

A Look at Maine Agriculture



Capital: Augusta

Population: 1,2318,301

Founded: March 15, 1820 (23rd)

State Bird: Chickadee

State Tree: White Pine

State Flower: White Pine Cone and Tassel

Number of Counties: 16

Largest City: Portland - 64,249

Nickname: Pine Tree State

Number of Farms: 8,000

Average Size of Farms: 166 acres

Total Farmland: 1.3 million acres



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Climate & Soil

- Maine's weather is characterized by rapidly changing conditions. In Maine, the saying goes, "If you don't like the weather, wait a minute."
- The normal daily mean temperature ranges from 38.8° F in northern Maine to 45.4° F in southern Maine.
- The average number of days in which the temperature reaches 90° F or above ranges from one in northern Maine to five in southern Maine, while the average number of days in which the temperature is 32° F or below ranges from 187 days in northern Maine to 156 days in southern Maine.
- The cumulative annual precipitation is 45.4".
- The growing season is about 135 days.
- The soils of most of central and northern Maine are characterized as glacial till. The soils of this region are somewhat acidic but treated with lime they are highly productive for farming.
- Much of the soil in southern and central Maine are lake and ocean bottom soils which are free of stones and are excellent for farming.

Crops & Livestock

- Maine leads the world in production of wild blueberries.
- Maine is 2nd in the nation in the production of maple syrup and Maine's Somerset County produces more maple syrup than any other county in the country.
- Maine ranks 8th in the nation among producers of fall potatoes.
- Many Maine farmers are producing fresh fruit and vegetable crops and value-added agricultural products for direct sale to consumers.
- Maine boasts a vibrant and diverse organic farming community and many Maine farmers are involved in sustainable agricultural production.
- Maine's dairy industry is consistently among the state's leading agricultural sectors.
- Maine leads the nation in production of brown eggs.
- Maine's beef industry is rapidly expanding and finding important new markets.
- Sheep, goats, hogs, equine and poultry have always been important on Maine farms; new livestock ventures such as elk and deer herds, as well as camelids (llama and alpaca) and ratites (emu) are becoming more common on Maine farms.

General

- Maine's economy, once highly based on manufacturing, is moving toward a service-based economy.
- Still, natural resources—pulp, fishing and farming—are highly important sectors of Maine's economy.