



# Fresno County Farm Bureau PRESS KIT

## FCFB History

*“Farm Bureaus are a natural outgrowth of the desire of American farmers to do two things. First to unite together for mutual self-help and cooperation along any line that may be needed, and second, to get into close and intimate touch with those institutions of public enterprise and of the government which have accumulated the information necessary to make farm life more prosperous.”*

*B.H. Crocheron, UC Berkeley Circular No. 209, March 1919*

The Fresno County Farm Bureau (FCFB) is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1917 to promote and protect agriculture.

Inspired by a desire among farmers nationwide to unite, first mention of a Farm Bureau organization appeared in 1910 in the state of New York. Local county Farm Bureaus were established in various areas of the country over the next few years, and the first statewide Farm Bureau organization was established in Missouri in 1915. On October 23, 1919, county Farm Bureaus in California followed Missouri’s lead and formed the California Farm Bureau Federation. The following month, on November 12-13, 1919, the newly formed California Farm Bureau Federation joined with several other state organizations to form the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which set up the Agriculture Extension Service, stipulated that before a county could obtain farm advisor services, it had to form a general farm organization through which the Extension Service could disseminate information and promote better farming methods. In the fall of 1917, George Fever, J.A. Poytress, Sam Heisinger, H.W. Wrightson and Charles Parlier were among a group of farmers that met with Leroy Smith, the first Extension Service farm advisor assigned to Fresno County, to lay the groundwork for a Fresno County Farm Bureau organization.

Fresno County Farm Bureau, like many other County Farm Bureau organizations, was originally set up in joint offices with the University of California Agriculture Extension Service. George Fever, Jr. of Fowler, California, was elected FCFB’s first president; membership fees were \$1.

FCFB membership rose and fell in the pre-World War II days, dropping to 350 during the depression. The largest growth in membership occurred between 1945 and 1967 (FCFB’s 50th anniversary) when it rose from 1,000 to 4,500 members. Today, the Fresno County Farm Bureau represents more than 4,600 members.

In the early 1960s, Fresno County bumped Los Angeles County out of first place in total production value of agriculture commodities and held the No. 1 position for approximately 40 years. In 2009, Fresno County’s total gross production value of agricultural commodities was more than \$5.3 billion, the third consecutive year it topped the \$5 billion mark.

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### Fresno County Top 10 Crops-2010



1. Grapes  
\$820.3 million



6. Cattle & Calves  
\$291.88 million



2. Almonds  
\$619 million



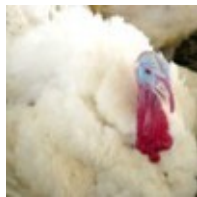
7. Garlic  
\$264.95 million



3. Tomatoes  
\$583.28 million



8. Pistachios  
\$222.48 million



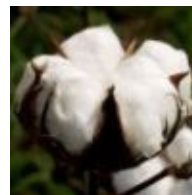
4. Poultry  
\$486.16 million



9. Oranges  
\$207.09 million



5. Milk  
\$393.27 million



10. Cotton  
\$150.56 million

Source: Fresno County Department of Agriculture 2010 Agricultural Crop and Livestock Report



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### Overview of California & Fresno County Ag

#### California Agriculture:

- California is leading farm state in the union — \$36.2 Billion in 2008.
- California is the fifth largest supplier of food and farm commodities in the World, producing more than 400 commercial crops.
- For more than 50 years, California has been the number one agricultural producer and exporter. The state set a record in agricultural exports, with nearly \$12.9 billion in 2008. California sells agricultural products to more than 190 countries, but three destinations — Canada, the European Union and Japan — accounted for more than 60 percent of the total.
- Many specialty crops are almost solely produced in California: artichokes, almonds, figs, kiwifruit, nectarines, olives, pistachios, dried plums (prunes), raisins, pomegranates, and walnuts.
- California accounts for about 46 percent of the national production of fruits and nuts and about 61 percent of the value for these commodities.
- California has 81,500 farms and ranches; less than four percent of the nation's total. Yet, the Golden State's agricultural production represents 11.2 percent of the nation's total value.
- In 2008, California land in farms and ranches totaled 25.4 million acres. The average farm size in the state is 312 acres, compared to the U.S. average of 418 acres.
- California's top 20 crops and livestock commodities account for about 82 percent of the state's cash farm receipts. Eleven commodities now exceed \$1 billion in value. Milk remained the No. one commodity, followed by grapes and nursery and greenhouse products.

#### California's Top 20 Commodities, 2008

*(in billions)*

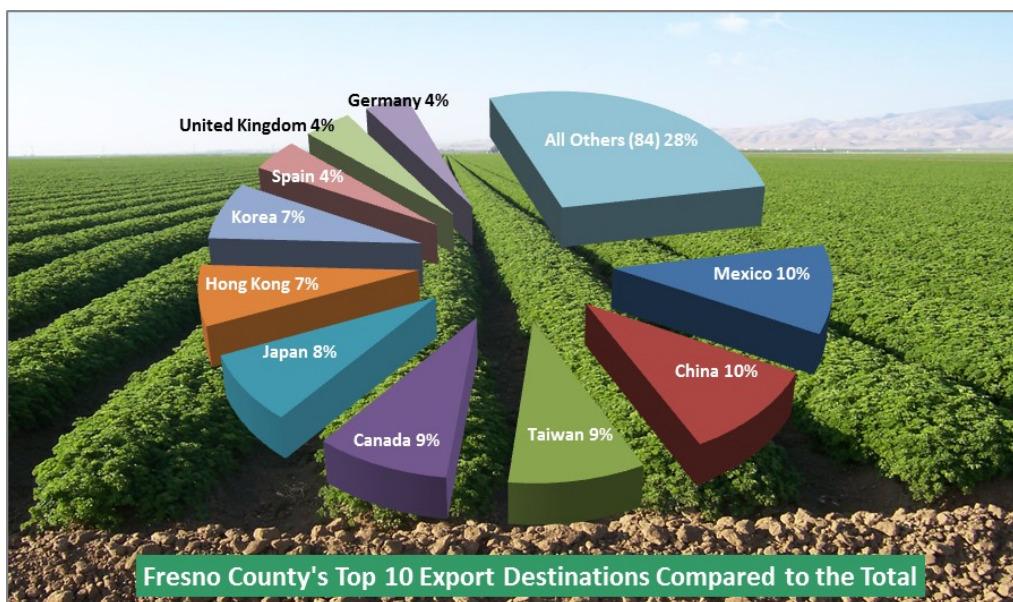
|                      |        |                  |         |
|----------------------|--------|------------------|---------|
| 1. Milk and Cream    | \$6.92 | 11. Floriculture | \$1.01  |
| 2. Grapes            | \$2.93 | 12. Chickens     | \$0.787 |
| 3. Almonds           | \$2.34 | 13. Broccoli     | \$0.663 |
| 4. Nursery           | \$2.27 | 14. Oranges      | \$0.608 |
| 5. Cattle and Calves | \$1.82 | 15. Pistachios   | \$0.569 |
| 6. Hay               | \$1.80 | 16. Walnuts      | \$0.558 |
| 7. Lettuce           | \$1.58 | 17. Carrots      | \$0.517 |
| 8. Strawberries      | \$1.57 | 18. Lemons       | \$0.473 |
| 9. Tomatoes          | \$1.32 | 19. Chicken Eggs | \$0.440 |
| 10. Rice             | \$1.18 | 20. Celery       | \$0.354 |

Source: CA Department of Food and Agriculture,  
UC Agricultural Issues Center

## Fresno County Agriculture:

- Fresno County is the number one agricultural county in the nation. Fresno County produces more than 400 commercial crops, worth more than \$5.374 billion in 2009.
- Every \$1 produced on the farm generates more than \$3.50 in the local and regional economy.
- Fresno County's agricultural productivity alone outpaces state totals of 22 of the 50 states.
- Fresno County has more than 6,000 farms. The average farm size is 269 acres. Family farms range in size from less than 10-acres to 25,000 acres.
- Major issues for Fresno County farmers are water supply and quality issues; immigration reform and a guest worker program; air quality regulations; rural crime prevention; energy costs; and land use planning.
- Fresno County is the leading farm county in the nation because of its diversity:
  1. Availability of a diverse water supply – Kings and San Joaquin Rivers, and Delta-Mendota Canal/California Aqueduct surface water supplies conjunctively used with an adequate groundwater aquifer;
  2. Fertile and various soil types allowing 350 different crops to grow here – west side heavier clay soils, east side sandier soils.
  3. Long growing season – abundant sunshine and mild temperatures—low temps in 40s-50s during winter, and 90s to 100s in summer.
  4. Availability of an adequate work force. One out of every five jobs in the Central Valley is related to agriculture, from farm workers to salespersons.

*(Sources: Fresno County Department of Agriculture 2010 Agricultural Crop and Livestock Report, United States Department of Agriculture Census 2007)*





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### Harvest Calendar

#### FRUITS AND NUTS:

|              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Almonds      | Aug.—Sept.         |
| Apples       | mid-Aug/Oct.       |
| Apricots     | mid-May/July       |
| Cherries     | June               |
| Figs         | June/Oct.          |
| Grapes       | mid-July-Oct.      |
| Kiwi         | Nov.               |
| Lemons       | Nov.—Dec.          |
| Oranges      |                    |
| Navel        | Nov./mid-May       |
| Valencia     | April—July         |
| Nectarines   | May—Sept.          |
| Peaches      | mid-May/mid-Sept.  |
| Persimmons   | Oct.—Nov.          |
| Pistachios   | Sept.—Nov.         |
| Plums        | May—Aug.           |
| Pomegranates | Oct.—Nov.          |
| Raisins      | Late-Aug./Sept.    |
| Walnuts      | Mid-Sept./mid-Nov. |
| Wine Grapes  | Aug.—Nov.          |

#### DAIRY

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| Milk | Daily |
|------|-------|

#### VEGETABLES, BERRIES AND MELONS:

|                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Asparagus                       | mid-Feb.—April                |
| Boysenberries                   | mid-May-mid-June              |
| Broccoli, Cabbage & Cauliflower | April-June/mid-Sept.-Dec.     |
| Carrots                         | March-June/Aug.—Sept.         |
| Sweet Corn                      | mid-May/mid-Oct.              |
| Lettuce                         | Mar./April & mid-Oct./Nov.    |
| Melons                          | June/mid-Oct.                 |
| Onions                          | Aug.—Oct.                     |
| Peas, Limas, Snap Beans         | Feb.—April/Aug.—mid-Oct.      |
| Pumpkins                        | Oct.                          |
| Strawberries                    | May—Sept.                     |
| Tomatoes                        | May-Sept.                     |
| Fresh                           | June/mid-Aug & Sept./mid-Nov. |
| Canned                          | mid-July/mid-Nov.             |

#### FIELD CROPS:

|                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Alfalfa and Hay      | mid-April/Sept. |
| Clover Seed          | mid-Sept./Oct.  |
| Dry Beans            | Mid-Sept.—Oct.  |
| Corn (grain, silage) | Sept.—Oct.      |
| Cotton               | Oct.—Dec.       |
| Potatoes             | June—Dec.       |
| Rice                 | Sept.—Oct.      |
| Safflower            | July—Aug.       |
| Sorghums (grain)     | Sept.—Oct.      |
| Sugar Beets          | mid-July/Oct.   |
| Wheat, Oats, Barely  | May—mid-Aug.    |



Fresno County  
**Farm Bureau**

**P R E S S   K I T**

**H a r v e s t   C a l e n d a r**

FRUIT AND NUTS: