



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY **AGRICULTURE**

CROP REPORT
2025

A Rich History of Agriculture



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*Historical Photos provided by East Contra Costa Historical Society

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER & DIRECTOR OF SEALER'S LETTER

Dear Karen Ross,
Secretary California Department of Food and Agriculture and
The Honorable Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County

I am pleased to submit the 2025 Agricultural Crop & Livestock Report for Contra Costa County in accordance with the provisions of Section 2272 and 2279 of the California Food and Agricultural Code.

The 2025 overall production values had minor changes. Demand for Contra Costa County agricultural goods remained strong, partially because many growers market goods directly to consumers or wholesale direct to retail. The total gross value of agricultural crops in 2025 was \$154,270,166 which is an increase of \$11,481,312. In general, demand and prices have remained strong for agricultural crops in Contra Costa County. Crop values vary from year to year due to factors such as production, weather, and market conditions.

Some notable changes include an increase in Fruit and Nut crops as the demand for these products stayed strong. Also noteworthy is a continued decrease in total value of Field Crops due to a reduction in production acreage and a decrease in average price.

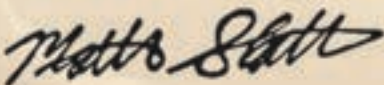
Fifteen crop categories exceeded one million dollars in value for 2025. These categories in decreasing order include sweet corn, green beans, tomatoes, cattle and calves, misc. fruit & nut, cherries, almonds, apiary products, rangeland, misc. vegetable & seed, grapes, misc. field crops, alfalfa hay, irrigated pastures, and misc. livestock & livestock products.

A move into new commodities and the increased specialization of others has enlarged our miscellaneous categories. Walnuts have seen a large decrease in average price and the loss of acreage to other commodities.

It should be emphasized that the values stated in this report are gross receipts and do not include the cost of production, transportation, or marketing of the products. The economic benefit of agricultural production is generally thought to be about three times the gross production value.

I truly appreciate the agricultural producers, farmers, ranchers, and organizations that shared information and supported our efforts in completing this report. Special recognition goes to all the staff who assisted in compiling the information to make this report possible.

Respectfully Submitted,



Matt Slattengren
Agricultural Commissioner
Director of Weights and Measures

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
2380 Bisso Lane Suite A
Concord, CA 94520



MISSION STATEMENT

The Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture, under the direction of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Department of Pesticide Regulation, and Division of Measurement Standards, is responsible for conducting regulatory and service activities pertaining to the agricultural industry and the consumers of our County.

The primary goal of this office is to promote and protect agriculture while safeguarding the public and the environment. Our work as County Weights and Measures officials in the community ensures a safe place to live and a fair marketplace for trade.

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Major & Mila

HARVESTING HISTORY

THE SOUL OF CONTRA COSTA AGRICULTURE

The Evolution of Agriculture in Contra Costa County

Agriculture in Contra Costa County has undergone dramatic shifts over the past several centuries, transforming from vast open ranges into intensive orchards, and finally into a protected modern landscape.

The Era of Cattle and Grain (1776–1890s)

The earliest agricultural era was defined by extensive cattle ranching, beginning around 1776 when livestock were first introduced to the region. Skilled vaqueros managed large herds that roamed freely across the county's valleys and hillsides.

By the late 1800s, this cattle-dominated landscape transitioned into a booming grain economy. Thousands of acres were devoted to dry-farmed

wheat and barley. However, decades of monocropping gradually depleted the soil. By the 1890s, declining yields and falling grain prices signaled the end of this chapter.



The Shift to Orchards and Irrigation (1900–1919)

At the turn of the century, Contra Costa County transitioned away from massive wheat fields. Farmers began subdividing large tracts of land into intensive fruit and nut orchards. The valley floors rapidly filled with pears, cherries, walnuts, almonds, and even mulberry trees to feed silkworms, hoping the silk trade might offer an

additional quick path to agricultural prosperity.

The Rail Networks

The arrival of the railroad in the newly formed town of Knightsen connected local farms to larger markets. The railroad's presence instantly transformed the isolated agricultural area. Farmers, who previously relied on muddy and impassable dirt roads, could now rapidly ship perishable crops to broader markets.



Engineered Irrigation

In eastern areas like Knightsen and Byron, early pioneers established the Byron-Bethany Irrigation District. This infrastructure brought reliable river water to almonds, apricots, alfalfa, and dairy farms.

During this time, wine grapes emerged as a primary cash crop. Farming predated the urban sprawl. Long before cities like Walnut Creek were known for shopping or suburban homes, they were celebrated for wine. In 1911, the region hosted the grand Walnut Creek Grape Carnival to celebrate this thriving industry.



Prohibition and the Rise of Specialty Crops (1920–1939)

The momentum came to a sudden halt in 1920 with the passage of Prohibition. Vineyards that had blanketed the county floors were quickly uprooted because growers could no longer legally produce wine. To survive, farmers replanted their land with walnuts, pears, and cherries. By the 1930s, the landscape had shifted completely to stone fruits and nuts. This shift was not limited to the south and east sections of the county. The face of agriculture was changing in other regions as well.



Flower Nurseries

In western Contra Costa County, Japanese American-owned flower nurseries transformed large areas of El Cerrito and Richmond into vibrant hubs of rose and carnation production, supplying fresh flowers to markets throughout the Bay Area. Early farmers' markets began appearing, giving local producers new ways to sell directly to nearby residents. Additionally, County growers proudly showcased their

achievements with impressive agricultural displays at the California State Fair, particularly between 1925 and 1950.

The Mid-Century Urban Transition (1940s–1970s)

The mid-20th century brought another major transformation. After World War II, rapid population growth spurred widespread urban development. Between 1940 and 1970, suburban expansion consumed vast stretches of prime farmland. In 1978, the Board of Supervisors formally codified the Agricultural Core ("Ag Core") as a cornerstone of the East County Area General Plan. By legally isolating 14,600 acres of the county's absolute highest-quality soils exclusively for

farming, this landmark 1970s zoning victory drew a protective line around local agricultural strongholds like Brentwood and Knightsen.

Agriculture Today in Contra Costa County (1970s–Today)

Agriculture in Contra Costa County has resiliently endured for hundreds of years by constantly adapting to severe economic, environmental, and biological pressures. Local growers have successfully navigated aggressive urban expansion through voter-backed protective boundaries, while simultaneously combating the continuous threat of noxious weeds and destructive invasive insects that vie for vital resources. Yet, few threats are as relentless or deeply entrenched as the native California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*). These adaptable rodents inflict millions of dollars in annual agricultural damage across the state by devouring valuable fruit and nut crops. Today, Contra Costa County remains a highly diverse, multi-million dollar agricultural region.



While the hills still support livestock grazing, the lower lands produce high value crops, including sweet corn, tomatoes, organic vegetables, vineyards, and the County's well-loved U-Pick fruit harvests.

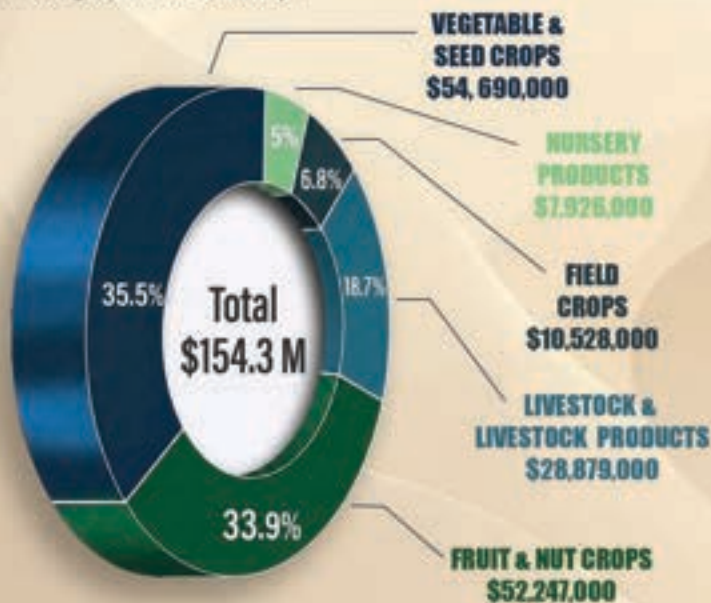
GROSS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION



Contra Costa County Agriculture is Alive and Well

Agriculture in Contra Costa County contributes approximately \$225 million to the local economy annually (based on 2013-2014 reports), supporting roughly 2,000 jobs. Contra Costa's agricultural production is highly concentrated in the eastern part of the county, but some form of production can be found throughout the County.

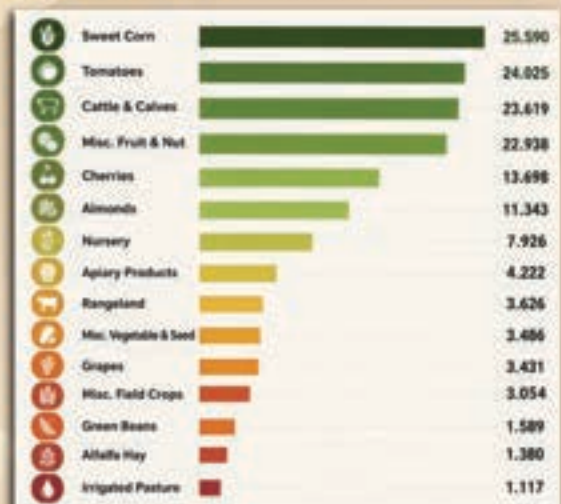
Contra Costa County possesses a highly diverse, niche-focused agricultural sector that differs significantly from the industrial-scale monoculture found in California's Central Valley. While many California counties are dominated by a single top-valued crop (like almonds or dairy), Contra Costa is characterized by its high-value specialty crops with a strong livestock component.



CROP CATEGORY

BREAKDOWN

Gross Value in Millions



GROSS PRODUCTION VALUE

TOTAL PRODUCTION

\$154,270,000



Vegetable & Seed Crops

\$54,690,000



Fruit & Nut Crops

\$52,247,000



Livestock &
Livestock Products

\$28,879,000



Field Crops

\$10,528,000



Nursery Products

\$7,926,000

Category	Gross Value 2025 (\$)	Gross Value 2024 (\$)	Change in Value (\$)	Gross Value Change %	Total Acreage 2025	Total Acreage 2024	Acreage Change %
Vegetable & Seed Crops	\$54,690,000	\$50,093,620	\$4,596,380	9%	6,876.0	6,575.0	5%
Fruit & Nut Crops	\$52,247,000	\$43,681,163	\$8,565,837	20%	7,008.5	7,457.0	-6%
Livestock & Products	\$28,879,000	\$25,721,507	\$3,157,493	12%	-	-	-
Field Crops	\$10,528,000	\$12,621,166	\$-2,093,166	-17%	173,125.0	174,353.0	-1%
Nursery Products	\$7,926,000	\$10,683,000	\$-2,757,000	-26%	44.1	40.8	8%
Total	\$154,270,000	\$142,800,456	\$11,469,544	8%	-	-	-

VEGETABLE AND SEED CROP

PRODUCTION VALUE

\$54,689,200



SWEET CORN

\$25,597,000



TOMATOES

\$24,025,000



MISCELLANEOUS

(Asparagus, Artichokes, Beets, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cardoon, Carrots, Cauliflower, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Ginseng, Greens, Herbs, Kohlrabi, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Okra, Onions, Peas, Peppers, Potatoes, Pumpkins, Radishes, Squash, Wheat Grass)

\$3,485,600



GREEN BEANS

\$1,588,600

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY AT THE STATE FAIR



The California State Fair has long provided a venue for counties to showcase their agriculture and industry to visitors from across the state. During the mid 20th century, Contra Costa County created impressive displays that highlighted the diversity and abundance of its agricultural production. The photos shown here - top left from 1925, top right from 1931, and bottom left from 1940 - feature a series of beautifully curated exhibits spanning several decades that highlighted the county's diverse and prolific agricultural production.

Crop	Year	Harvested Acreage	Per Acre	Total	Unit	Per Unit	Total
Sweet Corn	2025	3,025	11.11	33,594	Ton	762	\$25,590,000
	2024	2,764	10.69	29,547	Ton	786	\$23,223,942
Tomatoes	2025	3,113	71.19	221,620	Ton	108	\$24,025,000*
	2024	3,219	62.00	199,578	Ton	117	\$23,350,626
Miscellaneous*	2025	580	—	—	—	—	\$3,486,000
	2024	522	—	—	—	—	\$2,413,100
Green Beans	2025	158	6.01	950	Ton	1,673	\$1,589,000
	2024	70	6.11	428	Ton	2,584	\$1,105,952
TOTAL	2025	6,876	—	—	—	—	\$54,690,000
	2024	6,575	—	—	—	—	\$50,093,620

*Totals are approximate and may not add due to rounding.

FRUIT AND NUT CROP

PRODUCTION VALUE

\$54,689,200



Miscellaneous

\$22,938,000



CHERRY

\$13,697,700



ALMOND

\$11,343,000



GRAPE

\$3,431,000



WALNUT

\$588,300



STRAWBERRY

\$192,000



BLACKBERRY

\$57,000

MULBERRIES IN CONTRA COSTA: a FORGOTTEN SILK INDUSTRY and a MODERN REVIVAL



Mulberry trees have been planted in Contra Costa County since the 1800s, when early residents valued them not for their delicious fruit, but for their ability to provide food for silkworms. Mulberry leaves are the staple diet of silkworms, and having a steady supply allows the worms to grow and form their highly prized cocoons of pure silk. As seen in the photo below, tending silkworms was labor intensive work, and the industry did not last in the county. Although the silk cultivation industry

did not endure, mulberry tree production has seen a renewed rise in popularity.

Favorable growing conditions in the eastern part of the county, combined with increased demand for the fruit from Asian communities around the Bay Area, have contributed to the recent growth in mulberry cultivation.



Silkworm cocoon processing facility from the 1890s in the East Bay.

Crop	Year	Harvested Acreage	Tons Per Acre	Total Tons Harvested	Value Per Unit	Total Value
Miscellaneous*	2025	1,016	—	—	—	\$22,938,000
	2024	771	—	—	—	\$15,619,214
Cherries	2025	1,283	1.99	2,548	\$5,376.00	\$13,697,700
	2024	1,217	2.62	3,192	\$3,346.00	\$10,670,394
Almonds	2025	3,408	0.76	2,580	\$4,401.00	\$11,343,000
	2024	3,212	0.65	2,095	\$4,723.00	\$9,861,624
Grapes	2025	1,025	4.25	4,353	\$788.00	\$3,431,000
	2024	1,628	3.52	5,722	\$933.00	\$5,347,023
Walnuts	2025	256	1.95	499	\$1,180.00	\$588,300
	2024	440	2.01	883	\$2,439.00	\$2,156,076
Strawberry	2025	17	1.61	27	\$7,027.00	\$192,000
Blackberries	2025	4	1.44	5	\$11,017.00	\$57,000
	2024	4	0.75	3	\$8,944.00	\$26,832
TOTAL	2025	7,009	—	—	—	\$52,247,000
	2024	7,272	—	—	—	\$41,664,000

*Apples, Apricots, Apriums, Asian Pears, Berries, Citrus, Figs, Loquats, Melons, Mulberries, Nectarines, Pears, Pecans, Persimmons, Pistachios, Prunes, Pomegranates, Quinces, Strawberries

LIVESTOCK AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS

PRODUCTION VALUE

\$28,879,000



Cattle and Calves
\$23,619,000



Apiary Products
\$4,222,000



Miscellaneous
\$1,038,000



VAQUEROS and EARLY CATTLE RANCHING in CONTRA COSTA

Cattle ranching has been an important part of the Contra Costa landscape since the Spanish first came to Alta California. Colonists brought livestock and horses to the San Ramon Valley around 1776 as part of the Mission San José. The hides, tallow, and meat produced from cattle formed a cornerstone of the early California economy. Vast grasslands and few fences resulted in free-range



herds that were often feral and difficult to manage. Skilled cowboys, known as vaqueros, were essential to tend to these fierce cattle.

Many of the early vaqueros were a combination of Native American and Spanish descent. These vaqueros were known for their expert horsemanship and roping skills. Cattle ranching remains a part of the San Ramon Valley today, carried on by dedicated ranching families.

Commodity	Year	No. of Head	Total Liveweight	Unit	Per Unit	Total
Cattle & Calves	2025	16,921	81,117	Cwt	300	\$23,619,000
	2024	17,977	87,779	Cwt	233	\$20,452,507
Apiary Products*	2025	—	—	—	—	\$4,222,000
	2024	—	—	—	—	\$3,633,000
Miscellaneous Livestock & Livestock Products**	2025	—	—	—	—	\$1,038,000
	2024	—	—	—	—	\$1,636,000
Total	2025	—	—	—	—	\$28,879,000
	2024	—	—	—	—	\$25,721,507

*Honey, Wax, Pollination

**Chickens, Ducks, Emus, Goats, Hogs, Llamas, Ostriches, Pigs, Rabbits, Sheep, Turkeys, Eggs, Milk, Wool

FIELD CROP

PRODUCTION VALUE

\$10,528,000



MISCELLANEOUS

(Barley, Corn Silage, Field Corn, Hay (Forage), Hay (Wild), Hemp, Rye, Safflower, Silage, Straw, Sudan Grass)

\$3,054,000



WHEAT

\$499,000



PASTURE (RANGELAND & IRRIGATED)

\$4,743,000



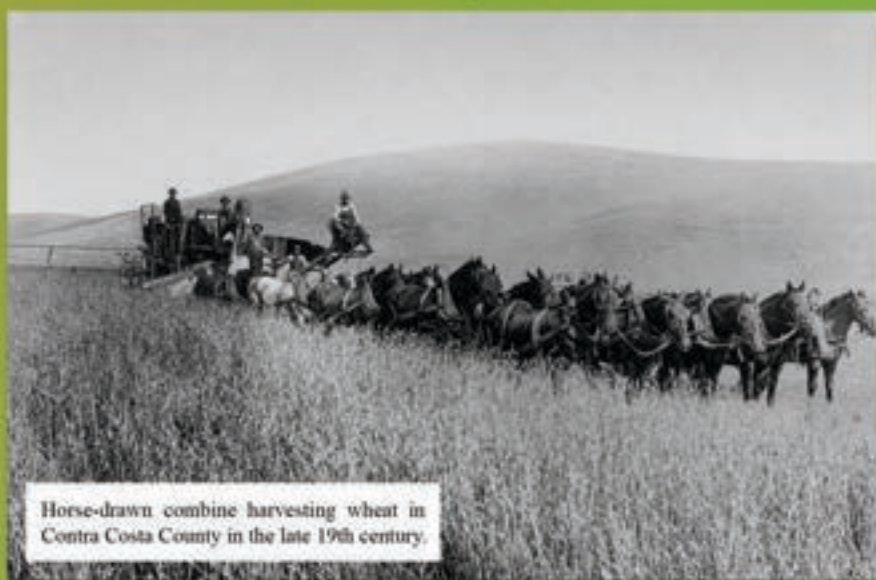
HAY (ALFALFA & CEREAL)

\$2,232,000



Wheat was one of Contra Costa County's principal crops in the late 1800s, with tens of thousands of acres in dry farmed production across the interior valleys and eastern part of the county. Typical yields ranged from 8 to 20 bushels per acre depending on rainfall. During this period, Martinez, Antioch, and Port Costa served as major shipping points, with Port Costa becoming one of the West Coast's busiest wheat-export terminals. In 1871 over 50,000 acres were dedicated to wheat production throughout the county. Wheat acreage

began to decline in the 20th century as soils were depleted.



Today only limited wheat acreage remains and is grown primarily on non irrigated land for feed or rotational crop purposes. While large scale wheat production has faded, the crop remains an enduring reminder of the county's early

farming heritage by those first dry farmed fields.

Crop	Year	Harvested Acreage	Per Acre	Total	Unit	Per Unit	Total
Pasture Irrigated	2025	3,700	—	—	Acre	302	\$1,117,000
	2024	3,700	—	—	Acre	302	\$1,117,400
Pasture Rangeland	2025	157,642	—	—	Acre	23	\$3,626,000
	2024	157,642	—	—	Acre	23	\$3,625,766
Miscellaneous*	2025	3,075	—	—	—	—	\$3,054,000
	2024	2,784	—	—	—	—	\$1,088,000
Hay	2025	1,483	5.07	7,516	Ton	184	\$1,380,000
	2024	2,382	6.41	15,260	Ton	212	\$3,237,028
Cereal	2025	3,591	2.33	8,373	Ton	102	\$852,000
	2024	4,333	2.34	10,133	Ton	113	\$1,145,707
Wheat	2025	1,585	1.61	2,556	Ton	195	\$499,000
	2024	1,803	1.88	3,388	Ton	198	\$670,569
TOTAL	2025	173,125	—	—	—	—	\$10,528,000
	2024	174,353	—	—	—	—	\$12,609,564

*Barley, Corn Silage, Forage Hay, Hay (Wild), Hemp, Rye, Safflower, Silage, Straw, Sudan Grass



TRY _____
"Port Costa" Flour

Early turn of the century commercial advertisement for Port Costa Flour.

NURSERY PRODUCTS

PRODUCTION VALUE

\$7,926,000



MISCELLANEOUS

\$7,926,000

A Short History of JAPANESE-AMERICAN NURSERIES

in EL CERRITO and RICHMOND

West Contra Costa County became known for nursery plant production in the early 1900s, when Japanese immigrants established horticultural operations in what is now El Cerrito and Richmond. Drawing on extensive knowledge and experience, these families built thriving nurseries that specialized in producing cut flowers for wholesale markets, most notably roses and carnations. During World War II, Japanese



Nellie, Sam, Chu, and Kazuo Sakai prepare flowers - 1940. ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market.



The Hisajiro Honda family in 1940: Sue (daughter), Hisajiro (father), Masue (mother), May (daughter), Sachiko (daughter), Jun (son)

ECHS collection, courtesy of the California Flower Market

Americans including the families who operated these nurseries were forcibly removed and incarcerated in internment camps. When they returned after the war, many found their greenhouses damaged or destroyed, and some families lost their farms entirely. Despite these hardships, many rebuilt and resumed operations.

Crop	Year	Acre	Total
Miscellaneous*	2025	44.14	\$7,926,000
	2024	40.80	\$10,683,000

*Christmas Trees, Cactus, Ground Covers, Propagative Materials, Ornamental Trees & Shrubs, Fruit Trees, Cut Flowers

MAJOR CHANGES TO K-9 PROGRAM



Scan QR code to watch a short video of Simone and Major's retirement and an introduction to Abigail and Mila.

Major and Simone Ackermann Celebrate Well-Earned Retirement



K-9 Major
Years of Service 2018-2026

For more than eight years Major, a nine-year-old Labrador Retriever, served as a dedicated working dog alongside his handler, Simone Ackermann. Together, they have intercepted over 40,000 parcels across eleven counties. Of these, 5,600 were unmarked shipments harboring more than 500 unwanted invasive pests hitchhiking on fruits and plants. Thanks to Major's vigilant work, numerous potential agricultural infestations throughout Northern California have been prevented.

Major was also an ambassador for agricultural protection through participating in public outreach events, school programs, and community demonstrations to help inspire residents to take part in protecting California. Beyond the numbers and accomplishments, Major earned a special place in the hearts of county staff and the public. His friendly personality, dedication to his work, and unwavering enthusiasm helped to make him an effective agricultural detection dog and beloved member of the Department of Agriculture / Weights & Measures.



Simone and Major showing off their skills

Mila and Abigail Despoy Join Quarantine Team



Abigail and Mila working together to sniff out plants

Mila, a 3 year-old black lab, is Contra Costa County's newest agricultural detection dog. Mila was born on February 25, 2022, here in California, and was hand-picked in 2024 by a former

agriculture detection dog handler who knew Mila had exactly what it takes to be a superstar sniffer. With her

boundless energy and eagerness to please, Mila quickly proved herself to be a natural fit for agricultural detection work.

Now serving as a detection dog, Mila thrives in her role, using her strong drive and enthusiasm to sniff out unmarked agricultural packages in parcel facilities. Her focus and determination make her a valuable member of the team. She loves having a job to do and is always ready to put her nose to work.



Left to Right: Supervisor Ken Carlson, Mila, Abigail, Supervisor Candace Andersen, Chair of the Board Diane Burgis, Commissioner Matthew Slattengren, Simone, Major, Supervisor John Gioia, and Supervisor Shanelle Scales-Preston

NOXIOUS WEED & VERTEBRATE CONTROL

Artichoke Thistle
(*Cynara cardunculus*)

Purple Starthistle
(*Centaurea calcitrapa*)

NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL

Contra Costa County has a long history of managing artichoke thistle (*Cynara cardunculus* L.), a noxious weed native to the Mediterranean region. The edible form of the artichoke thistle is the cultivated globe artichoke and is believed to have first grown in European monastery gardens during the Medieval period. When propagated from divisions of the perennial crown it reliably produces edible flower heads. However, when grown from seed, the plant readily reverts to its wild form and develops inch long spines around the flower head, making it unpalatable to livestock and humans alike.

California settlers introduced globe artichokes to their vegetable gardens in the 1800s, but the plant soon escaped cultivation through prolific seed production and dispersal by wind, animals, and human activity. By the mid 20th century, artichoke thistle had spread extensively through Contra Costa County's rangelands, reducing forage quality and displacing native grasses.

In the 70s, the Department of Agriculture launched its Noxious Weed Program specifically to combat invasive species such as artichoke thistle. At its peak, Contra Costa County was one of the most heavily infested counties in California, with more than 100,000 acres affected. Early program efforts included aerial herbicide applications by helicopter to reach large, inaccessible infestations. Over subsequent decades, sustained and coordinated management has led to dramatic reductions in plant density and spread.

Today, the Department continues to operate a robust noxious weed program focused on long term

suppression and early detection of artichoke thistle, as well as other invasive species such as purple starthistle and Mexican pokeweed. This work remains essential to protecting the county's agricultural resources, rangeland productivity, and native plant communities.

Pest	# Sites Surveyed	Control Method	Acres Treated	Acres Surveyed
Artichoke Thistle	1151	Chemical	196	66,427
Purple Starthistle	245	Chemical	40	8,636
Mexican Pokeweed	11	Manual	0.1	0.5

VERTEBRATE CONTROL

In Contra Costa County, the California ground squirrel is a highly destructive pest that causes millions of dollars in damage to local agriculture, suburban properties, and public infrastructure. When colonies reach a high threshold, their complex underground tunneling networks severely weaken the structural integrity of roadsides, building foundations, retaining walls, and landscaping. Beyond structural threats, these rodents damage local rangeland and crops, chew through plastic irrigation lines, and pose a public health risk as carriers of fleas that can transmit bubonic plague and tularemia.



FROM PLAGUE TO CROP PROTECTION: A HISTORIC BATTLE WITH GROUND SQUIRRELS

In the early 20th century, Contra Costa County faced an unexpected public health threat: bubonic plague. Although the disease is extremely rare and treatable today, ground squirrels can host rat fleas that transmit the plague bacterium *Yersinia pestis*. In 1900, San Francisco reported California's first human fatality from bubonic plague, traced to infected rats in the city.

Plague Spreads to Contra Costa County

State and federal officials soon grew concerned that the disease could spread into wild rodent populations across the Bay Area. Their fears were realized in 1903, when a blacksmith from Pacheco died after reportedly shooting ground squirrels only days before. Weeks later, a railroad worker in the San Ramon Valley also succumbed to the plague. At the time, it was common for railroad workers to hunt and eat ground squirrels. The presence of infected squirrels posed a dual threat: danger to human health and potential disruption to the region's agricultural economy. Contra Costa County's expansive farmlands offered ideal habitat for large squirrel colonies, heightening concerns among farmers and public health officials.

Growing Concern Over Ground Squirrels

Over the next couple of decades, bubonic plague spread throughout the surrounding regions and was a big concern for public health. While the rat is commonly associated with bubonic plague, squirrels are the most common disease host in western North America. In addition to being host to bubonic plague, ground squirrels are a major agricultural pest. In 1917, the federal government estimated that ground squirrels caused \$30 million in crop damage,

hindering efforts to produce grain crops to feed soldiers abroad during World War I.

California's "War on Squirrels"

In response to the growing threat, in 1918, California launched an aggressive and highly organized rodent control effort, often referred to as the state's "War on Squirrels." Proclaimed by California Governor William D. Stephens and the State Commission of Horticulture's Commissioner G. H. Hecke, the campaign aimed to significantly reduce ground squirrel populations, prevent crop damage, and stop the spread of the plague.

Legacy of Plague, Resilient Agricultural Pest in Modern Times

Despite these early eradication efforts, ground squirrel populations remain widespread and resilient across California today. Their adaptability and ability to thrive in rangelands, open fields, and agricultural areas continue to make them a familiar presence in Contra Costa County and beyond. Today, although plague persists at very low levels in wild rodent populations in the western United States, including California, it is rare, treatable, and closely monitored.



"Squirrel Week" as seen in the Lompoc Journal March 1918



California Ground Squirrels create extensive underground dens



California ground squirrels destroy nut and fruit trees, vineyards, alfalfa, and grains.

MR. FARMER
JOIN IN THE GREAT SPRING DRIVE
Now On
\$30,000,000 ANNUAL LOSS
Slay the Mother Squirrel
DURING BREEDING SEASON—RIGHT NOW
ASK Your County Agricultural Commissioner NOW
and 1944 State Commission of Horticulture

PEST DETECTION

Protecting Our Agriculture
One Trap at a Time

PEST DETECTION SPECIALISTS

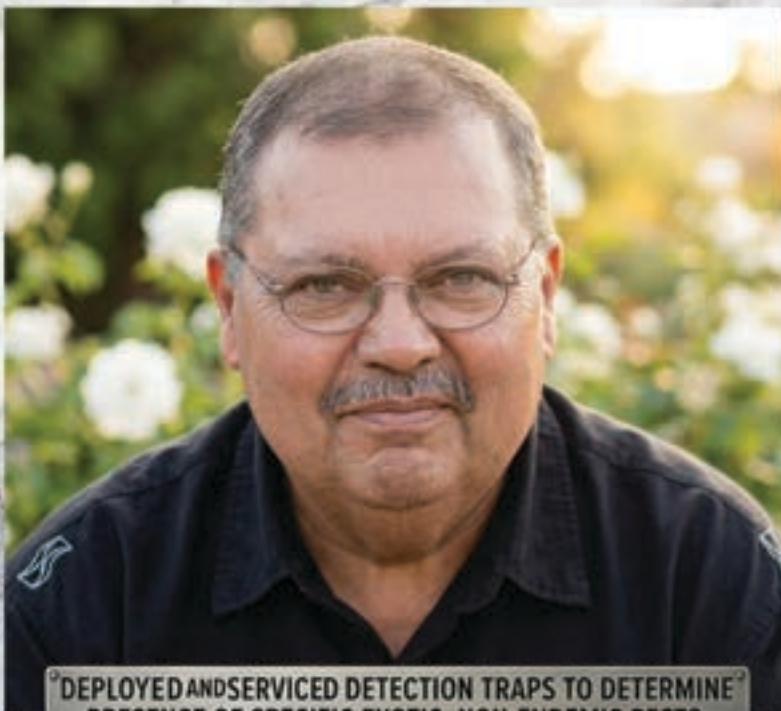
The Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture runs an insect trapping program to stop harmful invasive species of insects from damaging local crops and the environment. Our Pest Detection Specialists place over 6,000 insect traps in fruit trees throughout the county and service them on a set schedule. They inspect each trap looking for several invasive species of fruit flies. If an invasive insect is found, the team sets up a special zone to find and eradicate any others that may have invaded the county.

Pest Detection	Trap Type	2023		2024	
		# Traps	# Servings	# Traps	# Servings
Mediterranean Fruit Fly	Jackson	877	11,905	877	11,359
General Fruit Fly	McPhail	863	25,002	863	25,023
Oriental Fruit Fly	Jackson	877	12,602	877	11,814
Melon Fly	Jackson	877	8,177	877	8,151
Glassywinged Sharpshooter	Yellow Panel	883	9,577	883	9,577
Spongy Moth	Delta	579	3,345	579	3,118
Japanese Beetle	Funnel	579	3,069	59	2,725
Asian Citrus Psyllid	Yellow Panel	865	2,508	865	4,489
European Grapevine Moth	Delta	99	1,243	99	1,022
Western Cherry Fruit Fly	Yellow Panel	137	1,225	137	503

The Pest Detection Specialists work hard to protect our local agriculture from invasive species of insects like the Oriental Fruit Fly, Mediterranean Fruit Fly, Mexican Fruit Fly, and the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter.

IN REMEMBRANCE: RICK MATA

Dedicated Service to Contra Costa County: 1985 - 2025



DEPLOYED AND SERVICED DETECTION TRAPS TO DETERMINE PRESENCE OF SPECIFIC EXOTIC, NON-ENDEMIC PESTS.

Rick Mata was the longest-tenured Pest Detection Specialist in the history of Contra Costa County. As the county's very first Lead Pest Detection Specialist, he shaped the department's legacy by training multiple generations of trappers. His profound impact is reflected in the leadership he mentored.

Beyond his professional expertise, Rick was defined by his deep care for others. No matter the challenges he faced personally, he always prioritized helping those around him navigate their own struggles. He was also a steadfast supporter of Local 1, serving as a familiar, welcoming face at union meetings and the annual picnic. The Department is fundamentally changed without Rick Mata. His legacy lives on in our shared history and fondest memories.

COLLECT ALL 20

INVASIVE SPECIES

TRADING CARDS

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION

Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture produced trading cards which provide visual references and information for twenty of the most invasive and noxious species we are determined to keep out of California. We hand them out at educational events. These examples teach the youth what to look for and

and why we need to prevent these pests from entering California. These cards are available at our office. They are a great way to learn about what plants and insects we are looking for and a beautiful way to educate the public. If you have any questions about these species or want a set, please contact our office.





The importance of a standardized system of weights and measures has been recognized by civilizations throughout history as a stabilizing force in commerce. These systems have long aimed to ensure fair, accurate, and trustworthy transactions between buyers



and sellers. In California, efforts to establish consistent standards went through a tumultuous period from statehood in

1850 until 1913, when the Legislature created a unified statewide system overseen by the Office of the State Superintendent of Weights and Measures.

County officials became actively involved in this statewide system to help to verify that transactions in each County would be consistent throughout the state. Today, the Division of Measurement Standards operates within the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Contra Costa County's Weights and Measures officials have been helping to maintain a fair and equitable marketplace for more than a century.

Weights & Measures	2024	2025
Device Type	Number Inspected	Number Inspected
Vehicle Fuel Station Meters	8382	8764
Electric Submeters	6756	6313
Water Meters and Submeters	13100	14030
Vapor/LPG Meters and Submeters	3779	3367
Taxi Meters	94	75
Hydrogen Meters	6	6
EVSE	556	593
Other Measuring Devices		586
Petroleum Gas Stations (Labeling)	2024	2025
Light Capacity Retail Scales	2224	2344
Heavy Capacity Retail Scales	105	88
Vehicle/Railway Scales	102	98
Prescription/Jewelers Scales	33	36
Livestock/Animal Scales	14	14
Other Weighing Devices	2	2
Type	Tested	Tested
Retail Price Verification	5305	5528
Weighmaster	10	14
Investigations (Consumer Complaints)	18	60



FRESH • LOCAL • ORGANIC

DIRECT MARKETING

CALIFORNIA FARMERS MARKETS

Farmers' markets have been an integral part of Contra Costa County for more than a century. This 1921 photograph captures farmers and customers gathering in Pleasant Hill at a local market, highlighting the long-standing tradition of direct connection between growers and the community. These markets allow people to meet the individuals who produce their food, learn how it is grown, and experience the changing seasons through what is in harvest. With its rich soil and hardworking farming families, Contra Costa County continues to offer some of the freshest and most flavorful food in the region.



Use the QR code to access a video about a local bee keeper and the County's Farmers Markets.



CONTRA COSTA FARMERS' MARKETS

SATURDAY

Brentwood Farmers' Market	8am - 12pm	YEAR ROUND
Danville Farmers' Market	9am - 1pm	YEAR ROUND
Diablo Valley CFM	9am - 1pm	YEAR ROUND
Orinda Saturday Farmers' Market	9am - 1pm	YEAR ROUND
Pineole Farmers' Market	9am - 1pm	YEAR ROUND
San Ramon Farmers' Market	9am - 1pm	YEAR ROUND

SUNDAY

Alamo CFM	9am - 2pm	YEAR ROUND
Kensington Farmers' Market	9am - 2pm	YEAR ROUND
Martinez Farmers' Market	9am - 1pm	SEASONAL
Moraga CFM	9am - 1pm	YEAR ROUND
Richmond Marina Certified Farmers' Market	10am - 2pm	YEAR ROUND
Walnut Creek Sunday Farmers' Market	9am - 1pm	YEAR ROUND
Rivertown Certified Farmers' Market	9am - 1pm	SEASONAL

TUESDAY

Concord Tuesday Farmers' Market	10am - 2pm	YEAR ROUND
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WEDNESDAY

Kaiser Walnut Creek Farmers' Market	9:30am - 2pm	YEAR ROUND
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THURSDAY

Kaiser Richmond Farmer's Market	9:30am - 1:30pm	YEAR ROUND
Concord Thursday Farmers' Market	4-8 pm	SEASONAL
Kaiser Antioch Farmers' Market	9:30am - 1:30pm	SEASONAL

FRIDAY

Richmond Certified Farmers' Market Civil Center	7am - 5pm	YEAR ROUND
Rossmore CFM	9:30am - 1pm	SEASONAL



Here, an Agricultural Inspector ensures that all produce is grown in California. A careful review of the Certified Producer Certificate confirms the specific commodities on display match what the farmer is legally authorized to sell.

Building the Community's Gathering Place

Just four years later, in 1922, the organization completed construction on the meeting hall. The land was donated by town founder George W. Knight. More than a meeting space, the building quickly became the social and civic heart of the community. A record crowd of over 1,000 people from throughout East Contra Costa County attended the dedication on February 3, 1922.

For over a century, the hall has hosted:

- Farm meetings and agricultural education events;
- School graduations and youth programs;
- Weddings and holiday celebrations;
- Political gatherings and public forums;
- Church services and community plays;
- Emergency refuge during floods



The Farm Bureau Building Upon Completion

A Reflection of Agricultural Cooperation

The early 1900s marked the transition from dry farming to irrigated production after the creation of the Knightsen Irrigation District in 1920, allowing thousands of acres to be farmed more intensively and reliably. During this era, farmers increasingly relied on shared knowledge of pest control practices, water management strategies, and cooperative marketing. The Knightsen Farm Bureau Building was where the community gathered to share this information. The building therefore represents more than history; it symbolizes the cooperative spirit



The Farm Bureau Building Today

that enabled East County agriculture to prosper. Through decades of change, the Knightsen Farm Bureau Building has endured and continues to serve the community.

More Than a Building

For the Contra Costa County agricultural community, the Knightsen Farm Bureau Building represents continuity. It's a link between past and present farmers who share the same land, water, and land stewardship responsibilities. For over 100 years, the Knightsen Farm Bureau Building has been where those connections happen. It is not just a historic hall. It is a record of the people who built Contra Costa County agriculture together.



SUPPORTING OUR FARMERS PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT & SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
DIVISION OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES



Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture
2380 Bisso Lane, Suite A, Concord, CA 94520
(925) 608-6600

3020 Second Street, Knightsen, CA 94548
(925) 427-8610

John Sirenzell photographed in 1885 on his sprawling ranch in the Alhambra Valley Martinez, California.