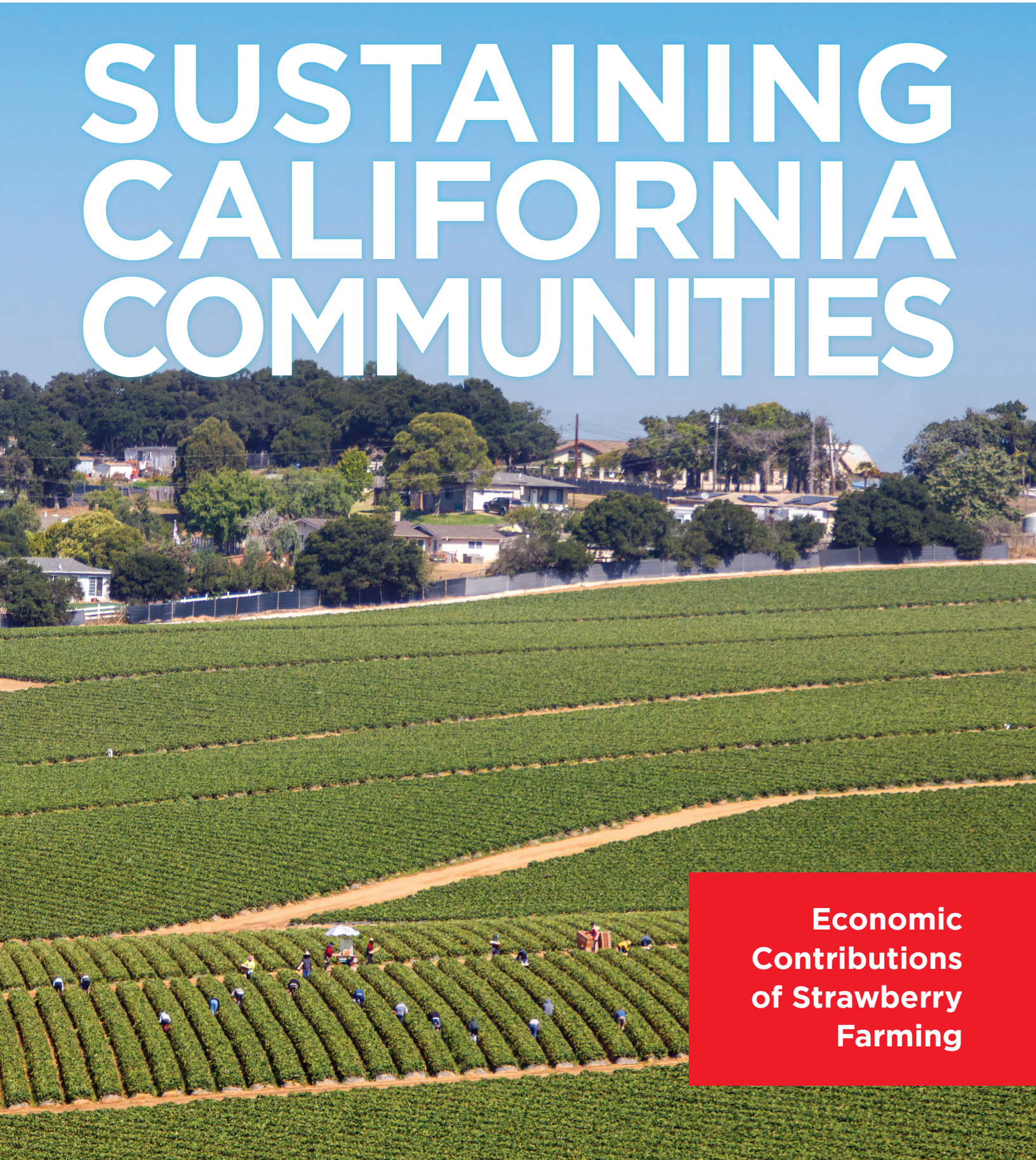
CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRY® COMMISSION

2025 REPORT

SUSTAINING CALIFORNIA COMMUNITIES



Economic Contributions of Strawberry Farming

THE STRAWBERRY ECONOMY

California Farms Supply Most of the Strawberries in the United States, and Play a Vital Role in Supporting Local Communities.

The California Central Coast provides perfect strawberry growing conditions, including warm sunny days, cool foggy nights, moderate temperatures, and sandy soil.

This unique bioregion, **comprised of more than 40,000 acres of strawberry farmland[5]**, is ideal for growing strawberries year-round—which contributes to California farmers leading United States strawberry production.





CALIFORNIA'S MORE THAN 300[1] FAMILY STRAWBERRY FARMS:

Grow 90 percent
of U.S. Strawberries[2]

Invest 95 Cents[3]
of Every Farm Dollar Back into the Community

Pay Taxes
to Support Teachers, Police, and Firefighters



A TOP VALUE CROP

Strawberries are California's
4th Highest Value Crop[4]

Among all California Crops
Strawberries Rank 1st in Value Per Acre[4]

This Extraordinary Value is Produced on
Less Than 1 Percent of California Farmland[4]







CREATING JOBS

Strawberry farming is directly responsible for generating more than **50,000 jobs** throughout the Golden State.

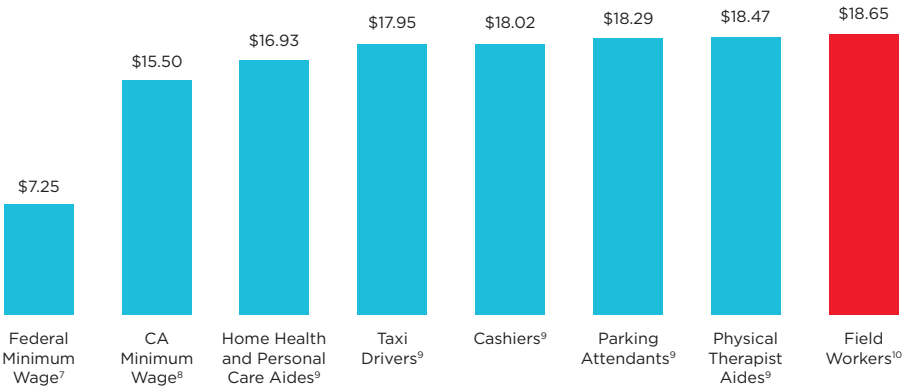
Strawberry-related jobs span nearly 30 different categories throughout the state's economy—from exporters and marketers to university researchers and harvesters in the field. These jobs create upward mobility in communities throughout California.

75 percent of the strawberry workforce is Latino, including management and field workers[6]. 25 percent of growers started off as field workers[6].





2023 HOURLY WAGE COMPARISON



Strawberry farming offers competitive wages. In 2023, field workers received a minimum of $18.65 per hour[10]. At that wage, workers received a higher wage rate than cashiers, home health and personal care aids, and other jobs. During peak harvest, piece-rate wages (additional pay per tray harvested) result in even higher wages.





FIELD WORKER WAGES HAVE INCREASED FURTHER SINCE 2023.

2024: $19.75[11]

2025: $19.97[12]

CA MINIMUM WAGE WAS HIGHER IN 2024 AND INCREASED AGAIN IN 2025.

2024: $16.00[13]

2025: $16.50[14]

On-Farm

- Supervisor
- Foreman
- Shop mechanic
- Tractor driver
- Irrigator
- Pest control advisor
- General labor

Education and Manufacturing

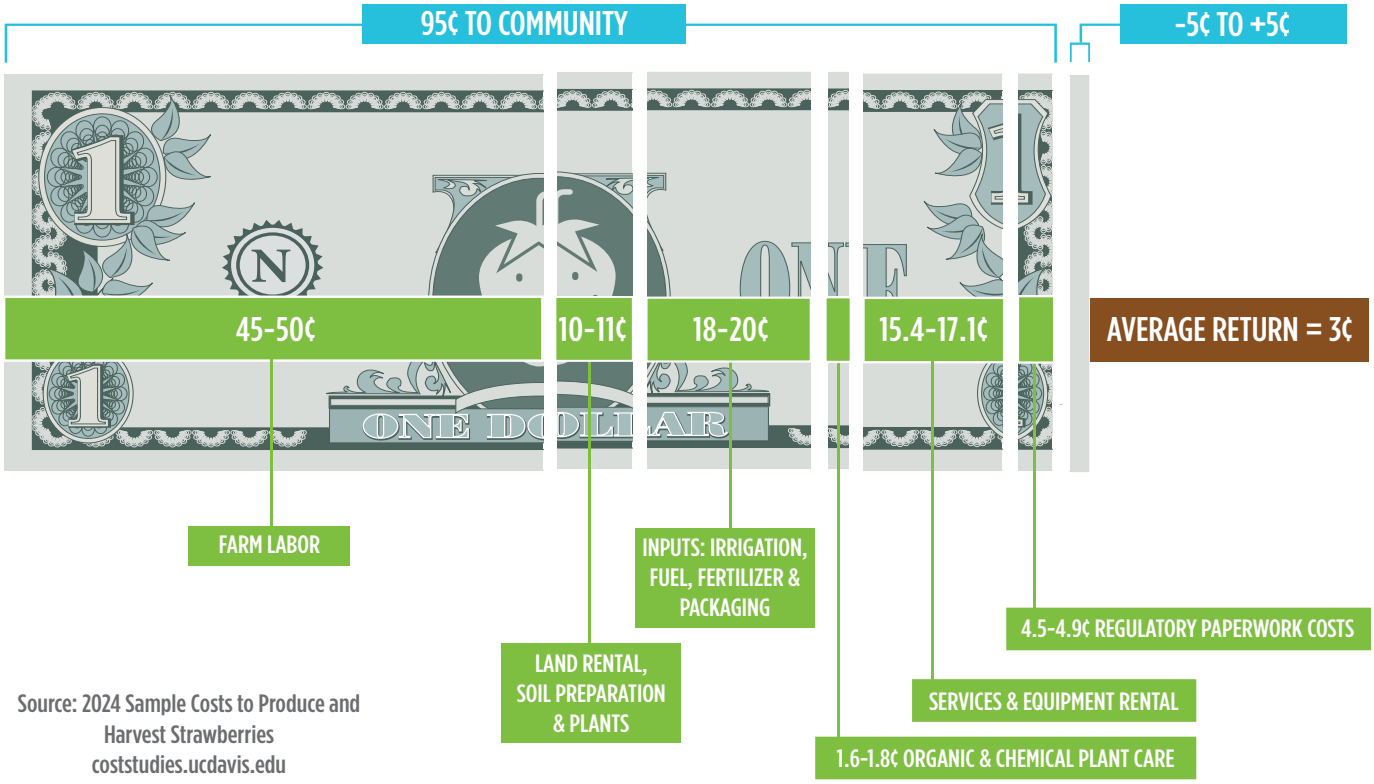
- Researchers
- Extension and outreach
- Agriculture teachers
- Input manufacturers and distributors
- Equipment manufacturers
- Packaging manufacturers

Delivery and Distribution

- Freight drivers
- Compliance officers
- Quality assurance
- Packaging
- Marketing
- Sales
- Cooler management
- Logistics
- Human resources
- Information technology
- Retail
- Food service
- Exports

WHAT HAPPENS TO STRAWBERRY REVENUE?

About 50 percent of the crop revenue goes to pay the cost of labor.



Source: 2024 Sample Costs to Produce and Harvest Strawberries
coststudies.ucdavis.edu





SEEDLINGS & PLANTS (NURSERIES)

The entire lifecycle of a strawberry plant begins and ends in California.

Young plants are nurtured in open-field nurseries in Northern California from March to January, then nursery plants are shipped to the Central Coast. California's primary production regions stretch along this coastline, supplying strawberries year-round.

The strawberry nursery industry also contributes greatly to local economies. Annual nursery sales are estimated at **$309 million**[15] with 80 percent of those plants going to California strawberry farms[15].

The labor required to grow and produce strawberry seedlings into plants equates to almost **2,300 jobs**[15] at nurseries.

Impacts Beyond California and Throughout The World

From San Diego to the Oregon Border: A California Native



Strawberry farms in other states and countries rely on planting stock from California nurseries, with over 1.4 billion plants[16] shipped worldwide annually.

Contributing to State and Federal Economies

California Strawberry Farming Makes a Substantial Contribution to the National Economy.

"The estimated direct contribution of California strawberry farming to the U.S. GDP is $2.68 billion. The total indirect effect, driven by spending in other industries, is $611 million. The total induced effect of California strawberry farming, defined by the household spending made by employees of the strawberry industry, is estimated to be $1.72 billion. Finally, the total federal tax contribution derived from California strawberry farming, including taxes on production and employee compensation, amounts to $425 million. Therefore, the total economic contribution from California strawberry farming is estimated to be more than $5.4 billion as of 2022."

Richard Volpe, Ph.D. & Xiaowei Cai, Ph.D
Professors of Agribusiness
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo







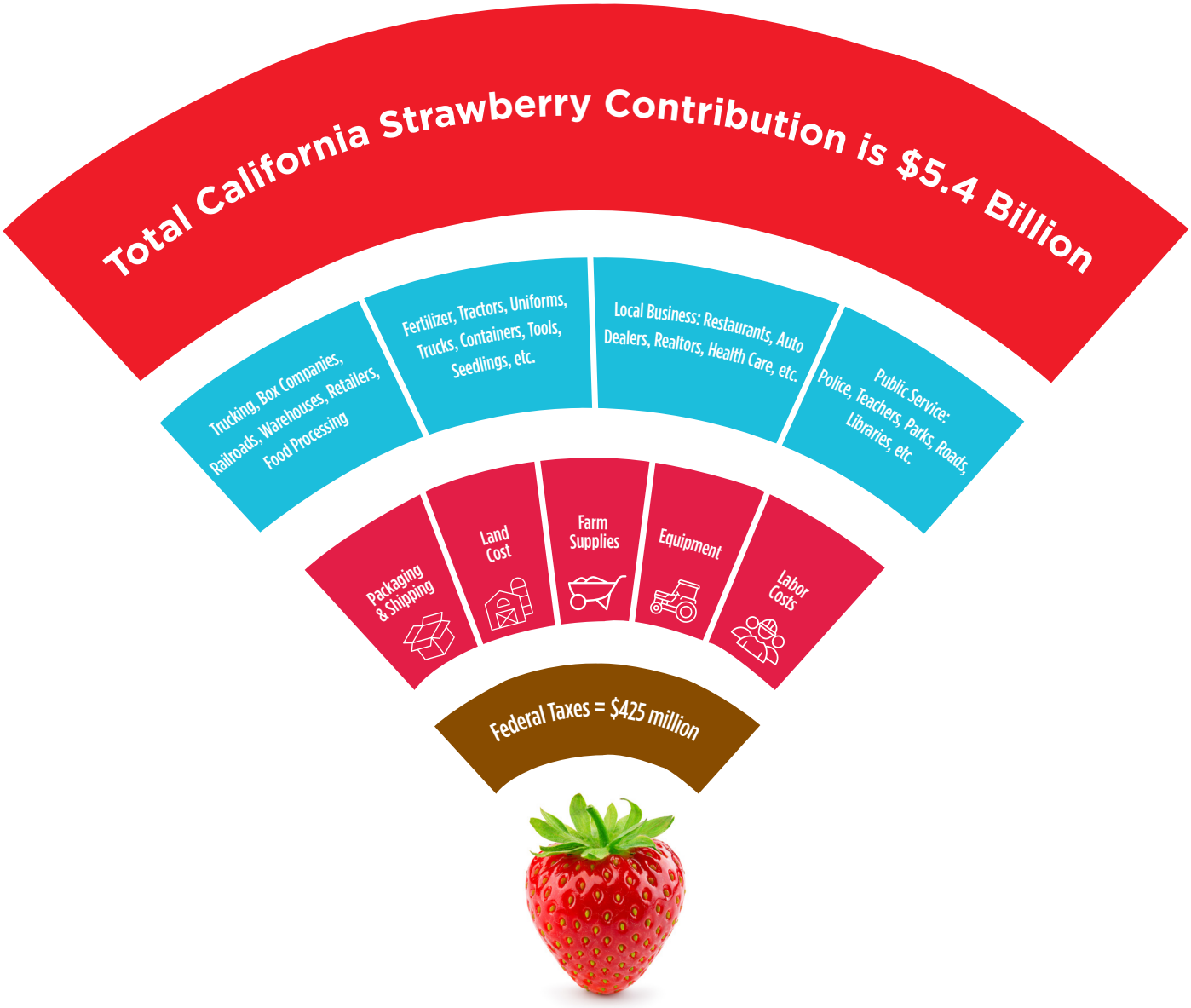
Definitions:

Direct Effect: the estimate of strawberry farming's contribution to the GDP of the geographic region of interest.

Indirect Effect: the effect of strawberry farming on other industries, driven by spending on intermediate inputs.

Induced Effect: the effect of wages paid to employees of strawberry farming.

U.S. National Economic Contribution



Estimated Effect Versus Value

The economic impacts for California pertain predominantly to fresh strawberries. According to the CDFA County Agricultural Commissioner reports, the total statewide value of fresh strawberries in 2022 was $2.53 billion[16], which can be compared to the direct effect estimate of $2.49 billion. It is likely the methodology is underestimating the value of processed strawberries, which was estimated to be $179.64 million[16] as of 2022.

Total contribution: $5.4 billion

Total indirect and induced effect: $2.3 billion

Total direct effect: $2.6 billion

Federal Taxes: $425 million

Contribution to the California economy is about $4 billion

Direct Effect	$2.49 billion
Indirect + Induced Effect	$1.4 billion
State Taxes	$185 million
Total Contribution	**$4.08 billion**

RETAIL SNAPSHOT

Strawberries are a favorite fruit of Americans and have a considerable impact in food sales and distribution channels.



80%

of fresh strawberries are sold through retail and wholesale channels, and the remaining 20 percent are mostly sold to food service buyers.



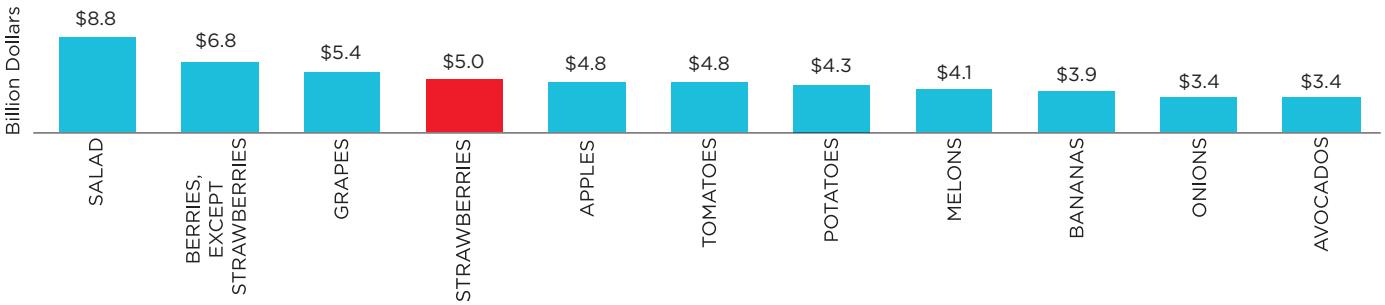
California is the predominant supply region to the U.S. an average of 35 weeks of the year.

Fresh strawberries are a powerful force in driving overall sales in retail grocery produce departments. In 2024, retail grocers, including supermarkets, club stores, big box stores, specialty markets and online grocery platforms, sold **$5 billion** worth of strawberries or **1.62 billion pounds** of strawberries[17].

Strawberries represent 42 percent of berry category dollar sales, and 60 percent of berry volume sales[17]. The fresh berry category in retail produce departments has grown by 7 percent in volume over a year[17]. Most of this growth was due to the growth in strawberry volume sales.

Strawberries are a valuable commodity in retail produce departments. In 2024, they ranked 4th among all produce commodities in annual dollar sales at **$5 billion**[17].

TOP FRESH PRODUCE RETAIL DOLLARS[17]



APPENDIX | METHODOLOGY

The research team relied on Implan to estimate the economic impacts of California strawberry farming. Implan is a common tool, utilizing government sources of spending, to measure economic impacts. All reported results from Implan pertain to 2022, the most recently available data.

Strawberry farming, as a category, was created in Implan utilizing the standard approach of identifying the closest industry available in Implan, fruit farming, then adjusting for factors that vary between general fruit farming and strawberry farming. Some estimates could under or over-estimate the true impact.

In addition to strawberry farming, support activities for agriculture are included in the definition of strawberry farming. This includes operational activities such as soil preparation, planting, and cultivating, postharvest crop activities (fruit precooling, sorting, grading, packing), farm labor contracts, crew leaders and farm management services.

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Sustaining California Communities

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