

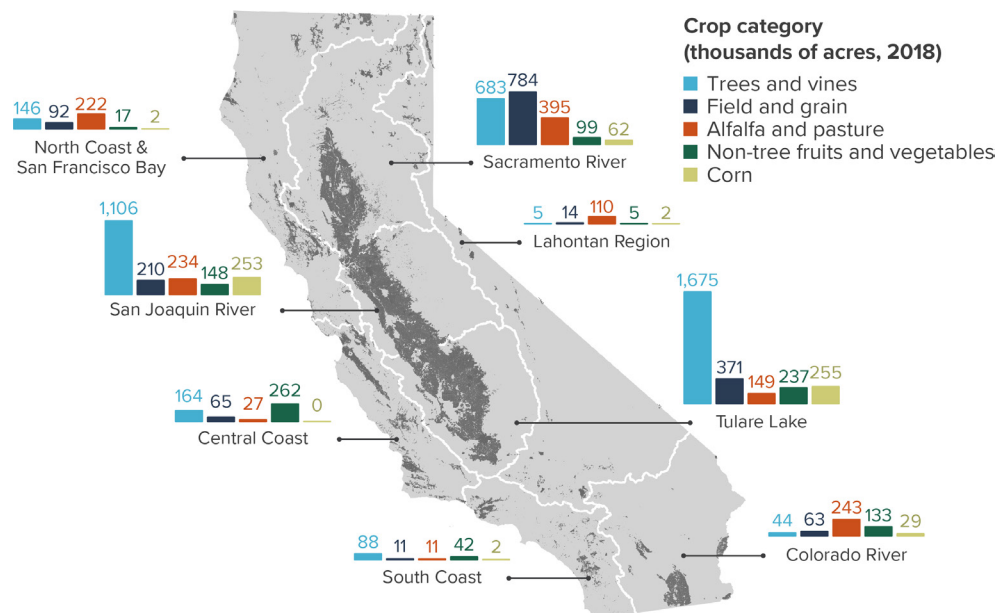
# Agricultural Land Use in California

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## Roughly 40 million acres—40% of California’s land—are used for agriculture

- ▶ One-fifth of all working lands, or about 8.5 million acres, is used for irrigated crops, including a diverse mix of nuts, fruits, vegetables, grains, hay, and fiber.
- ▶ In addition, livestock grazing occurs on about [32 million acres](#) of mostly non-irrigated rangeland—including 17 million acres of private lands and 15 million acres of federal lands.
- ▶ California’s irrigated crops [use about 40% of the state’s water](#), or 80% of all water used by homes and businesses. They [generate over \\$40 billion](#) in farm revenue annually, and they supply large dairy and beef sectors, which generate more than \$10 billion.

## The crop mix varies considerably across different regions of California



Source: Author calculations using California Department of Water Resources (DWR) [Statewide Crop Mapping dataset](#). For details, see the dataset: [PPIC Irrigated Crop Acreage, 2018–22](#) (Cole 2024).

Notes: The map shows irrigated crop acreage in 2018, a near-average water year. Dark gray areas are irrigated cropland and are broken into five groups: (1) alfalfa and pasture, (2) corn (primarily for animal feed), (3) field and grain (cotton, dry beans, rice, safflower, sunflower, grains, and hays), (4) trees and vines (including fruit and nut perennials), and (5) non-tree fruits and vegetables (berries, cucurbits, lettuce, onions, garlic, tomatoes, and truck crops). Crop totals are shown by hydrologic region.

## Irrigated farmland is concentrated in several regions, and the crop mix has been shifting

- ▶ About three-quarters of all irrigated acreage lies in the Central Valley, where a variety of crops is grown. Specialty fruits and vegetables and forage for dairy and beef are grown along the coast and the southeast.
- ▶ Although total acreage has remained similar in recent decades, the crop mix has shifted dramatically. Perennial orchards and vineyards now cover about half of all acreage—double their share in the mid-1980s. Cotton, alfalfa, and other annual crop acreage has fallen.
- ▶ Marijuana, another irrigated crop, is only partially tracked. About [2,000 acres are cultivated](#) on small, permitted farms, and there are also [many illegal grow operations](#).