



# CULTIVATE WASHINGTON





# CULTIVATE WASHINGTON

## Agriculture supports our state and its people. It needs our support to survive and thrive.

Washington has long been a leading producer of fruit, grain, and vegetables. It is also renowned for specialty crops grown on small to mid-size farms. Two-thirds of our state's farms are less than 50 acres in area. Unfortunately, the number of farms and acres cultivated has been declining steadily for more than a decade.

Farming operations face higher costs for labor, fuel and more due to state regulations. Unlike other sectors, they do not control the price received for their products and therefore are hit harder when the cost of doing business increases.

### Washington Agriculture's Economic Impact

#### Total Market Value of agriculture in WA

**\$10.2 Billion**  
Crops & Livestock

**\$20.1 Billion**  
Food Processing

**160,000**  
Jobs

**35,500**  
Farms

**95%**  
Family Farms

#### Top 10 Commodities in Washington



**APPLES**  
\$2.185 billion



**MILK**  
\$1.209 billion



**CATTLE**  
\$801.5 million



**WHEAT**  
\$756.8 million



**POTATOES**  
\$712.4 million



**HAY**  
\$601.7 million



**HOPS**  
\$482.2 million



**CHERRIES**  
\$476.4 million



**GRAPES**  
\$300.7 million



**BLUEBERRIES**  
\$228.3 million

Source WSDA/NASS

*Agriculture experienced its largest-ever increase in inflation in 2022. (According to the Washington State Department of Agriculture)*

Adding to this, more and more often, decision makers and the general public are increasingly removed from the source and production of their food. This creates a lack of understanding of the challenges faced by the agricultural community and how some regulations hurt agricultural families and threaten the food supply.

We understand agriculture and its value. Our Cultivate Washington agenda recognizes and responds to the challenges posed to farmers, growers and ranchers by government policies.

- Reduce the regulatory burden on farming operations while balancing the interests of farmworkers
- Ease the pain of high fuel costs
- Promote new opportunities for the state to support small- and mid-sized farms
- Continue work toward a reliable supply of water for crops and farm housing, including during drought
- Seek a balance between the needs of wildlife and the needs of farming operations
- Work toward a renewed public appreciation for agriculture

Legislators can do much to improve the business climate for Washington agriculture. We look forward to advocating for our agenda during the 2024 legislative session.



**FACTS:**

Washington is a leading producer of agricultural commodities in the United States:

- #1 for apples, blueberries, hops, pears, spearmint oil, rhubarb and sweet cherries
- #2 for apricots, asparagus, grapes, potatoes, and raspberries
- #3 for barley, dried peas, dry onions, lentils, and peppermint oil

Washington products are highly diverse with over 300 different commodities.

67% of Washington farms are less than 50 acres.

Agriculture in Washington generates \$49 billion annually, accounting for 13% of the state's economy.

Farmers, growers and ranchers can't control what they're paid for their products. The market – meaning supply and demand – sets the price, meaning people in ag are price takers, not price makers. Therefore, increasing costs of doing business hit them harder.

**Farms are closing at historic rates and suicide has become a leading cause of death among farmers.**

**Problem:** Labor costs and regulations are overburdening producers and raising costs to the extent of driving producers out of business

**Solution:** Ease the regulatory burden on farmers while balancing the interests of farmworkers

- Seasonal exemption to overtime

**Problem:** Fuel costs are driving producers out of business

**Solution:** Ease the fuel taxation burden on farmers

- Exempt farm fuel from the extra tax costs from the "Climate Commitment Act"

**Problem:** Mid-size and small size farms are struggling under costs because of their small scale

**Solution:** Promote options for optimization of mid and small size farms

- Start-up costs assistance, such as the meat processing start up grant program
- Incentivize vertical integration - re-examine regulations about processing herbs, vegetable products, dairy, etc.
- Money for people who want to convert cropland to grazing to supplement seed money, fencing, and water
- Exempt greenhouses from building code requirements
- Fund a study by Washington State Department of Agriculture/Conservation Commission of what midsize farms need to optimize production and reduce costs
- Support agritourism while protecting local communities

**Problem:** Water availability will continue to be a challenge into the future

**Solution:** Continue work to ensure provision of water for agriculture and housing

- Continue to support programs like the Yakima, Icicle, and Walla Walla Integrated plans which are building reservoirs, supporting in-stream flows, and ensuring water supply for agriculture during times of drought
- Continue coordination efforts to complete the Columbia Basin project and provide surface water to producers in the Odessa Subaquifer area

**Problem:** State management of predators and other wildlife results in costly losses for producer

**Solution:** Promote a balance between wildlife and livestock

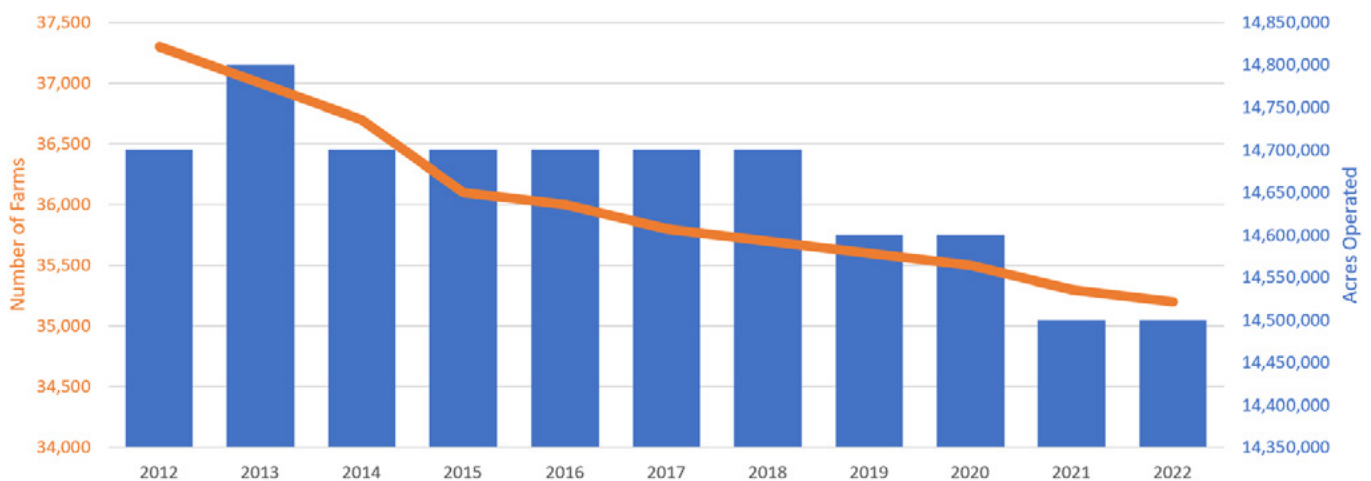
- Continued budgetary and policy investments in promoting a working relationship between livestock producers and the agency in order to preserve the livestock industry in the face of wolf repopulation
- Promote sensible forest and management of ungulates (such as deer and elk)
- Encourage agency management of the elk herd to protect the unique Skagit agriculture while balancing the tribal interest in a healthy elk herd

**Problem:** Society has moved away from a fundamental knowledge of where food comes from

**Solution:** Educating for the future of agriculture:

- Support agriculture in the classroom
- Assistance and support for FFA (Future Farmers of America)

Washington - Number of Farms and Acres Operated, 2012-2022



*“If agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right.” – M.S. Swaminathan*

**Problem:** Dairy farmers are selling out in unprecedented ways because of negative press about cows and carbon.

**Solution:** Support opportunities for dairies to sequester carbon and convert carbon into useful energy.

- Promote methane digesters through incentives and tax exemptions
- Promote soil carbon storage programs
- Work together as a community to maintain healthy soil, and nourish communities.



## FACTS:

Washington livestock:

- Livestock in Washington includes trout production, honey bee and honey production, beef cattle, dairy cattle, hogs and pigs, sheep and goats
- Milk and cattle are in the top 10 commodities produced in Washington
- Washington dairies produced 6.24 billion gallons of milk in 2022
- Washington's beef cow inventory peaked at 436,000 cows in 1984 and has declined to 230,000
- In 2019, the cattle industry contributed \$1.638 billion to the Washington economy
- There are approximately 9,000 cattle owners in Washington


## THE DAIRY GROUP PROVIDES MANY NUTRIENTS INCLUDING:


- |                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| • Calcium              | • Potassium |
| • Phosphorous          | • Zinc      |
| • Vitamins A, D, & B12 | • Choline   |
| • Riboflavin           | • Magnesium |
| • Protein              | • Selenium  |


# WASHINGTON DAIRY FARMS



## INTERESTING FACTS

 Dairy foods provide about 67 percent of the calcium available in the U.S. food supply.

 The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend three servings of low-fat and fat-free dairy foods per day.

 Dairy foods deliver a unique combination of nine essential nutrients including protein, vitamin D and potassium



There are approximately 400 dairy farms in Washington. Dairy foods constitute the 2nd largest agricultural commodity produced in Washington, with farm-gate production valued at \$1.28 billion

The total economic impact of dairy products produced and sold specifically in Washington is \$12.59 billion.



Largest Ag Commodity in Washington



Direct Jobs



Rank of Total Milk Production in U.S.

## Economic Impact

Processing milk creates additional contributions to employment and the state economy. Dairy production and processing indirectly contribute to the regional economy through purchases of inputs such as labor, services, equipment and feed. More generally, Washington's economy is affected by income and employment growth within the dairy industry and its supporting businesses.







**40,628 JOBS**  
INDIRECTLY  
SUPPORTED BY  
THE DAIRY  
INDUSTRY





## BEEF SUSTAINABILITY: FACT VS. MYTH

	FACT	MYTH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beef production, including the production of animal feed, is <b>responsible for only 3.7% of greenhouse gas emissions</b> in the United States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cattle are one of the leading sources of greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cattle <b>only consume 2.6 lbs. of grain per pound of beef</b>, which is similar to pork and poultry, and nearly <b>90% of grain-finished cattle feed is inedible by humans</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cattle consume 9 pounds of grain or more per pound of beef and compete with people for food.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corn going to feed beef cattle represents <b>only 10% of harvested corn grain in the United States</b>, or 8 million acres.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We grow 100 million acres of corn just to feed cattle.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It only takes 308 gallons of water to produce a pound of boneless beef, and water use by beef is around <b>5% of U.S. water withdrawals. Plus, this water is recycled.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It takes up to 24,000 gallons of water to produce a pound of boneless beef and beef is major drain on water resources.</li> </ul>

CA Rotz, S Asem-Hiablie, S Place, G Thoma., 2018. Environmental footprints of beef cattle production in the United States. Agricultural Systems. Advance online publication. doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2018.11.005.



Funded by Beef Farmers and Ranchers

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

To monitor legislation that affects agriculture, follow the meeting schedule and agenda of the [Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources & Parks Committee](#). You can also [learn how to testify in committee](#) on bills that get a hearing. Find out more information at [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov).

Learn more  
online





# CULTIVATE WASHINGTON



**Ron Muzzall** is a fourth-generation farmer on Whidbey Island. He has been involved in numerous industry associations, boards, and committees, including the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Skagit Farmers Supply and Land O'Lakes cooperative. Ron and his family own and operate a family farm, marketing their local products in the community. He is the Ranking Member on the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee.

Contact Sen. Ron Muzzall at 360-786-7618 or [Ron.Muzzall@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Ron.Muzzall@leg.wa.gov).



**Judy Warnick** represents the 13th Legislative District, which includes Kittitas, Grant, and part of Yakima County. Communities in the district are heavily involved in the state's agricultural industry. Judy grew up on a dairy farm in Deer Park. She and her husband live in Moses Lake, where they operate a small business and own a family farm. Judy has served previously as the Chair and Ranking Republican on the Senate's ag-related committee.

Contact Sen. Judy Warnick at 360-786-7624 or [Judy.Warnick@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Judy.Warnick@leg.wa.gov).



**Perry Dozier**, owner of Double D Ranches in Waitsburg, has owned and operated dryland and irrigated farm operations in Walla Walla and Columbia counties for over 40 years. He has been a member and served as president of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and the Northwest Grain Growers, and a member of the Washington State Barley Commission. Perry's recent policy work on behalf of agriculture includes proposing legislation to deliver on a fuel surcharge exemption promised to the agricultural sector in Washington's 2021 cap-and-trade law.

Contact Sen. Perry Dozier at 360-786-7630 or [Perry.Dozier@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Perry.Dozier@leg.wa.gov).



**Shelly Short** represents the 7th Legislative District, encompassing all or part of seven counties in northeast and north-central Washington. She is a champion of her district's rural lifestyle and agricultural and water needs, its desire for greater employment, and the sensible management of natural resources for beneficial use. Shelly serves on the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee.

Contact Sen. Shelly Short at 360-786-7612 or [Shelly.Short@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Shelly.Short@leg.wa.gov).

