

Changing Landscape of Agronomic Crops in California

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The acreage planted to California field crops dramatically changed during the past ten years. Most of this change occurred in the cotton acreage. Cotton's acreage decreased 75 percent, from slightly over one million acres in 1997 to a little over two hundred fifty thousand in 2008. This change occurred at an almost constant rate over this 12 year period. The other major field crops alfalfa, wheat, rice and corn all had very steady planted acreages over this same period. The fraction of both wheat and corn harvested for silage increased by over one third. This increase forage production lines up with an over 50 percent increase milk production from 1997 to 2008. Although it wasn't always the same physical acreage, almost one half of cotton's loss shifted to almonds and pistachios. These statistics are from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service.