



COUNTY OF MONTEREY CAO Weekly Report

In This Edition:

- > Crop report delivers big numbers and more
- > Assistant Auditor named
- > Car seat safety event

SPECIALREPORT



Agricultural Commissioner Eric Lauritzen delivers the numbers and details of the 2015 Crop Report.

County Notes

- > Look whose talking! [Check out county social media posts on the homepage](#) where you'll find a combined twitter feed and facebook links.

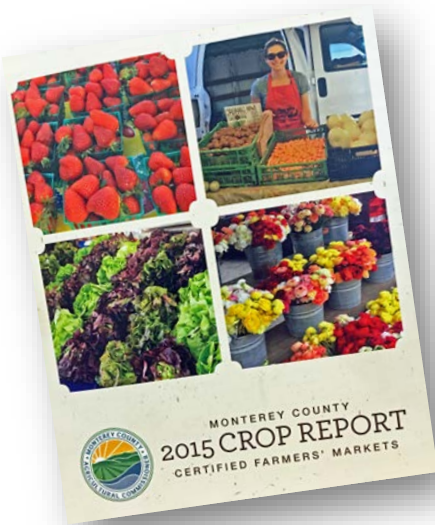
Crop Report Shines a Light on Big Numbers, Local Growers

Each year, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office prepares and releases an important document: the Crop Report. With agriculture being the county's top economic driver, the annual crop report is really a 'state of the industry' report.

Over the last several years, this report has become more than just numbers by including highlights of various aspects of the industry and trends. This year's report featured a look at Certified Farmers' Markets, which allow consumers to buy directly from the farmer with confidence thanks to certification from the Commissioner's Office.

Taking a look at the numbers, for the fourth consecutive year, Monterey County agriculture set a record in crop production values: \$4.84 billion. The top crops were leaf lettuce in first place followed by strawberries in second place and head lettuce third.

Ag Commissioner's Office staff explains more about the importance of the report and how it's created.



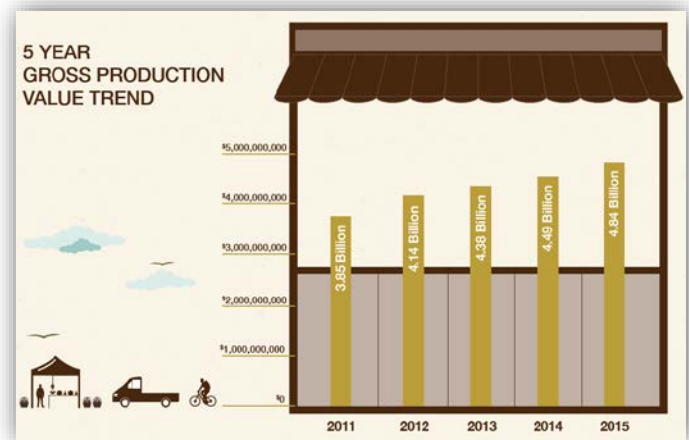
Q. The Crop Report is a major undertaking. How many hours go into creating this document?

A. Each November, we begin by sending production surveys to every grower, shipper and packer in the county. From January through April, we compile survey production and pricing data along with numerous industry reports to cultivate crop report numbers. During May and June, the final product starts to take form and everything is reviewed with a fine-tooth comb.

Three staff members work on the report along with their other duties, but at least a dozen in total are involved with various aspects such as articles, exports, reviews and evaluations.

Q. The report has evolved from just numbers to including people or trends behind the numbers.

A. Since the main purpose of the report is the compilation of data, the primary focus is on the numbers and total revenue of Monterey County's agricultural industry. However, as the report has evolved and become more sophisticated, the Agricultural Commissioner has used it to highlight different aspects of the industry. During the last few years themes have ranged from school salad bars, farm sustainability programs and this year's theme of the local Certified Farmers' Markets.



Q. Are people surprised to find that your office certifies both farmers and farmers' markets?

A. The certification process is one of many functions our office provides and it helps to ensure the produce purchased is actually grown by the farmer selling it.

Our Agricultural Commissioner's office has a unique and important role in the promotion of agriculture, farm worker health and safety, the protection of environmental resources and the assurance of a fair marketplace. For instance, did you know that Agricultural Commissioners enforce

the state's organic food laws? Our office is one of just three in California which can certify farms as organic.

Q. What are the benefits for consumers when they buy at a certified farmers' market vs. uncertified market or food stand?

A. People should know that when they buy food from an uncertified market, the produce could have been grown essentially anywhere without any oversight. Knowing that the food for sale at a certified farmers' market has been verified provides a level of customer assurance and creates a sense of community.

The 2015 Crop Report and video stories of some of the county's certified farmer's market growers are available [online](#). You can also find an interactive map of local certified farmers' markets [here](#).



Assistant Auditor Controller Named

A familiar face has some new duties in the Auditor-Controller's Office. Auditor-Controller Michael Miller has selected Rupa Shah to serve as Assistant Auditor-Controller.



Rupa Shah.

Her appointment to the position was effective on June 11th.

"Rupa's training, experience and professionalism make her extraordinarily qualified to be the Assistant Auditor-Controller," says Auditor-Controller, Michael Miller. "I look forward to collaborating with Rupa to continue providing excellent services to our stakeholders."

Shah has been employed in the Auditor-Controller's Office for more than 16 years and with Monterey County for 19 years. Prior to this appointment she was the Chief Deputy Auditor-Controller over the General Accounting Division of the office.

Along with her assignment, Shah will continue to serve on the ERP Upgrade project as the lead for the County financial system.

Shah has Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Business and received her CPA license in 1995.

Congratulations!

NMC, Health Department Team Up for Car Safety Seat Event

While most all of us have had them at one point, it's very possible that we were driving with children in car seats that were installed or adjusted incorrectly.

To help educate parents about proper car seat installation, a special, free child passenger seat safety check up event was held June 11th at Natividad Medical Center's parking lot 'E.' The hospital sponsored the event along with the Health Department, the California Highway Patrol and Safe Kids Monterey County.

Key to the program was that it was a 'no questions asked' event - parents were encouraged to come so that experts could inspect their safety seats and show them correct installation techniques if needed. No citations would be issued for seats not installed correctly, something that could happen if you are stopped by law enforcement.

Organizer Lorraine Artinger, Natividad Trauma Prevention and Outreach Nurse, says families learned a lot and many children left the event in safe car seats.

"We checked 53 car seats, which included teaching parents how to properly install and use car seats and safety belts," says Artinger. "Thanks to the generous donations from the Natividad Medical Foundation, NMC Trauma Services, the Health Department and CHP we were able to replace/donate 29 new car seats to families in need."

There will be another car safety seat event September 24th, but you don't have to wait until then to get good information. NMC has an [online guide to safety seats](#). It shows proper safety seat use, types of seats and how children should be positioned.



Did you know that four out of five child passenger safety seats are installed or adjusted incorrectly?