

A recent report given from Ventura County's Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzalez places avocados as the worst hit crop from the Thomas Fire in terms of value, while lemon farmers suffered the most when it comes to crop volume.

In a letter to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) County Executive Director Brenda Estrada, Gonzalez said the fire was still yet to be fully contained and had impacted more than 10,289 acres of irrigated cropland and a further 60,000 acres of rangeland.

"The estimated damage to current and future crops, machinery and equipment dwellings, service buildings, and other structures due to the fire is \$171,296,703," Gonzalez said.

"This is a conservative figure and only includes dwellings in agricultural settings. This estimate does not include the losses in wages of agricultural workers and nothing can measure the pain and suffering of the farmers that have lost much of their livelihood.

"I ask that you assist in making your staff and disaster assistance programs promptly available to the many Ventura County farmers that may otherwise go out of business."

In terms of dollar losses, the commissioner's disaster report calculated a level of US\$10.2 million for avocados from a volume of 4,030 metric tons (MT).

Lemons were the second-most hit at US\$5.8 million in losses and a volume loss of 7,591MT.

Other crops that were seriously affected include vegetables (US\$4.6 million), oranges (US\$3.4 million; 3,680MT), nursery plants (US\$1.4 million), mandarins (US\$491,022) strawberries (US\$486,416), raspberries (US\$55,420) and grapefruit (US\$35,930).

For the strawberry producers that still have a crop, Gonzalez told *Fresh Fruit Portal* there were also concerns about freezing temperatures in the country's eastern states as growers were in the middle of their harvest window and poor conditions often kept people away from grocery stores.

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