

CALAVERAS AG OUTPUT RISES

REOPENED LUMBER MILL A KEY FACTOR

Photo 1 of 2 | [Zoom Photo +](#)



Logs are cut at the Sierra Pacific Industries mill near Sonora in October. The mill, which had been closed for a couple of years, was retooled to take smaller-diameter trees. The mill's reopening boosted Calaveras County agricultural output last year. that are now what mostly comes out of area forests.CRAIG SANDERS/Record File 2011

By ***Dana M. Nichols***

July 11, 2012

Record Staff Writer

July 11, 2012 12:00 AM

SAN ANDREAS - The total dollar value of Calaveras County agricultural production jumped about 9 percent to \$23 million in 2011, thanks largely to increased demand for lumber and the reopening of a Sierra Pacific Industries mill in Sonora in nearby Tuolumne County.

According to the annual Calaveras County Agriculture Report issued Tuesday by County Agricultural Commissioner Mary Mutz, the county produced \$4.1 million in timber in 2011, up from \$1.8 million the year before.

As for other major commodities produced in Calaveras, the value of cattle was up slightly for the year, the value of winegrapes declined slightly, and the value of poultry was down sharply from 2010.

Cattle remained king. With a total value of \$7.6 million, cows and calves were by far the single most valuable agricultural commodity.

Rising prices for cattle allowed county producers to increase their dollar take at the same time that they sold fewer head.

Strong prices prompted by some recovery in lumber markets also boosted the value of Calaveras County timber.

Production increased about 31 percent over the previous year to 33,661 million board feet. But the value of production more than doubled to \$4.1 million, making timber production second only to cattle in value.

Mutz said in an email that last year's reopening of the Sierra Pacific Industries mill in Sonora increased the volume of timber taken from area forests at the same time that an improved lumber market pushed up prices.

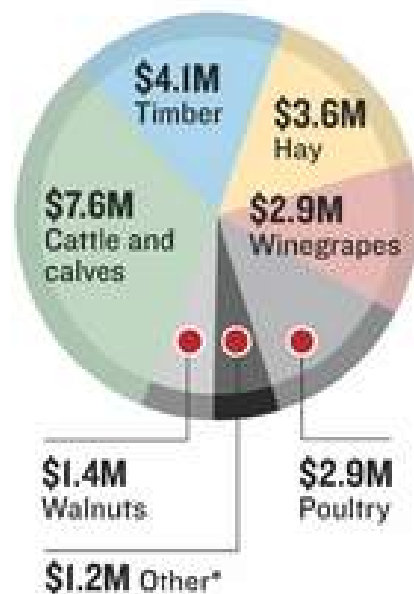
Last year's long winter and cool weather caused a slight decline in winegrape production even as prices and acres planted both rose.

Grapes were the third most valuable single agricultural commodity at about \$2.9 million.

Contact reporter Dana M. Nichols at (209) 607-1361 or dnichols@recordnet.com. Visit his blog at recordnet.com/calaverasblog.

Calaveras County agriculture

The total value of Calaveras County agricultural production rose in 2011 thanks to increased demand for lumber. Here are the values of top commodities.



*Various other crops and livestock including vegetables, nursery products, sheep, lambs, ewes, llamas, goats, wool, eggs and orchard crops not otherwise listed

Source: Calaveras County
agricultural commissioner

KORY HANSEN/
The Record