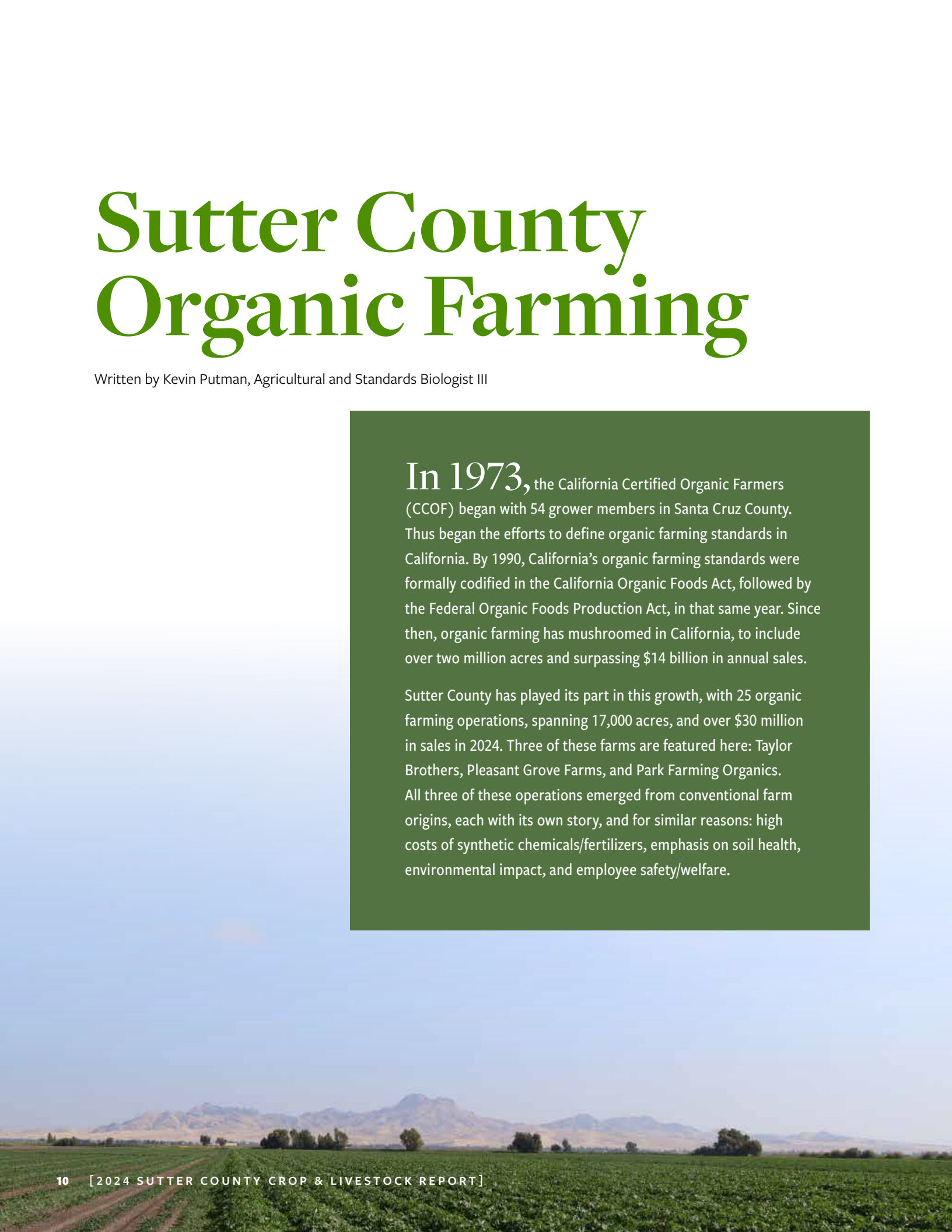
Total Hours Expended 2024: 4,647

Sutter County Organic Farming

Written by Kevin Putman, Agricultural and Standards Biologist III

In 1973, the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) began with 54 grower members in Santa Cruz County. Thus began the efforts to define organic farming standards in California. By 1990, California's organic farming standards were formally codified in the California Organic Foods Act, followed by the Federal Organic Foods Production Act, in that same year. Since then, organic farming has mushroomed in California, to include over two million acres and surpassing $14 billion in annual sales.

Sutter County has played its part in this growth, with 25 organic farming operations, spanning 17,000 acres, and over $30 million in sales in 2024. Three of these farms are featured here: Taylor Brothers, Pleasant Grove Farms, and Park Farming Organics. All three of these operations emerged from conventional farm origins, each with its own story, and for similar reasons: high costs of synthetic chemicals/fertilizers, emphasis on soil health, environmental impact, and employee safety/welfare.



Taylor Brothers Farms

Brothers, Richard and John Taylor

Taylor Brothers Farms was among those at the leading edge of the organic shift. This family farming operation, which began in 1916 with 70 acres and a fruit stand, is now in its 3rd generation in Sutter County. Taylor Brothers, Richard and John, made the move to organic farming in 1986. Their model at the time? They simply looked back at how things were done in their father's era, before the advent of synthetic chemicals and fertilizers. They shifted to the use of compost and cover crops to improve and fertilize the soil.

Although the use of vetch cover crops still works as well as ever for nitrogen and soil tilth, it is an ongoing necessity to adapt and change with the times: all efforts are made to reduce tillage to save on labor and fuel costs. "Our biggest challenge is weeds; this takes a lot of effort to keep them at bay," John says.

The two brothers divide the tasks of the operation. While Richard runs the marketing end, John tends to production farming.

John says, "I enjoy the challenges of farming, figuring out the health and nutrition of the trees: what will make them grow best and produce a steady crop. We try to bring consistency to a crop by thinning the trees, which evens out the crop and produces better sizing and quality of fruit. I also like being outside. There's something enjoyable about being out in the dirt, and the feeling of accomplishment when you see the fruit on the trees. I enjoy planting new orchards and seeing them progress to produce a nice crop. Trees will last thirty years with every new planting. Farmers are eternal optimists; always looking forward to the next year to be even better."

Today, Taylor Brothers has grown to become the world's largest producer and global distributor of organic prune products, with international processing operations in Poland and South Korea. These two operations began in the early 2000s, and as Richard reflects, to build the facility in Poland, "We were able to purchase 4 acres for about the same price as I paid for my Ford Expedition, at the time!" The opportunity for business there, at that time, was favorable. With Poland's transition away from communism and towards free markets, there was a ready and willing supply of labor. Prune products from the Polish facility are now distributed across Europe, Scandinavia, and Asia. In addition to prune products, the South Korean facility also processes and distributes dried apricots, dried blueberries, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried dates, dried figs, golden prunes, and grape juice.

John, Father George, Richard Taylor

Taylor Brothers' reach is truly global. They are an international, vertically integrated organization. From production in California, to processing, marketing, and distribution virtually everywhere, including Japan, South Korea, China, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Thailand. As Richard put it, "You don't have to be IBM or Microsoft to sell around the world. It's just meeting people, doing what you say you're going to do, giving them a good product at a fair price, and following through on everything."

Ed Sills, daughters Jessica & Kate, and wife, Wynette Sills

Pleasant Grove Farms

Also, among the earliest of California's farms to transition into organic farming was Sutter County's Pleasant Grove Farms. A 3rd generation family operation, this farm was started by Tom Sills in 1946, currently operated by son Ed and his wife Wynette. Frustrated with returns from conventional farming, increasing costs of chemicals and fuel, and increasing resistance of weeds to herbicides, the Sills first turned to organic farming in 1985. They subsequently converted the entirety of their acreage over the next decade. Today, their operation consists of approximately 3000 certified regenerative organic acres, which produce field crops of corn, popcorn, beans, wheat/triticale, rice, and organic seed.

Crop rotations are utilized to reduce pest, weed, and disease pressure. Cover crops of vetch and animal materials are incorporated into the soil to improve fertility and tilth.

Rice fields are planted in a two-year rotation, alternating a year of rest/green fallow in between years of rice plantings. Vetch seed is flown on just before rice is harvested in the fall, and then, after the rice is harvested, the vetch emerges through the stubble and grows throughout the winter. In spring, that vetch is cut for its seed, while some seed falls to the ground. The harvested vetch seed is cleaned for sale or planting. The seed that falls to the ground later

Ed and his father, Tom Sills

Ed, Jessica, and Farm Manager, Fernando Cordova

sprouts and, once again, grows through the winter. In spring, the vetch is plowed under, enriching the soil with nitrogen and organic matter. Then the rice is planted once more, and the cycle begins anew. Water levels are strategically adjusted high or low to favor rice while hindering weed growth.

For row crops and wheat/triticale, a three-year rotation is used. Corn or popcorn in year one, beans in year two, and finally wheat/triticale in year three. Every winter, vetch cover crop grows and is incorporated into the soil before the next crop is planted. Wheat is the one exception, as it also grows during the winter and spring. Sometimes the wheat grows with the vetch, and the seed is harvested together and separated out in our seed cleaning facility. Occasionally, a four-year rotation is used by planting rice in between the corn and bean years.

Throughout the farm, soil health is a key component of crop health, and the result is vigorous growth of plantings. With healthy soil, a crop can out-compete weeds for sunlight and resources, and the plants can grow through a certain amount of insect damage.

But growing a crop is only half the story here. Pleasant Grove Farms also has the capability to process, clean, and package its grains for market, as well as grain from other organic growers. Seeds are cleaned and sorted with a variety of cleaning machines ranging from time-tested spiral separators to state-of-the-art color sorting machines. Control of storage pests is a challenge with any farm commodity, and even more so in an organic operation. Pleasant Grove Farms fumigates silos of grain with food-grade carbon dioxide, slowly introducing the gas from the bottom until it vertically displaces all oxygen out the open top. Concentrations of carbon dioxide are monitored throughout the column until complete saturation is achieved, then the top is closed. This effectively suffocates and desiccates storage pests in five to six days.

Another feature of Pleasant Grove Farms is its cold storage facility, where grains can be stored in temperatures that preclude insect entry and activity.

In 1989, Ed told *Ag Alert*, "We are trying to work with the environment rather than against it. This is our land here, and we don't want to be doing anything that makes it less able to grow crops. We are going to be living here the rest of our lives and want to be able to raise kids here."

Thirty-six years later, that plan is now a reality. Having raised their three children, now adding grandchildren, Ed and Wynette are still growing and processing their quality crops for satisfied customers.

Ed & Wynette Sills

Park Farming Organics

Park Farming Organics also emerged out of conventional farming origins. Scott Park began farming in Sutter County in 1974. But by the late 1980s, he began to reconsider his emphasis on conventional farming methods, which relied upon high yields to overcome high input costs, and he shifted his attention towards ways to improve the soil by tilling wheat straw back into the soil after harvest. Thus, began what is now an annual mission of ongoing experimentation with ways to improve the soil, and soil health is the top priority.

Today, the operation of the farm has passed to Scott's son Brian and his wife Jamie. It consists of approximately 1850 acres distributed among organic rice, processing tomatoes, corn, melons, vegetables, wheat, beans, sunflowers, and cover crops. As Brian observes, "We feel like our ground gets better every year." Ten to fifteen tons of compost/ biomass per acre are added to each field annually. Intense crop rotation and targeted tillage are key components of their operation. Sheep are sometimes brought in to reduce winter cover crops and crop residue. For their continued efforts towards this goal, Park Farming Organics was awarded the 2023 Leopold Conservation Award for improvement of land under their care. In 2022, Park Farming Organics received Regenerative Certification from two certifying agencies, A Greener World (AGW) and Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC). This certification recognizes a holistic, sustainable approach to farming, and it encompasses not only soil health, but also employee well-being and welfare.

The regenerative organic certification has brought important new business opportunities for Park's operation. Pacific Farms, a subsidiary of Campbell's, has now contracted with Park Organic to grow processing tomatoes for tomato soup, and sunflowers are grown for La Tourangelle for organic sunflower oil.

With 18 full-time employees, the Parks' emphasize that it makes good business sense to compensate them well with good wages, health insurance, retirement benefits, profit sharing, and bonuses. "The better we take care of our employees, the better the farm runs," says Brian.

The Park family – back, Scott & Ulla, Brian & Jaime; front, their children Hannah and Corbin. PHOTO CREDIT PAOLO VESCIA

Park employees plus Hannah and Corbin

Organic Black Seedless Watermelons

Goats enjoying cover summer cover crops

SUTTER COUNTY EXPORTS

Sutter County exported Agricultural Commodities to 80 countries in 2024, the top five being The Republic of Türkiye, Japan, India, China, and Australia.

2024 FEDERAL PHYTOSANITARY CERTIFICATES

Total of 1,617 issued to 80 countries

NUMBER OF CERTIFICATES ISSUED

The Republic of Türkiye - 155

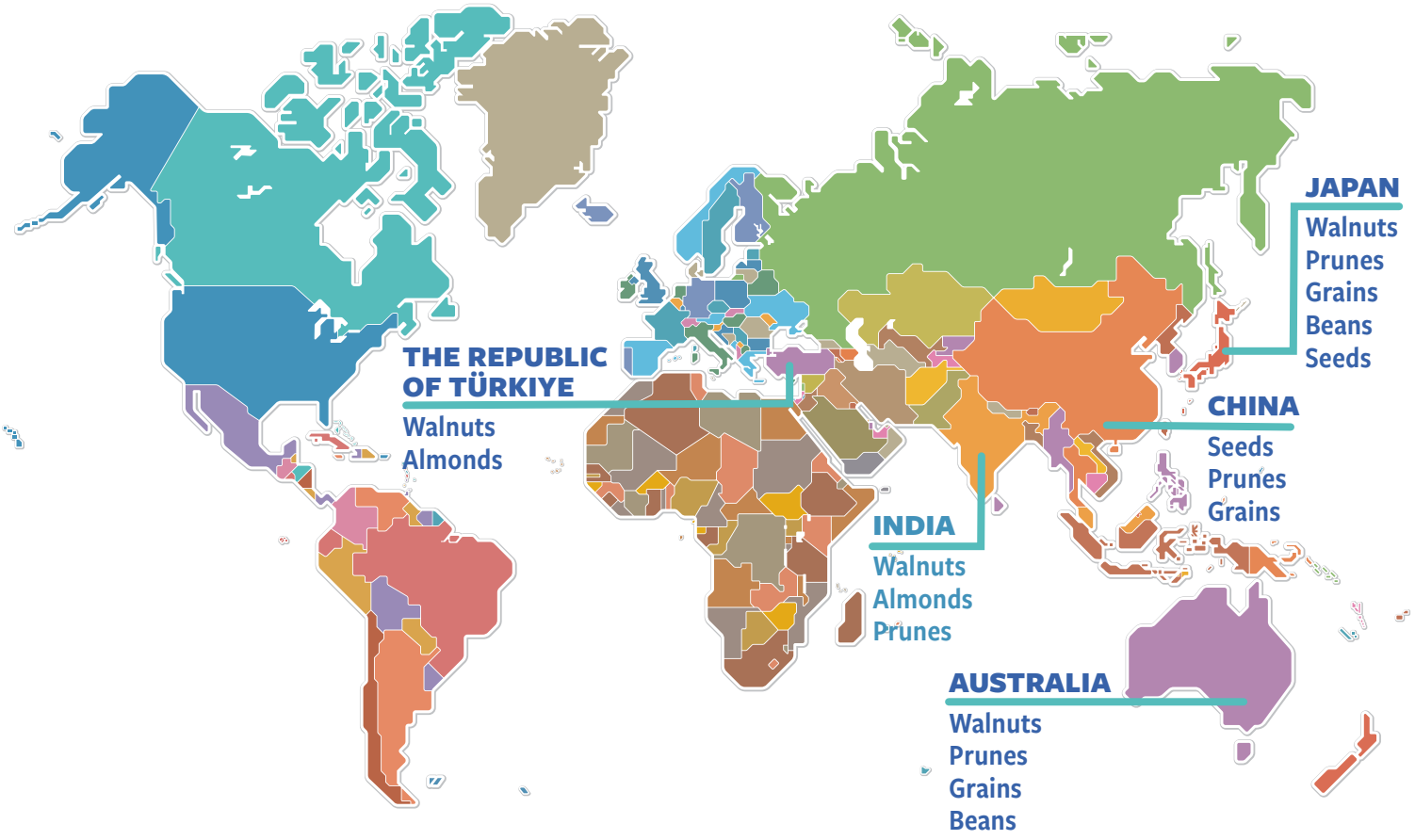
Japan - 125

India - 123

China - 107

Australia - 90

TOP FIVE EXPORT COUNTRIES



WEIGHTS & MEASURES

PETROLEUM SIGNS & LABELING INSPECTION	
Number of Inspections Completed	54
Consumer Complaints	1
Notices of Violations Issued	55

QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTIONS	
PRICE VERIFICATION	
Locations Tested	5
Number of Inspections	130
OVERALL COMPLIANCE	**96%**

MEASURING DEVICE INSPECTIONS	
DEVICE TYPE	**INSPECTIONS COMPLETED**
Fabric, Cord, Wire Meters	11
Liquid Propane Gas Meters	33
Retail Motor Fuel Meters	1011
Retail Meters	12
Retail Water Meters	24
Taximeters	1
Gas Vapor Submeters	32
Water Submeters	35
TOTAL MEASURING DEVICES INSPECTED	**1,159**
Compliance Rate:	*89.60%*

WEIGHING DEVICE INSPECTIONS	
DEVICE TYPE	**INSPECTIONS COMPLETED**
Computing Scales	254
Counter Scales	41
Dormant/Platform Scales	154
Hanging Scales	11
Hopper Scales	6
Livestock Scales	8
Misc. Weighing Device	1
Monorail & Meatbeam	2
Prescription/Jewelry	6
Vehicle Scale	70
TOTAL MEASURING DEVICES INSPECTED	**553**
Compliance Rate:	*73.10%*

COUNTY OF SUTTER

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER
SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

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