



# A Look at *South Carolina* Agriculture

Capital: Columbia

Population: 5,148,714

Founded: May 23, 1778 (8<sup>th</sup>)

State Bird: Carolina Wren

State Tree: Palmetto

State Flower: Yellow Jessamine

Number of Counties: 46

Largest City: Columbia - 138,458

Nickname: Palmetto State

Number of Farms: 24,600

Average Farm Size: 195 acres

Total Farmland: 4.8 million acres



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## Climate & Soil

- The state's annual average temperature varies from the mid-50s in the mountains to low-60s along the coast.
- During the winter, average temperatures range from the mid-30s in the mountains to low-50s in the Lowcountry.
- During summer, average temperatures range from the upper 60s in the mountains to the mid- 70s in the Lowcountry.
- Average annual precipitation is heaviest in northwestern South Carolina, and annual totals vary directly with elevation, soil type, and vegetation:
  - Mountains – 70" to 80" annually
  - Foothills – 60" to 70" annually
  - Piedmont – 45" to 50" annually
  - Midlands – 42" to 47" annually
  - Coastal Plain - 50" to 52" annually
- In general, the Southern Piedmont is a reddish soil that has a high amount of clay near the surface.
- The Carolina Sandhill is a band of deep sandy soil that goes through the middle of the state.

## Crops & Livestock

- Broilers (meat chickens) were the top commodity in 2019. They accounted for over 30% of the state's total agricultural sales.
- South Carolina is home to the only tea farm in North America.
- South Carolina's top agricultural crops in 2019 were: broilers, corn, cotton, cattle and calves, soybeans, eggs, peanuts, peaches, wheat and turkeys.
- Second only to California, South Carolina is the largest peach producing state on the East Coast. Sorry, Georgia!
- South Carolina is also second nationally in collard green and kale production. Lexington County is the top producing county for collards.
- South Carolina grows a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables including: peaches, watermelons, strawberries, blue berries, peppers, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, potatoes and sweet potatoes.
- Specialty crops include exotic mushrooms, ginkgo and pecans.
- South Carolina greenhouse and nursery products generated \$150 million in cash receipts in 2017.
- In 2019, South Carolina had 345,000 head of cattle, 195,000 hogs, 245 million broilers (meat chickens), 7.5 million turkeys and 743,465 quail.
- Cattle and calves are raised in every county in the state. Jasper County has the fewest with 500 head, while Anderson County tops the chart with 36,000 head.

## General

- Agribusiness returns nearly \$42 billion each year to South Carolina's economy and supports over 212,000 jobs, 10.5% of the state's workforce.
- There are over 12 million acres of forestland throughout South Carolina, with 74% privately owned.
- South Carolina is home to many ag-related festivals, such as the Okra Strut, the World Grits Festival, the Rice Festival, the Chitlin' Strut, and several festivals featuring peaches, watermelons, shrimp, oysters, and catfish.