

Fact Sheet

Texas Agriculture



The Texas Story

Texas leads the United States in number of farms and ranches, with nearly 250,000 farms and ranches covering over 51 million hectares (125 million acres). Of these, 93% of the farms and ranches in Texas are family-owned and -operated, and today one of every seven working Texans is in an agriculture-related job. As a result, producing high-quality, safe agricultural products is a way of life for many Texas families, and it has been that way for generations. Many of our farms and ranches are multi-generational, as families pass down the legacy of agriculture to their children.

The size of the state coupled with its varied climates and soil composition creates an optimal environment for producing a variety of food, fiber, and other crops throughout the year. Texas farmers, and ranchers' pasture and range land support healthy habitats for wildlife, pollinators, fish, and a wide variety of native plant, animal, and insect species. At the same time, Texas is first in the nation for our infrastructure for wind energy, which is also supported by our pasture and range land.



Our farmers and ranchers are committed to innovation, using agricultural technology to produce safe, abundant products in ways that are more economically and environmentally sustainable. Dairy operations in Texas are implementing best management practices including water conservation and recycling and developing on-farm biodigester and renewable energy sources, while cotton fields accommodate wind turbines to produce renewable energy.

In Texas, farming and ranching is driven by a culture of and commitment to producing high-quality, safe products in a way that will sustain Texas agriculture families and the land they manage for many generations.

What We Produce

With its diverse climates and land, Texas produces many agricultural commodities to fill seasonal gaps around the world. Texas is among the top 10 producers in the U.S. for more than 40 major commodities. The state is 5th in the nation in agricultural exports, ranking 2nd in total animal products exported, and 10th in total plant products exported. Texas exports key commodities, including: Pecans, Peanuts, Citrus (including Grapefruit), Produce, Sorghum, Cotton, Timber, Wheat, Corn, Rice, Livestock and Genetics, Beer, Wine, Spirits, Beef, Dairy and Poultry.

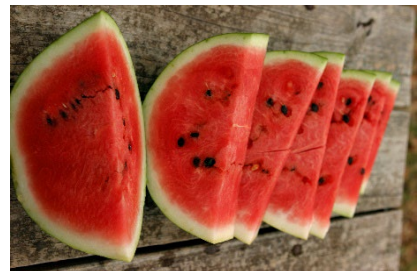
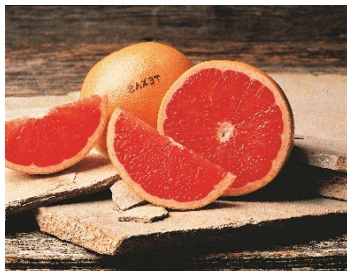


While beef dominates Texas agriculture at over 50% of the state's agricultural products, cotton, milk, and broilers (young chickens) make up over one-quarter of total production in the state. Given Texas has the most cattle, its robust livestock and genetics industry is tremendous. It ranks 2nd in the nation for sorghum production, which is used primarily for livestock feed and ethanol production, but is becoming popular in the consumer food industry and other emerging markets.

Pecans are the only major tree nut that is truly native to the U. S., with Texas being the top producer among states where the pecan tree originated. In Texas, this nut is revered as the Official State Health Nut and its tree is known as the State Tree of Texas. In addition to managed pecan orchards, native or "wild" pecan trees are found throughout Texas, primarily along river bottoms.

Texas is the only state to grow all four types of peanuts (Runner, Virginia, Valencia, and Spanish), and the state leads in growing organic peanuts. Texas peanuts are high oleic peanuts, which provides health benefits and longer shelf stability.

Texas is the 5th largest rice producer in the U.S. The upper Texas coast is home to most of the state's rice production and milling industry. The Texas Rice Belt plays an important environmental, as well as agricultural, role in the coastal prairie. Texas produces mostly long grain rice, which cooks up as separate, fluffy grains. Versatile long grain rice is often used for recipes requiring rice grains with a distinct shape and texture.



Texas farmers produce over 600 specialty crops, and the state is recognized as a top grower in the U.S. of more than 60 of them. Various produce, like green cabbage, carrots, herbs, mushrooms, tomatoes and turnips, are available year-round.

Over the last century, Texas's rich soil, temperate climate, and moderate rainfall have helped growers and researchers in the state to develop uniquely Texan produce, including red grapefruit and the TX1015 sweet onion. The state is the country's top producer of watermelon and second in carrots and pumpkins. It is also a major grower of grapefruit, oranges, melons, peppers, cabbages, cucumbers, mushrooms, and spinach.

As the 5th largest wine-producing state in the U.S., Texas wines are gaining national and international recognition. At the same time, beer and spirits in Texas are growing industries with increasing recognition worldwide.

Timber has been a major commodity in Texas for nearly 200 years. Forest land covers roughly 38% of the state's land area with approximately 25.3 million hectares (62.6 million acres). East Texas is known for its Piney Woods, where much of the state's timber and forest products are produced.

More Information

Contact the Texas Department of Agriculture for more information about Texas agricultural products at GoGlobal@TexasAgriculture.gov.

