



DEMOGRAPHICS

The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service reported 919 farms with Asian operators in Fresno County in 2007, and 1,021 farms in 2012. However, the number of Southeast Asian farmers is greater than the national census numbers due to low participation in mail-in surveys. A comprehensive survey conducted by Richard Molinar and Michael Yang in 2007 found over 1300 Southeast Asian farmers in Fresno County¹. Approximately 900 of these were Hmong, with around 400 Lao and smaller numbers of Mien, Cambodian, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thai farmers.

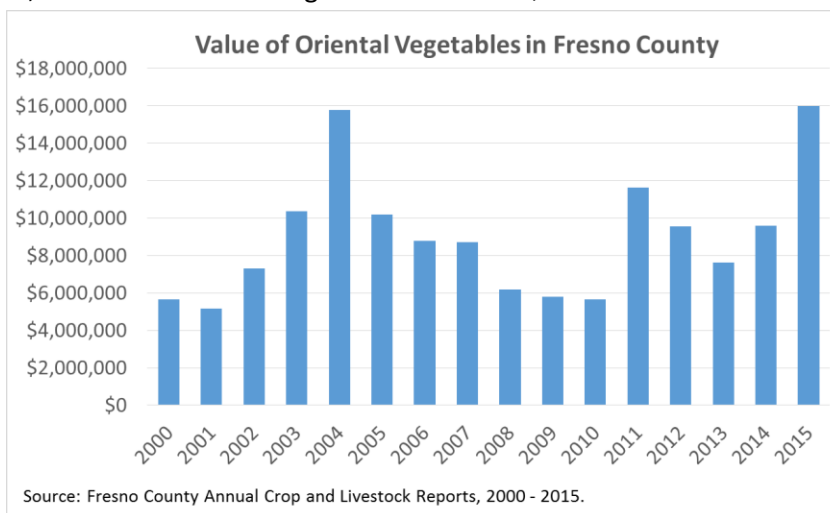
FARM SIZE AND LAND OWNERSHIP

A survey of 83 Southeast Asian farmers in 2013 found that the median farm size was 8.8 acres, with a range of 0.5 to 60 acres². Previous surveys had found an average farm size of 5.8 acres for Hmong farms and 7.8 acres for Lao farms in 2007, which had both increased from averages of 3.25 acres for Hmong farms and 5 acres for Lao farms in 1992¹. Many Southeast Asian farmers are tenants on rented land, often in the peri-urban areas around Fresno and Clovis. In a 2015 survey of 48 Hmong farmers, 80% were farming on rented land (average farm size of 7.42 acres), and 20% owned their farms (average farm size of 17.78 acres)³.

ASIAN SPECIALTY VEGETABLES

In 2015, farms in Fresno County produced 10,300 tons of oriental vegetables valued at \$16 million⁴.

Southeast Asian growers cultivate a large variety of specialty vegetables, as well as tropical crops such as sugarcane, lemongrass, taro, guava, and papaya. Specialty vegetables include traditional squashes (luffa, winter melon, bittermelon, wax gourd, and snake gourd), Asian leafy greens (bok choy, yu choy, gai lan, Chinese cabbage, and mustard greens), long beans, daikon, eggplant, snap pea and snow pea, and many other traditional vegetables and herbs. Many of these crops are classified as “oriental vegetables” in Fresno County crop reports.



References:

- ¹Molinar, R., M. Yang, and C. Cha. 2007. Update: The Southeast Asian farmers in Fresno County status report for 1992 and 2007. University of California Cooperative Extension, Fresno County. Unpublished.
- ²Sowerwine, J. & Getz, C. 2013. The Changing Face of California Agriculture: Identifying challenges and providing opportunities for Southeast Asian and other minority farmers. Rural Connections.
- ³Dahlquist-Willard, R.M., J. Sowerwine, M. Yang, S. Vue, and X. Chang. 2015. Unpublished data.
- ⁴Fresno County Annual Crop and Livestock Report. 2015. Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Available online at <http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/agricultural-commissioner/crop-report-history>