



# County of San Luis Obispo 2023 Annual Crop Report



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**Thank You!**

The Department would like to recognize **Karen Lowerison** and **Katherine Wolf** for their lasting contributions made during their 40 years of combined professional service with the County. We thank them for all of their efforts throughout their tremendous careers and wish them well in their retirements.



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**Karen Ross, Secretary**  
**California Department of Food and Agriculture**  
**and**  
**The Honorable Board of Supervisors**  
**San Luis Obispo County**

It is a pleasure to present the 2023 San Luis Obispo County Annual Crop Report in accordance with section 2279 of the California Food and Agricultural Code. The report outlines a record high production value of over \$1.1 billion, which is an increase of 2.8% or \$29.9 million over the previous year.

Crop values tend to swing from year to year based on overall production, growing conditions, and market trends, and 2023 was no exception. The animal industry experienced a significant increase driven by an almost 39% rise in cattle prices. The fruit and nut sector increased 10% with wine grapes overtaking strawberries as the top crop spurred by an upswing in overall production. Above normal rainfall bolstered field crop yields leading the sector to a slight 1.9% value increase on the year. Nursery products remained relatively stable despite unpredictable market trends and increased input costs. The vegetable sector, which was the only group to experience a decrease in overall value, dropped 17% primarily due to a substantial drop in harvested acres.

It is important to note that this report represents gross values which do not reflect the profit and loss of our individual producers. Farming is an unpredictable and complex industry that requires a high degree of individual commitment and collaboration. The persistence and innovative nature of our agricultural producers and agricultural associations helps to keep our industry stable. Each year, challenges present themselves and invariably our farmers and ranchers rise to the occasion to overcome those challenges. We owe them all a debt of gratitude for their unwavering dedication to maintaining our food supply and sustaining one of the largest economic drivers in San Luis Obispo County.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the producers and industry groups who provided essential information for the development of this report. Without their input, this report would not have been possible. Additionally, I would like to thank my talented and dedicated staff who, in the course of their duties, support and protect the agricultural industry of San Luis Obispo County.

Martin Settevendemie  
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

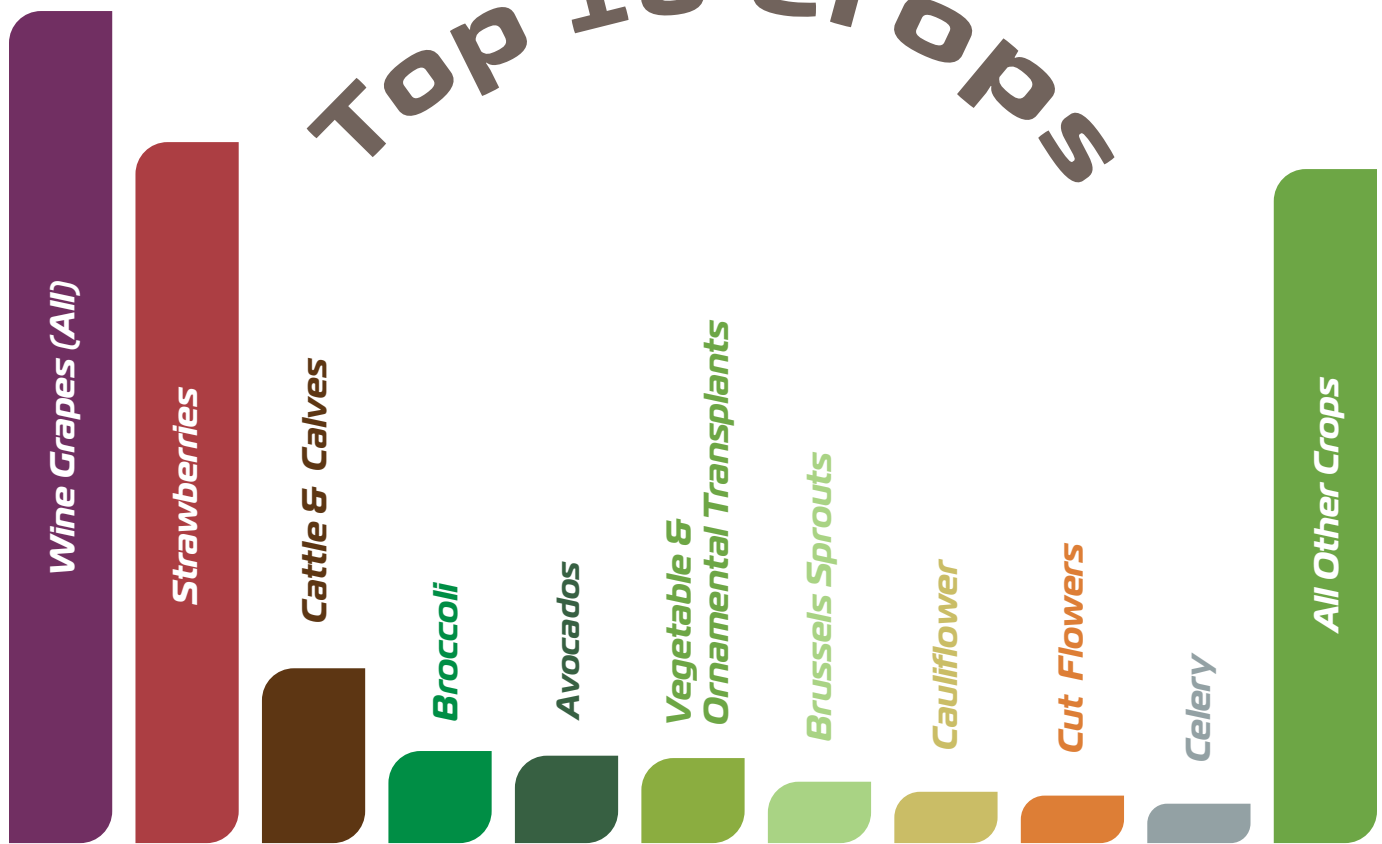
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# TOP 10 CROPS



Rank	Crop	Value	%
1	Wine Grapes (All)	\$323,952,000	29.07%
2	Strawberries	\$274,072,000	24.60%
3	Cattle and Calves	\$68,646,000	6.16%
4	Broccoli	\$36,184,000	3.25%
5	Avocados	\$34,202,000	3.07%
6	Vegetable & Ornamental Transplants	\$33,543,000	3.01%
7	Brussels Sprouts	\$24,604,000	2.21%
8	Cauliflower	\$20,603,000	1.85%
9	Cut Flowers	\$19,067,000	1.71%
10	Celery	\$16,172,000	1.45%
	<b>Top Ten Total</b>	<b>\$851,045,000</b>	<b>76%</b>

# Agricultural Sector Highlights

Crop values for San Luis Obispo County reached another record high in 2023, as overall farmgate value edged past \$1.1 billion for the first time. Despite significant storm related damage early in the year, crops thrived under ideal growing conditions that led to strong yields across multiple crop sectors.

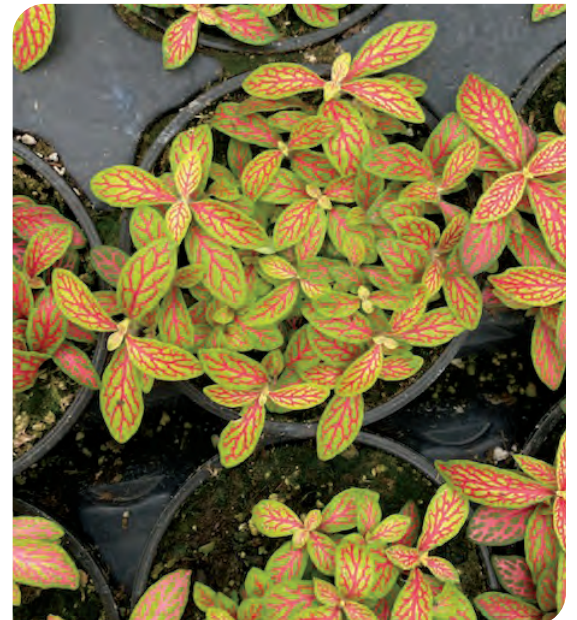
After four years of strawberries being the county's most valuable crop, wine grapes moved back into the top slot based on excellent growing conditions and steady prices. Combined, wine grapes and strawberries continue to account for more than half of the county's overall crop value, while the county's diverse geography and microclimates continue to support an incredibly wide variety of other crops.



## *Vegetable Crops*

Despite favorable growing conditions during most of the year and relatively steady markets, the overall vegetable sector value fell in 2023, as harvested vegetable acreage fell significantly. Heavy winter rains led to flooded fields and caused growers to delay both planting and harvest times. In addition, some acreage was left fallowed and other fields shifted over to strawberries, which all combined to cause a significant reduction in planted and harvested vegetable acreage.

The vegetable industry continues to be a major driver of the county's agricultural economy, accounting for over 21% of the total farmgate value, as well as representing four of the county's ten highest valued individual crops with broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and celery representing the #4, #7, #8, and #10 spots, respectively.



## *Nursery Products*

The local nursery industry continues to evolve and adapt as market conditions shift widely from year to year and consumer demand remains unpredictable. The overall sector value remained essentially unchanged from 2022, with some areas performing well, while others, like vegetable transplants and outdoor ornamentals, experienced decreased demand.

Nursery operators continue to struggle with multiple challenges, from international competition to labor shortages and especially higher production costs for everything from fuel and energy to seeds, fertilizer, and other basic growing supplies.

## Fruit & Nut Crops



The fruit and nut sector continued to lead the way for San Luis Obispo County crop values. Strawberries held steady, down just 1% in total value from 2022, based on a slight uptick in planted acres and a slight decrease in prices in both the fresh and processed markets. Avocado yields were up significantly from the previous year, but prices dropped considerably as growers continue to face the challenges of competition from several international markets. Acreage of lemons in the county increased again, with bearing acreage up 6% from the previous year, but average values per ton plummeted 37% causing some growers to delay or even forego harvesting.

Overall, it was wine grapes that led the way for the fruit and nut sector, as the total value jumped 24% year over year driven primarily by increased production. Prices remained relatively steady from the previous year, and despite a delayed growing season that led to late harvests, wine grapes experienced favorable growing conditions resulting in both strong yields and high quality grapes. The drastic increase in overall production from 2022 helped wine grapes move over the 300 million dollar mark in farmgate value and top strawberries as the county's top crop for the first time since 2018.

## Animal Industry

The overall value of the county's animal industry jumped an extraordinary 50% over the previous year driven by improved rangeland conditions and record high cattle prices. After several years of severe drought, heavy winter and spring rainfall led to improved forage and increased cattle weight, and local ranchers benefited from record high prices to enjoy one of the best markets in years.



## Field Crops

Field crops flourished in 2023 with above average rainfall and ideal growing conditions. Although yields were up significantly for barley, grain hay, and other rainfall dependent crops, prices came down after spiking to record levels during the extended drought. The overall value for the field crops sector increased only slightly, but certain crops rebounded significantly after two incredibly dry years where thousands of planted acres went unharvested due to sparse yields. Most notably, barley more than doubled in both total production and overall value from a disastrous, drought stricken 2022.

Year	Animal	Field	Nursery	Fruit/Nut	Vegetable	Total
2014	\$135,017,000	\$16,812,000	\$84,394,000	\$468,518,000	\$195,329,000	\$900,070,000
2015	\$70,659,000	\$15,600,000	\$99,511,000	\$428,344,000	\$214,059,000	\$828,173,000
2016	\$45,350,000	\$16,784,000	\$86,933,000	\$568,129,000	\$212,734,000	\$929,930,000
2017	\$47,909,000	\$16,679,000	\$82,802,000	\$566,592,000	\$210,716,000	\$924,698,000
2018	\$48,596,000	\$18,777,000	\$81,190,000	\$656,609,000	\$230,327,000	\$1,035,499,000
2019	\$41,073,000	\$24,180,000	\$80,566,000	\$615,218,000	\$217,972,000	\$979,009,000
2020	\$46,509,000	\$20,217,000	\$75,883,000	\$603,283,000	\$232,783,000	\$978,675,000
2021	\$43,108,000	\$14,889,000	\$76,503,000	\$713,904,000	\$233,548,000	\$1,081,952,000
2022	\$48,247,000	\$20,056,000	\$88,640,000	\$624,332,000	\$293,656,000	\$1,074,931,000
<b>2023</b>	<b>\$72,228,000</b>	<b>\$20,439,000</b>	<b>\$88,970,000</b>	<b>\$688,753,000</b>	<b>\$243,848,000</b>	<b>\$1,114,238,000</b>

# Technology in Agriculture



As the global population continues to climb and the demand for food and fiber increases, farmers are constantly striving to produce greater quantities of high-quality products more efficiently than ever before. Although many still hold on to outdated ideas and images of how their food is produced, farmers and the agricultural industry are adopting new technologies at a remarkable pace.

In the Midwest, high-tech, million-dollar tractors equipped with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technology enable growers to plant, fertilize, tend, and harvest vast swathes of corn and soybean acreage with constant feedback on the varying conditions found in their fields. Here in California, where the bulk of fruits and vegetables that feed the nation and even the world are produced, a host of innovative technological advancements are utilized to bring flavorful, nutritious crops to tables across the globe in the most efficient, innovative manner possible.

Harnessing the power of novel, advanced technologies helps improve farming methods in a host of ways, from increasing production and improving worker safety, to decreasing labor demands and decreasing the amount of fertilizers, pesticides, and irrigation water that is needed to produce the same amount of food. Farmers, ranchers, and the agricultural industry may still have their hands in the dirt, but they are also well versed in the benefits of modern technology and are constantly experimenting, adapting, and improving upon age-old farming techniques.

In this year's crop report, as we celebrate the highest annual farmgate value in county history, we also take a moment to highlight some of the amazing technologies and innovative techniques being used in farms and fields across San Luis Obispo County.



## Pest Control Innovations



The Amiga by Farm-ng

As pesticides become more expensive, their use more restricted, and the human health and environmental concerns with some products remain, companies are developing innovative ways to replace or reduce their use. By employing computers, highly sensitive cameras, crop specific algorithms, and artificial intelligence (AI), developers are bringing these solutions to the field. Alternatives range from lasers, ultraviolet light (UV) treatments, and electric bug vacuums, to biopesticides produced from naturally occurring soil microbes and boiling vegetable oil applications.

Specific examples include the highly adaptable, all electric micro-tractor called "The Amiga", developed by Farm-ng in Watsonville, CA, which is being put to use at the Cal Poly Strawberry Center in San Luis Obispo.

TRIC Robotics, Inc., headquartered in San Luis Obispo, began with a battery powered robot that could cover one row at a time and treat up to one acre. Working with growers and crop consultants to evolve their technology over a few short years, TRIC has developed the "Luna", an autonomous tractor that uses innovative UV technology and electric bug vacuums to treat plant pests and diseases over 6-8 rows in a pass and a treatment range of 50-100 acres.



Luna, Photo: TRIC Robotics



## Optical Sensors

Recent technological advancements in optical sensors have led to major innovations in crop production and stands to revolutionize the methods that growers utilize to produce crops effectively and efficiently.

Optical sensors, often combined with spectral imaging, can be used to evaluate crop conditions by assessing the type and intensity of light wavelengths reflected to the sensors. The data produced provides information on crop health and potential nutrient deficiencies at a very granular level, enabling growers to precisely target where supplemental irrigation, specific nutrient fertilizers, or other inputs may be needed.

Optical sensors affixed to tractors can scan fields as they move down the rows, with the ability to differentiate between crops and weeds. These high-tech, sometimes autonomous tractors are often combined with robotic technology, lasers, and other control methods to identify and then immediately destroy the weeds found without the need for herbicides. These technologies are even being combined with artificial Intelligence to more effectively learn how to identify weeds and differentiate them from the crops being grown.



## Soil Monitoring



From the dawn of agriculture, farmers have closely monitored the soil to help them make the best decisions possible and ensure that their crops are healthy and that yields are high. What has changed over time is the level of sophistication involved with that monitoring process and the sensors used to provide continuous, real-time data on soil moisture levels, soil drainage rates, and nutrient availability. Monitors are often placed at different soil depths, with data fed instantly to smart phone apps, providing a wide range of data that growers need to make the best choices for their crops. Improvements in soil monitoring technology have helped farmers achieve record yields with less irrigation and fewer, more targeted fertilizer applications.

# Technology in Agriculture

## Drones



The use of drones in agriculture continues to increase and expand. Drones can be used to monitor crop health and assess less accessible areas of a field. Drones can make targeted applications of fertilizers and pesticides, benefiting applicators by reducing potential exposure to hazardous products, saving growers money by reducing the volume needed through the ability of more targeted applications, and reducing potential environmental impacts by reducing the amount of overall product being used.

In our department's efforts to combat invasive wildland weeds in San Luis Obispo County, we have utilized drones to make targeted herbicide applications to pioneer populations of jubatagrass. Drones enabled us to control weed populations that would have otherwise been inaccessible, and would have continued to bloom and spread seed across the coastal bluffs of our county's north coast.



## Betteravia Farms

Betteravia Farms was established in the Central Coast region of California in 1932 and currently grows a wide variety of conventional and organic rotational row crops on 7,200 acres in San Luis Obispo County. Given their long and successful history, it's not surprising that they pay serious attention to technological advances in agriculture.

At Betteravia Farms, they are always on the lookout for new technology, whether it's for their in-house laboratory, production, or harvest departments, and they continually trial new equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, and product variants.

Betteravia's proactive approach to up and coming technology has gained them a reputation for innovation. They've been approached by companies from around the world who are interested in collaborating with them. Joseph Frost, Automation Production Supervisor for Betteravia Farms, worked extensively with Swiss based company Ecorobotix

to adapt their "smart sprayer" technology to suit California growing practices. By mid-2023, Betteravia acquired an Ecorobotix ARA unit and has found that they can utilize it year-round for precision applications of pesticides and fertilizers. A tractor moving at 4.5 mph, pulls the ARA unit across 6 beds at a time while cameras collect data that is run through preset algorithms in the computer. Information on the shape of leaf margins and the size of each plant is processed and relayed to a series of 150 nozzles which apply precise amounts of product on predetermined targets. This technology has enabled them to dramatically reduce pesticide and herbicide use and to do the work in one third the time of traditional applications.

Betteravia also works with the New Zealand based company SeedSpider which has developed precision mechanical weeding technology they call WeedSpider. Robotic arms are programmed to a specific soil depth and plant and row spacing for thinning and weeding.



Mechanical weeding with WeedSpider



Photo: EcoRobotix

Joseph Frost, left, and Martin Cossio, Jr, right, of Betteravia Farms

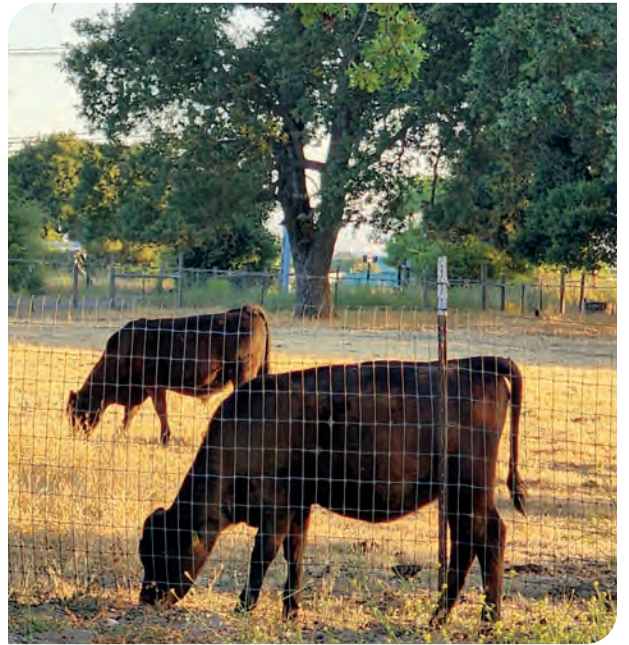
Agriculture is a complex living system, and understanding the consequences of changing one aspect of the growing operation may have significant downstream effects that are not immediately apparent. When asked about the challenges they encounter by embracing new technologies, Martin Cossio Jr., Production Supervisor for Betteravia Farms, pointed out that in order to accommodate the new equipment, they need to cater to the capabilities of each machine and reevaluate scheduling. At times, in order to utilize a new piece of equipment they may have to sacrifice some crop density or change methodologies to make it work. There's also the technological expertise required to properly manage and implement new systems and technologies

Betteravia Farms is not deterred and continues to field test and adapt. In the process, they've found added flexibility and cost savings that far outweigh the challenges.



Photo: Betteravia Farms

Dye added to the herbicide demonstrates the accuracy of the application.



# Field Crops

Crop	Year	Planted Acres	Harvested Acres	Yield/Acre	Total Production	Unit	Value/Unit	Total Gross Value
Alfalfa Hay	2023	1,138	1,131	5.66	6,401	Ton	\$253	\$1,620,000
	2022	1,027	1,027	5.67	5,823	Ton	\$488	\$2,842,000
Barley	2023	4,410	4,390	1.11	4,873	Ton	\$293	\$1,428,000
	2022	8,266	2,395	0.63	1,509	Ton	\$294	\$444,000
Grain Hay*	2023	10,245	9,336	2.25	21,006	Ton	\$196	\$4,117,000
	2022	9,575	8,746	1.92	16,792	Ton	\$405	\$6,801,000
Rangeland, Grazed	2023		1,012,000			Acre	\$11	\$11,132,000
	2022		1,012,000			Acre	\$8	\$8,096,000
Miscellaneous**	2023	1,158	1,627					\$2,142,000
	2022	1,157	1,167					\$1,873,000
Total	2023	16,951	1,028,484					\$20,439,000
	2022	20,025	1,025,335					\$20,056,000

\* includes winter forage

\*\* irrigated pasture, oats, safflower, Sudan grass, wheat, greenchop, seed, grain stubble (grazed), teff, dried beans, straw

# Animal Industry

Commodity	Year	# of Head	Total Production	Unit	Value/Unit	Total Gross Value
Cattle and Calves	2023	42,315	305,091	CWT	\$225	\$68,646,000
	2022	43,421	279,197	CWT	\$162	\$45,230,000
Miscellaneous*	2023					\$3,582,000
	2022					\$3,017,000
Total	2023					\$72,228,000
	2022					\$48,247,000

\*eggs, goats, hogs, lambs, sheep, beeswax, honey, milk, pollination



# Nursery Products

<i>Nursery Crop</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Field Production (acres)</i>	<i>Greenhouse Production (sq. ft.)</i>	<i>Total Gross Value</i>
Cut Flowers & Greens*	2023	17	2,899,225	\$19,067,000
	2022	16	2,899,225	\$19,490,000
Outdoor Ornamentals	2023	52	203,820	\$7,626,000
	2022**	53	207,700	\$7,377,000
Vegetable & Ornamental Transplants	2023	31	1,450,685	\$33,543,000
	2022	31	1,449,625	\$35,372,000
Miscellaneous***	2023	72	1,654,327	\$28,734,000
	2022**	38	1,672,807	\$26,401,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>6,208,057</b>	<b>\$88,970,000</b>
	2022**	138	6,229,357	\$88,640,000

\* includes cut flowers grown in greenhouse and field

\*\* revised

\*\*\* bedding plants, bulbs, cacti, Christmas trees, fruit & nut trees, ground cover, indoor decorative, propagative plants, flower seed, sod, specialty plants, succulents

# Vegetable Crops



<i>Crop</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Harvested Acres</i>	<i>Yield/Acre</i>	<i>Total Production</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Value/Unit</i>	<i>Total Gross Value</i>
Broccoli	2023	4,585	6.224	28,537	Ton	\$1,267.97	\$36,184,000
	2022	4,250	6.326	26,886		\$1,482.86	\$39,867,000
Brussels Sprouts	2023	1,098	10.881	11,947	Ton	\$2,059.35	\$24,604,000
	2022	1,463	10.127	14,816		\$1,718.52	\$25,461,000
Cabbage	2023	1,101	22.088	24,319	Ton	\$411.90	\$10,017,000
	2022	1,428	26.837	38,323		\$481.94	\$18,470,000
Cauliflower	2023	2,644	7.436	19,661	Ton	\$1,047.92	\$20,603,000
	2022	3,896	9.698	37,783		1,030.36	\$38,931,000
Celery	2023	984	30.161	29,678	Ton	\$544.91	\$16,172,000
	2022	1,139	27.721	31,574		\$498.96	\$15,754,000
Cilantro	2023	1,216	6.299	7,660	Ton	\$1,764.18	\$13,513,000
	2022	1,088	5.459	5,939		\$2,201.10	\$13,073,000
Lettuce, Head	2023	1,748	17.779	31,078	Ton	\$463.08	\$14,391,000
	2022	3,656	15.947	58,302		\$658.89	\$38,415,000
Lettuce, Leaf	2023	1,259	11.232	14,141	Ton	\$843.29	\$11,925,000
	2022	1,297	11.174	14,493		\$1,276.51	\$18,500,000
Miscellaneous*	2023	6,177					\$96,439,000
	2022	9,712					\$85,185,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>20,812</b>					<b>\$243,848,000</b>
	2022	27,929					\$293,656,000

\* anise, arugula, basil, beans, beets, bell peppers, bok choy, carrots, chard, chili peppers, collards, cucumbers, daikon, dandelion, dill, endive, escarole, fennel, garlic, green onions, herbs, kale, leeks, melons, mizuna, mushrooms, mustard greens, Napa cabbage, onions, parsley, peas, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, spinach, squash, sweet corn, tomato, tomatillo



# Fruit & Nut Crops



<i>Crop</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Planted Acres</i>	<i>Bearing Acres</i>	<i>Yield/Acre</i>	<i>Total Production</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Value/Unit</i>	<i>Total Gross Value</i>
Avocados	2023	5,265	4,739	3.079	14,591	Ton	\$2,344	\$34,202,000
	2022	5,009	4,653	2.402	11,177	Ton	\$3,006	\$33,597,000
Grapes, Wine (All)	2023	49,206	44,696		171,491	Ton		\$323,952,000
	2022	47,368	42,264		136,982	Ton		\$261,937,000
Lemons	2023	2,734	2,406	12.949	31,155	Ton	\$377	\$11,746,000
	2022	2,661	2,262	10.816	24,466	Ton	\$603	\$14,753,000
Strawberries (All)	2023	4,403	4,403		120,233	Ton		\$274,072,000
	2022	4,333	4,333		120,951	Ton		\$277,883,000
Fresh	2023			22.167	97,601	Ton	\$2,598	\$253,568,000
	2022			20.588	89,208	Ton	\$2,767	\$246,838,000
Processed	2023			5.140	22,631	Ton	\$906	\$20,504,000
	2022			7.326	31,744	Ton	\$978	\$31,045,000
Miscellaneous*	2023	5,037	3,880					\$44,781,000
	2022	5,213	4,083					\$36,162,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>66,645</b>	<b>60,124</b>					<b>\$688,753,000</b>
	2022	64,584	57,595					\$624,332,000

\* apples, apricots, Asian pears, blueberries, blackberries, English walnuts, feijoas, gooseberries, grapefruit, kiwis, mandarins, navel oranges, olives, passion fruit, peaches, persimmons, pistachios, pomegranates, raspberries, specialty citrus, table grapes, tangerines, Valencia oranges, white sapote





# Wine Grape Varietals

<i>Crop</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Bearing Acres</i>	<i>Yield/Acre</i>	<i>Total Production</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Value/Unit</i>	<i>Total Gross Value</i>
Chardonnay	2023	2,729	4.942	13,487	Ton	\$1,677	\$22,617,000
	2022	2,673	3.651	9,759	Ton	\$1,696	\$16,551,000
Sauvignon Blanc	2023	1,073	7.620	8,176	Ton	\$1,600	\$13,082,000
	2022	981	9.854	9,667	Ton	\$1,589	\$15,361,000
White Wine (Other)	2023	1,803	3.512	6,332	Ton	\$2,373	\$15,026,000
	2022	1,651	2.860	4,722	Ton	\$2,464	\$11,635,000
Cabernet Sauvignon	2023	21,048	4.247	89,391	Ton	\$1,755	\$156,881,000
	2022	19,956	3.404	67,930	Ton	\$1,825	\$123,973,000
Merlot	2023	3,069	3.949	12,119	Ton	\$1,676	\$20,312,000
	2022	3,133	3.092	9,687	Ton	\$1,610	\$15,596,000
Pinot Noir	2023	2,185	2.955	6,457	Ton	\$2,252	\$14,540,000
	2022	2,095	2.838	5,946	Ton	\$2,107	\$12,527,000
Syrah	2023	2,688	3.077	8,271	Ton	\$2,617	\$21,645,000
	2022	2,591	2.669	6,915	Ton	\$2,378	\$16,445,000
Zinfandel	2023	2,025	2.326	4,710	Ton	\$1,940	\$9,138,000
	2022	2,017	2.133	4,302	Ton	\$2,082	\$8,957,000
Red Wine (Other)	2023	8,076	2.792	22,548	Ton	\$2,249	\$50,711,000
	2022	7,167	2.519	18,054	Ton	\$2,265	\$40,892,000

## 2023 Commercial Fishing Landings

Species	Pounds	Value
Sablefish	382,296	\$685,301
Thornyhead, Shortspine	24,508	\$251,219
Halibut, California	38,651	\$234,778
Rockfish, Gopher	27,827	\$212,246
Rockfish, Brown	25,060	\$173,017
Cabazon	25,928	\$165,756
Rockfish, Black-and-Yellow	16,190	\$131,119
Squid, Market	184,328	\$109,386
Prawn, Spot	4,156	\$103,530
Rockfish, Grass	8,883	\$95,446
Other Species*	623,583	\$1,037,091
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,361,409</b>	<b>\$3,198,890</b>

\*Other species includes 88 species.



In 2023, commercial fishing operations working from Morro Bay and Port San Luis landed 98 different species of fish, valued at nearly \$3.2 million.

This data was provided by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Report. (Commercial fishing value represents 2023 data and is not included in overall agricultural values.)

## Organic Crops

### Top 5 Organic Crops

Rank	Crop	Acreage
1	Field Crops (includes pasture and rangeland)	62,799
2	Wine Grapes	5,035
3	Carrots	3,023
4	Nut Crops (excludes almonds)	977
5	Seed Crops	527

San Luis Obispo County ranked 11th out of 58 California Counties for the number of organic registrations in 2023.

One hundred and seven growers registered with San Luis Obispo County as their primary county for organic crops and rangeland production.

In addition, seventeen producers based in other counties registered organic production sites within the county.

### Acres Registered Organic

Year	Acres
2023	82,073
2022	87,136
2021	87,371
2020	80,413
2019	78,220



# Certified Farmers' Markets

The Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures certifies farmers' markets and producers in the county. Certification allows our local producers to sell their own produce directly to consumers. Department staff inspect local farms and ranches to ensure that producers are practicing the agricultural arts and

growing what they sell. Farmers' markets offer a venue for consumers to interact personally with many of the county's agricultural producers. In San Luis Obispo County, there are over 115 certified producers, and the county hosts 15 certified farmers' markets.

<b>Day</b>	<b>Market</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Market Location*</b>
Monday	Baywood/Los Osos	2:00 - 4:30	Santa Maria St between 2nd St & 3rd St
Tuesday	Paso Robles	9:30 - 12:00	11th St & Spring St
	San Luis Obispo	2:30 - 5:30	224 Tank Farm Rd (Farm Supply parking lot)
Wednesday	Arroyo Grande	08:30 - 11:00	1463 East Grand Ave (Smart & Final parking lot)
	Atascadero	3:00 - 6:00	Atascadero Sunken Gardens - East Mall Ave
Thursday	Morro Bay	2:30 - 4:30	2650 Main St (Spencer's parking lot)
	San Luis Obispo	6:00 - 9:00	Higuera St between Chorro St & Osos St
Friday	Avila Beach	4:00 - 10:00	Front St Promenade (May - August)
	Cambria	2:30 - 5:30	1000 Main St
	Cayucos	10:00 - 12:30	Ocean Ave & D St (June - August)
Saturday	Arroyo Grande	12:00 - 2:30	214 E Branch St between Short St & Mason St
	Morro Bay	2:30 - 5:30	Main St & Morro Bay Blvd
	Paso Robles	9:00 - 1:00	11th St & Spring St
	San Luis Obispo	8:00 - 10:45	325 Madonna Rd (World Market parking lot)
	Templeton	9:00 - 12:30	City Park - 6th St

\*Market operations and locations change from year to year. The list above represents those markets anticipated to be in operation during calendar year 2024.

# Sustainable Agriculture



The California Food & Agricultural Code mandates pest prevention programs to prevent the introduction and spread of pests. Pest prevention involves various activities and programs including Pest Detection, Pest Management, Pest Eradication, and Pest Exclusion.

## Pest Detection

Pest detection is the systematic search for exotic pests arriving from an outside known infested area or for pests not known to occur in California. Detecting pests at their lowest population level is essential to the success of eradication efforts. Pest Detection uses visual inspection and insect traps that target specific exotic insects of high agricultural and economic importance.

San Luis Obispo County is host to many varied crops that thrive in the diverse geographic regions and microclimates within the county. Exotic, invasive insects and pathogens threaten agricultural crops, residential gardens, and wildlands. In 2023, several thousand residences hosted 2,444 specialized insect traps designed to intercept invasive insects.

Pest Detection Trappers from our department checked these residential traps 34,366 times. Although 60 Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) insects were found in residential areas in South County during the 2022 trapping season, intensive

delimitation trapping and eradication efforts were successful. No ACP were detected during the 2023 trapping season, and delimitation trapping ended. Routine ACP detection trapping is ongoing countywide.

Commercial traps were placed in plant nurseries and croplands throughout the county for the detection of Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter, Light Brown Apple Moth, European Grapevine Moth, and European Pine Shoot Moth. These 518 additional traps were checked 5,543 times throughout the trapping season.

Early detection programs protect local agriculture by intercepting pests at their lowest populations, increasing the likelihood of successful eradication. Community participation is a key element to a successful detection program. By allowing traps to be placed, residents support local agriculture and help protect the environment.



<i>Target Pest</i>	<i>Insect Hosts</i>	<i>Traps Placed</i>	<i>Trap Servicing</i>
Asian Citrus Psyllid	Citrus	1,083	13,449
Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter	Ornamental and Commercial Crops	349	4,084
European Grapevine Moth	Grapes	191	1,960
Mediterranean Fruit Fly	Fruit Trees	186	3,275
Mexican Fruit Fly	Fruit Trees	167	5,420
Oriental Fruit Fly	Fruit Trees	186	3,275
Melon Fruit Fly	Vegetable Gardens and Fruit Trees	99	1,777
Various Exotic Fruit Flies	Fruits and Vegetables	159	2,068
Light Brown Apple Moth	Ornamental and Commercial Crops	67	746
European Corn Borer	Corn and Sorghum	66	644
Spongy Moth	Shade Trees	134	929
Japanese Beetle	Turf and Flowers	126	893
Khapra Beetle	Stored grains	12	12
Invasive Shothole Borers	Many tree species including Avocados	109	1,017
Brown Marmorated Stink Bug	Ornamental and Commercial Crops	7	119
False Codling Moth	Orchard and Field Crops	20	224
High Hazard	Parks	1	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,962</b>	<b>39,909</b>

***Interested in hosting insect traps?***



Scan the QR code or go to <https://bit.ly/4eopymd> and fill out the online *“Permission to Trap in My Yard”* form, or contact the County Agricultural Commissioner’s office at 805-781-5910.

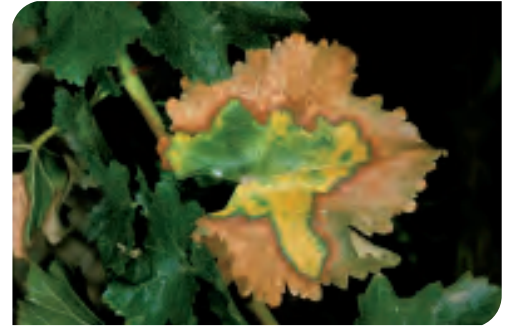
# Sustainable Agriculture

## Pierce's Disease Control Program

The Pierce's Disease Control Program protects the local agricultural and nursery industries by inspecting incoming nursery stock from Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) infested areas across California. Over the past year, the program profiled 3,324 shipments for GWSS, a vector for Pierce's Disease, which poses a threat to the county's viticulture industry.

Inspection staff visited 414 distinct sites within the county and inspected 2,435 individual shipments for the presence of GWSS. A total of 8 notices of rejection were issued for incoming GWSS shipments not meeting legal requirements. Ongoing inspection efforts by department staff have been vital in keeping San Luis Obispo County free from GWSS.

In 2023, there were no live GWSS intercepted, and the county remains GWSS free.



## Pest Exclusion

Type of Pest Intercepted	# of Rated, Actionable Pests Found
Ants	4
Aphids	2
Bacteria	2
Eggs/Immature Insects	8
Fungi	54
Leafhoppers	3
Moths	2
Mealybugs	20
Mites	6
Scale Insects	31
Slugs/Snails	4
Stink Bugs	1
Thrips	1
Unknown	2
Weeds	7
Whiteflies	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>

To mitigate the risks associated with pest introductions, the San Luis Obispo Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures implements a robust pest prevention system, aligned with the California Department of Food and Agriculture's model. This system prioritizes pest exclusion, the first line of defense that prevents the introduction of harmful pests not yet established in San Luis Obispo County.

We conduct numerous inspections to exclude pests, including package inspections at delivery facilities, nurseries, and landscape sites. In 2023, we profiled over 13,000 shipments and physically inspected 9,700 of those shipments.

California employs a comprehensive pest rating system to guide the response to intercepted pests. Pests are categorized based on their potential impact. Those with the highest potential negative impact are designated as actionable pests. If an invasive pest is intercepted, the commodity is either returned to the shipper, treated, or destroyed to eliminate the pest, depending on the severity of the threat posed. This systematic approach aims to safeguard California's agriculture and environment from the detrimental effects of invasive species.

# Noxious/Invasive Weed Control

The department's Invasive Weed Control Program protects agriculture, sensitive habitats, and native wildlife by controlling noxious and invasive weeds. Roadside treatment programs performed along county roads enhance safety by improving visibility and clearance and reducing fire risk. In an effort to maintain and minimize the spread of unwanted noxious and invasive weeds, department staff visited 165 locations, treating 210 net acres, along with surveying a total of 33 distinct locations, approximating 95 gross acres throughout the county. In the course of their work, staff covered all parts of the county, targeting areas of concern to help control unwanted weeds in the county, ultimately protecting our local environment.

The department continues to contribute to the San Luis Obispo County Weed Management Area, a cooperative effort comprised of county departments, state agencies, and non-profit groups concerned with minimizing the spread of invasive weeds. The department's involvement in this group continues to promote protection of the local environment.

Residents and visitors to San Luis Obispo County can help reduce the spread of invasive weeds by cleaning their boots or tires after hiking or biking, keeping an eye out for unusual plants, and informing the department if they suspect an invasive plant in the county.

Activity	Amount
Locations Treated	165
Net Acres Treated	210
Gross Acres Treated	1,536
Gross Acres Removal by Hand	54
Locations Surveyed	33
Net Acres Surveyed	3
Gross Acres Surveyed	95

In 2023 the Weed Abatement Program saw the completion of the 2022/2023 California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) grant, highlighted in the 2022 Crop Report, and began work on a second grant through CDFA targeting listed noxious weeds in the Highway 1 corridor from San Luis Obispo north to the county line. Much of the work addressed jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) in outlying areas and pioneer populations. The work was accomplished through partnerships between the California State Parks, Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District, Morro Bay National Estuary Program, and private land managers. These initial efforts were very productive, and the program will continue monitoring the project.



# Phytosanitary Certification Program

Country	Certificates
Canada	1,794
Taiwan	115
Japan	59
Netherlands	43
Mexico	40
French Polynesia	34
Belgium	32
Panama	17
United Kingdom	10
Chile	4
China	3
Republic of Korea	3

The export certification program ensures that commodities exported to other countries meet their import requirements.

Department staff work with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and have trained inspectors certified as Accredited Certifying Officials who are authorized to conduct inspections and issue phytosanitary certificates. These federal documents inform other countries that the exporting commodity has been inspected and is free from harmful pests. San Luis Obispo County issued nearly 2,200 phytosanitary certificates in 2023, with broccoli and cauliflower being the most commonly exported commodities. The twelve countries that local growers exported products to most frequently are listed in the table.





# Pesticide Use Enforcement Program

<i>Pesticide Use Permits Issued</i>	<i>Total</i>
Restricted Material* Agricultural	467
Restricted Material* Non-Agricultural	15
Operator Identification Numbers**	416

<i>Notices of Intent</i>	
Notices of Intent*** Reviewed	427

<i>Investigations</i>	<i>Total</i>
Investigations Completed	18

<i>Pesticide Use Inspections</i>	<i>Total</i>
Agricultural Use	185
Pre-application	263
Structural Use	65
Pest Control Headquarters	44
Fieldworker Safety	65
Pest Control Business Headquarters	36
<b>Total Inspections</b>	<b>658</b>

Overall Inspection Compliance Rate	91%
Agricultural & Structural Civil Penalties	15



Our department conducts a comprehensive program in Pesticide Use Enforcement (PUE), enforcing pesticide laws and regulations to protect the health and safety of workers, the public, and the environment. Pesticides are registered and regulated by federal and state government laws and regulations, with the Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures being the local enforcement authority.

PUE inspectors conduct routine inspections on pesticide applications and pest control businesses countywide to ensure they are being run in a safe and effective manner. Inspectors also review and issue operator identification numbers and restricted material permits to qualified growers and businesses, investigate pesticide complaints, and educate the public and county stakeholders about pesticide compliance.



\*Restricted Material: A pesticide that may be purchased and used only by or under the supervision of a certified commercial or private applicator under a permit issued by the County Agricultural Commissioner.

\*\*Operator Identification Number: A unique identification number issued to a qualified business to enable tracking of agricultural and commercial uses of pesticides through pesticide use reporting.

\*\*\*Notice of Intent: A verbal or written notification submitted to the commissioner prior to the use of a restricted pesticide associated with a permit.

# Weights & Measures

## Measuring Device Inspections

Device Type	*Inspections	Device Type	*Inspections
Retail Motor Fuel Dispensers	2,772	Retail Computing Scales	686
Propane Meters	48	Counter Scales	108
Wholesale Meters	1	Hanging Scales	46
Vehicle Tank	23	Crane Scales	5
Water Vending Machines	126	Hopper Scales	23
Electric Submeters	357	Livestock Scales	73
Gas Vapor Submeters	189	Animal Scale (Single Head)	4
Water Submeters	2,294	Platform Scales	312
Wire/Rope/Cordage Meters	42	Vehicle Scales	89
Misc. Measuring Devices	9	Monorail/Meatbeam Scales	7
Compressed Natural Gas	3	Class II, Low Capacity Scales	28
<b>Total Measuring Devices Inspected</b>	<b>5,864</b>	<b>Total Weighing Devices Inspected</b>	<b>1,381</b>

\*Overall Commercial Device Compliance Rate: 66.1% includes out of county water submeters

## Weighing Device Inspections



## Quantity Control Inspections

### Price Verification

Retail locations Inspected: 121  
 Packages Inspected: 2239  
 Overall Compliance for all Locations: 61.9%

### Packaging & Labeling

# Lots Inspected: 98  
 # Packages Inspected: 769  
 Overall Compliance for all Lots: 71.2%

## Petroleum Signs & Labeling

# Inspections: 113

## Enforcement Actions

Civil Administrative Actions: 11  
 Violations Issued: 333



Department staff help safeguard consumers by overseeing commercial transactions by weight, measure, or count. Our inspectors ensure transaction accuracy and fairness in commerce through a range of services, including inspection of commercial weighing and measuring devices, inspecting packaging for net content and labeling, verifying price accuracy at retail locations, auditing weighmasters, and examining petroleum signs and fuel quality throughout the county. This year, the four weights and measures inspectors completed 10,619 inspections across all program areas and responded to 97.6% of consumer complaints within 24 hours.

County weights and measures officials stay updated with specialized training in areas such as mass flow meters and electric vehicle supply equipment. This ongoing training allows inspectors to keep pace with new technologies and methods, ensuring compliance with annual inspection requirements for all commercial weighing and measuring devices.

In 2023, the department had representation at the Western Weights and Measures Association (WWMA) and at the National Council on Weights and Measures (NCWM). Our staff contributed to the national standards development process as active members on the Specification and Tolerances Committee along with the Professional Development Committee. Additionally, San Luis Obispo County weights and measures presided over the 66th annual WWMA technical conference in Sparks, NV, where our representative served as President of the association.

# Financial Report

## Fiscal Year 2022 - 2023



### Revenue \$ 7,727,463

State Funds	\$3,060,981	39%
Federal Funds	\$898,130	12%
County Funds	\$3,224,015	42%
Collected Fees	\$544,337	7%

### Expenditures \$ 7,727,463

Salaries & Benefits	\$6,666,457	86%
Services & Supplies	\$701,071	9%
Overhead	\$353,443	5%
Equipment	\$6,492	<1%



### Funding by Program Area

#### Agricultural Resources \$481,476

State Funds	\$88,653	18%
County Funds	\$374,628	78%
Collected Fees	\$18,195	4%

#### Pest Management \$777,881

State Funds	\$472,229	61%
County Funds	\$305,652	39%
Collected Fees	\$0	0%

#### Pest Prevention \$3,157,534

State Funds	\$1,346,719	43%
Federal Funds	\$898,130	28%
County Fees	\$755,461	24%
Collected Fees	\$157,224	5%

#### Pesticide Use Enforcement \$2,080,948

State Funds	\$998,473	48%
County Funds	\$1,061,498	51%
Collected Fees	\$20,977	1%

#### Product Quality \$248,398

State Funds	\$147,256	59%
County Funds	\$85,382	35%
Collected Fees	\$15,760	6%

#### Weights & Measures \$981,226

State Funds	\$7,651	1%
County Funds	\$641,394	65%
Collected Fees	\$332,181	34%

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