
YUMA AREA AGRICULTURE

Mr. William J. Moody

Yuma County Statistics

- Yuma County is located in the southwestern portion of the State of Arizona along the Colorado and Gila Rivers. The nation of Mexico borders Yuma County on the south. California lies across the Colorado River to the west. Yuma County encompasses some 5,509 square miles and accounts for about 4.85% of the state's land mass. Within the county, about 8.5% of the land area is in private ownership.
- Population of Yuma County totaled 189,480 people in 2005, per Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation. The U.S. Census noted that Yuma County, which grew by some 4.1% yearly between 1990 and 2000, was the third fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States.

Brief History and Facts

- Agriculture is an integral part of the history of Yuma County. Prior to European exploration, Native Americans raised melons, gourds and grain in the flood plains of the Colorado and Gila Rivers.
- Traditional farming has been in region since the 1860's, diverting water from both rivers.
- Today, there are approximately 200,000 acres of irrigated land around Yuma, most of it in seven irrigation districts, all of which rely on Colorado River water delivered through facilities developed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Location of these irrigated areas is shown on the Yuma Area Projects Map later in the report.

The districts are listed below, together with current operation & maintenance fees for irrigation water

District Name	Size in Irrigable Acres	2007 Operation & Maintenance Fees.
<i>Yuma Project</i>		
Valley Division	50,000	\$77.00, includes first 5 acre feet.
Reservation Division	15,000	\$63.50, includes first 5 acre feet
Unit 'B'	3,300	\$138.68, includes first 10 acre feet
<i>Gila Project</i>		
North Gila Valley	6,000	\$32, includes first 5 acre feet
South Gila Valley	12,000	\$30, includes first 5 acre feet
Wellton Mohawk	60,000	\$72, includes first four acre feet
Yuma Mesa	<u>19,200</u>	\$50., includes first 9 acre feet
Total Acreage	165,500	

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- Yuma County is generally ranked in the top 20 counties nationally in terms of gross agricultural income. Important winter vegetable crops include lettuce, salad greens, cauliflower, broccoli, celery, carrots, and melons in the spring. Field crops include cotton, alfalfa, bermuda, wheat and other grains. Much of Arizona's citrus is produced in Yuma County, some 13,300 acres.
- The area has a 12-month growing season, adequate irrigation water at a reasonable cost, and good soil quality. Most of the district farmland is multi-cropped. There is a strong demand for farmland suitable for production of winter vegetables in the valleys. Despite urban encroachment, there remains some demand for irrigated farmland on the Yuma Mesa, which is suitable for citrus; especially lemons, alfalfa, green onions, and vegetable seed crops.
- Gross income from agriculture in Yuma County is often the highest in Arizona, depending on prices received. In 2004 the gross income generated by field crops, vegetables and citrus totaled about \$743 million. Gross income from livestock in 2005 was around \$237 million.

Listed below is the contribution in Gross Income to the local economy by general crop types and livestock, as compiled by the Yuma County office of Cooperative Extension.

Crop Type	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Field	\$87,238,261	\$70,083,047	\$83,037,583	\$94,128,964	\$83,434,092	\$77,462,291
Vegetables	\$469,913,600	\$606,816,998	\$1,074,536,705	\$452,274,510	\$710,260,860	\$647,513,392
Tree & Vine	\$51,868,037	\$32,103,968	\$48,673,344	\$44,997,116	\$29,038,356	\$18,080,549
Livestock	\$80,000,000	\$82,400,000	\$79,196,000	\$99,932,774	\$134,545,000	\$237,291,000
Totals	\$689,019,898	\$791,404,013	\$1,285,443,632	\$691,333,364	\$957,278,308	\$980,347,232

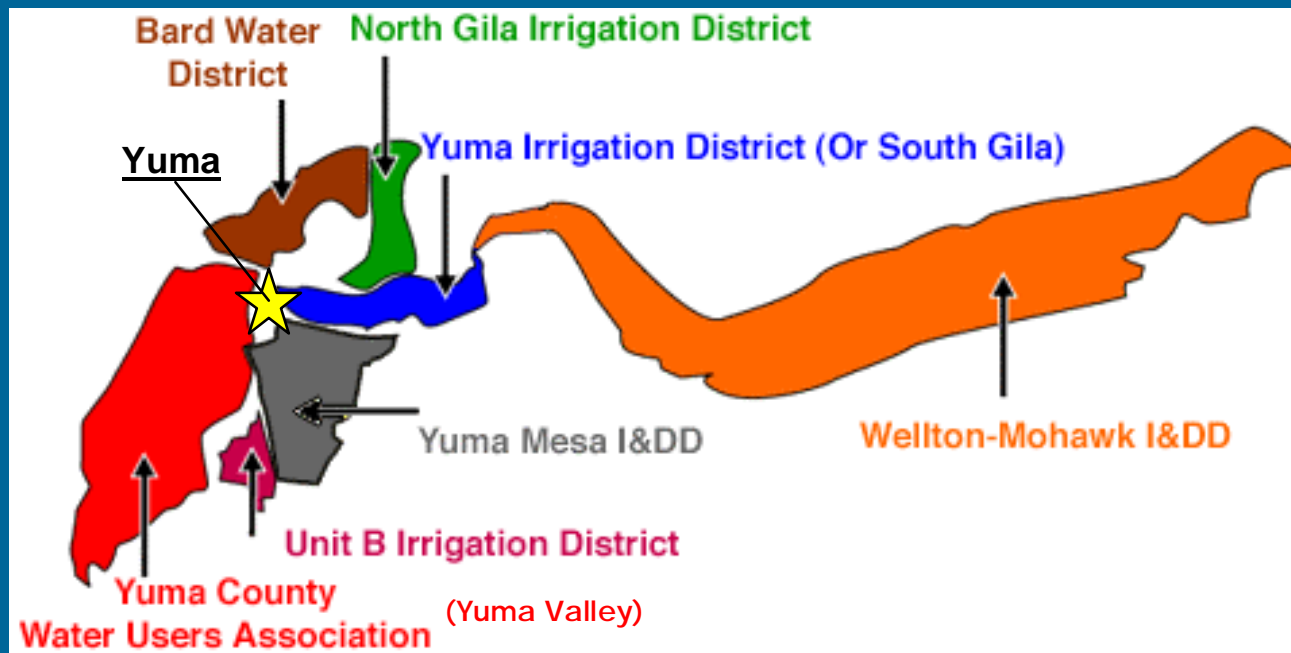
- Data compiled by USBR suggests that the Bard Valley, California is estimated to have contributed an additional \$60,000,000 gross income that is not included in the statistics compiled by Cooperative Extension.

Yuma County

- Gross revenues from field crops, citrus, and livestock have remained generally stable for several years. A substantial portion of our agricultural economy is based on winter vegetables, and this crop type has experienced some increase in revenues. 92,790 acres of lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and other winter vegetables were produced in 2005. Almost 7,350 acres of cantaloupe, watermelons and honeydews were planted that spring. Most of the lettuce and a significant amount of other winter vegetables consumed in the United States are produced in Yuma County. One source estimated that about 120,000,000 vegetable boxes were produced in the 2002 season, a very profitable year as the above table shows. There are about 26 vegetable cooling facilities in the area; most of the newer facilities include salad mix plants. Package cost to develop such a facility can exceed \$100 per square foot.
- A specialty crop in the Bard, California area is Medjool dates. Bard Water District reports there are approximately 1,300 acres planted to dates. This is the largest producing acreage for Medjool dates in the United States. Per the Office of Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner, gross value of date production totaled some \$17,650,000 in 2005, based on only 1,001 harvested acres. Competition for farmland in the Bard area for winter produce, dates and citrus contributes to strong appreciation in price paid for land. Several hundred acres of Medjool dates have also been planted on the South Yuma Mesa outside irrigation project boundaries, irrigated from deep wells under drip irrigation. This acreage is now coming into production.

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- Irrigated land prices and annual cash rentals in the valleys vary because of location. Sales suggest the market has stabilized and there is little change in price paid from a year ago. The highest land values have been in the upper part of the Yuma Valley, the North and South Gila Valleys east of Yuma, the western part of the Wellton-Mohawk District known as the Dome Valley, and in the Bard Valley, across the river in California.



Values & Rent Rates For Irrigated Farmland in Yuma County & Bard Valley

Location	Value Per Acre	Sale Price Activity / Trends	Annual Cash Rents	Rent Rates Activity / Trends
Upper Yuma Valley	\$20,000 - \$26,500	Limited / Stable	\$600 - \$800	Active / Moderate increase
Lower Yuma Valley	\$17,000 - \$22,000	Limited / Stable	\$550 - \$700	Active / Moderate increase
North & South				
Gila Valleys	\$17,000 - \$26,500	Limited / Stable	\$600 - \$800	Active / Moderate increase
Yuma Mesa Districts	\$12,000 - \$15,000	Limited / Stable	\$125 - \$200	Limited / Stable
Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation District				
Dome Valley	\$17,000 - \$23,000	Limited / Stable	\$500 - \$750	Active / Moderate increase
Wellton area	\$11,000 - \$18,000	Limited / Stable	\$350 - \$525	Active / Stable
Roll area	\$9,000 - \$12,000	Limited / Stable	\$250 - \$450	Active / Stable
Texas Hill	\$7,000 - \$10,000	Limited / Stable	\$250 - \$375	Active / Stable
Wellton Mesa	\$5,000 - \$12,000	Limited / Stable	\$175 - \$225	Limited / Stable
Bard Valley, CA.				
Irrigated Farmland	\$16,000 - \$22,000	Limited / Stable	\$550 - \$750	Active / Moderate increase
Medjool Dates	\$30,000 - \$55,000	Limited / Stable	\$.40 - \$.50/lb	Active / Stable