



# A Look at *Colorado* Agriculture

Capital: Denver

Population: 5,607,154

Founded: August 1, 1876 (38<sup>th</sup>)

State Bird: Lark bunting

State Tree: Blue Spruce

State Flower: Rocky Mountain

Columbine

Number of Counties: 64

Largest City: Denver - 693,060

Nickname: The Centennial State

Number of Farms: 33,800

Average Farm Size: 938 acres

Total Farmland: 31.7 million acres



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## Climate & Soil

- Colorado's climate is generally dry and sunny. It is a semi-arid state averaging 15" of precipitation.
- Colorado has dry winters, wetter springs and summer, highly changeable weather, often windy and the occasional monstrous thunderstorms with damaging hail.
- Because of the difference in altitude found in the state there is a large range of temperatures.
- The soils in the eastern plains regions and the valley of the western mountains are the most fertile in the nation.
- Colorado's State soil is "Seitz soil" that consists of very deep, well drained, slowly permeable soils that were formed from igneous, sedimentary and volcanic rocks. Seitz soils are found on mountains, mainly in southwestern and central Colorado.
- Colorado's warm days and cool nights help lock in sweetness in fruits such as peaches and melons.

## Crops & Livestock

- Colorado ranks first nationally in production of proso millet. This annual grass is grown as a grain crop and is used for bird and livestock feed.
- Colorado's production of sunflowers ranks fourth in the nation.
- The San Luis Valley is the largest and highest alpine valley in the world capable of producing crops. Elevation in the valley ranges from 7,400 to 8,000 feet.
- Colorado produces more than 100 million pounds of pinto bean each year, ranking ninth nationally in dry bean production.
- Colorado's leading vegetable crops are potatoes, cabbage, and onions.
- Colorado's leading fruit crops are peaches and apples.
- Cattle and Calves is Colorado's number one agricultural commodity with 2.8 million head of cattle in the state.
- Colorado's sheep and lamb totals rank third in the nation and Colorado wool production ranks fourth.
- In 2016, Colorado's 155,000 milk cows produced more than 456 million gallons of milk.
- There are 4.6 million layers in Colorado producing more than 1.3 billion eggs each year.
- There are over 40 aquaculture producers (or fish farmers) in this state.
- There are 32,000 bee colonies in Colorado producing nearly 1.5 million pounds of honey every year.
- Sugarbeet production in Colorado totaled 927,000 tons in 2016, ranking Colorado ninth nationally.
- Colorado's grape growing regions range in elevation from 4,000 to 7,000 feet and are among the highest vineyards in the world.

## General

- Nearly half of the state's total land area is used for production agriculture.
- There are more than 170,000 jobs in Colorado related to agribusiness, contributing more than \$40 billion annually to Colorado's economy.
- Colorado exports nearly \$2 billion in products. Canada, Mexico, Japan, Korea, and China receive the largest share of Colorado food products.