

# Mohave County, AZ

## Arizona County Agricultural Economy Profiles University of Arizona Cooperative Extension

### Overview

Mohave County is located at the northwest corner of Arizona bordered to the west by the Colorado River, to the east by Coconino and Yavapai counties, and to the south by La Paz County. As of 2018, the population in Mohave County was more than 209,000, with 23% of the county's population residing in rural areas. Major population centers include Lake Havasu City, Kingman, and Bullhead City.

Top industries in Mohave County are linked with outdoor recreation and water sports as the county is an access point to a number of large reservoirs along the Colorado River, including Lake Mead, Lake Mohave, and Lake Havasu.

On-farm agriculture in Mohave County accounts for less than 1% of all private industry jobs and less than 1% of county GDP. Approximately 9% of county land is in farms. That said, Mohave County is a significant producer of alfalfa hay, ranking in the top 5% of counties nationally in terms of its production. Mohave County accounts for about 1% of Arizona's total agricultural cash receipts.



Map of Mohave County, Arizona

Indicator	Mohave County	Arizona
Land Area (square miles)	13,461	113,990
Land in Farms (Crops, Grazing) (square miles)	1,165	40,822
Population (2018)	209,550	7,171,646
Annual Average Population Growth Rate (2010-18)	0.6%	1.4%
Percent of Population Over 65 (2018)	30.3%	17.5%
Percent Population Rural (2010)	23.0%	10.2%
Total Employment (2018)	50,290	2,826,095
Share Federal, State, & Local Government Employment (2018)	14.9%	13.8%
GDP (2018)	\$5.7 billion	\$348.3 billion
Ag, Forestry, & Hunting GDP (on-farm only) (2018)	\$27.0 million	\$2.3 billion

\* Estimated using IMPLAN 2017 model

Industry	Location Quotient
Recreational goods rental	17.46
Other gasoline stations	10.08
Marinas	8.79
Dental laboratories	7.70
Recreational vehicle dealers	5.26
Other nonresidential exterior contractors	5.19
Boat building	5.18
Boat dealers	4.82
Water supply and irrigation systems	4.65
Motorcycle, atv, and other vehicle dealers	4.17

Top 10 Private Industries in Mohave County by Employment LQ, 2018

An economy can be characterized by the industries that make up the “base” of the economy. A common way to measure this is with location quotients (LQs), which measure the ratio of a particular industry's share of employment within a region to the same industry's share of national employment. An industry with a LQ greater than 1.25 is considered part of the economic base, exporting goods and services and bringing money into the region. LQs also help identify a region's areas of specialization. Higher LQs indicate greater specialization. Of the top 10 most concentrated industries in Mohave County, agriculture does not rank among them.

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Every 5 years, U.S. Department of Agriculture releases the Census of Agriculture, which provides the most comprehensive source of information on agricultural production by county. The Census provides information on the number of farms, types of crops and livestock produced, and farm characteristics, among other information. A farm is defined as any establishment that produced and sold, or could have sold, more than \$1,000 or more of agricultural products in the Census year. The following information comes from the most recent 2017 Census of Agriculture.

## Farms

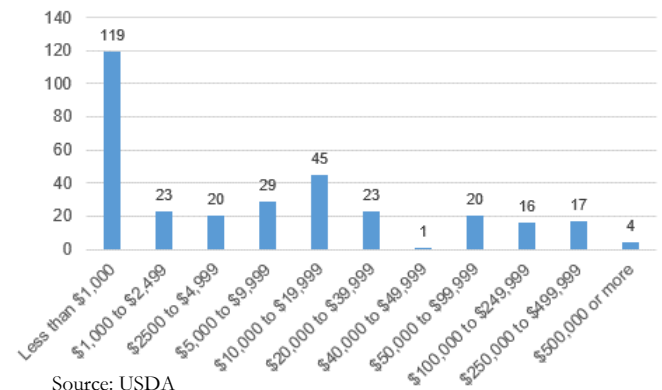
There were 317 farms in Mohave County in 2017, covering 22,002 acres of cropland (94% irrigated) and 658,273 acres of pastureland (<1% irrigated). The average farm size was 2,351 acres, significantly larger than the national average of 441 acres, with the top 12% of farms accounting for 93% of county acreage.

Of 317 farms, 119 had less than \$1,000 in sales and 4 farms had more than \$500,000 in sales. A majority of county farms (69%) are family- or individually-held, 16% are partnerships, and 8% are family-held corporations.

Farms are classified by the type of agricultural products they produce. When a farm or ranch produces more than one agricultural product, they are classified by the product that constitutes more than 50% of their sales. The most common type of operation in Mohave County is beef cattle ranching and farming (141 farms), followed by aquaculture and other animal production\* (87 farms), and fruit and tree nut farming (33 farms).

While the number of farms is helpful in understanding how many farms “specialize” in different types of agricultural production, it does not reflect the magnitude or scale of production by commodity, which is better captured by sales or cash receipts (next page).

Mohave County Farms by Annual Sales, 2017

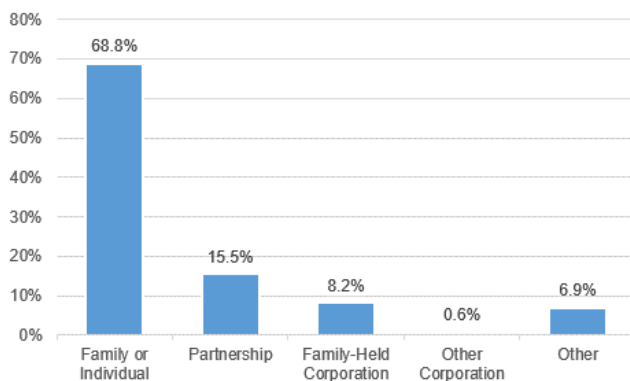


Mohave County Farms by Industry

Category	Farms
<i>Total farms</i>	317
Oilseed and grain farming	2
Vegetable and melon farming	0
Fruit and tree nut farming	33
Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production	11
Other crop farming	21
Cotton farming	0
Hay and all other crop farming	21
Beef cattle ranching and farming	141
Cattle feedlots	0
Dairy cattle and milk production	0
Hog and pig farming	0
Poultry and egg production	6
Sheep and goat farming	16
Aquaculture and other animal production*	87

\* Includes farms where no single type of livestock accounts for more than 50% of farm sales.

Mohave County Farms by Legal Organization, 2017



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## Production & Marketing

Mohave County is a crop-dominant county, with 71% of county cash receipts originating from sales of crops and 29% from livestock. However, prior to the 1990s, livestock was responsible for a majority of cash receipts.

Major agricultural commodities by sales include **other crops and hay** (\$19.5 million), **cattle and calves** (\$8.5 million), and **grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas** (\$1.4 million).

Local marketing represents less than 1% of county cash receipts and there were no farms with reported sales of organic products.

## Hay Production in Mohave County

Hay is, by far, the top agricultural commodity produced in Mohave County. It accounts for approximately 85% of county crop sales, and 60% of total agricultural sales.

In 2017, there were 18 farms that produced more than 100,000 tons of hay, primarily alfalfa hay. This level of production ranks Mohave County in the top 5% of U.S. counties producing hay.

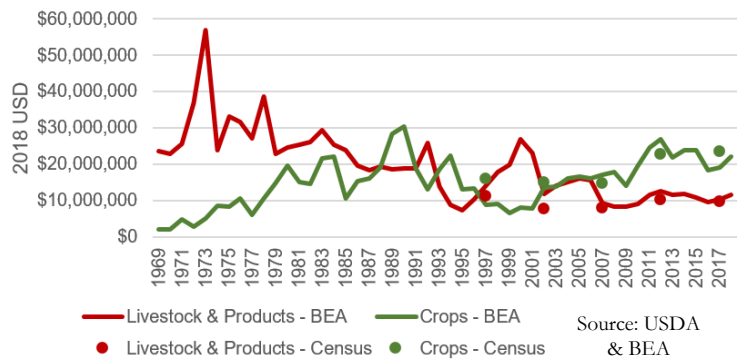
## Ranching & Public Lands

Sales of cattle and calves account for 91% of livestock and livestock product sales in Mohave County. Cattle ranching in the county relies in-part on leasing of grazing rights on public lands.

The county contains 5.7 million acres of federal land (66.5% of the county's area), of which 4.5 million acres are managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Ranching on public lands presents a series of unique considerations for producers, including coordinating with one or many land managers, complying with federal or state regulation, obtaining permits, and paying fees. These considerations have implications for operations and the cost of doing business (Cost and Return Estimates for Cow/Calf Ranches in Five Regions of Arizona, Teegeerstrom & Tronstad, 2000).

Mohave County Agricultural Cash Receipts for Crops & Livestock, 1969 to 2018

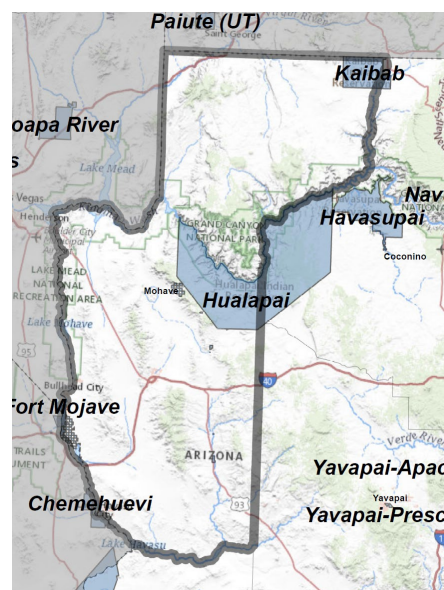


## Tribal Agriculture

Mohave County contains portions of the Kaibab Paiute, Fort Mojave, and Hualapai reservations. Statistics reported below represent production within entire tribal areas, therefore production occurring within Mohave County is only a portion of the totals reported.

The Kaibab Paiute had 4 farms in operation in 2017, the Fort Mojave had 4 in farms as well with 27,812 acres of farmland, and the Hualapai had 49 farms operating 977,645 acres. The most common type of operation for the Kaibab Paiute and Hualapai were cattle and calf operations, while hay production was the most common type of operation within the Fort Mojave reservation.

Mohave County Tribal Areas



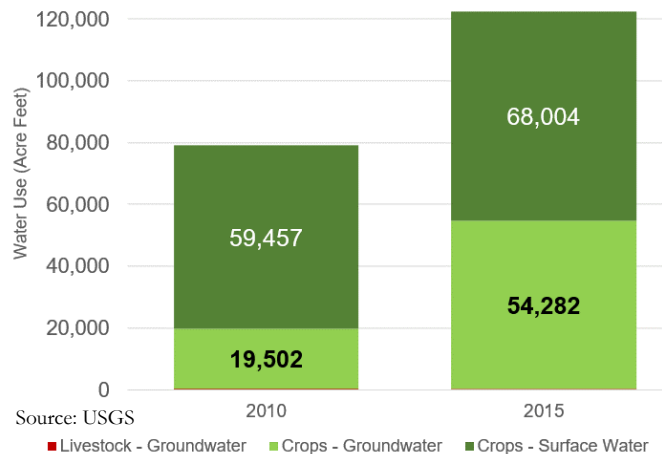
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## Irrigation Water Use

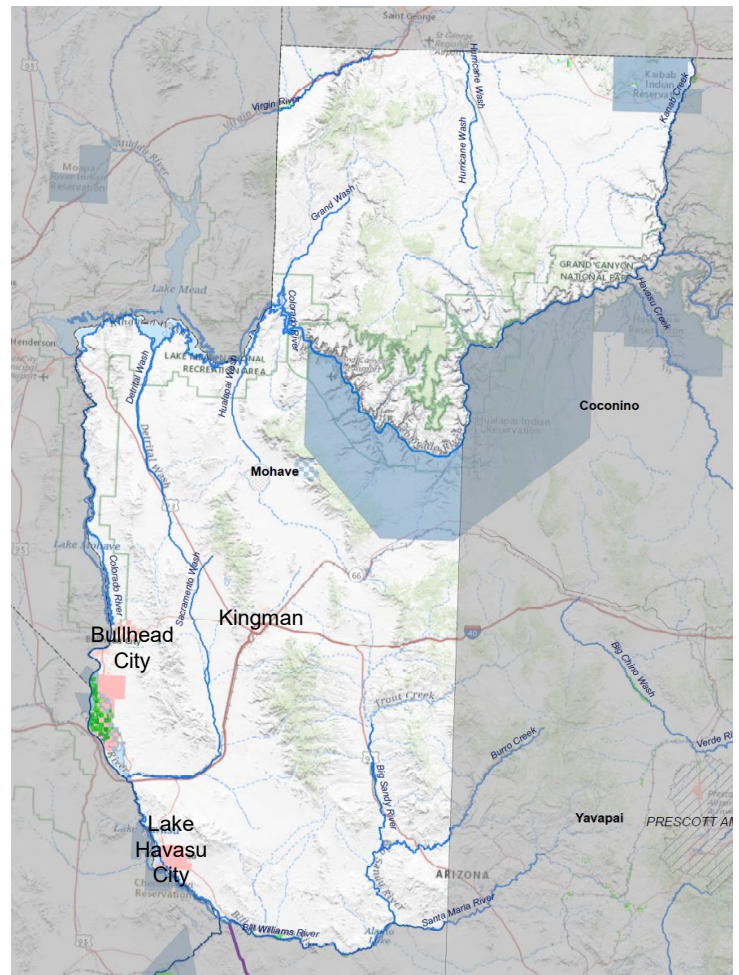
In Arizona, agriculture accounts for about 75% of the state’s water use. More than half of withdrawals for agricultural uses in the state are from surface water. In some areas of the state with high demand, groundwater withdrawals for irrigated agriculture are limited by the 1980 Groundwater Management Act. This legislation established five Active Management Areas (AMA) as well as other Irrigation Non-Expansion Areas (INA) where groundwater pumping and expansion of irrigated agriculture are limited. There is no land in Mohave County within an AMA or INA.

Based on 2015 USGS estimates of water use, agriculture accounted for 66.7% of Mohave County water withdrawals. Agricultural irrigation water use in Mohave County is dominated by production of crops. In 2015, an estimated 68,004 acre-feet (AF) was sourced from surface water and 54,282 AF was sourced from groundwater for agricultural production. An acre-foot is the amount of water required to cover one acre one foot deep in water. Irrigated crop production is concentrated along the Colorado River mainstem within the Fort Mojave reservation. Groundwater use increased substantially between 2010 and 2015 and surface water use increased slightly. Meanwhile, total irrigated acreage is estimated to have increased between 2010 and 2015, and acreage by irrigation technology shifted from nearly exclusive gravity-flow irrigation to include acreage irrigated by sprinkler and microirrigation.

Mohave County Agricultural Water Use by Use & Source



Mohave County Water Map



Mohave County Irrigated Acres by Irrigation Technology

