

COUNTY OF VENTURA
AGRICULTURAL CROP REPORT
2009



INVASIVE THREAT

**Office of the
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER**

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

Henry S. Gonzales

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(an artistic representation, not depicting actual disease symptoms)



Office of
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER

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Agricultural Commissioner
Henry S. Gonzales

Chief Deputy
Susan L. Johnson

July 27, 2010

TO: The Honorable Board of Supervisors of Ventura County

**Steve Bennett, 1st District,
Linda Parks, 2nd District
Kathy Long, 3rd District, Chair
Peter C. Foy, 4th District
John C. Zaragoza, 5th District
and
A.G. Kawamura, Secretary
California Department of Food & Agriculture**

Pursuant to Section 2279 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, I am honored to submit the 2009 Ventura County Agricultural Report. The estimated gross value for Ventura County agriculture for calendar year 2009 is \$1,623,857,000. This is an overall increase of 0.7% from 2008.

Strawberries are, once again, the leading commodity, with a value of \$515,406,000. This is an increase of 24% over 2008. This very healthy increase is attributed to an increase in acres, production, and value. Nursery stock remained the second leading crop, with a value of \$191,300,000. This is a decrease of 36% from 2008. This large decrease is due to reductions in acreage, production, and value. Celery is our new third leading crop, with an estimated worth of \$169,488,000. This is an increase of 5% over 2008, which is due primarily to an increase in production and acreage. Raspberries moved up again this year, this time to fourth place, with an increase in value to \$155,327,000. This 46% increase over 2008 is attributed to a rise in acreage, production, and value. Lemons came in at fifth in value at \$128,784,000. This 46% drop in overall value over 2008 is due to drops in acreage and production, but mostly due to a reduction in value. Tomatoes stayed in sixth place, while increasing 59% to \$127,130,000, mostly from increases in production and value. Peppers moved up to seventh place based on an increase in value to \$45,902,000. This represents a 33% increase over 2008. Avocados dropped to eighth place with a 32% decrease to \$43,677,000, due to a decrease in production. Other crops experienced similar increases and decreases, respectively.

Overall, 2009 was another remarkable year for agriculture in Ventura County, especially when considering the continued downturn in the economy. This report reflects gross values only and does not represent the net return to farmers nor the multiplier effect on the surrounding economy. Agriculture continues to be a mainstay for Ventura County's economy and should remain so for the foreseeable future.

Special thanks go to Kerry DuFrain for compiling the data in this report and to industry members that provided her with their individual information. Special recognition goes to Korinne Bell for the article, *Invasive Pest Threat*.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry S. Gonzales
Agricultural Commissioner
County of Ventura

2009 Ventura County Crop Report

INVASIVE PEST THREAT

Agriculture has been the lifeblood of Ventura County since the 1800's and remains today as an essential part of our economy and way of life. Located 60 miles from a major metropolitan area, Ventura County is home to nearly 1 million people. The county spans over 1,800 square miles and is unique in that it boasts of nearly one acre of irrigated farmland for every acre of city. Although the threat of invasive pests has been an issue throughout Ventura County's dynamic agricultural history, due to the county's increasingly mobile population, the threat has become ever more apparent. Invasive species are non-native plant, animal, insect, and disease pests that present many detrimental effects. Invasive species can cause huge economic losses for both cropland and rangeland; degrade native habitat through increased competition for natural resources, such as soil and water; increase the need for pesticide use; and generally reduce the biological, recreational, and economic value of the land. Invasive pests are not just a problem for farms, ranches, and wild land areas; they can devastate even the smallest of urban landscapes, plantings, and gardens.

Currently, Ventura County is faced with several invasive pests, some of which are well established, and as their population increases, so does the damage to natural resources, crops, and urban landscapes. One such example is *Arundo donax*: a giant bamboo-like grass which infests waterways, dominates the landscape, crowds out native species, and uses large amounts of water; thereby decreasing the availability of natural resources and biological diversity. Other invasive pests, though not yet established in the county, have the potential to cause tremendous damage if populations are allowed to become established. The Gypsy Moth is a hitch-hiking moth from the Northeastern United States, which feeds on and defoliates large numbers of plant and tree species. It has been found in an isolated area of the county and is currently under strict monitoring. If allowed to become established, the Gypsy Moth would be a major threat to our native California Oak Trees, as well as over 500 other plant species.

Other invasive pests have not yet been found in the county but have been found in adjacent counties. Perhaps the most frightening of these species is a tiny insect pest known as the Asian citrus psyllid. This aphid-like insect feeds on the leaves and stems of all citrus and citrus-related plants, but the real threat lies in that fact that it spreads a deadly and incurable bacterial disease known as the Huanglongbing. Once infected with the disease, trees will produce misshapen, bitter, and inedible fruit, and will eventually die. It has severely damaged the citrus in areas such as Asia, India, South and Central America, and the state of Florida. Over 200,000 acres of citrus has been lost in Florida alone. Because of the rapid spread of this incurable disease, it is now considered by many to be the most dangerous citrus disease in the world, and the insect responsible is right at our backdoor; with findings reported in neighboring Los Angeles County.

(continued on inside cover)

AGRICULTURAL CROP REPORT RECAPITULATION AND INDEX 2008 – 2009

CROP GROUPING	YEAR	\$ VALUE ¹
1. FRUIT AND NUT CROPS Page #4	2009	\$867,759,000
	2008	823,464,000
2. VEGETABLE CROPS Page #5-6	2009	509,248,000
	2008	427,742,000
3. NURSERY STOCK ² Page #7	2009	191,300,000
	2008	298,690,000
4. CUT FLOWERS Page #8	2009	42,763,000
	2008	51,297,000
5. FIELD CROPS Page #8	2009	2,313,000
	2008	2,580,000
6. LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY Page #9	2009	7,494,000
	2008	6,853,000
7. APIARY PRODUCTS Page #9	2009	698,000
	2008	463,000
8. TIMBER Page #9	2009	9,000
	2008	10,000
9. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE Page #10	2009	2,273,000
	2008	2,148,000
GRAND TOTAL	2009	\$1,623,857,000
	2008	1,613,247,000

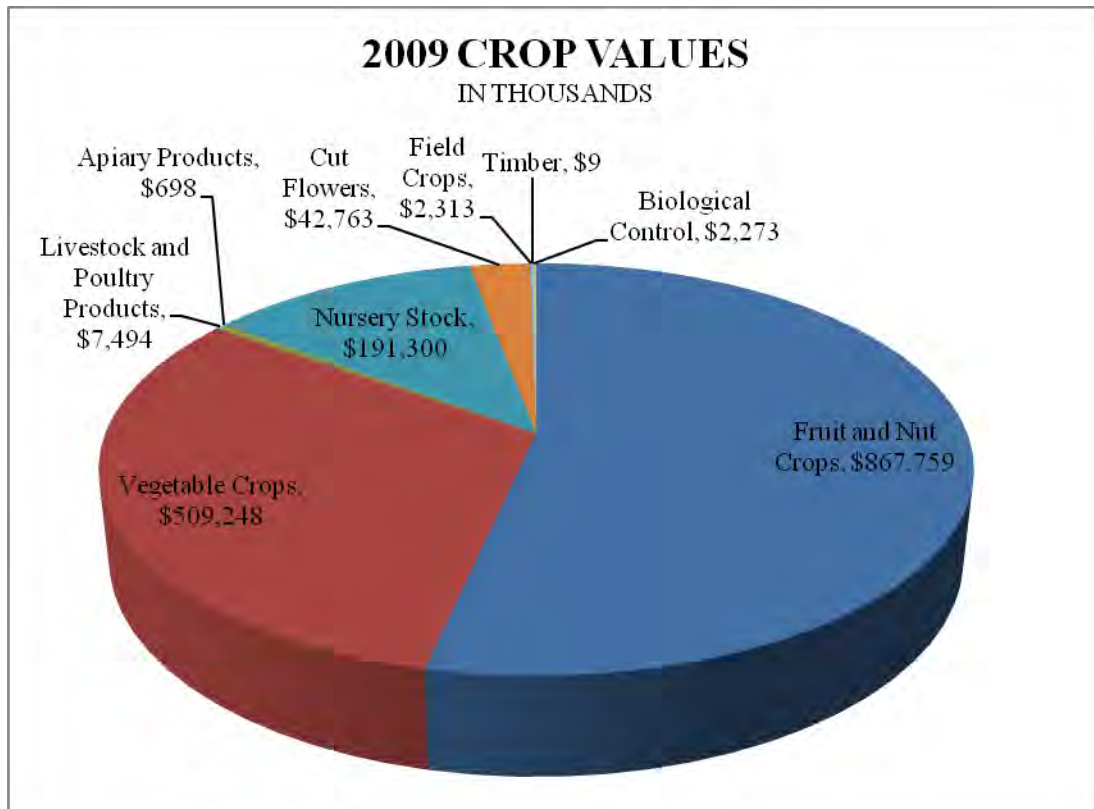
¹ Figures are rounded off to nearest \$1000

² Includes Cut Christmas Trees

FIVE YEAR COMPARISON

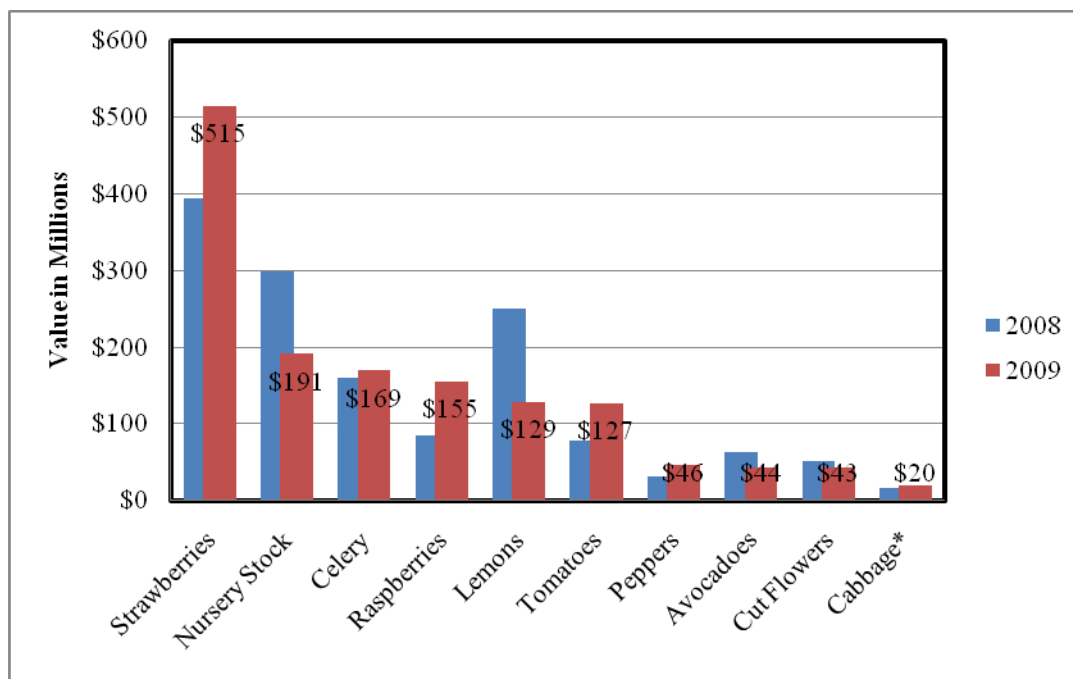
VENTURA COUNTY CROP GROUPING VALUES

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Fruit and Nut Crops	652,777,000	755,700,000	752,138,000	823,464,000	\$867,759,000
Vegetable Crops	330,269,000	426,659,000	442,220,000	427,742,000	509,248,000
Livestock and Poultry Products	2,150,000	4,775,000	9,006,000	6,853,000	7,494,000
Apiary Products	509,000	431,000	640,000	463,000	698,000
Nursery Stock	213,661,000	263,890,000	292,989,000	298,690,000	191,300,000
Cut Flowers	51,751,000	52,456,000	48,646,000	51,297,000	42,763,000
Field Crops	1,193,000	1,677,000	1,624,000	2,580,000	2,313,000
Timber	62,000	16,000	17,000	10,000	9,000
Biological Control	1,999,000	2,570,000	2,718,000	2,148,000	2,273,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,225,109,000	\$1,508,174,000	\$1,549,988,000	\$1,613,247,000	\$1,623,857,000



TEN LEADING CROPS FOR 2009

RANK	CROP	VALUE
1 st	Strawberries	\$515,406,000
2 nd	Nursery Stock	191,300,000
3 rd	Celery	169,488,000
4 th	Raspberries	155,327,000
5 th	Lemons	128,784,000
6 th	Tomatoes	127,130,000
7 th	Peppers	45,902,000
8 th	Avocados	43,677,000
9 th	Cut Flowers	42,763,000
10 th	Cabbage	20,053,000



*10th Leading Crop for 2008 was Valencia Oranges valued at \$18,227,000

OTHER MILLION DOLLAR CROPS

Greens	16,701,000	Beans (all)	4,823,000
Cilantro	11,416,000	Kale	4,156,000
Veg. Transplants*	11,366,000	Parsley	3,968,000
Valencia Oranges	11,262,000	Orchids*	3,785,000
Spinach	10,986,000	Broccoli	3,453,000
Lettuce	10,186,000	Carrots	3,446,000
Cucumber	7,574,000	Beet	3,153,000
Livestock	7,494,000	Tangerines	2,967,000
Radishes	5,517,000	Poinsettia*	2,654,000
Oriental Vegetables	5,237,000	Onions (all)	2,059,000

* Included in Nursery Stock total above

On the web: www.ventura.org

FRUIT AND NUT CROPS ACREAGE, PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-2009

CROP	YEAR	PRODUCTION			\$ VALUE		
		HARVESTED ACREAGE	PER ACRE	TOTAL	UNIT	PER UNIT	TOTAL
AVOCADOS							
	2009	17,665	0.99	17,483	Tons	\$2,498.26	\$43,677,000
	2008	17,608	1.69	29,701	Tons	2,133.80	63,376,000
GRAPEFRUIT							
	2009	100	8.90	890	“	502.25	447,000
	2008	106	8.49	900	“	273.33	246,000
LEMONS							
	2009	17,703	16.61	293,881	“	438.22	128,784,000
	2008	18,541	16.82	311,874	“	803.89	250,713,000
ORANGES (Navel)							
	2009	316	11.88	3,754	“	372.67	1,399,000
	2008	450	11.00	4,949	“	369.77	1,830,000
ORANGES (Valencia)							
	2009	3,402	8.83	30,015	“	375.22	11,262,000
	2008	4,464	15.44	68,946	“	264.37	18,227,000
RASPBERRIES							
	2009	2,838	9.10	25,800	“	6,020.43	155,327,000
	2008	2,370	6.42	15,212	“	5,561.00	84,594,000
STRAWBERRIES							
Total	2009	11,766	30.37	357,216	“	1,442.85	515,406,000
	2008	11,721	25.01	293,087	“	1,342.63	393,507,000
Fresh	2009			277,913	“	1,685.50	468,422,000
	2008			214,963	“	1,582.98	340,282,000
Processed	2009			79,303	“	592.37	46,984,000
	2008			78,124	“	681.29	53,225,000
TANGERINES & TANGELOS							
	2009	477	4.44	2,114	“	1,403.51	2,967,000
	2008	461	3.76	1,732	“	1,429.56	2,476,000
MISC. FRUITS AND NUTS³							
	2009	842			“		8,490,000
	2008	936			“		8,495,000
TOTAL							
	2009	55,109					\$867,759,000
	2008	56,657					823,464,000

³ MISC. FRUITS AND NUTS include Apples, Apricots, Asian Pears, Bushberries, Cherimoya, Grapes, Guavas, Kiwi, Limes, Olives, Persimmons, Macadamias, Walnuts; and miscellaneous citrus, deciduous, and subtropical fruit

VEGETABLE CROPS ACREAGE, PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-2009

CROP	YEAR	PRODUCTION			UNIT	\$ VALUE	
		HARVESTED ACREAGE	PER ACRE	TOTAL		PER UNIT	TOTAL
BEANS							
Green and Dry Limas,	2009	1,842	2.60	4,788	Tons	\$1,007.31	\$4,823,000
Green Snap	2008	1,756	2.94	5,167	“	887.17	4,584,000
BEETS	2009	385	14.98	5,765	“	546.93	3,153,000
	2008	390	11.53	4,495	“	884.94	3,978,000
BROCCOLI							
Fresh and	2009	615	8.63	5,303	“	651.15	3,453,000
Processed	2008	1,504	7.33	11,031	“	602.21	6,643,000
CABBAGE	2009	3,516	22.00	77,335	“	259.31	20,053,000
	2008	2,857	26.94	76,970	“	216.02	16,627,000
CARROTS	2009	508	20.54	10,430	“	330.40	3,446,000
	2008	408	17.86	7,288	“	418.91	3,053,000
CELERY	2009	11,138	37.67	419,466	“	404.06	169,488,000
	2008	11,918	34.96	416,661	“	385.57	160,650,000
CILANTRO	2009	2,988	8.53	25,484	“	447.97	11,416,000
	2008	3,702	8.58	31,753	“	396.78	12,599,000
CUCUMBERS ⁴	2009	108	58.99	6,370	“	1,189.02	7,574,000
	2008	79	23.85	1,884	“	1,614.65	3,042,000
GREENS ⁵	2009	1,255	6.30	7,896	“	2,115.13	16,701,000
	2008	1,073	7.05	7,560	“	2,406.22	18,191,000
KALE	2009	307	15.40	4,727	“	879.21	4,156,000
	2008	393	12.35	4,853	“	865.24	4,199,000
LETTUCE	2009	1,818	10.58	19,217	“	530.06	10,186,000
Total	2008	1,573	11.25	17,693	“	506.53	8,962,000
Head	2009	60	11.59	695	“	414.39	288,000
	2008	123	7.99	983	“	661.24	650,000
Romaine	2009	912	12.40	11,303	“	404.68	4,574,000
	2008	649	13.90	9,024	“	356.38	3,216,000
Leaf	2009	846	8.54	7,219	“	737.50	5,324,000
	2008	801	9.60	7,686	“	663.02	5,096,000

⁴ Includes hydroponics

⁵ Includes: chard, collard, mustard, turnip and watercress.

VEGETABLE CROPS ACREAGE, PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-2009

CROP	YEAR	PRODUCTION			\$ VALUE		
		HARVESTED ACREAGE	PER ACRE	TOTAL	UNIT	PER UNIT	TOTAL
ONIONS	2009	117	11.51	1,346	Tons	\$1529.72	\$2,059,000
Green & Dry	2008	339	17.68	5,992	Tons	478.81	2,869,000
ORIENTAL VEG.	2009	667	11.87	7,915	“	661.66	5,237,000
	2008	616	11.30	6,961	“	629.22	4,380,000
PARSLEY	2009	626	14.83	9,282	“	427.50	3,968,000
	2008	657	12.13	7,967	“	629.22	5,013,000
PEPPERS							
Bell and	2009	3,134	20.05	62,891	“	729.87	45,902,000
Chili	2008	2,767	19.48	53,906	“	570.86	30,773,000
PUMPKIN	2009	152	13.73	2,086	“	230.59	481,000
	2008	102	14.47	1,476	“	256.78	379,000
RADISHES	2009	1,141	12.63	14,406	“	382.97	5,517,000
	2008	1,265	13.53	17,115	“	348.35	5,962,000
SPINACH	2009	1,744	7.02	12,237	“	897.77	10,986,000
	2008	1,239	8.35	10,350	“	918.26	9,504,000
SWEET CORN	2009	883	8.31	7,331	“	231.90	1,700,000
	2008	197	6.13	1,207	“	367.85	444,000
TOMATOES ⁶	2009	1,790	57.51	102,938	“	1,235.02	127,130,000
	2008	1,853	46.21	85,629	“	905.13	77,505,000
VEGETABLES, MISC. ⁷	2009	1,603					51,819,000
Field,	2008	1,353					48,385,000
Indoor, and Processed							
TOTAL	2009	36,337					\$509,248,000
	2008	36,041					427,742,000

⁶ Includes hydroponics

⁷ Includes: artichokes, arugula, asparagus, baby vegetables, cauliflower, eggplant, endive, garlic, gourds, herbs, kohlrabi, leeks, melons, mushrooms, peas, radicchio, sprouts, squash, tomatillos, and turnips.

NURSERY STOCK PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-2009

ITEM	YEAR	PRODUCTION	PRODUCTION AREA		Per Unit	TOTAL	
			Greenhouse Square Feet	Field Acres			
NURSERY STOCK							
	2009			7,067,258	3,989	\$191,300,000	
	2008			6,662,955	4,432	298,690,000	
Fruit and Nut Trees	2009	728,530 Trees		1,800	119	14.80	10,782,000
	2008	908,377 Trees		18,900	209	17.16	15,588,000
Potted Plants	2009	2,869,680 Pots		3,412,354	25	4.21	12,090,000
	2008	2,328,660 Pots		2,007,743	24	4.14	9,644,000
Propagative Mat	2009	50,060,321 Cuttings		592,780	15	.12	6,145,000
	2008	46,426,920 Cuttings		748,904	18	.12	5,541,000
Herb. Perennials	2009	5,468,188 Containers		80,484	236	3.44	18,803,000
	2008	9,161,367 Containers		564,710	145	2.19	20,019,000
Woody Orn.*	2009	9,353,841 Tree/Shrubs		1,175,180	2,329	10.06	94,057,000
	2008	12,829,087 Tree/Shrubs		831,900	2,614	14.32	183,690,000
Bed. Plants	2009	23,615,734 Flats		590,480	1,249	1.61	38,057,000
Gr. Cover & Turf	2008	30,244,344 Flats		635,336	1,414	1.78	53,823,000
Veg. Transplants	2009	3,695,581 Flats		1,214,180	16	3.08	11,366,000
	2008	3,839,084 Flats		1,855,462	8	2.71	10,385,000
TOTAL	2009						\$191,300,000
	2008						298,690,000

*Includes cut Christmas Trees

CUT FLOWERS PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-2009

ITEM	YEAR	ACRES	PRODUCTION	UNIT	TOTAL \$ VALUE
FLOWER BLOOMS & STEMS	2009	55	13,641,066	Blooms	\$4,072,000
	2008	40	12,914,880	Blooms	3,063,000
CUT GREENS & DRIED FLOWERS	2009	86	459,875	Bunches	1,722,000
	2008	167	640,361	Bunches	1,745,000
FLOWER BUNCHES Total	2009	740	13,187,789	Bunches	36,969,000
	2008	767	14,884,354	Bunches	46,489,000
Statice, Lace, Aster And Gypsophila	2009	59	1,208,412	"	3,447,000
	2008	126	1,472,219	"	3,614,000
Chrysanthemums and Sunflowers	2009	89	2,867,744	"	4,737,000
	2008	69	2,366,601	"	3,975,000
Lilies & Irises	2009	64	3,583,267	"	14,821,000
	2008	77	3,756,675	"	21,141,000
Lisianthus	2009	24	476,604	"	1,768,000
	2008	24	770,528	"	2,241,000
Delphinium, Larkspur, Stock & Snapdragons	2009	346	2,523,206	"	5,521,000
	2008	302	3,288,444	"	7,430,000
Miscellaneous	2009	158	2,528,556	"	6,675,000
	2008	169	3,229,887	"	8,088,000
TOTAL	2009	881			\$42,763,000
	2008	974			51,297,000

FIELD CROPS ACREAGE, PRODUCTION AND VALUE 2008-2009

CROP	YEAR	HARVESTED ACREAGE	TOTAL \$ VALUE
ALFALFA AND PASTURE Irrigated and Non-Irrigated	2009	100,284	\$1,556,000
	2008	100,280	1,647,000
GRAIN ⁸ , HAY, & VEGETABLE SEED	2009	1,235	757,000
	2008	1,376	933,000
TOTAL	2009		\$2,313,000
	2008		2,580,000

⁸ Includes green barley

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-09

ITEM	YEAR	PRODUCTION	UNIT	\$ VALUE	
				PER UNIT	TOTAL
LIVESTOCK					
Cattle, Hogs	2009	20,456	cwt.	99.43	\$2,034,000
Sheep	2008	28,461	cwt.	101.61	2,892,000
POULTRY					
Chickens and Eggs	2009				5,106,000
	2008				3,794,000
OTHER LIVESTOCK					
Alpaca and Squab	2009				354,000
	2008				167,000
TOTAL					
	2009				\$7,494,000
	2008				6,853,000

APIARY PRODUCTS PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-2009

CROP	YEAR	PRODUCTION	UNIT	\$ VALUE	
				PER UNIT	TOTAL
HONEY					
	2009	121,344	lbs	\$1.66	\$201,000
	2008	67,170	lbs	\$1.62	109,000
BEESWAX AND POLLEN					
	2009	23,310	"	2.32	54,000
	2008	6,176	"	3.24	20,000
POLLINATION USE					
	2009				443,000
	2008				334,000
TOTAL					
	2009				\$698,000
	2008				463,000

* Beeswax only

TIMBER PRODUCTION AND VALUES 2008-2009

CROP	YEAR		\$VALUE
TIMBER⁹			
	2009		\$9,000
	2008		10,000

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

ITEM	PEST	AGENT	SCOPE OF PROGRAM
BIOLOGICAL CONTROL			
Commercial Insectaries	Red and black scale, Mealybug, snails, various aphids, mites and flies	<u>Aphytus melinus</u> , <u>Cryptolemus</u> , Decollate snails, various predators, parasitic wasps and nematodes	Estimate 50,661,158,000 beneficials, released on 232 ranches. Valued at \$2,273,000
COLONIZATION OF BENEFICIAL ORGANISMS	Yellow Star Thistle	<u>Puccinia jacaeca</u>	1 site/1 release 100 mg spores/sq. meter
PEST ERADICATION	Dalmation Toadflax Scotch Thistle Spotted Knapweed Euphorbia terracina	Mechanical/ Digging Mechanical/ Digging Mechanical/ Digging Mechanical/Digging	1 Site 1 Site 1 Site 1 Site
PEST EXCLUSION	Various Gypsy Moth	<u>Incoming Shipments</u> Postal/UPS/Fed Express (Parcels) Truck/Air Freight Household Goods (Inspections)	 3,716 1,445 115 <hr/> Total 5,276
ORGANIC FARMING			
Number of registered growers	79	Vegetables & Herbs Fruits and Nuts Field Crops Flowers	Acreage 1,801 Acreage 2,723 Acreage 4 Acreage 9
		Total Acreage	<hr/> 4,337

What is at stake for Ventura County? Over 24,000 acres or about one quarter of all irrigated farmland is devoted to citrus production alone. The citrus industry supports more than 7,000 local jobs, generates \$19 million in indirect business tax revenue annually, and overall is valued at about \$434,577,000 to the local economy in 2009, not

including citrus nursery stock. If the Asian citrus psyllid is allowed to enter the county and is then unable to be contained and/or eradicated, it will bring with it the disease which will decimate the 100-year old citrus industry in Ventura County within a decade. This one pest has the potential to change the face of Ventura County as citrus trees are representative of our rural quality of life, as well as one of the backbones of our local economy.

Although nothing can completely eliminate the threat of invasive pest introduction, increased knowledge and swift organized action is the best defense. For this purpose, the Ventura County Asian Citrus Psyllid - Huanglongbing (ACP-HLB) Task Force was created. This group, formed from a cross-section of the community, includes members from the agricultural industry, governmental and regulatory agencies, civic groups, and concerned citizens.

The mission of the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force is to *coordinate an education and outreach program intended to alert Ventura County residents to the threat posed by the Asian citrus psyllid and to mobilize broad public support for efforts to exclude, detect, and eradicate the pest.* This outreach program includes presentations to elected officials and civic groups; educational workshops for producers (growers, pest control advisors), distributors (shippers, retailers) and homeowners; preparation and distribution of educational materials in print, on the radio, and online; and operation of a telephone ACP hotline. Such efforts are being managed through a collaboration between the Ventura County Farm Bureau and the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, and these activities are being coordinated with statewide efforts of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Citrus Research Board, Invasive Species Council, and the California ACP-HLB Task Force.

Since news of this invasive pest and its devastating disease potential has spread, there has been much community and grower support to prevent Asian citrus psyllid from becoming established in Ventura County. However, more help is needed to stop this pest. If you have citrus on your property, check regularly for signs of psyllid infestation. Any suspected findings should be immediately reported to the ACP hotline at 800-491-1899, or to the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's office at 805-933-2926. Do not bring citrus trees or fruit from other counties or states into our area. Keep informed, spread the word, and encourage your relatives, friends, and neighbors to do the same.

Ventura County is our home. It is a county with a rich agricultural heritage, a unique interface of agriculture and urban development, and a rural quality of life second to none, which makes it one of the most desirable places to live in the state. It is a place worth preserving for future generations to enjoy. Although the threat of invasive pests will always exist, by keeping vigilant, informed, and by working together, we can minimize the risk to our industry, our community, and our way of life.



Office of

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