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For Immediate Release

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## **County Agricultural Commissioner 2020 Crop & Livestock Report Highlights Diverse Stories of Women in Ventura County Agriculture**

Ventura, CA - The year 2020 brought several things into sharp focus about the importance of agriculture to the County of Ventura. The COVID 19 pandemic pointed out how vulnerable and extraordinarily essential the 40,000 hardworking people who faithfully kept coming to work are to not only the residents of Ventura, but to people throughout the world. They kept the food, clothing, landscaping, and agricultural systems moving despite many new challenges and changes in our society. They did all this while not only worrying about how to provide food and shelter for their families, but also keeping them safe through rapidly changing work and social conditions.

Our report this year features the diverse stories of women in Ventura County agriculture. Women who grow crops, manage a farm, connect farmworkers to resources, advocate for farmworker rights, distribute wholesale produce, manage farmers' markets, provide agricultural education, contract farm labor, provide farm labor housing, oversee food safety, provide legal counsel, provide pest control advice, conduct agricultural research, and protect the industry, the public and the environment by regulating agriculture.

With the closure of restaurants and restrictions at grocery stores during 2020 the farming community and distributors had to scramble to change marketing practices and for some the type of produce they grew. Some of these changes are reflected in some of the crop values and production numbers.

### **Strawberries are still number one**

The estimated gross value of Ventura County's agriculture for calendar year 2020 is \$1,985,365,000. This represents a 0.2% decrease in comparison to 2019. Strawberries were again the number one crop at \$575,373,000, increasing by 13.0%. Lemons moved back into second place with a value of \$216,190,000, increasing by 2.0%. Nursery Stock moved up into third place with a value of \$193,135,000, increasing by 3.0%. Tomatoes remained in seventh place with a value of \$54,387,000, increasing by 17.0%. Peppers moved up into eighth place with a value of \$41,165,000, but decreased by 4.0%.

### **Big changes in the top ten**

Avocados moved up into fourth place with a value of \$179,727,000, increasing by 54.0%. Raspberries moved down to fifth place with a value of \$141,547,000, decreasing by 30.0%. Celery moved down to sixth place with a value of \$126,870,000, decreasing by 48.0%. Blueberries

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entered the top ten for the first time, landing in ninth place with a value of \$38,781,000, with a tremendous increase of 119.0 %!

Crops that dropped out of the top ten

Cabbage replaced Hemp as the number ten crop at \$37,135,000, increasing by 8.0% from 2019. Sadly, for the first time since 1983, cut flowers has dropped out of the top ten with a total value of \$33,917,000, a decrease of 27%.

Organic demand remains high

Although the number of acres farmed organically decreased, the value of crops grown organically increased by 1.8% from 2019 to 2020.

View the 2020 Crop Report at: <https://cdn.ventura.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2020-Crop-Report.pdf>

To learn more about support for Farmworkers please visit the County of Ventura's Farmworker Resource Program website at: <https://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/farmworker-resources/>.

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