

What is the current size of the organic industry in California and here on the Central Coast? It seems like it is growing larger all the time.

The most recent statistics for organic agriculture in California are for the year 2003*. They show that total farm level sales in the state were estimated at \$330 million. Between 2002 and 2003 farm level sales increased 32%. Vegetables, fruits, and nuts make up the largest share of the sales, estimated at 83% of the state's total. Statewide vegetable sales were estimated at \$155 million, with fruit and nut sales at \$117 million.

Not surprisingly, the Central Coast—which includes Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito Counties—currently produces many of the crops shown to be the state's "top" organic crops with respect to farm level sales. These include lettuce, spinach, and broccoli, which had combined sales of \$59 million statewide, and strawberries, raspberries and blackberries, which had combined sales of \$24 million statewide.

Looking more specifically at the Central Coast, farm level sales for all organically produced crops posted at \$101 million in 2003—roughly one-third of the state's total. Vegetable crop sales represented the largest share at \$76 million; fruit and nut crop sales were at \$21 million. These two categories combined represent 96% of all organic production on the Central Coast.

In 2003 California's organic acreage was estimated to be 174,000 total acres. Between 2002 and 2003 acreage increased by roughly 6%. Acreage for vegetables, fruits, and nuts were prominent, with 52% of the total. Statewide, organic fruit and nut crops were produced on 46,000 acres; vegetable crops were produced on roughly the same number of acres. The Central Coast had the highest number of organic vegetable acres at 20,000 total, and ranked fifth highest in fruit and nut acreage at 3,000 total.

The numbers here discuss statistics for the past two years only. Statistics over the longer term have shown continued growth in the organic industry. Nevertheless, farm level sales for organic agriculture still represents roughly 1% of the total value of production in the state, with vegetables, fruits and nuts contributing the largest share.

*** If you are interested in additional detail about the organic industry in California and on the Central Coast, a more comprehensive report is available from the UC Davis Agricultural Issues Center at <http://www.aic.ucdavis.edu> under organic agriculture. The methods used to generate the analysis are also discussed. Please also feel free to contact our office in Watsonville if you would like additional information.**