



MONTEREY COUNTY **AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER**

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Contacts: Henry Gonzales, Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner (831) 759-7301
Maia Carroll, County Communications Coordinator (831) 796-3092

MONTEREY CROP VALUES DECREASE IN 2018

SALINAS – Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzales announced today that the economic value of Monterey County agriculture decreased by 3.7% in 2018, as compared with 2017, with crop production values of \$4.25 billion. The State-required annual crop report documents the details of the overall decrease but also captures the increases of some specific crops.

Several of Monterey County’s top crops (leaf lettuce, head lettuce, and broccoli) decreased between 5% and 11%. Gonzales noted that “Optimal pricing one year is many times followed by reduced values and increased production the next”. A few commodities experienced increased value in 2018. Due to higher production, cauliflower increased 2.5% while strawberries destined for processing increased 21%. Moving into the fifth highest valued crop were wine grapes with an increase of 3.7%.

Other down swings were noted in celery, Napa cabbage, avocados, raspberries, red leaf lettuce, green leaf lettuce and butter lettuce from 3% to 32%. Whereas the values of asparagus, artichokes, blackberries, cilantro, kale, leeks, onions, and peas and peppers increased 4% to 47%. The category of livestock increased 9% as ranchers restocked herds and forage production increased with the rainfall. The above average rainfall also contributed to the increase of the field crops category from \$21,675,000 in 2017 to \$23,438,000 in 2018.

The report celebrates women in agriculture by featuring vignettes about some local women who make Monterey County Agriculture successful. The numbers reported reflect gross receipts earned by farmers but do not show the costs associated with labor, field preparation, planting, irrigating, harvesting, distribution, and other production activities. The numbers also do not reflect the economic contribution or “multiplier effects” of agriculture to the local economy.

Other speakers at the briefing included: Norm Groot, Executive Director, Monterey County Farm Bureau; Chris Valadez, President, Grower-Shipper Association of Central California; Kim Stemler, Executive Director, Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association; Carolyn O’Donnell, Communications Director, California Strawberry Commission, and Abby Taylor-Silva, Vice President, Policy and Communications, Grower-Shipper Association of Central California.

The crop report was released at a public briefing at the Ag Center Conference Room, 1428 Abbott Street, Salinas. It may be downloaded from the Agricultural Commissioner’s Web site at ag.co.monterey.ca.us/.