

A Look at *New Mexico* Agriculture

Capital: Santa Fe

Population: 2.116 million

Founded: January 6, 1912 (47th)

State Grass: Blue Grama

State Vegetables: Chile and Beans

State Question: Red or Green?

State Flower: Yucca

State Tree: Two Needle Piñon Pine

State Motto: "It Grows as is Goes"

State Bird: Greater Roadrunner

State Cookie: Biscocho/Biscochito

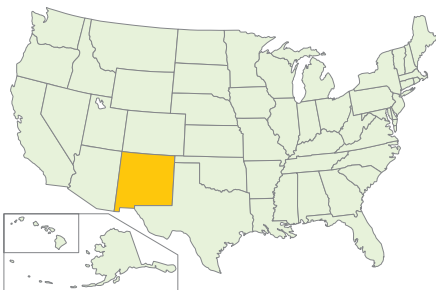
Number of Counties: 33

Largest City: Albuquerque

Nickname: Land of Enchantment

Number of Farms: [24,100](#)

Agricultural land: 40 million acres



www.agclassroom.org/nm

Climate & Soil

- New Mexico is home to six of the seven life zones in the world. (Life zones refer to groups of plants and animals that grow in certain temperatures and elevations.)
 - Lower Sonoran- below 4,500 ft.
 - Upper Sonoran-between 4,500-8,000 ft.
 - Transition- between 8,000- 9,5000 ft.
 - Canadian-between 8,500-12,000 ft.
 - Hudsonian- above 11,000 ft.
 - Artic- Alpine [De Angelis, Therese. New Mexico. NewYork: Scholastic, 2009. Print.]
- Due to its geographic diversity, New Mexico's annual precipitation varies from 6 inches in the San Juan Basin to over 46 inches in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. However, most New Mexican farms are irrigated because the soil is too dry during the growing season.
- The growing season ranges from 60 days in the North, 110 days in the Rio Grande Corridor, and 190 days in the South.
- Penistaja soils are the state soil of New Mexico and cover more than 1 million acres. In Navajo, "Penistaja" means "forced to sit". This type of soil is productive for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat.

Crops & Livestock

- [Top agricultural products for New Mexico](#) include milk, beef cattle & calves, pecans, hay, sheep, onions, chile, greenhouse/nursery, cotton, corn, wheat, poultry and eggs.
- Farming and ranching have deep roots in New Mexico. About 2500 years ago the Mogollon native people grew corn, squash, and beans. Native Americans, Spanish explorers, and Anglo pioneers all brought unique contributions that are still important to New Mexico agriculture today.
- Beef cattle were said to have been officially introduced into New Mexico in 1598. Juan de Oñate is credited with bringing 799 cows, steers, & bulls to what was then a Spanish colony.
- Many ranchers use state trust lands for grazing and the fees they pay help fund the state's education system.
- 93% of New Mexico's ranches are family owned and have been handed down through multiple generations.
- New Mexico, along with Texas and Georgia, [consistently ranks as one of the top 3 pecan producing states in the nation](#).
- New Mexico has some of the largest dairy herds in the nation (about 2,193 milking cows per herd) thanks to our large land base.
- [NM cows rank amongst the highest producing in the nation in milk productivity](#) (more milk per cow) thanks to excellent climate conditions.
- New Mexico consistently ranks among the top 10 states in the nation in milk production and among the top 5 in cheese production.
- Southwest Cheese LLC, one of the world's largest manufacturers of American style cheese, is located in the eastern part of NM. They take in about 285 tanker loads of milk per day.
- New Mexico State University (NMSU) [leads the nation in chile research](#) with the Chile Pepper Institute.

General

- New Mexico offers the most diverse record of volcanic activity in the nation. The youngest volcanic rocks are roughly 3,800 years old, while the oldest being 25 million years old.
- The Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, built in 1610, is one of the oldest public buildings in America. Santa Fe is also the oldest capital city in the U.S.
- Acoma Pueblo (Sky City), New Mexico, inhabited since 1150, is the oldest continuously inhabited community in the United States.