

Cauliflower Production in California

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Historic background

In the early 20th century, cauliflower was mainly produced around the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles. Los Angeles County in the south and San Mateo, San Francisco and Alameda counties in the north were the most important producers.

With land prices rising, cauliflower production moved away from the close vicinities of the population centers and spread, mainly along the coast^[1]. Santa Barbara County became the most important producer in the 1930s^[2].

Harvested area increased rapidly until 1930, reaching 17,100 acres (Figure 1). Production area fluctuated widely until the early 1950s, when it dropped to a low of 12,000 acres. Following the early 1950s, the cauliflower production area increased almost exponentially, reaching a maximum in 1986 with 53,000 acres. Since then, the area has decreased again to stabilize between 31,000 and 35,000 acres since 2006^[3].

The rapid growth of the cauliflower industry after 1915 was largely due to improved transportation facilities. California together with Oregon, New York and Colorado were the major producers of cauliflower in the U.S.^[1], with California growers producing between 70 and 90% of the U.S. cauliflower. California has remained the major cauliflower supplier in the nation, producing now close to 90% of the US harvest^[3].

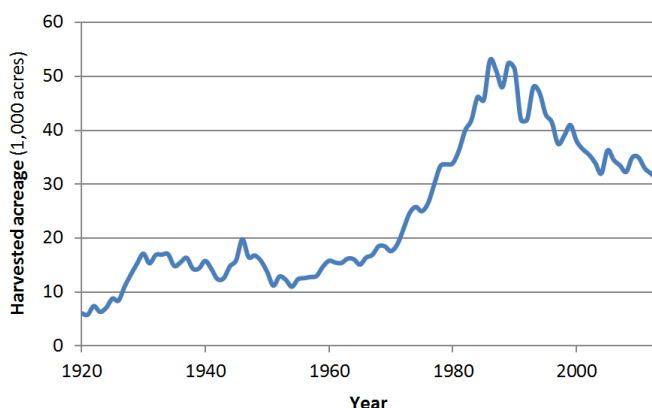


Figure 1: Harvested acreage of cauliflower in California since 1920^[3].

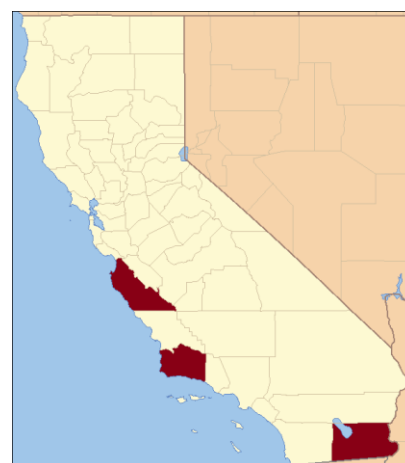


Figure 2: Location of the leading cauliflower producing counties in California^[3].

Yield and production regions

While the yields in the 1960s and 1970 averaged close to 100 cwt/acre, they have increased almost linearly since then to reach 180 cwt/acres in 2013 (Figure 3) ^[3].

Roughly half of the acres harvested are located in Monterey County. Other important production areas are located in Santa Barbara and Imperial County (Figure 2) ^[3]. Together, these three counties produce almost two thirds of the cauliflower in California, or half of the U.S. production.

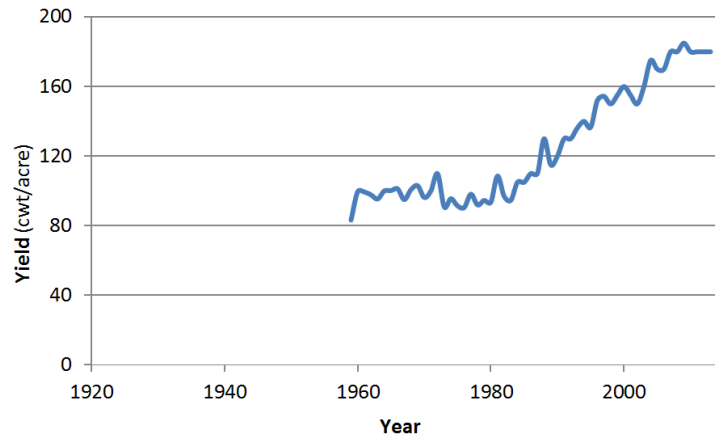


Figure 3: Development of cauliflower yield since 1959 in California ^[3].

References

1. Jones, H.A., Ernst, F.H., 1927. Cauliflower production in California. California Agricultural Extension Service. Circular 11. University of California printing office, Berkeley, CA.
2. Jones, H.A., Ernst, F.H., Tavernetti, A.A., 1935. The cauliflower industry of California. California Agricultural Extension Service. Circular 93. University of California printing office, Berkeley, CA
3. USDA NASS. Available online at <http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>

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This document is available online at http://apps.cdffa.ca.gov/frep/docs/Cauliflower_Production_CA.pdf

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