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W. B. Saunders

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

SAN BENITO COUNTY

HOLLISTER, CALIFORNIA

COURT HOUSE

W. B. SAUNDERS  
COMMISSIONER  
AND  
QUARANTINE OFFICER

# 1951 Report On Crops

Farmers, ranchers and orchardists in San Benito county collected \$17,230,490 in gross income last year.

It was the second straight year that returns have increased for agriculture although prices and sales did not equal the all-time high of \$19,940,640 of 1946. Even so, gross income was over a million dollars more than the \$15,880,844 farmers here collected in 1950.

A bumper tomato crop, good apricot prices and continued high offerings for beef and sheep were credited with the income rise. Wool prices were the highest on record.

## BRIGHT PICTURE

The bright farm income picture is reflected in the 1951 crop report of Ward B. Saunders, county agriculture commissioner.

Nine fruit and nut crops brought \$5,394,450 to growers. More than 14 truck and field crops were harvested for a total of \$4,982,905. General farm produce, including livestock, brought \$6,853,135 to farmers and ranchers.

Returns for the last five years are as follows:

1947	.....	\$19,389,454
1948	.....	\$18,160,623
1949	.....	\$14,572,238
1950	.....	\$15,880,844
1951	.....	\$17,230,490

## THE REASONS

Saunders reviewed reasons for the income increase and predicted slightly higher income and crops next year.

He had one warning: production costs are likely to increase as the inflation pressure increases and the value of the dollar continues to go down.

"The total returns from fruit and nut crops in San Benito County are up slightly—about \$50,000—from last year," he said. "An increase in returns from the apricot crop was offset by a reduction in the returns from prunes, cherries and walnuts.

"The crop yields were, on the whole, about the same as 1950 but low prices for prunes cut down the increased returns from other fruit crops.

"Growing conditions were fair," he continued. "The cool weather caused a very late apricot and prune harvest. Some losses were reported from brown rot in apricots."

## PRUNES SMALL

"Prune sizes where the crop was heavy were disappointing. Heat injury to winter pears, especially Comice, was considerable, Easter Buerre pears were not harvested on account of lack of profitable markets.

"Prices for Winter Nelis and D'Anjous were not good. In contrast, Bartlett pear prices were up about \$20 a ton.

Both grape prices and sugar content were low during 1951, Saunders

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pointed out. Some growers received \$52.50 a ton, higher than the San Joaquin valley market, but still too low for a reasonable profit.

He concluded the orchard picture with the note that the only new tree plantings included walnuts and a few acres of Bartlett Pears.

## ROW CROPS

Row crop returns were up about \$450,000 over last year although a slump in some crops was noted. Tomatoes, potatoes, cotton and onions, with increased production or prices, helped keep the gross income rising.

Sugar beet acreage and yields were lower.

"Lettuce prices in 1951 were much better than in 1950," he said. "However, the acreage in San Benito County was about 100 acres less."

"Potato acreage was up and yields were better than in 1950. Prices were better, but establishment of price ceilings reduced prices to growers a good deal."

## COTTON UP

"Cotton plantings jumped from 52 to 695 acres but further increases of such proportions is unlikely."

General crops up almost a million dollars from 1950, included grain and livestock.

"Beef and sheep prices continue high," said the commissioner. "For a while wool prices were the highest on record. Hog values under present grain prices are not good."

"Egg production in the county remained about the same. Higher grain prices have reduced production profits. The broiler business has increased and one producer has 32,000 birds under one roof."

## TURKEY PROFIT

"Turkey numbers and profits were up. Mortality losses were lower and prices were up. Butterfat production was down slightly. Grain acreage and yields were down but prices advanced."

Looking forward to the current year, Saunders predicted about the same fruit crops with little change in prices. Prunes will likely be a little higher with a smaller state crop. Apricots and pears may be a little lower with increased state production.

"For row crops, potatoes may have increased plantings," he observed. "Spring lettuce harvest will probably be down due to heavy rainfall delaying planting."

## 1952 CROP PREVIEW

"The garlic crop is likely to be less and sugar beet acreage will be reduced. Some increase in tomatoes is likely."

"For other crops there is no indication at present of any considerable change in acreage.

"Grain planting may not exceed last year with planting made difficult by wet weather.

"Sheep and beef production will likely increase along with broiler and turkey production. Egg production is likely to go down."

Thanks are due to the growers, packers and other organizations as well as individuals for making this report possible.

A complete breakdown of 1951 gross income follows:

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## FRUIT AND NUT CROP

CROPS	ACRES	GROSS VALUE
Apricots .....	4,310	\$2,692,700
Apples .....	152	121,600
Almonds .....	28	5,000
Cherries .....	52	8,800
Grapes .....	1,684	141,120
Peaches .....	39	18,000
Pears .....	588	690,900
Prunes .....	3,593	1,116,330
Walnuts .....	1,649	600,000
<b>TOTAL</b> .....		<b>\$5,394,450</b>

## TRUCK CROPS

CROPS	ACRES	GROSS VALUE
Sugar Beets .....	4,539	\$ 924,995
Garlic .....	520	299,700
Lettuce .....	786	235,500
Beans .....	1,357	244,260
Peas .....	214	64,200
Seeds .....	1,450	435,000
Tomatoes .....	1,444	779,760
Carrots .....	28	5,600
Miscellaneous Crops .....	500	100,000
Broccoli, Squash .....	240	60,000
Cotton .....	695	291,900
Onions .....	315	315,000
Spinach .....	1,493	206,990
Potatoes .....	1,785	\$1,120,000
<b>TOTAL</b> .....		<b>\$4,982,905</b>

## GENERAL FARM PRODUCE

CROPS	ACRES	GROSS VALUE
Barley .....	30,000	\$ 990,000
Wheat .....	3,200	114,800
Hay .....	16,000	400,000
Beef .....		2,692,800
Sheep .....		128,000
Hogs .....		96,620
Dairy .....		286,995
Broilers, Eggs, Meat .....		606,000
Turkeys .....		1,537,920
<b>TOTAL</b> .....		<b>\$6,853,135</b>

## SUMMARY

Fruit Crop .....	\$5,394,450
Truck Crop .....	4,982,905
General Crops .....	6,853,135
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	<b>\$17,230,490</b>