

# A Look at Arizona Agriculture



Capitol: Phoenix

Population: 6,595,778

Founded: February 14, 1912 (48<sup>th</sup>)

State Bird: Cactus Wren

State Tree: Palo Verde

State Flower: Saguaro Cactus Bloom

Number of Counties: 15

Largest City: Phoenix - 1.5 million

Nickname: Grand Canyon State

Number of Farms: 15,600

Average Farm Size: 1,670 acres

Total Farmland: 26.1 million acres



[www.agclassroom.org/az](http://www.agclassroom.org/az)

## Climate & Soil

- The southern half of the state is mainly desert and is good for year round crop growth in irrigated areas. Arizona is on the western end of the Rocky Mountain chain and the northern half of the state is very mountainous. Cattle and sheep are the main agricultural commodities in this region. State elevation ranges from 70 ft. to 12,633 ft.
- With Arizona's diverse topography, the temperature average for southern Arizona, including the Phoenix metropolitan area, is lows of 30°F in the winter to over 100°F in the summer. In the northern portion of the state, the temperature fluctuates from 20°F to 95°F. The highest temperature recorded was 127°F. The lowest temperature recorded was -40°F.
- A major climate feature of the Southwest is the North American monsoon (a distinct seasonal change in wind direction of at least 120°). Arizona receives a majority of it's rainfall during this late summer period. On average, there are 197 clear, sunny days with an average rainfall of 13.6" a year giving Arizona a very low humidity.
- Most Arizona soils have very low levels of organic matter, usually less than 1% by weight.
- Our top soils around the state average only about one-half inch.
- Most of the state's farming occurs in the alluvial basins of the Colorado, Salt, Verde and Agua Fria rivers. Massive irrigation projects with dams for water storage in lakes and reservoirs provide a large portion of the water for farming. Arizona has one of the most efficient irrigation networks in the world.

## Crops & Livestock

- The top agricultural crop commodities in Arizona are lettuce, cotton and hay. Lettuce production represents 14% of the state's total farm receipts. Yuma, Arizona is the winter lettuce capitol of the world. Cotton produced 553,950 bales representing 6% of total farm receipts for the state. Hay was 5% of farm receipts.
- Arizona grows enough cotton each year to make more than one pair of jeans for every person in the United States.
- The top agricultural crop exports are vegetables, hay, cotton, and cottonseed.
- Arizona ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> nationally in it's production of cantaloupe & honeydew melons, head & leaf lettuce, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and lemons.
- Arizona alfalfa yield led the nation at 8.3 tons per acre, compared to 3.4 tons nationally.
- Cattle & calves and dairy goods are Arizona's most valuable farm products, with cattle & calves representing 18% of total farm receipts and dairy products 20%.
- There are approximately 1 million head of cattle & calves producing 386 million pounds of beef annually.
- There are 186,000 milk cows in the state with a yearly milk production of 23,382 pounds per cow.
- Arizona has over 165,000 hogs, and 150,000 head of sheep and lambs.
- The state has, on average, 1,600,000 laying hens which produce over 5.8 billion eggs a year.

## General

- Agriculture is a \$9.2 billion industry for the state of Arizona.
- Arizona's land ownership is 48% federal and state, 28% Native American, and 24% private.
- The state has the largest contiguous stand of Ponderosa pine forest in the world.
- The state's land grant university is the University of Arizona in Tucson. <http://cals.arizona.edu>