

*...before we plow an unfamiliar path
It is well to be informed about the winds,
About the variations in the sky,
The native traits and habits of the place,
What each locale permits, and what denies.*
-Virgil

*They're making people
everyday, but they ain't
makin' any more dirt.*
-Will Rodgers

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

What is organic agriculture? It is an ecological approach to farming that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on the minimal use of man-made products and emphasizes farming practices that are sustainable and ecology sound. "Organic" is a labeling term that denotes products produced under the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act. Organic agricultural methods are used to minimize pollution from air, soil, and water. Organic food handlers, processors and retailers adhere to standards that maintain the integrity of organic agricultural products.

In 1990 the California Organic Food Act was revised and added an enforcement component to the existing state laws. Each County Agricultural Commissioner now enforce these laws with their respective producers, handlers and retailers. The act also requires all organic producers and handlers to be registered with their home Agricultural Commissioner's office.

Marin County currently has 29 registered organic farms which vary in size from 1/4 acre to 220 acres. There are 312 acres of organically farmed land yielding a total gross value of 3.1 million dollars. Organic farming uses agricultural techniques that enable farmers to grow an array of crops in a small area of land. The diversity of fresh organic products in Marin include gourmet salad mixes, herbs, tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkins, wheatgrass, sprouts, watercress, vegetable seedlings, cut flowers and dairy products.

Small is not bad! Although organic farming accounts for a small fraction of the agricultural production in Marin, local consumers have a variety of choices on where to purchase these organic products. These include local farmer's markets, world class restaurants, retail and natural foods grocery stores and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). A CSA is a system where community members subscribe for farm products on a seasonal basis. Each week members receive a share of the farmer's harvest.

Marin County organic production has found a distinct and supportive organic marketing niche with local and Bay area consumers. These dedicated producers have laid the ground work for continued creative niche marketing as well as promoting a sustainable method of farming for future generations.

Cover Photo: Spinach seedlings emerging through fertile organic soil in West Marin.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

April 1, 1998

Ann M. Veneman, Secretary
California Department of Food and Agriculture
and

STACY K. CARLSEN
COMMISSIONER/DIRECTOR
ANDREA DEGRASSI
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER/DIRECTOR

Marin County Board of Supervisors:
John Kress, President, District 1

Harold C. Brown, District 2
Steve Kinsey, District 4

Annette Rose, District 3
Harry Moore, District 5

In accordance with the provisions of Section 2279 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, I am pleased to submit the Annual Crop Report for 1997. This report is a summary of counts, acreage, yields, and gross value of agricultural production in Marin County. The report represents gross returns to the producer and does not indicate actual net profit.

Despite heavy January rains Marin's agricultural production value for 1997 rose to \$57,338,984, a 1.6% increase over 1996.

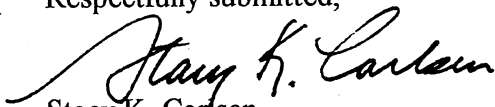
Milk, Marin's top commodity, had a 3% increase in production, but saw a \$1,768,333 (4.7%) decrease in value. The drop in milk price received corresponds to the reduction in the minimum farm milk prices set by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The minimum price is that minimum that processors must pay to purchase milk from farms. The price set reflects the supply and demand conditions of the dairy industry.

The biggest change in 1997 was \$3,122,663, a 68.6% increase in Livestock value. This growth was due to a 40% increase in the number of cattle sold and significantly better market prices over 1996. Hay and silage production values increased due to greater harvested acreage and to a recent introduction of hay for seed. Aquaculture fared better in 1997, though it was still plagued with the problems of past years, but to a lesser degree. Value increased by over 21%.

The value of fruit, nut and vegetable production fell by 2.7% due to fewer acres planted. Nursery products fell by 4.9% due to further cuts in production. Marin's only cut flower rose producer shut down the remainder of its rose production after a long struggle with foreign competition and rising costs. Poultry dropped by \$710,302, a 24% decrease, due in large part to lower prices received for turkey breeding eggs and some drop in production.

My appreciation goes to all of the individuals and organizations for their cooperation in providing the information for this report.

Respectfully submitted,

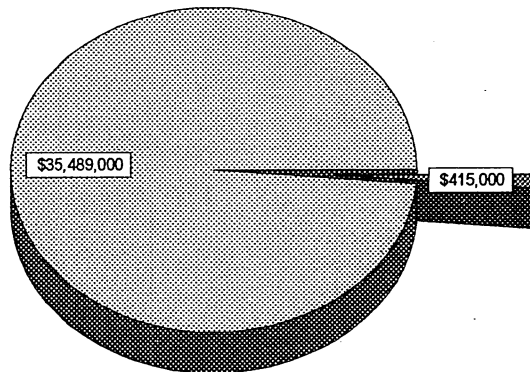

Stacy K. Carlsen
Agricultural Commissioner

FIELD, FRUIT, NUT & VEGETABLE CROPS

	YEAR	HARVESTED ACREAGE	TOTAL UNITS	DOLLAR VALUE	
				PER UNIT	TOTAL
Hay, Other	1996	2,929	6,502	58.89	\$382,870.00
Hay, Grass	1997	1,547	2,509	75.60	\$189,681.00
Hay, Oats		1,823	3,181	92.81	\$295,235.00
Silage	1996	2,721	33,134	24.86	\$823,573.00
	1997	3,349	31,706	22.80	\$723,099.00
Hay, Grain	1997	485	261	408.64	\$106,656.00
Pasture, Irrigated	1996	820		110.00	\$90,200.00
	1997	824		101.00	\$83,224.00
Pasture, Other	1996	154,000		29.00	\$4,466,000.00
	1997	154,000		29.00	\$4,466,000.00
Fruits, Nuts & Vegetables	1996	320			\$1,334,013.00
	1997	234			\$1,298,370.00
TOTAL	1996	160,790			\$7,096,656.00
	1997	162,262			\$7,162,265.00

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS				
		DOLLAR VALUE		
ITEM	YEAR	PROD. UNIT	PER UNIT	TOTAL
Milk: Market	1996	2,581,377 Cwt	14.27	\$36,825,000.00
	1997	2,692,365 Cwt	13.18	\$35,489,000.00
Milk:Manufact.	1996	64,806 Cwt	13.09	\$848,000.00
	1997	35,368 Cwt	11.74	\$415,000.00
Wool	1996	82,080 Lbs	.65	\$53,352.00
	1997	83,106 Lbs	.65	\$54,019.00
TOTAL	1996			\$37,726,352.00
	1997			\$35,958,019.00

MILK PRODUCTION VALUES



■ MILK: MARKET

■ MILK:MANUFACTURING

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY			
ITEM	YEAR	NO. OF HEAD	DOLLAR VALUE TOTAL
Cattle	1996	16,371	\$4,551,616.00
	1997	22,951	\$7,674,279.00
Lambs	1996	11,016	\$1,029,217.00
	1997	8,837	\$749,201.00
Poultry and Eggs: Hatching	1996		\$2,950,910.00
	1997		\$2,240,608.00
TOTAL	1996		\$8,531,743.00
	1997		\$10,664,088.00

INVENTORIES OF LIVESTOCK & POULTRY		
ITEM	January 1, 1997	January 1, 1998
All Cattle	44,407	44,053
Dairy Cows	13,486	13,100
Beef Cows	11,000	11,550
Stock Sheep	10,260	9,234
Poultry	455,624	120,908

NURSERY PRODUCTS				
		PRODUCTION AREA		TOTAL
		HOUSE SQUARE FT	FIELD AREAS	
ITEM	YEAR			
Nursery	1996	217,800	44.00	\$575,467
	1997	159,300	39.75	\$547,182

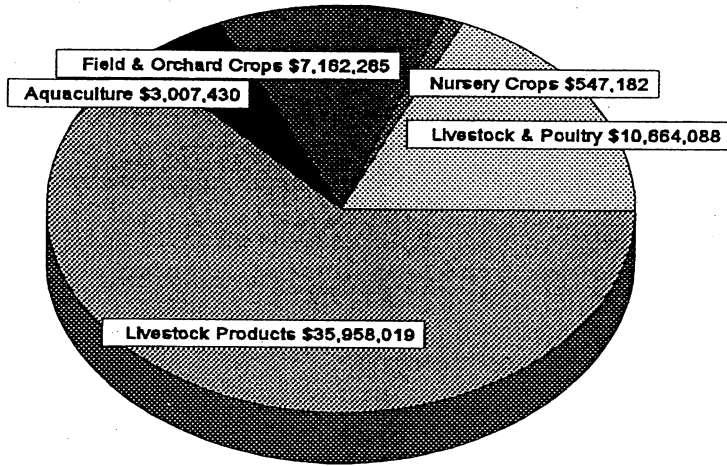
AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS			
	YEAR	PRODUCTION ACREAGE	DOLLAR VALUE
Oysters, Clams, Mussels, Abalone	1996	1,295	\$2,479,205.00
	1997	1,545	\$3,007,430.00

COMMERCIAL FISHING			
	YEAR	PRODUCTION ACREAGE	DOLLAR VALUE
Herring, Trout	1996	N/A	\$5,000,600.00
	1997	N/A	\$2,000,000.00

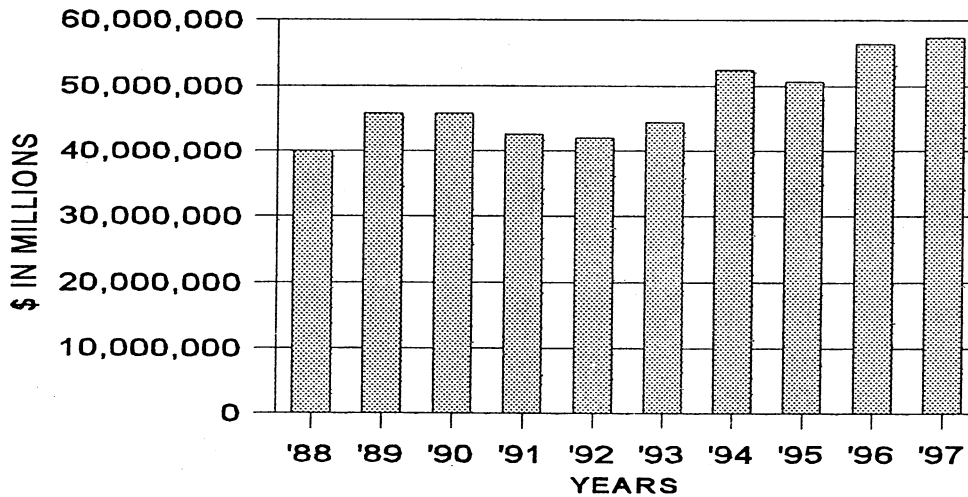
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COMPILATION		
	1996	1997
Field & Orchard Crops	\$7,096,656.00	\$7,162,265.00
Nursery Crops	\$575,467.00	\$547,182.00
Livestock & Poultry	\$8,531,743.00	\$10,664,088.00
Livestock Products	\$37,726,352.00	\$35,958,019.00
Aquaculture Products	\$2,479,205.00	\$3,007,430.00
TOTAL	\$56,409,423.00	\$57,338,984.00

1997 COMPILATION



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION GROSS VALUE TEN YEAR SUMMARY



SUMMARY OF THE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTION

Organic farming emphasizes a greater cooperation with nature without reliance on synthetic chemical inputs. All organic producers register in their principal county of operation.

Organic commodities produced in Marin County included: Apples, beans, berries, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, chard, cucumbers, cut flowers, garlic, herbs, leaf lettuce, mixed salad greens, onions, parsley, potatoes, pumpkins, silage, spinach, sprouts, squash, tomatoes, turnips, vegetable starts and watercress. Organic dairy products included: Milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, whipping cream and buttermilk.

There are 29 registered organic producers in Marin County farming 312 acres, producing a total gross value of 3.1 million dollars.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

Biological pest control is the use of natural enemies to help suppress pest populations to acceptable levels. Once the agent becomes established, control is self perpetuating, potentially reducing the need to use pesticides.

PEST

Gorse
Bull Thistle
Yellow Star Thistle
Scotch Broom
Ash White Fly
Italian Thistle
Puncture Vine
Kalamath Weed
Canada Thistle
Plumeless Thistle

BIOLOGICAL AGENT/MECHANISM

Gorse Mite, Seed Weevil
Bull Thistle Gall Fly
Seed Head Weevil, Gall Fly, Hairy Weevil, Peacock Fly
Seed Weevil, Stem Boring Moth
Parasitic Wasp
Seed Weevil
Seed Weevil
Beetle
Mechanical removal
Mechanical removal

PEST PREVENTION

Pest prevention is the systematic search for injurious pests before they have become established to help prevent costly and environmentally disruptive eradication programs.

Exclusion

4,052 shipments of incoming plant material inspected at UPS, Federal Express, Postal and delivery trucks.
80 shipments placed under quarantine for violation of plant quarantine laws.

Detection

751 exotic pest traps are placed in Marin County as front line to detect pests such as Medfly, Japanese Beetle, and Gypsy Moth.

DEPARTMENT STAFF

Agricultural Commissioner/Director of Weights and Measures

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Departmental Mission Statement

Our mission is to serve the public's interest by ensuring equity in the market place, promoting and protecting agriculture, protecting environmental quality and health and welfare of Marin County's citizens.

This document is available in alternative format upon request.