

**INDUSTRY PROFILES** > [Agriculture and Fisheries](#)**Agriculture and Fisheries****i****Key statistics:**

- Gross value of NSW agriculture production \$8.6 billion (2004-05)
- 40,000 farms (2004-05)
- 104,000 people directly employed in agriculture and fisheries (Nov 2006)
- exports of \$4.3 billion (2005-06)

Industry strengths:

- quality clean and green produce
- diversity of growing conditions
- leading research and development facilities
- proximity to major domestic and export markets
- counter seasonality to northern hemisphere producers

The NSW agriculture industry is highly diverse, benefiting from the State's variety of soil types, topography and climates. Crops and livestock each represent about half the value of production. The State's relatively low population density and strict environmental controls allow produce to be grown free of the many pests and diseases found in other parts of the world.

The agriculture and fishery industries are the backbone of regional NSW and 80% of NSW's land use is devoted to agricultural production.

Despite the ongoing drought, NSW has maintained significant production of crops such as barley and wheat, oil seeds, oranges and apples, macadamia nuts, and grapes for winemaking.

NSW is Australia's largest producer of rice, maize, oats, cotton, oranges, cherries, nectarines, oilseeds, macadamias, blueberries and mushrooms and is the second largest producer of wheat, sorghum, sugar cane, plums and avocados.

The State produces more than 700,000 tonnes of red meat, including pig meat, each year, with beef representing almost 60% of the total. In 2005, NSW was the country's largest producer of mutton, pig meat, and chicken meat. The State is also responsible for more than a third of Australia's wool production.

The NSW fishing industry provides valuable income to regional communities. The aquaculture industry in particular has experienced sustained growth over recent years, with a production worth A\$51.8 million in 2004-05. The Sydney rock oyster is the biggest contributor to the State economy of all fishery products. For more information, see the [aquaculture industry profile](#).

Agriculture and fisheries are major sources of employment in NSW, particularly in rural areas. In November 2006, 104,000 people were employed directly in agriculture and fishing. The industry also provides downstream employment in food processing (54,000), farm produce and food wholesaling (29,000), food retailing (169,000), accommodation, cafes and restaurants (164,000), and throughout the supply chain in transport and storage.

Export success

NSW has enjoyed considerable export success in the agriculture and fishery industries, with the State located in close proximity to some of the fastest growing markets in the world. Exports totalled A\$4.3 billion in 2005-06, with the major export items, beef, wheat, wool, wine and cotton contributing three-quarters of NSW's agriculture exports alone. Agricultural exports accounted for 16% of the State's total merchandise exports in 2005-06. The largest export markets are Japan, China, the US, and Korea.


NSW has some of Australia's most advanced agricultural production laboratories. Recent innovations include disease and insect resistant plant species, novel seed production technologies and climatically friendly, salt and drought resistant plants.

Other ongoing areas of research include improving quality and yield in meat, wine grape and dairy production. The NSW Department of Primary Industries recently ranked in the top 1% of world research institutions in agricultural science, and plant and animal science.

For more information

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Related publications

 [NSW - First for Aquaculture](#)