

KERN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

January 1, 1932

By: Lewis A. Burtch, Agricultural Commissioner

The total value of agricultural crops, exclusive of live stock and dairy production, in Kern County for the year 1932 is \$8,531,643. This valuation is based on the average f.o.b. prices received by the growers at shipping point and does not include the cost of transportation and marketing. It is lower than the total value of agricultural crops in the county for a number of years past. This is due to the present economic conditions prevailing throughout the country and not because of any shortage in production or lack of quality.

The total production of crops this year exceeded that of last year in volume and the quality was better than any we have produced in a great many years past.

Grapes still continue to be the leading crop in value, our production this year being about 500 cars more than last year and of better quality. The total produced was 3,502 cars of fresh grapes and 9,093 tons of raisins valued at \$2,456,406.

Cotton continues to follow in second place. Our production this year was 40,000 bales from 35,000 acres, which is still a world's record in pounds of lint per acre, and is valued at \$1,640,000. This includes the cotton seed. Alfalfa is third in value, producing 177,684 tons from 29,613 acres valued at \$1,243,788. Potatoes are fourth with a production of 2,572 railway cars from 4,841 acres and are valued at \$888,462.

The prices obtained for farm products were exceedingly low and few of the farmers showed a profit on their operation. However, despite these critical conditions, there seems to have

been some compensating factors for in many instances production costs are reported as reduced, either by good management or by force of necessity. The condition of agriculture in Kern County is better than it is in most other agricultural counties, and is in better condition than most of the industries. The fact has been demonstrated that we can produce a large crop per acre and produce it earlier than most of the competing production areas and due to our favorable climatic conditions are able to harvest our crops without much loss from the elements. This year was exceptionally favorable for production and no losses were occasioned by rain, hail, wind or frost.

There were practically no crops left in the field unharvested this year in spite of the discouragingly low prices prevailing, the farmers feeling that in a year like this that every salable product should be gathered and sold.

We are exceptionally free from dangerous insect pests and plant diseases which exist in other states and in other parts of California. The grape phylloxera, which has caused so much damage to vineyards in other parts of California, does not exist in Kern County. The cotton boll weevil and pink boll worm, which are such destructive factors in the major cotton producing states do not exist here. The alfalfa weevil does not exist in Kern County, yet it causes tremendous losses in other states and has invaded northern parts of California. We are free from infestations of the Colorado potato beetle which causes a severe loss to potatoes in other states.

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I cannot take the space in this article to enumerate the many dangerous insect pests and plant diseases which occur in other localities that do not exist here but have already mentioned one for each of our four major crops. Freedom from these pests is largely responsible for our greater production of these crops in Kern County. This position is largely due to the vigilance of the inspection service maintained by this department which is for the protection of agriculture and to prevent the introduction from other states and localities of these dangerous insects and plant diseases. Our department maintains quarantines against every state in the union for some dangerous insect or disease of plants known to exist there and not in our state. In carrying out this work we make an inspection of all plants shipped into the county by postal, freight, express or other common carriers and all individuals are required to report any plant products which they bring in other than by common carriers. We also inspect all nursery stock and products produced within the county and offered for sale to the growers in order that they may be assured that they are planting this stock free from insects and diseases. We also require the control or eradication of pests which are already existent in the county. One of the important pests is the elm leaf beetle, which, if it were not for our annual spray program, would entirely defoliate every elm tree in the county.

We are required to make field inspections and where there exists dangerous insect pests, plant diseases or animals, require the owner of the property to control or eradicate these

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pests for the protection of adjacent or neighboring areas. In this activity we poison annually about one half million acres of land that is infested with ground squirrels. The annual damage to agricultural crops has been many times the cost of control work. We have been able to reduce both the agricultural damage and the cost of control work many times during the past few years. In addition to the damage which these pests do to agricultural crops, they are known to be carriers of dangerous diseases to the human race such as bubonic plague, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Tularemia. These conditions alone would justify the expense of rodent control if they committed no damage to agriculture. We have been able through the Farm Bureau to purchase poison materials at wholesale prices. They were sold to the farmers at cost, making an annual saving to them of many thousands of dollars.

We inspect all shipments of seed to prevent the introduction of dangerous noxious weeds which have oftentimes been established in a clean area by means of this manner of distribution.

Apiary inspection is another phase of our activities and by the inspection of some 8,000 colonies of bees we have reduced the infestation of American foulbrood which causes great financial losses to the beekeeper to a point where little damage is done. The value of the honey crop this year is \$16,300 which would have been materially less were it not for the control of foulbrood.

We inspect all shipments of fruits and vegetables, both for the protection of the grower and the consuming public,

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to prevent the marketing of inferior quality fruits which might be infested with insects, rots, frost damage or other conditions. We inspected approximately 9,000 cars of fruits and vegetables leaving the county, as well as all incoming fruits and vegetables, both from a plant quarantine standpoint and fruit and vegetable standardization work.

We rejected many shipments due to lack of maturity and because of over-tolerance of other serious defects and intercepted many shipments coming into the county infested with red scale, purple scale, mealybugs and many other serious pests not known to exist in Kern County.

We also act as a clearing house for complaints of growers to the Division of Markets who enforce the provisions of the Produce Dealers' Act and in many cases have returned money to the grower which he was entitled to and otherwise could not collect.

We maintain two expert trappers in predatory animal control work. These men have rendered a very valuable service to the livestock industry of our county and last year killed about 450 coyotes and 200 bobcats. This method of predatory animal control was substituted for the old system of paying bounties and has proven much more effective and valuable to the livestock interests.

We are required to issue certificates on shipments leaving our county for markets in other states. Practically all of the potato crop grown here is sold in the northwestern states who require a certificate of inspection from point of origin and vacuum fumigation before entering their state.

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If it were not for this service rendered by our department the growers would be unable to market their crops in these states where they can obtain the best prices. We are also required to examine and issue certificates to persons engaged for hire in the control of plant pests and to supervise their work and revoke their license to operate if improper materials or work is employed. This affords a valuable protection to growers.

Agriculture is fast becoming Kern County's greatest and most important industry, and upon the prosperity of agriculture will depend the prosperity of Kern County.

As our agriculture develops we hope to keep the advantageous position which we now hold in being free from most of the serious insect pests and plant diseases by keeping our fields and orchards free from most of the serious insect pests and plant diseases.

ACREAGE, PRODUCTION & VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL CROPS FOR YEAR 1932

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Production</u>	<u>Unit Value</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>DECIDUOUS FRUITS</u>				
Apples	577	4,620 boxes	\$1.25	\$ 5,775
Apricots	1030½	1,953 tons	20.00	39,060
Apricots - dried		150 tons	40.00	6,000
Berries	60		300.00 acre	18,000
Cherries	48	50 tons	160.00	8,000
Figs	135½	60 tons	90.00	5,400
Figs dried		260 tons	45.00	11,700
Olives	741½	260 tons	70.00	18,200
Peaches	1053½	1,603 tons	70.00	112,210
Pears	737	516 tons	44.00	22,704
Persimmons	31	50 tons	40.00	2,000
Plums	1494½	2,025 tons	40.00	81,000
Pomegranates	79	312 tons	52.00	16,224
Prunes	194½	100 tons	50.00	5,000
Walnuts	71	17 tons	260.00	4,420
Almonds	68	22 tons	200.00	4,400
Other Fruits	187½	900 tons	40.00	36,000
	<u>6508</u>			<u>\$396,093</u>

CITRUS

Grapefruit	46½	3,696 boxes	3.35	12,382
Lemons	7½	100 boxes	3.00	300
Oranges	1328	92,400 boxes	3.67	339,108
Tangerines	80½	6,000 bags	1.10	6,600
	<u>1462½</u>			<u>\$ 358,390</u>

GRAPES

Table	6849	16,240 tons	50.00	\$812,000
Wine	2763½	11,134 tons	22.00	244,948
Raisin	7932½	18,159 tons	32.00	581,088
Dry Raisins		9,093 tons	90.00	818,370
	<u>17545</u>			<u>\$2,456,406</u>

MELONS

Cantaloupes	540	66,515 crates	.90¢	59,864
Watermelons	1928	11,520 tons	8.00	92,160
Other Melons	291	1,183 tons	8.00	9,464
	<u>2759</u>			<u>\$161,488</u>

<u>CROP</u>	<u>AC. ACRE</u>	<u>PRODUCTION</u>	<u>UNIT VALUE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u> (Dollars Only)
<u>Vegetables</u>				
Potatoes	4,841	1,138,925 bu.	.78	\$ 884,462
Cabbage	20	1,677 tons	12.00	20,124
Carrots	211	29,900 crates	1.00	29,900
Cucumbers	33	10,000 lugs	.75	7,500
Lettuce	335	56,340 crates	1.50	84,510
Onions	1925	195,582 bushels	.57	\$111,482
Sweet Potatoes	696	139,200 bushels	.75	104,400
String Beans	5	359 lugs	.50	180
Tomatoes	93	18,600 lugs	.60	11,160
Cauliflower	104	13,400 crates	.75	10,050
Peas	142	40,000 bushels	1.80	72,000
Beans	33	650 bags	1.50	975
Asparagus	40	205 crates	2.00	410
Other Vegetables	291		100.00	29,100
	<u>8769</u>			<u>\$1,366,253</u>

#### FIELD CROPS

Cotton	35,000	40,000 bales	35.00	1,400,000
Cotton Seed		20,000 tons	12.00	240,000
Grain Hay	1,700	2,550 tons	6.00	15,300
Alfalfa	29,614	177,684 tons	7.00	1,243,788
Silage Crops	2,000	3,000 tons	7.00	21,000
Nursery Stock	40		500.00 Acres	20,000
Mint	150		100.00 "	15,000
Honey		560,000 lbs.,	.03 lb.	16,800
	<u>68,504</u>			<u>\$2,971,888</u>
Barley	1,500	37,500 sacks	.85	31,875
Milo, etc.,	23,500	510,000 sacks	.70	357,000
Wheat	57,500	432,250 sacks	1.00	432,250
	<u>82,500</u>			<u>\$ 821,125</u>

Total Acreage  
All Crops

188,047

Total Value all Crops

\$4,537,643



- 1932 SHIPMENTS FROM KERN COUNTY -

- Products -	Railway Cars	Estimated Cars by Truck	Total Cars
Apples		1	1
Apriocots	32	139	171
Cantaloupes	161	61	222
Figs		1	1
Grapefruit		6	6
Grapes	3024½	846	3870½
Lemons		3	3
Lettuce	106	54	160
Nectarines		2	2
Olives		34½	34½
Onions	278½	175	453½
Oranges	157½	69	220½
Peaches	58	77	135
Pears	31	10	41
Persimmons	1½	½	2
Plums	147	46½	193½
Pomegranates		9½	9½
Potatoes	1791	765	2576

- 1932 Shipment from Main Road -

Products	Railway Cars	Estimated cars by Truck	Total Cars
<u>Continued from preceding page</u>			
Sweet Potatoes	2	124	126
Prunes		4	4
Guineas		2	2
Tangerines		4	4
Watermelons	646	240	886
Honey Dew Melons	22	174	394
Perian Melons	11	35	46
Casabas	1	4	5
Carrots	23		23
Cauliflower	11		11
Peas	12		12
Mixed Vegetables		86	86
Total Shipments	6,510	2,842	9,352

Cars by rail ..... 6,510

Estimated cars by truck... 2,842

9,352 Total