

This publication serves as a ready reference of facts about Washington's unique, diverse agricultural industry. With the many ongoing challenges facing our industry today, factual data are needed now more than ever for presenting a "True" picture of the State's agriculture.

While there is no doubt many Washington agricultural producers faced challenging economic times the past year, overall Washington state producers held their own in the volatile farm industry in 2002. The value of agricultural production in the state held nearly steady at \$5.56 billion. In fact, Washington farmers fared a little better than the rest of the nation. Nationwide, farm cash receipts fell more than 3 percent from 2001 to 2002. That counts only the value of production, not other industries tied to agriculture - such as seeds, fertilizer, transportation and processing. In fact, food processing is the second-largest source of factory jobs in Washington state (aerospace is the largest). Many farm goods are processed into higher-value products such as wine, juice, and french fries.

The voluntary cooperation of farmers, ranchers, representatives from agribusiness, and others associated with Washington agriculture make this publication possible. It is difficult to take time out of busy schedules to respond to surveys. Rest assured that the original time investment is multiplied many times over in benefits to Washington agriculture.

We also would like to express our appreciation to the office staff of the Washington Agriculture Statistics Service, for their dedication in compiling and maintaining these data. A special thanks and our sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff of office and field enumerators, employed by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), who collect most of the data from the State's producers summarized for our reports. The NASDA staff are our frontline agricultural ambassadors to the agricultural community throughout the State.

We look forward to continuing to provide service to Washington agriculture and remain optimistic about the future of the industry in our State. With all the challenges that agriculture faces, we have the right ingredients in Washington for success. We have a strong natural resource base and we have some of the Nation's most progressive and thoughtful producers.

Sincerely,



Ray Garibay
State Statistician

Joe Parsons
Deputy State Statistician