

Mission Agriculture



Following a mission dedication, two governing padres started the difficult process of building a community. Padres set out to convert Native Americans, but also sought to create a sustainable and independent community with a small supply of tools and a few soldiers to help. Food sources were important, and Padres neither trained nor experienced in agriculture or livestock struggled toward the goal of self-sufficiency.

Padres were equipped with seeds, fruit tree cuttings, agricultural tools, cattle, and other livestock from Baja California. Yet, the challenge for these novice farmers and ranchers lied in what to do with the supplies.

In order to achieve a self sufficient community, many padres came prepared with self-help books on agriculture and ranching. The padres read an 18th century version of "Agriculture for Dummies," called Agricultura General. Within the guide padres learned about selection of soil, storing of garnered crops, and the breeding and caring for animals.

Even with the self-help book, padres still learned by trial and error. Padres made mistakes; many missions had to move locations because the farming land selected lacked good soil, or water sources. Yet, because of these trials, padres learned from their mistakes and discovered new techniques to improve production.

Padres built irrigation systems and learned the proper technique of plowing, planting, and harvesting. They taught all these things to the Native American converts, and with time, the mission land began yielding an abundance of diverse crops.

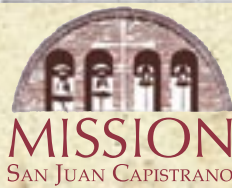
Planted crops included wheat, barley, corn, beans, peas, garbanzos, habas, and lentils. Garden vegetables included onions, garlic, tomatoes, asparagus, cabbage, lettuce, potatoes, and chilies. Orchards included apples, plums, olives, pears, figs, oranges, and pomegranates.

Padres produced reports about agricultural production and sent these reports to the California Governor, Mexico City Officials, and even to the King of Spain. These reports, or what the Spanish Padres called informes, not only tracked the agricultural production, it also included census data, livestock numbers, and important events of that year.



MATERIAL RESULTS AT MISSION SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO.— AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

Year	Wheat		Barley		Corn		Beans		Peas		Lentils		Garbanzos		Habas		TOTAL				
	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	Plant.	Harv.	
1790		300				600															
1791		400				1200															
1792	20	367				651	600	3	1200												
1793	43	536				97	1000	4	1200												
1794	26	3000				674	3000	250	1200												
1795	43	3000				91	300	3	30												
1796																					
1797																					
1798	60	1200				20	1600	8	100												
1799	95	2500	2	60	27	2000	4	30													
1800	80	3000			27	1200	3	120													
1801	80	3000			26	1200	3	70													
1802	100	3000			6	500	2	100													
1803	11	177			7	1000	2	31													
1804	103	2000			7	200	2	10													
1805	151	3500	2	70	7	510	3	61													
1806	177	3000			6	400	3	70													
1807	170	3000	17	60	5	400	3	70													
1808	100	3000	2	30	5	400	2	40													
1809	126	3000	14	40	7	500	2	60													
1810	188	4000	15	30	7	500	4	50													
1811	180	4000			16	200	5	60													
1812	180	4000			15	200	5	60													
1813	170	3000	4	15	14	400	7	70													
1814	166	3000			6	400	2	20													
1815	120	3000	21	100	21	500	17	20													
1816	120	3000	21	100	21	500	17	20													
1817	200	3000	30	300	30	500	24	30													
1818	140	3000	6	20	11	500	8	30													
1819	130	3000			8	500	5	20													



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