

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Ask Laura Newsletter Column
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Q: What's the latest news on the growth of organic agriculture along the Central Coast?

A: A new report is now available showing that Central Coast farmers continue to be leaders in the state with respect to organic agricultural production and value. The Statistical Review of California's Organic Agriculture, 2005-2009¹, reports statewide totals for the number of growers, acres, and farm level sales value for five years. The report also separates this information into eight geographic regions, one of which is the Central Coast. Counties included in this region are: Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo. Two tables are presented here to give you a 'snapshot' view of the report. The full report will soon be available online at: <http://www.aic.ucdavis.edu/research1/organic.html>. Our office also has a copy.

Table 1 shows California and Central Coast totals for five years in the three categories noted. Central Coast farm level sales value as a percent of the state total is also included on the table.

Table 1. California & Central Coast Organic Agriculture, 2005-2009

	-----California-----			-----Central Coast-----			Sales Percent**
	Growers	Acres	Sales (\$)*	Growers	Acres	Sales (\$)*	
2005	1,795	195,171	511	243	28,476	149	29
2006	1,891	253,121	629	253	31,298	150	24
2007	2,156	353,906	808	301	44,055	181	22
2008	2,311	463,989	908	310	50,600	239	26
2009	2,330	486,169	921	303	48,548	225	24

* Farm level sales value in million dollars.

** Central Coast farm level sales value as a percent of the California total.

Table 2 shows farm level sales value for three crop groups that are prominent in organic agricultural production in California, and, more particularly, along the Central Coast.

Table 2. California & Central Coast Organic Farm Level Sales Value*
by Selected Crop Group, 2005-2009

	-----California-----			-----Central Coast-----		
	Vegetable (\$)	Fruit & Nut (\$)	Nursery** (\$)	Vegetable (\$)	Fruit & Nut (\$)	Nursery** (\$)
2005	220.4	166.9	8.1	114.4	30.5	3.4
2006	244.5	214.4	6.2	110.0	37.1	2.5
2007	347.5	274.7	12.4	117.9	54.3	7.7
2008	371.3	335.5	14.5	166.0	62.5	9.6
2009	355.2	340.5	13.5	153.1	60.9	8.4

* All farm level sales values are stated in million dollars.

** Includes nursery, greenhouse, and floriculture crops.

As you can see from the information contained in both tables, from 2005 to 2009 there was substantial growth in the organic industry, with the Central Coast's organic farmers making a significant contribution to California's organic agriculture in total. Nonetheless, it is important to look at organic agriculture as part of a larger agricultural picture for the state. The California Department of Food and Agriculture estimates the state's total value of production for all agriculture at \$34.6 billion in 2009. Total organic farm level sales value in 2009 therefore represents roughly 2.6 percent of all agricultural production in California.

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