



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

NEWS RELEASE



Date: September 20, 2024

Contact: Jason Hoppin

Jason.Hoppin@santacruzcountyca.gov

IMPACTED BY EARLY STORMS, CROP VALUES DECLINED IN 2023

Facing challenges recovering from winter storms, Santa Cruz County gross crop values declined 1.8 percent in 2023, with agricultural commodities valued \$654.7 million before production and other costs are factored in, Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner David Sanford announced today.

Berry crops continue to represent the majority of gross crop values led by strawberries, which had an estimated value of \$184.8 million over 2,363 acres. This represented a 16 percent decline in total gross production value of strawberries attributable to storm damage and flooding that occurred in late 2022 and early 2023. Overall, berries represent 60 percent of the total gross production values of the County's agricultural crops.

"Severe storms can have a significant impact on agricultural operations, and these declines were not unexpected," Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner David Sanford said. "While the fields have recovered and returned to full productivity, damages and delays caused losses that persisted throughout 2023 and underscored how climate change can impact our economy."

Vegetable production also suffered from weather-related issues, contributed to a drop in production value of approximately 10 percent compared to 2022, with an overall value of \$90.9 million. Nursery crops rebounded in 2023, while wine grapes and apples held steady.

The Santa Cruz County Department of Agriculture serves 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 Santa Cruz County's residents.

The full report is available at www.agdept.com.