



COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

2020 CROP

REPORT

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD & AGRICULTURE
Karen Ross, Secretary

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Welcome!



It is my pleasure to present the 2020 County of Santa Clara Crop Report. The efforts of our agricultural industry are displayed as the acreage, yield, and gross value of commodities produced in Santa Clara County. It is important to note that the values presented in this report are gross values and do not reflect net profits or losses to our agricultural producers.

The gross value of Santa Clara County’s agricultural production for 2020 is \$321,716,000, an increase of 5.1% from the 2019 value of \$305,067,000.

Nursery crops continue to be in the number one position in 2020, with a value of \$92,040,000. As people stayed home because of COVID-19 through most of 2020, home gardening was very popular, contributing to increased nursery sales. Mushrooms remain the top food crop, although their value decreased to \$75,844,000. The decrease in value was due to reduced demand from restaurants and increased competition from imports. In 2020, 21 different agricultural commodities grown in Santa Clara County exceeded \$1,000,000 in crop value.

During most of 2020, COVID-19 was a factor in crop planting and harvesting. The closures of restaurants and the cancellation of events and gatherings changed demand for multiple crops, and our growers pivoted. More acres of bell peppers were planted, and that commodity moved back to the number three position and showed a large increase in value of \$5,760,000. Fewer acres of lettuce were planted due to lower demand and lettuce decreased in value to \$5,264,000.

After a string of years where cherry crops suffered, 2020 was a welcome change with a good harvest and increased value of \$5,918,000, a 96% jump from 2019. Other notable increases are broccoli at 43%, spinach at 68%, and processing tomatoes at 69%. Notable decreases were fresh tomatoes at 69% and cabbage at 66%.

I would like to express my gratitude for the continuing cooperation of all individuals, growers, and agencies who contribute the information necessary to prepare this report. I wish to thank my staff and acknowledge the efforts of Nidia Aguirre, Melissa Chacon, Lucy Diekman, Ericka Mora, Lori Oleson, Khang Phan, Paulo Phillippidis, and Lily Zanta who made the publication of this report possible.

JOSEPH C. DEVINEY
Agricultural Commissioner
Sealer of Weight & Measure

Cherries Past & Present

“There is no secret to farm life. It is work. All I remember all these years is work”

- Rose Zama Olson

California is the nation’s second largest producer of cherries after Washington State. While California cherries have a short season, typically lasting from mid-May through June, they are eagerly anticipated as the first US cherries of the season to ripen. Today, the San Joaquin Valley is California’s top cherry producer, but in the early twentieth century, Santa Clara Valley was the national epicenter for stone fruit production.

Prior to colonization, the Ohlone diet included the Hollyleaf cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), a native evergreen shrub with a cherry like fruit. Although the fruit is edible, Native groups more commonly ate the pit after grinding it into a meal.

Sweet cherries (*Prunus avium*), which are native to Asia and Europe, have been cultivated in Santa Clara Valley since the 1800s when Spanish missionaries first introduced them along with other orchard crops. Recognizing a scarcity of fresh fruit during the gold rush, settlers planted the first commercial orchards in San Jose in the 1850s. Orchards spread rapidly in the 1870s and 1880s, coming to dominate Santa Clara Valley agriculture by the 1900s. During the heyday of local fruit production, prunes were most common, followed by apricots, peaches, and then cherries. As orchards replaced wheat in the local agricultural economy, agricultural land ownership patterns changed as well. Large ranches were subdivided into plots for small family orchards and the number of small farms in the county grew substantially. Many of these landowners hired farm laborers, who during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were primarily Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino.

The fruit packing and canning industry grew up alongside the county’s orchards. When the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, eastern markets opened up to Santa Clara Valley fruit. This was soon followed by the county’s first successful commercial canning operation, established in San Jose in 1871. Fruit produced in Santa Clara County was shipped—either fresh, canned, or dried—

across the country and exported around the world. At their peak, the county’s 38 canneries and 13 dried fruit packers employed thousands of people. Cannery workers were primarily immigrants. During the pack season, canneries also employed large numbers of women to peel, pit, cut, and slice fruit.

Fruit production peaked in the 1920s, but fruit production, packing, and canning remained an important part of the county’s economy through World War II. In addition to production and processing,



Raph’s Cherry Hut, Gilroy CA (1986)

local orchards were also a tourist attraction. From 1900 until the start of World War II, the annual Blossom Festival brought thousands to experience the beauty of the county’s extensive orchards in full bloom.

Beginning around 1950, however, subdivisions and shopping malls began to rapidly replace the county’s orchards. Since 1950, the number of acres in cherries has shrunk from 2,562 to just 953. Although the acreage is smaller, cherries continue to play an important role in Santa Clara County agriculture. Santa Clara Valley-grown cherries are still packed and shipped for US and international markets, while closer to home, people in the area can experience local orchards through cherry U-Picks, farm tours, and tastings.

Million Dollar Crops



| 2020 | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT | VALUE |
| 1. Nursery Crops | \$92,040,000 |
| 2. Mushrooms | \$75,844,000 |
| 3. Peppers, Bell | \$17,841,000 |
| 4. Lettuce, All | \$13,058,000 |
| 5. Spinach | \$12,420,000 |
| 6. Wine Grapes, All | \$11,982,000 |
| 7. Broccoli | \$11,713,000 |
| 8. Asian Vegetables | \$9,531,000 |
| 9. Peppers, Wax & Chili | \$7,552,000 |
| 10. Tomatoes, Fresh | \$7,416,000 |
| 11. Cherry | \$6,191,000 |
| 12. Corn | \$6,127,000 |
| 13. Cabbage | \$5,929,000 |
| 14. Beans, All | \$5,178,000 |
| 15. Salad Greens | \$4,155,000 |
| 16. Steers & Heifers | \$3,884,000 |
| 17. Rangeland | \$3,219,000 |
| 18. Garlic | \$3,211,000 |
| 19. Tomatoes, Processing | \$3,051,000 |
| 20. Seed Crops | \$2,613,000 |
| 21. Squash | \$1,619,000 |
| All Other Crops | \$17,142,000 |
| 2020 Total Gross | \$321,716,000 |

| 2019 | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT | VALUE |
| 1. Nursery Crops | \$81,215,000 |
| 2. Mushrooms | \$78,646,000 |
| 3. Lettuce, All | \$18,322,000 |
| 4. Peppers, Bell | \$12,081,000 |
| 5. Wine Grapes, All | \$11,545,000 |
| 6. Tomatoes, Fresh | \$10,698,000 |
| 7. Asian Vegetables | \$9,329,000 |
| 8. Cabbage | \$8,990,000 |
| 9. Spinach | \$8,482,000 |
| 10. Corn | \$7,159,000 |
| 11. Peppers, Wax & Chili | \$6,253,000 |
| 12. Beans, All | \$5,570,000 |
| 13. Broccoli | \$5,038,000 |
| 14. Salad Greens | \$4,659,000 |
| 15. Steers & Heifers | \$3,489,000 |
| 16. Rangeland | \$3,315,000 |
| 17. Seed Crops | \$3,068,000 |
| 18. Garlic | \$2,209,000 |
| 19. Tomatoes, Processing | \$2,104,000 |
| 20. Squash | \$1,260,000 |
| 21. Timber | \$1,149,000 |
| All Other Crops | \$20,486,000 |
| 2019 Total Gross | \$305,067,000 |

CHERRY VARIETIES IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

| Early Season (May 5 – June 2) | Mid Season (May 23 – June 8) | Late Season (June 5 – June 30) |
|--|--|---|
| BlackPearl: A sweet, large cherry that stores well and is not prone to cracking. Ripens about a week before Bing. | Belle Magnifique: Fruit is larger in size than an average sweet cherry, and their flesh is yellow-red in color. Because Belle Magnifique cherries are a sweet/tart hybrid, their flavor is somewhere in the middle. | Balanton: These tart cherries ripen late and are great to use in cooking and preserving. They tend to hold their shape well and provide excellent dark-red color and flavor. |
| Black Republican: The tree is a parent of Bing, and the cherries are known for being deep purple color and exceedingly sweet and flavorful. | Bing: Most popular market cherry! Dark red and sweet. | Jubileum: A sweet-tart cherry hybrid, this fruit can be eaten fresh or used in baking and canning. Jubileums have bright red flesh and juice. |
| Black Tartarian: Cherries are nearly black in color, sweet, and medium-sized. | Lapins: These cherries are dark red in color and sweet. They typically ripen 4 days after Bing | Montmorency: A large cherry that is very light red (almost orange) in color. Good for baking and canning. |
| Danube: A tart cherry that is bright red in color and semi-firm. | Rainier: A popular large cherry, yellow in color and very sweet in taste. | Skeena: This variety is one of the few self-fertile sweet cherries. Trees produce dark red, very sweet fruit. |
| Coral Champagne: A sweet, large cherry that stores well and is not prone to cracking. Ripens about a week before Bing. | Royal Ann: Fruit is large, sweet, and light red to yellow in color. Can be used fresh or for baking. | Stella: Produces large fruit, nearly black in color and very sweet in taste. |
| Brooks: Developed by UC, these cherries are red in color and large. Bloom very early | Van: Medium-sized fruit, crimson to dark red in color with a subtly tart flavor. | Sweetheart: These cherry trees produce bright red fruit that have a sweet flavor. |

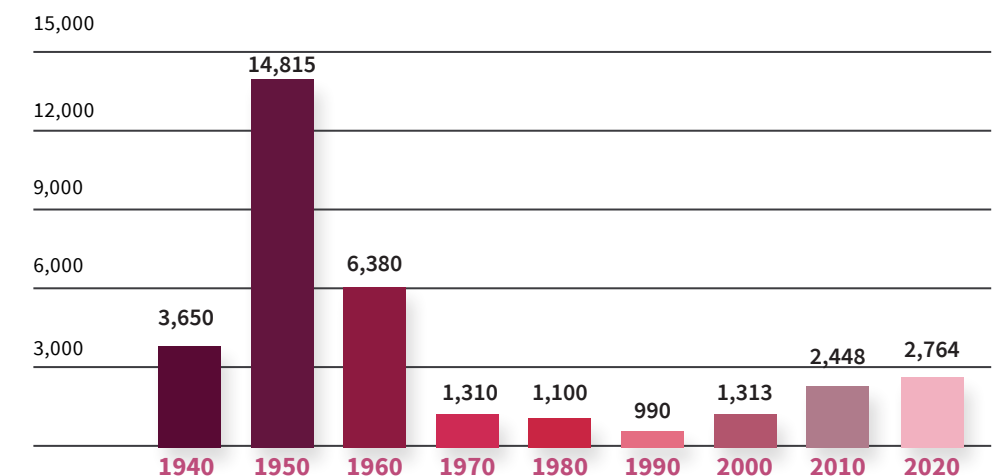
*Highlighted varieties are most common.



CHERRIES OVER THE YEARS

| Year | Bearing Acres | Tons per Arce | Production Total Tons | Value per Tons | Total |
|------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 2020 | 953 | 2.9 | 2,764 | \$2,240 | \$6,191,000 |
| 2010 | 597 | 4.1 | 2,448 | \$2,093 | \$5,123,000 |
| 2000 | 1,050 | 1.3 | 1,313 | \$1,986 | \$2,607,000 |
| 1980 | 734 | 1.5 | 1,100 | \$925 | \$1,018,000 |
| 1960 | 3,073 | 2.0 | 6,380 | \$131 | \$2,976,800 |
| 1940 | 2,628 | 1.4 | 3,650 | \$174 | \$637,000 |

SANTA CLARA COUNTY TOTAL CHERRY PRODUCTION IN TONS OVER THE YEARS



County Launches New Agricultural Resilience Incentive Grant Program Pilot

This year, for the first time, the County of Santa Clara offered its innovative Agricultural Resilience Incentive (or ARI) Grant Program. The ARI program recognizes the potential for farmers' and ranchers' stewardship practices to improve soil health and sequester carbon. To advance the County's climate change goals and increase the resilience of the local agricultural community, the ARI Grant Program offers farmers and ranchers up to \$30,000 in grant funding to implement 27 pre-approved practices. The program is open to all farmers and ranchers operating on agricultural lands within Santa Clara County. With no acreage minimum or maximum, agricultural operations of all sizes are eligible to apply. During this pilot phase, the County will award a total of \$200,000 in grants.

Pilot Year Overview

Number of applications received: **64**
 Total number of acres applied for: **1,176 acres (cropland)**
5,300 acres (rangeland)
 Total amount requested: **\$1,305,607**



EXAMPLE PRACTICES

27 pre-approved practices that improve soil health on rangeland, annual cropland, and orchards and vineyards can be funded through the ARI Grant Program. The full list of practices can be found on the program website.



PRESCRIBED GRAZING

One of the approved practices for rangelands is prescribed grazing, which uses livestock grazing as a tool to meet particular ecological objectives, such as reducing fuel loads, improving food or cover for wildlife, and maintaining desired plant species.



Forest Products

| TIMBER CROPS | | | | |
|--------------|------|------------------|------|-------------|
| Item | Year | Production Total | Unit | Total |
| Timber | 2020 | 1,661 | MBF | \$982,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,505 | MBF | \$1,149,000 |



COMPOST APPLICATION

Compost application was the most popular practice during the 2021 ARI Grant application cycle. Applying compost to agricultural land can increase carbon sequestered in soil organic matter, which in turn improves the soil's water and nutrient retention capacity and reduces soil erosion among other benefits.



HEDGEROW PLANTING

Establishing a perennial hedgerow is a practice that can be adopted in orchards and vineyards, rangeland, and annual crop land. A hedgerow is a line of woody plants (or perennial bunch grasses) that offer a wide range of conservation functions, including providing habitat for wildlife, enhancing food and habitat for pollinators as well as increasing carbon storage in plant matter and soils.



APIARY NEWS

Pesticides and insecticides can be harmful to pollinating bees. If they are used, it is advised that spray be limited during bloom season, and that spray be completely dry before bees begin pollination.



Facts about cherry pollination

Bees are imperative to the healthy and efficient production of most fruits, and cherries are no exception. Most sweet cherry cultivars, as well as many tart cherry cultivars, are self-incompatible, meaning they need cross-pollination to produce fruit. Pollen cannot be adequately transferred via wind movement, so pollinating insects are needed for this process.

While many species of ants, flies, and butterflies can pollinate plants, bees are generally the most efficient and thorough pollinators. This is due in large part to the fact that bees use pollen as a protein source and thus actively forage for it. They have also evolved specific morphology to hold more pollen than other pollinators. And because humans manage beehives for profit, bees can be easily transported to various agricultural operations and used for efficient pollination.

Typically, cherry growers plant one pollinizer tree for every eight to twenty fruit-bearing trees. This allows bees the highest chance of pollinating the field effectively.



Then, two hives per acre are placed in the production field in March, starting in the trees' fourth year of growth. Not all cherry cultivars are inter-fertile, and therefore growers must know what pollinating trees to plant where. For example, Bing cultivars can be pollinated by Black Tartarian, but not Lambert.

Cherry fields are most often pollinated by hives of honey bees, however in California Mason Bees are also occasionally used. Mason Bee populations can establish permanent residency at agricultural operations if nesting materials are provided by growers.

Bees typically visit pollinating cultivars in the morning. Therefore, it can be detrimental to fruit production if bees are disturbed during these hours. Honeybees can be disrupted by inclement weather, mowing, pesticide application, or other excessive activity in the area. It is often recommended to refrain from participating in any disruptive activities during pollination hours.



| APIARY | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| ITEM | |
| Number of Hives Registered in County | 1892 |
| Total Apiary Value* | \$420,000 |





CERTIFIED FARMERS' MARKETS

| Year | Pre-Covid | During-Covid |
|------|-----------|--------------|
| 2020 | 37 | 28 |

| FIELD CROPS | | | | | | | |
|----------------|------|-------------------|---------------|------------------|------|----------------|-------------|
| ITEM | YEAR | HARVESTED ACREAGE | TONS PER ARCE | PRODUCTION TOTAL | UNIT | VALUE PER UNIT | TOTAL |
| Hay | 2020 | 3,011 | 2.0 | 6,022.0 | Ton | \$134 | \$807,000 |
| | 2019 | 3,167 | 1.9 | 6,017.0 | Ton | \$125 | \$752,000 |
| Range | 2020 | 247,642 | - | - | Acre | \$13 | \$3,219,000 |
| | 2019 | 254,977 | - | - | Acre | \$13 | \$3,315,000 |
| Miscellaneous* | 2020 | 239 | - | - | - | - | \$94,000 |
| | 2019 | 170 | - | - | - | - | \$95,000 |
| TOTAL | 2020 | 250,892 | - | - | - | - | \$4,120,000 |
| | 2019 | 258,314 | - | - | - | - | \$4,162,000 |

*Includes: Alfalfa, Triticale, etc.

Organic Agriculture

- County of Santa Clara has 73 organic growing locations for a total of 5,958 acres.

| TYPE OF ORGANIC REGISTRANT | NUMBER REGISTERED |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Producers | 43 |
| Handlers | 14 |
| Processors | 37 |



VEGETABLE CROPS

| ITEM | YEAR | HARVESTED ACREAGE | TONS PER ARCE | PRODUCTION TOTAL TONS | VALUE PER TONS | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Asian Vegetables | 2020 | 774 | 16.8 | 13,003.2 | \$733 | \$9,531,000 |
| | 2019 | 781 | 18.9 | 14,760.9 | \$632 | \$9,329,000 |
| Beans | 2020 | 859 | 4.1 | 3,521.9 | \$1,470 | \$5,178,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,015 | 4.0 | 4,060.0 | \$1,372 | \$5,570,000 |
| Broccoli | 2020 | 905 | 10.6 | 9,593.0 | \$1,221 | \$11,713,000 |
| | 2019 | 577 | 9.9 | 5,712.3 | \$882 | \$5,038,000 |
| Cabbage | 2020 | 623 | 21.1 | 13,145.3 | \$451 | \$5,929,000 |
| | 2019 | 456 | 31.0 | 14,136.0 | \$636 | \$8,990,000 |
| Corn | 2020 | 1,041 | 10.8 | 11,242.8 | \$545 | \$6,127,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,351 | 9.2 | 12,429.2 | \$576 | \$7,159,000 |
| Garlic | 2020 | 450 | 5.5 | 2,475.0 | \$1,297 | \$3,211,000 |
| | 2019 | 571 | 5.8 | 3,311.8 | \$667 | \$2,209,000 |
| Salad Greens* | 2020 | 659 | 6.2 | 4,085.8 | \$1,017 | \$4,155,000 |
| | 2019 | 735 | 5.7 | 4,189.5 | \$1,112 | \$4,659,000 |
| Lettuce (Romaine, Leaf, Head) | 2020 | 2,105 | 9.3 | 19,576.5 | \$667 | \$13,058,000 |
| | 2019 | 2,215 | 11.3 | 25,029.5 | \$732 | \$18,322,000 |
| Mushrooms | 2020 | 136 | 126.4 | 17,190.4 | \$4,412 | \$75,844,000 |
| | 2019 | 138 | 119.5 | 16,491.0 | \$4,769 | \$78,646,000 |
| Onions, Dry (Yellow & Red) | 2020 | 40 | 18.6 | 744.0 | \$403 | \$300,000 |
| | 2019 | 66 | 10.0 | 660.0 | \$369 | \$244,000 |
| Peppers, Bell | 2020 | 1,261 | 36.0 | 45,396.0 | \$393 | \$17,841,000 |
| | 2019 | 914 | 34.6 | 31,624.4 | \$382 | \$12,081,000 |
| Peppers, Wax & Chili | 2020 | 408 | 30.0 | 12,240.0 | \$617 | \$7,552,000 |
| | 2019 | 407 | 29.1 | 11,843.7 | \$528 | \$6,253,000 |
| Spinach | 2020 | 966 | 8.6 | 8,307.6 | \$1,495 | \$12,420,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,564 | 5.5 | 8,602.0 | \$986 | \$8,482,000 |
| Squash | 2020 | 242 | 14.2 | 3,436.4 | \$471 | \$1,619,000 |
| | 2019 | 248 | 10.2 | 2,529.6 | \$498 | \$1,260,000 |
| Tomatoes, Fresh | 2020 | 951 | 10.8 | 10,270.8 | \$722 | \$7,416,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,094 | 17.4 | 19,035.6 | \$562 | \$10,698,000 |
| Tomatoes, Processed | 2020 | 680 | 56.8 | 38,624.0 | \$79 | \$3,051,000 |
| | 2019 | 464 | 57.4 | 26,636.6 | \$79 | \$2,104,000 |
| Miscellaneous** | 2020 | 1,532 | - | - | - | \$10,475,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,824 | - | - | - | \$14,168,000 |
| TOTAL | 2020 | 13,632 | | | | \$195,420,000 |
| | 2019 | 14,420 | | | | \$195,212,000 |

*Arugula, Endive, Frisee, Mizuna, Mustard, Radicchio, Spring Mix, Swiss Chad

**Atrichokes, Cauliflower, Celery, Cucumber, Herbs, Parsley, Pumpkins, Shallots, etc.



| ITEM | YEAR | HARVESTED ACREAGE | TONS PER ARCE | PRODUCTION TOTAL TONS | VALUE PER TONS | TOTAL |
|--------------------|------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Apricots (Fresh) | 2020 | 115 | 1.5 | 172.5 | \$1,002 | \$174,000 |
| | 2019 | 143 | 1.2 | 171.6 | \$1,579 | \$271,000 |
| Cherries | 2020 | 953 | 2.9 | 2,763.7 | \$2,240 | \$6,191,000 |
| | 2019 | 173 | 0.3 | 51.9 | \$5,256 | \$273,000 |
| Grapes, Wine Red | 2020 | 1,232 | 3.3 | 4,065.6 | \$1,634 | \$9,127,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,207 | 3.2 | 3,862.4 | \$2,245 | \$8,671,000 |
| Grapes, Wine White | 2020 | 494 | 4.0 | 1,976.0 | \$1,445 | \$2,855,000 |
| | 2019 | 492 | 3.9 | 1,918.8 | \$1,498 | \$2,874,000 |
| Total Red & White | 2020 | 1,726 | - | - | - | \$11,982,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,699 | - | - | - | \$11,545,000 |
| Persimmon | 2020 | 43 | 3.1 | 133.3 | \$1,699 | \$226,000 |
| | 2019 | 43 | 3.3 | 141.9 | \$1,498 | \$213,000 |
| Walnuts | 2020 | 288 | 1.2 | 345.6 | \$1,526 | \$527,000 |
| | 2019 | 243 | 1.0 | 243.0 | \$2,777 | \$962,000 |
| Miscellaneous* | 2020 | 234 | - | - | - | \$2,231,000 |
| | 2019 | 225 | - | - | - | \$2,422,000 |
| TOTAL | 2020 | 3,359 | - | - | - | \$21,331,000 |
| | 2019 | 2,526 | - | - | - | \$15,686,000 |

*Includes: Apples, Bushberries, Kiwis, Nectarines, Olives, Peaches, Plums, Prunes, Strawberries, etc.



LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY

| ITEM | YEAR | # OF HEAD | PRODUCTION TOTAL LIVE WEIGHT | UNIT | VALUE PER UNIT | TOTAL |
|------------------|------|-----------|------------------------------|------|----------------|-------------|
| Steers & Heifers | 2020 | 4,236 | 29,880 | CWT | \$130 | \$3,884,000 |
| | 2019 | 3,813 | 25,101 | CWT | \$139 | \$3,489,000 |
| Cows & Bulls | 2020 | 644 | 7,148 | CWT | \$72 | \$515,000 |
| | 2019 | 608 | 6,404 | CWT | \$82 | \$525,000 |
| Miscellaneous* | 2020 | - | - | - | - | \$224,000 |
| | 2019 | - | - | - | - | \$301,000 |
| TOTAL | 2020 | - | - | - | - | \$4,623,000 |
| | 2019 | - | - | - | - | \$4,315,000 |

*Includes: Chicken Eggs, Goats, Llamas, Pigs, Sheep, etc.



SEED CROPS

| CROP | YEAR | HARVESTED ACREAGE | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------|------|-------------------|-------------|
| Flower and Vegetable Seed Crops | 2020 | 572 | \$2,613,000 |
| | 2019 | 629 | \$3,068,000 |

NURSERY CROPS

| ITEM | YEAR | HOUSE (SQ. FT.) | FIELD ARCE | SOLD BY PRODUCERS | UNIT | VALUE PER UNIT | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------|------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| Bedding Plants | 2020 | 2,276,221 | 50 | 2,056,224 | Flats | Various | \$23,462,000 |
| | 2019 | 1,895,009 | 50 | 1,903,032 | Flats | Various | \$23,055,000 |
| Christmas Trees | 2020 | - | 269 | 4,854 | Tree | \$66 | \$320,000 |
| | 2019 | - | 294 | 6,256 | Tree | \$65 | \$406,000 |
| Ornamental Trees, Roses, & Shrubs | 2020 | 239,332 | 319 | 11,338,468 | Plant | Various | \$34,408,000 |
| | 2019 | 246,740 | 320 | 2,286,589 | Plant | Various | \$28,126,000 |
| Herbaceous Perennials | 2020 | 206,500 | 52 | 761,527 | Plant | Various | \$11,396,000 |
| | 2019 | 190,400 | 35 | 506,829 | Plant | Various | \$7,879,000 |
| Miscellaneous* | 2020 | 2,178,925 | 191 | - | - | - | \$22,454,000 |
| | 2019 | 2,273,150 | 191 | - | - | - | \$21,749,000 |
| TOTAL | 2020 | - | - | - | - | - | \$92,040,000 |
| | 2019 | - | - | - | - | - | \$81,215,000 |

*Indoor decoratives, Orchids, Propagative Materials, Turf, Succulents, Vegetable Plants, Floral Crops (Cut Flowers), etc



Borello Family Farms

CHRIS & MARY BORELLO

What is your family's background in farming?

Chris: My great grandfather migrated from Italy, landed in New York and made his way to Northern California, made it to Brentwood and started farming around 1925. He sold his ranches and made his way to Santa Clara County. He then purchased the land for less than \$50,000 for roughly 120 acres. My family started off with prunes, then apricots and eventually transitioned into cherries as a primary crop about 25 years ago. I am the fourth generation cherry grower and my children will be the fifth.

How many acres of cherries do you manage?

Chris: Roughly 220 acres of cherries, of which 175 acres is available to U-pick. With that said it's not all U-pick, we have a lot of commercial pickers that come and finish cropping on ladders. We are always on the lookout for new opportunities to purchase properties where we can expand U-pick or commercial.

Pros and cons of U-Pick and pack and ship

Chris: When harvest time comes around I manage the commercial side of the harvest. I work and coordinate with labor contractors along with packer shippers. Pack shippers receive our fruit, sort and size it and pack it and get distributed on a world wide scale and go out to countries like Korea, Australia or even our local Safeway. My wife, Mary, manages all of our U-pick business such as staffing and marketing.

Cons with U-Pick, is that there are a lot of people to manage, people can also be aggressive with the trees, they can break

limbs and that takes a while to regrow. Irrigation, people step on everything. Pros are that we get to share with the public a little bit of who we are.

As far as the commercial picking; I can sell more fruit commercially and within a faster time frame. It can be done in 5 days, whereas U-Pick can be done in 3-4 weeks. Overall they are two markets that we want to be a part of, we don't just want to be exclusive to one or the other.

So many varieties! What varieties do you plant for early, mid, and late seasons?

Chris: For early season, our Coral Champagne. They are usually pretty sweet, crunchy with a shorter stem, making it a little harder to pick. Middle season are our Bing cherries, we predominantly carry Bings, these are essentially the gold standard of cherries, all other cherries are judged against the Bings. The Rainiers come after, then we have Sweethearts and Lapins to close out the season. My personal favorite is the Rainier.

How long is your cherry season?

Chris: This year we are off by two weeks, typically we start on the first or second week in May and end roughly in the last week in June, but sometimes it can get pushed out to the first week of July. That's because we have a number of different varieties.

To some degree we can control when the fruit comes through fertilizers, because as you could imagine labor is very difficult and it's a whole lot easier to harvest 20 acres at a time versus trying to harvest 100-150 acres at a time.

How's the effect of rain and rain seasons on cherries?

Mary: Cherry picking is like a roll of the dice, you are gambling. We love the rain up until April, if it sprinkles here or there after April that's fine but as soon as the cherries turn red is when you want the rain to stop, because when they're green and it rains, they don't absorb the water, but when they are red they will start absorbing the water. Cherries absorb water through the skin versus a root system. Their skin cannot absorb a whole lot of water so once they get to the max, their skin cracks open, then it becomes worthless.

How did Covid impact your farm?

Mary: During the 2020 Shelter in Place, we were one of the few family activities that remained open. I got some really great feedback from families, thanking us for giving them the ability to take their kids outside of their home. Some were nearly in tears. Given the way the farm is structured, even the trees are naturally distanced apart, and we never had a problem where there was another family picking from the same tree you are picking from.

Chris: Last year our business was up by 15-20%. This year it's been a 25-30% increase. Given that Covid has brought a lot of us back to the simple things, that has helped our business tremendously. We've had about 25,000 people within the last couple of weeks come to the orchard.

U-Pick Origins

Mary: This is what our dream always was. We used to have a fruit stand in Los Gatos where we sold strawberries and cherries, we had a customer named Steve who was a realtor. He would come by every weekend and buy some fruit to put out at his open houses. He would always ask us, "What are you going to do next?" I told him, "One day we will own a U-Pick." Last year he showed up at one of our farms and I immediately recognized him. He told me "Mary, you said you were going to do this and you did it!". It's really neat to be reminded that this is something we had said we wanted to do.

Chris: The name of our company, Borello family farms is the name for a reason. It's a family run operation. Both my brothers help me, my dad, sister in-law, my grandpa is still involved. My grandpa and uncle Francis used to come to our U-Picks and keep in mind they are old school, my uncle could not get it through his head and would say "What is happening here? We were paying people to pick for us, and now they are paying you to pick the crop." He was always so fascinated by the U-Pick concept. They would just sit in their pickup, watch people pick cherries, and giggle. He would always say, "Chris and Mary with your crazy ideas!"



U-PICK TIPS



- The best way to find out cherry availability is to call or go to the county U-pick websites listed on page 15 on the morning of your visit. Some U-picks may be closed for periods in between varieties.
- Many U-picks have an email sign-up on their website to subscribe to email notifications.
- Bring water & sunscreen.
- Most U-picks provide buckets for picking and bags to take home.
- Dress appropriately, and no sandals.
- If you want to avoid traffic and the rush, do not come first thing in the morning. It is recommended to go after 2:00 P.M. to avoid the wait and crowd. 11:30 A.M. is generally very busy, but then crowds lessen.
- Most U-picks have the rule that if you pick it, you buy it. Please only pick what you need to prevent waste and losses for the farmer.
- Many U-picks have Facebook pages with Frequently Asked Questions.



LAZY K RANCH
 3465 SUSIE LN, GILROY, CA 95020
 WWW.GILROYCHERRIES.COM

Varieties: Bings, Brooks, Vans

GILROY UPICK
 10541 KORN LN, GILROY, CA 95020
 (408) 607-1417
 GILROYUPICK.COM

Varieties: Rainier & Bing



U PICK ORCHARDS (RANCH 1, BORUGI FARMS)
 10900 MONTEREY RD, MORGAN HILL, CA 95037
 (408) 710-7068
 WWW.UPICKORCHARDS.COM

Varieties: Corals

U PICK ORCHARDS (RANCH 2, GILROY OUTLETS)
 8990 MARCELLA AVE, GILROY, CA 95020

Variety: Rainiers and Bings

U PICK ORCHARDS (RANCH 3, GODFREY)
 2905 GODFREY AVE, GILROY, CA 95020

Variety: Sweethearts & Lapins

U PICK ORCHARDS (RANCH 4, 101 RANCH)
 55 CASTRO VALLEY RD, GILROY, CA 95020

Varieties: Bings

U PICK ORCHARDS (RANCH5, WEST COAST FARMS)
 550 MONTEREY RD, MORGAN HILL, CA 95037

Varieties: Bings

U-PICK CHERRY FARM LOCATIONS



RALPH SANTOS

In 1976, my dad and I started farming together; he passed away in 1985. My father was Ralph Santos the first, I'm the second, my son is the third and his son, my grandson is the fourth. Hoping this place can continue to stay within the family.

El Camino Packing

How did you get started in the cherry farming business?

This property was purchased by my grandfather in 1926. My grandfather started farming in the 40's, at that time it was just a small family orchard with just about 2-3 acres. Over the years he kept expanding it. He then purchased more land for \$500 an acre, 40 acres for \$20,000.

Are cherries the best crop to grow in Santa Clara?

Some years yes, some years no. It's agriculture. There are good years and bad years. In 2020 we had a good crop. The market started getting progressively better. With all agriculture the markets are getting narrow and are fluctuating.

What would you like people to know about cherry farming?

All of the effort and time that goes into trying to develop a cherry, they are very weather and moisture sensitive. Just getting them off a tree and into a box there is already a sense of accomplishment. In the cherry business the decisions we make at 10am sometimes change by 2pm due to weather, market, variety, and picking; it is an ever evolving business and I've learned to adapt.

What are the biggest challenges for cherry farmers?

For us labor is crucial, because it's so time sensitive. When we start picking, we got to move quickly. Additionally, costs. Having markets that we can ship to and make a profit is pretty challenging and especially in California due to the high cost of wages.



El Camino Packing has changed its business recently to include exporting cherries to other countries. Please share your thoughts on this big transition.

Originally, we used to take the cherries from here and ship them to a packing company. In order to get more shipping options I decided to add a shipping line for myself, some days it's a good idea, some days it's a bad idea. But these alternatives give us more options. The more options we have the better of a chance we have to open the market with our product. It's the difference from two places to ship our product to four places.

What are you most proud of with your cherry business?

That we've been able to stay in this industry with the ability to make a profit. I'm fortunate enough that all of the property we are in has no debt. Just looking back to how we started and myself as a child, I sorted the cherries under a tree in a 5-acre ranch, from that we've grown to about 150-160 acres of cherries that we grow and pack ourselves.

Also I have the ability to employ and supply housing for some of the full time employees. Homes, utilities and vehicles. Being able to employ year-round employees, and once the season starts we employ about 100-120 seasonal employees, is pretty gratifying.

Where else does El Camino Packing sell cherries in addition to international exports?

We're loading a truck today that's heading to Detroit. We loaded a full load yesterday, full load meaning like 2,200 cartons, to Texas.

We have the latest equipment, all electronic. Electronic sizing, defect, and color sorting. Even within exports, our machine is programmed to know that if it's going to an international location, it's a different box: a 5-kilo box vs. an 18-pound box.

Santos Family History

My grandfather was born in Hawaii and came to the US in the early 1900's. At that time the Portugese were the migrant workforce of agriculture. My father was born in 1923 in Santa Clara. In 1926 my grandfather bought this (Gilroy) property; he started with prunes. In 1975 we pulled the prunes and planted cherries.

My dad wanted to be a draftsman. He loved architecture and attended Cal Berkeley for one year but given that his older brother died at a young age and my grandfather needed help, he decided to come back home and help with the ranch. But he always had a passion for building. So when they remodeled the last phase of this home, he drafted the plans.



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Deputy Commissioner
Michelle Thom
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Drew Raymond

Deputy Sealer of Weights & Measures
Stan Toy

Weights & Measures Inspectors
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Martin Lobato, Elliot McIntosh, Regidor
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Calso, Amy Chang, Michelle Duong,
Jennifer Gracy, Ramona Hockett, Jane
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