



John Eiskamp poses on his farm where he grows raspberries and blackberries. Eiskamp has seen an increase in demand for raspberries over the past year. JAMES TENSUAN/SENTINEL

# County crops gross record \$565.7 million

Agriculture

Raspberry sales grow 44 percent to lead gain

By DONNA JONES

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WATSONVILLE — Raspberry growth drove Santa Cruz County's gross agricultural revenue to a record \$565.7 million in 2011.

Growers planted more acreage, produced higher yields per acre and sold their raspberries for a better price than in 2010 to increase gross revenues for the crop 44 percent to \$132.4 million, according to the 2011 crop report released Monday by the Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

Strawberries remained the county's top earner, but the \$198.3 million in gross revenue represented only a marginal gain.

"Raspberries are good business," said grower John E. Eiskamp, explaining a nearly 30 percent increase in the number of acres growers planted in 2011 compared to the previous year. "There's always challenges, but they've made money the last several years."

Raspberry growers also boosted yields per acre 8.6 percent and sold their crop at \$5,462 a ton, a 3.3 percent increase compared to 2010, the report said.

Strawberry farmers saw an even stronger price hike, receiving \$1,979 a ton, up nearly 30 percent from the previous year, mostly due to the law of supply and demand. Production plummeted 22.5 percent despite a 17 percent increase in acreage. The weather was the culprit.

"We had a long, cold, wet spring and it

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## BY THE NUMBERS

2011 TOP CROPS

1	STRAWBERRIES	\$198.3M
2	RASPBERRIES	\$132.4M
3	INDOOR CUT FLOWERS	\$34.4M
4	FIELD GROWN FLOWERS	\$33M
5	MISC. VEGETABLES	\$32.7M

SOURCE: 2011 Santa Cruz County Crop Report.  
To view complete report, visit [www.santacruzsentinel.com](http://www.santacruzsentinel.com)



Workers sort raspberries into containers to be shipped out. J.E. Farms produces roughly 3,000 crates of raspberries daily. JAMES TENSUAN/SENTINEL