



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### CROP VALUES RISE MORE THAN \$100 MILLION

Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner Juan Hidalgo is pleased to release the 2018 Santa Cruz County Crop Report, showing a 17 percent increase in crop production values over the previous year.

While strawberries remain the top crop in acres under production, yield and overall value, raspberries saw a 52 percent increase in value over the previous year. Raspberries' total value of \$168,465,000 is the highest figure ever recorded in Santa Cruz County, and was second behind strawberries' value of \$220,653,000.

"Weather, low prices and oversupply impacted our local growers in 2017, making for a challenging year," Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commission Juan Hidalgo said. "We're happy to see significant rebound in 2018 to put us back in line with historic growth in crop values. It demonstrates how resilient our local industry is."

The County's overall 2018 crop value of \$683,012,000 represents a \$101,812,000 million increase over 2017. The report is available at [www.agdept.com](http://www.agdept.com).

In addition to the dramatic rise in raspberry values, nursery stock (plants including landscape and indoor) rose 85 percent over the prior year, to \$83,204,000. The value of apple stocks also rose significantly to \$23,705,000, a 74 percent increase, likely due to favorable weather patterns.

Santa Cruz County is also a key incubator of the organic farming movement, and organic farming continues playing a significant role in overall crop production. With 140 registered organic growers in Santa Cruz County, the total value of organic crops was \$126,376,000, a 16 percent increase over the prior year.

The mission of the Santa Cruz County Department of Agriculture is to serve the public's interest by ensuring equity in the marketplace, promoting and protecting agriculture, assuring environmental quality, and protecting the health, safety and welfare of Santa Cruz County's citizens. The Department includes the agricultural division, weights and measures division, and mosquito and vector control division.