

Washington County Agriculture Profile

Economics Department

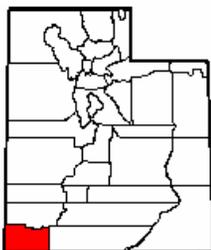
Washington County

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Area: 2,427 square miles
 (1,553,280 acres)

Population: 104,132
 (U.S. Census Bureau
 Estimate, 2003)



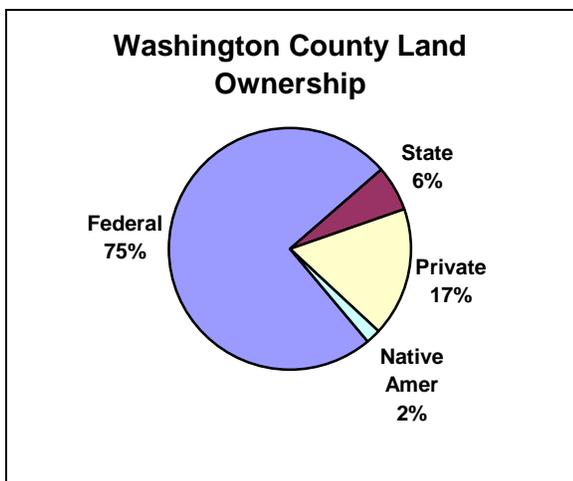
County seat: St. George

Location

Washington County is located in the southwest corner of the state. It is bordered by Nevada on the west and Arizona on the south.

Land Ownership

The land ownership within the county is divided as follows:



Source: (Utah County Fact Book, 2002)

The majority of the federally-owned ground is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). A portion is maintained as a national park. The state owned ground is primarily Utah state parks, recreational areas, and wildlife preserves. A portion is also under the jurisdiction of the Utah School and Institutional Trust Land Administration (SITLA). The private ground is primarily farm ground and grazing areas.

The 2002 Census of Agriculture indicated that there were 217,147 acres in farms or ranches in the county with an average size of 451 acres and an average value of \$1659 per acre. The county had 41,427 acres in cropland of which 8,008 acres were harvested and 15,371 were irrigated. The value of livestock and crops produced was listed at \$7,200,000.

Agricultural Snapshot

The major crops grown in Washington County with 2004 yields and total acres harvested were:

2004 Primary Crops	Yields	Total harvested acres	Average yield/acre
All alfalfa hay	26,000 tons	6,000	4.3 tons
Other hay	2,900 tons	1,300	2.2 tons

In 2003 county production statistics (2004 Utah Agricultural Statistics), Washington County ranked third in peach production.

There are two typical ground preparation methods for planting alfalfa. When flood irrigation is used the ground is moldboard plowed and then furrowed. If a pivot is the irrigation system then the ground is disked and cultipacked.

The most prevalent crop rotation that producers practice is to leave alfalfa in for four to six years, small grains for one year, and then replant alfalfa. Producers typically get four to seven cuttings of alfalfa each year. About 70% of all inputs (e.g., seed, fertilizer, pesticides, etc.) are purchased locally while the remaining 30% is bought in a neighboring county.

The majority, about 60% of the irrigation water available in Washington County, is from the Virgin River. About 5% comes from stock ponds and the remaining 35% comes from deep wells.

Growing Season

The growing season in Washington County is one of the longest in Utah. It averages five and a half months. Following are some of the details on climatology in three areas of Washington County.

The major classes of livestock produced in the county along with their associated inventories as of January 2004 were:

Livestock Type	Number of Head
All Cattle & Calves	17,000
Beef Cows	8,500

For more information visit these Web sites:

<http://utahreach.org/washington/visitor/about.htm>

<http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/htmlfiles/ut/ut.ppt.html>

<http://climate.usu.edu/utahclim/freeze/default.htm>

<http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/summary/listut.html>

http://www.utahweather.org/UWC/utahs_climate/climate_of_utah.html

<http://biology.usgs.gov/s+t/SNT/noframe/gb150.htm>

Washington	Climate Characteristics			
County Locations	Annual Precip.	Last spring freeze	First fall freeze	Freeze-free period
Enterprise Beryl Junction	9.82 in	June 7	Sept. 14	99 days
St. George	8.2 in	April 3	Oct. 28	210 days
Zion National Park	14.81 in	April 15	Oct. 31	201 days

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