



A Look at *New Mexico* Agriculture

Capital: Santa Fe

Population: 2,085,109

Founded: January 6, 1912 (47th)

State Bird: Roadrunner

State Tree: Pinon Pine

State Flower: Yucca

Number of Counties: 33

Largest City: Albuquerque - 557,169

Nickname: Land of Enchantment

Number of Farms: 24,700

Average Farm Size: 1,749 acres

Total Farmland: 44.8 million acres



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Climate & Soil

- New Mexico is home to six of the seven life zones in the world. (Life zones refer to groups of plants and animals that grow in certain temperatures and elevations.)
 - Lower Sonoran- below 4,500 ft.
 - Upper Sonoran-between 4,500-8,000 ft.
 - Transition- between 8,000- 9,5000 ft.
 - Canadian-between 8,500-12,000 ft.
 - Hudsonian- above 11,000 ft.
 - Artic- Alpine [De Angelis, Therese. New Mexico. NewYork: Scholastic, 2009. Print.]
- The diverse growing season ranges between 60 days in the North, 110 days in the Rio Grande Corridor, and 190 days in the South.
- Penistaja soils are the state soil of New Mexico and cover more than 1 million acres. In Navajo, "Penistaja" means "forced to sit". This type of soil is productive for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat.
- Due to its geographic diversity, New Mexico's annual precipitation varies between as high as 20 inches in the North and as low as 9 inches in the South. Due to the fact that New Mexico is so dry, most farms are irrigated.

Crops & Livestock

- Top agricultural products for New Mexico include milk, beef cattle & calves, pecans, hay, sheep, onions, chile, greenhouse/nursery, cotton, corn, wheat, poultry and eggs.
- Farming and ranching have deep roots in New Mexico. About 2500 years ago the Mogollon people grew corn, squash, and beans. Native Americans, Spanish explorers, and Anglo pioneers all brought unique contributions that are still important to New Mexico agriculture today.
- Beef cattle were introduced into New Mexico in 1598, when Juan de Onate brought 799 cows, steers and bulls to what was then a Mexican colony.
- By grazing cattle on remote lands, ranchers utilize a resource that is too dry, rocky or rugged for growing crops.
- Many ranchers use state trust lands for grazing and the fees they pay help fund the state's education system.
- 98% of New Mexico's ranches are family owned and have been handed down through multiple generations.
- New Mexico, along with Texas and Georgia, consistently ranks as one of the top 3 pecan producing states in the nation.
- New Mexico has some of the largest dairy herds in the nation (about 2,175 milking cows per herd) thanks to our large land base.
- NM cows rank amongst the highest producing in the nation in milk productivity (more milk per cow) thanks to excellent climate conditions.
- New Mexico consistently ranks among the top 10 states in the nation in milk production and among the top 5 in cheese production.
- Southwest Cheese LLC, one of the largest cheese plants in the world, is located in the eastern part of NM. They take in about 230 tanker loads of milk per day.
- New Mexico State University (NMSU) leads the nation in chile research with the Chile Pepper Institute.

General

- New Mexico offers the most diverse record of volcanic activity in the nation. The youngest volcanic rocks are roughly 3,800 years old, while the oldest being 25 million years old.
- The Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, built in 1610, is one of the oldest public buildings in America. Santa Fe is also the oldest capital city in the U.S.
- Acoma Pueblo (Sky City), New Mexico, inhabited since 1150, is the oldest continuously inhabited community in the United States.