

RIPE FOR THE PICKING

Washington State offers rich soils, diverse climates, and large-scale irrigation, making the state one of the most productive growing regions in the world. Farmers in Washington are able to produce some 300 crops each year. Further, the state's deep-water ports and its proximity to important Asian markets provide a natural advantage for agricultural trade. Additionally, with the emergence of a sustainable agriculture movement, Greater Seattle has become a leader in urban farming, making agriculture one of our most exciting industries.

RANKED #1 IN U.S. FOR ELEVEN AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES

BEST OF THE BEST

Washington State is a unique region when it comes to agriculture. The state is composed of a number of climate zones allowing for the production of a broad range of agricultural yields not offered in most states. Further, irrigation allows the desert climate of Eastern and Central Washington to be some of the most valuable agricultural land in the state. Washington State is ranked first in the production of eleven commodities. The five that generate the most revenue are apples, dairy products, beef cattle, wheat, and potatoes. Approximately 39,000 farms operate on over 15 million acres. Washington State's location is ideal for the export of agricultural goods through its deep-water ports. All of these factors make agriculture the third largest export for the state. Overall, the goods produced in this diverse industry are valued at \$7.9 billion.

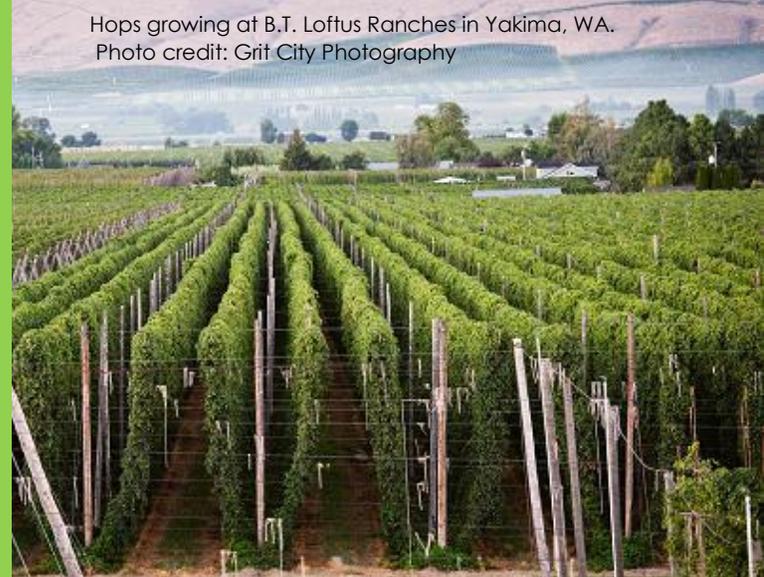
Ranks No. 1 in U.S. production in 11 commodities:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Red Raspberries |  Pears |
|  Hops |  Grapes, Concord |
|  Spearmint Oil |  Carrots, processing |
|  Wrinkled Seed Peas |  Green peas, processing |
|  Apples |  Peppermint Oil |
|  Sweet Cherries | |

Source: Washington State Department of Agriculture

URBAN FARMING

According to the USDA, around 15 percent of the world's food is now grown in urban areas. City and suburban agriculture takes the form of backyard, roof-top and balcony gardening, community gardening in vacant lots as well as in parks, roadside urban fringe agriculture and livestock grazing in open space. Seattle has embraced urban farming, becoming a leader in what has become a global movement. For instance, Seattle Central Community offers a program in sustainable urban agriculture and Seattle Tilth organizes community education that has allowed for increased implementation of urban farming in the region.



Hops growing at B.T. Loftus Ranches in Yakima, WA.
Photo credit: Grit City Photography

EDUCATION

Washington is a leader in agricultural education. The following institutions offer majors in agriculture:

- Washington State University
- Evergreen State College
- Wenatchee Valley College
- Lake Washington Institute of Technology
- Seattle Community College
- Walla Walla Community College

These schools offer diverse educations in the field of agriculture. For instance, Evergreen State College's Practice of Sustainable Agriculture program integrates theoretical and practical aspects of small-scale organic farming in the Pacific Northwest.

Further, WSU's agricultural sciences department stands out as one of the most innovative and productive in the world. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ranks WSU in the top ten in nearly every agriculture discipline.

Seattle offers its own agricultural education in the form of the University of Washington's UW Farm which is run by more than 600 volunteers. Over 70 different crops are grown at the UW Farm, generating more than 100 cubic yards of organic matter per year.

CROP PROFILES

-Apples: Washington State produces about 58% of the apples grown in the United States. The total apple acreage in Washington is estimated at about 168,500 acres. Washington's most famous apple, the Red Delicious, represents about 30% of apples grown in the state, but accounts for 48% of apples exported to other countries. About 30% of the crop is exported yearly, with major markets in the Asian Pacific Rim, Canada, Mexico, and South America. The value of production in 2013 was \$2.18 billion.

-Hops: The Yakima Valley contains approximately 75% of the total United States hop acreage, with an average farm size of 450 acres. Hop farmers have gained importance with the recent increase in the demand for craft beers. Approximately two-thirds of the hops produced in the Yakima Valley are exported to countries all over the globe. The value of production in 2013 was \$202 million.

-Sweet Cherries: Washington State produces about 40% of the United States sweet cherries annually. The major sweet cherry production regions are east of the Cascade Mountains in the central area of the state. Washington's sweet cherries are of renowned quality, and recognized for including some of consumers' favorite varieties. The value of production in 2013 was \$385 million.

-Red Raspberries: Washington State produces 59% of the raspberries grown in the United States and over 10% of the raspberries grown worldwide. The entire area of Washington west of the Cascade Mountains is considered raspberry production area. Under ideal soil conditions and good cultural maintenance, a planting may remain productive for 10 years or more in this region. The value of production in 2013 was \$57.3 million.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

-Washington State, aptly named the Evergreen State, produces some 300 commercial crops and livestock products valued at \$7.9 billion.

-Food processing is a \$12 billion industry and is the state's second largest manufacturing industry. Seattle Business Magazine named the 2014 Food Processor of the Year as Seattle based company, Darigold.

-About one-third of Washington's agricultural commodities are exported with about 75 % of the commodities going to Asia.

-Over 80,000 people are employed directly in crop and livestock production, with fruit production being the largest agricultural sector for employment.

-In 2014, agriculture products made up approximately 13% of Washington merchandise exports.

FUN FACTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Seattle ranked 7th as leader in urban agriculture ordinances (Seedstock, 2014)
- Washington ranks 12th in the nation in terms of total agricultural cash receipts, but is second only to California in the diversity of crops grown
- Yakima County is the state's leading agricultural county and ranks 12th among all U.S. counties in the value of its agricultural production
- Washington ranks second in the United States in the production of wine

WSDA INTERNATIONAL MARKETING PROGRAM

The International marketing program of the Washington State Department of Agriculture acts as an ally to the state's food and agricultural companies, helping them export their goods. The program helps companies find buyers for their goods by providing promotional support, marketing information, and access to the USDA's market assistance programs. Their main services include matching buyers with sellers, assisting in finding financing, and providing marketing resources. WSDA organizes trade shows around the world, giving companies the opportunity to interact with large numbers of international buyers.

Snohomish County

On the Western half of the state, Snohomish County stands out as one of the most productive regions. There are 1,574 farms on 68,612 acres of farmland. The county produces over 1,000 acres of seed crops, and the majority of this is exported overseas. Notably, Snohomish County ranks number one in the state in annual milk production per cow, ranks number three in the state in total pounds of milk produced, number two in the state in broiler chicken production, and number three in the state in strawberry production.



UW Farm. Photo credit: Anthony Atae

SUSTAINABILITY

Washington State is dedicated to creating sustainable production systems. Washington State University's Center for Sustaining Agriculture & Natural Resources is a leader in research and education in this field, and was even the first school in the country to offer an organic agriculture degree. Another major player in sustainability is the Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network. Their main services include education, grassroots organizing, and policy advocacy. For example, their recent advocacy helped get funding for the Healthy Kids – Healthy School grants which among other things, provides schools with gardens and greenhouses.

RESOURCES:

Washington State Department of Agriculture

<http://agr.wa.gov>

WSU's College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences

<https://cahnrs.wsu.edu>

The Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network

<http://wsffn.org>

American Farmland Trust

<https://www.farmland.org/>

Northwest Agriculture Business Center

<http://www.agbizcenter.org/>

Growing Washington

<http://growingwashington.com/>

Seattle Tilth

<http://www.seattletilth.org>

Food at UW

<http://food.washington.edu>

Beacon Food Forest

<http://www.beaconfoodforest.org>

INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE

Universities are incubators for innovation and WSU in particular is a world leader in agricultural research. Advancements in all sorts of technologies such as drones, robots, sensors, and satellites can be applied to agriculture, and students at WSU as well as at other universities and labs are doing the research to figure out how.

An exciting partnership has formed between WSU and a Chinese company, DJI, for agricultural drone research. This partnership will bring together technology and agriculture in order to find new ways to tackle issues in agriculture.

Agriculture is becoming more and more data driven and WSU is pioneering the effort to innovate in the field.

COMPANY SPOTLIGHT

1. Bryant Christie Inc.

Located in Seattle, Bryant Christie Inc. is a firm with the goal of assisting clients increase and maintain their international sales. They provide services concerned with government affairs, trade policy, international marketing, research and regulatory data. Washington is ideal for international trade because of its unique access to key Asian markets, making the service of Bryant Christie Inc. particularly important to the region. Bryant Christie Inc. is an important link between Washington agriculture producers and international markets.

2. Darigold

Darigold is a dairy agriculture cooperative with headquarters in Seattle, Washington. Darigold is farmer owned, representing over 500 farms in the Northwest. As one of the largest dairy cooperatives, their facilities have embraced the latest technologies to lower their environmental impact. In addition to success locally and nationally, Darigold exports two thirds of the milk powder and three-quarters of the whey it produces. In 2012, this meant exporting 800 million pounds of bulk dairy products.