

Food Systems Advocacy Project
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Applied Nutrition-Dietetics
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Table of Contents

Part 1: Summary of Community Health, Food Insecurity and Nutrition Programs	3
Community Summary	3
County and State Health Concerns	4
Community Food Insecurity	4
Food and Nutrition Connections to Disease	5
Part 2: Food Systems Assessment	8
State Agriculture	8
Local Farms and Food Spotlights	9
The Biological Environment	13
The Agricultural Workforce	15
Food Retailers and Foodservice Workers	16
Regional Food Culture	17
Part 3: Local Political System and Food and Health Policy Making	18
Summary of Constituencies and Policy-Makers	18
Legislator Directory – Executive Branch	19
Legislator Directory – Legislative Branch	21
Part 4: Take Action	25
Local Advocacy Opportunities	25
Congress	25
State Legislature	27
Local	28
Congressional Hearing	29
Take Action	30
References	31

Part 1: Summary of Community Health, Food Insecurity and Nutrition

Community Summary

I grew up in the rural, diverse, border community of Yuma, which is the county seat of Yuma County, Arizona, located in the southwestern corner of the United States. It sits at the confluence of the Colorado and Gila rivers.^{1,2} Yuma is also known as the “Sunnier City on Earth” shining 91% of daylight hours every year with only 3 inches of annual rainfall per year.³ Average temperatures range from 41°F – 68°F in January to 76°F – 106°F in July.³ Yuma County is approximately 5,522 square miles comprised of desert, agricultural, commercial, and residential areas.² It is a uniquely “border” community in the sense, that to the west it borders the State of California to the south, it borders two states of Mexico (Baja California Norte and Sonora), and is also home to two Native American tribal nations (Quechan and Cocopah).



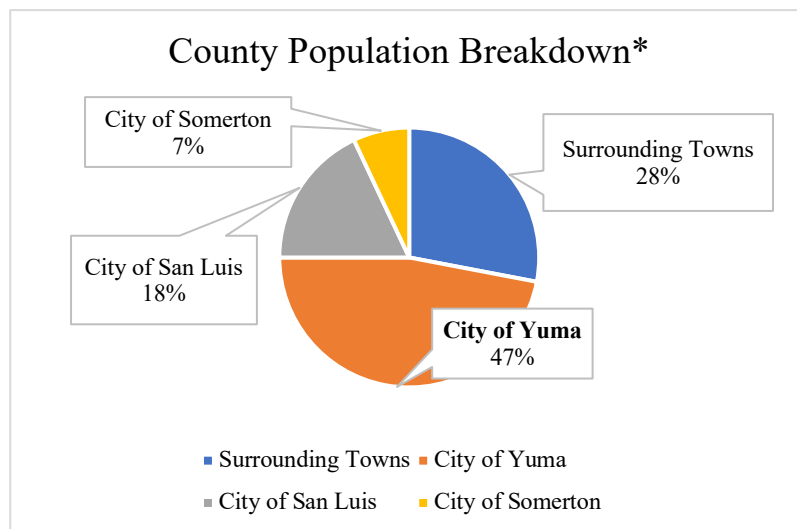
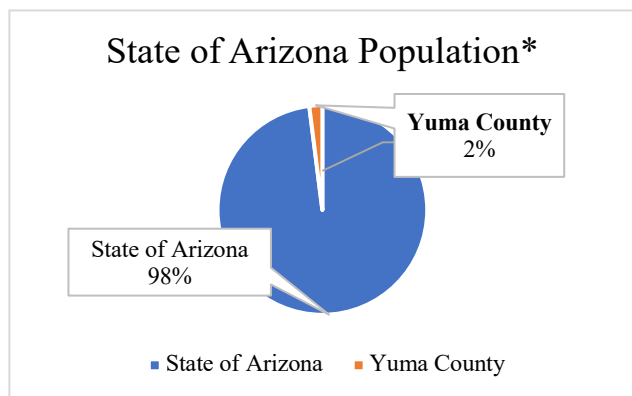
*Location - Yuma. YumaAZ.gov. Accessed January 29, 2023.
<https://www.yumaaz.gov/business/economic-development>*

After the 2020 United States Census, the state of Arizona was estimated at 7,264,877 individuals.⁴ The total population for Yuma County was averaged at 206,990 individuals, with 97,093 of the population residing in the City of Yuma, 37,333 from the City of San Luis, and 14,311% from the City of Somerton.⁴ The remaining population lives in smaller surrounding towns/communities, such as Gadson and Dateland.⁴

The racial makeup in the State of Arizona is as follows: 82% white alone (of which 32.3% was Hispanic or Latino and 53.2% was White Alone, not Hispanic or Latino), 5.4% Black or African American alone, 5.3% American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 3.8% Asian alone, 0.3% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone, and 3.1% was two or more race.⁴ 88.3% of the population greater than 25 years is estimated to be a high school graduate or higher, and 31.2% have a bachelors' degree or higher. And 12.9% of the population under the age of 65 years do not have health insurance.⁴

*US Census, 2020.

County/City Lived In is Bolded



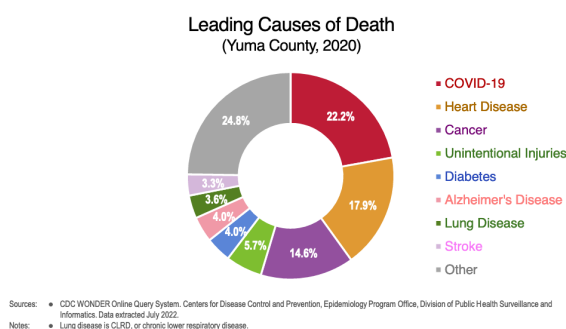
County and States Health Concerns

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, last reviewed January 2023, the top 10 Leading Causes of Death in Arizona are: (1) Heart Disease, (2) Cancer, (3) COVID-19, (4) Accidents, (5) Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases, (6) Alzheimer's Disease, (7) Stroke, (8) Diabetes, (9) Chronic Liver Disease/Cirrhosis, (10) Suicide.⁵ In 2020, the leading cause of death in Yuma County were COVID-19, Heart Disease, Cancer, Unintentional Injuries, Diabetes, Alzheimer's Disease, Lung Disease, Stroke, and Other.⁶

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

Distribution of Deaths by Cause

COVID-19, heart disease, and cancers combined account for more than one-half of all deaths in Yuma County in 2020.



Leading Causes of Death. YumaRegional.org. Published September 2022.

[https://www.yumaregional.org/EmergeWebsite/media/Yuma-Documents/2022-Community-Health-Needs-Assessment-\(CHNA\)-Yuma-County-AZ.pdf](https://www.yumaregional.org/EmergeWebsite/media/Yuma-Documents/2022-Community-Health-Needs-Assessment-(CHNA)-Yuma-County-AZ.pdf)

Community Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is defined as the “lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life.”⁷ Food insecurity can affect people from all backgrounds. FeedingAmerica.org states the leading causes are poverty/unemployment/low income, lack of affordable housing, chronic health conditions or lack of access to healthcare, and/or systemic race and racial discrimination. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a dramatic increase in the number of people experiencing foods insecurity – in fact, almost 32% of Arizona households experienced food insecurity.⁸

Currently, Arizona, 12.8% of the population is estimated to be in poverty, it follows that in Arizona an estimated 788,790 (11%) people face hunger.^{4,9} 17.3% in Yuma County meet the poverty level and within the County, the City of San Luis has the highest rate of poverty (25.1%), followed by the City of Somerton (19.6%), and the City of Yuma, 17.1%.⁴ In 2013, Yuma County estimated that 27.3% were food insecure - the highest rate of food insecurity in the whole state.¹⁰ In 2019, the numbers had lowered and 16.1% of people and 31.6% of children were considered to be food insecure.¹¹

Hispanic households, households with children, and households that had experienced a job disruption are more likely to experience food insecurity.⁸ The majority of Arizona households worried about the rising cost of food, as well as the limited availability of food assistance programs and safety.

Food and Nutrition Connections to Disease

Heart Disease

Heart disease refers to several types of heart conditions, including coronary artery disease and myocardial infarctions (heart attack).¹² It is linked to dietary intake as diets rich in whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and low ultra-processed (especially low sodium, sugar, and trans fat) foods can reduce the risk of heart disease.¹³ It is also linked to food insecurity (particularly strong association between very low food security and higher heart disease risk).¹⁴ Additionally, environmental pollutants (such as ambient air pollution, household air pollution, lead, arsenic, and cadmium) is linked with heart disease.¹⁵

Cancer

Nutrition and dietary quality have an important influence of the risk of developing many different types of cancer. For instance, higher intake of red meat is associated with higher rates of colorectal cancer and isoflavones are associated with lower risk of breast cancer in Asian populations.¹⁶ Food insecurity is also linked to cancer, when the prevalence of cancer increases so does the severity of food insecurity.¹⁷ Environmental pollutants are also linked to the development of cancer, including air pollution, environmental tobacco smoke, and chemical (asbestos, arsenic, benzene, etc) exposure.¹⁸

COVID-19

Diet quality (particularly diets rich in healthy plant-based foods) are thought to be associated with lower risk and severity of COVID-19.¹⁹ Environmental pollutants have also been theorized as a carrier of the COVID-19 virus and is associated with increases cases of the COVID-19 infection and associated mortality.^{20, 21}

Accidents

Depending on the type of accident, food insecurity can affect risk of accident. Food insecurity was found in a retrospective, observational study, to increase the odds of those who fell.²² Hypoglycemia related to dietary quality and food insecurity may also increase risk of accidents.

Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases

Chronic lower respiratory diseases include: chronic obstructive disease (COPD), chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma.²³ Air pollutants are established causes of chronic respiratory diseases and can exacerbate pre-existing conditions.^{24, 25}

Alzheimer's Disease

Risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, a neurodegenerative condition, can be increased through diets rich in saturated fatty acids and branched-chain amino acids.²⁶ The chance of developing can also be decreased through diets rich in antioxidants, fiber, and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids as they have a protective effect.²⁶ While causal effects are unknown, food insecurity is theorized to affect cognition in older adults and may lead to higher susceptibility to increased cognitive decline.²⁷ Environmental pollutants can also affect the brain and can lead to neurotoxicity and promote the pathogenesis of neurological disorders like Alzheimer's.²⁸

Stroke

Heart healthy diets (ie rich in fiber, fruits, vegetables, lower sodium, sugar, trans fats) are associated with decreased risk of stroke due to promotion of healthy vessels. Plant-based diets which are higher in the components of the heart healthy diet are also linked with decreased risk of stroke (total, ischemic, and hemorrhagic).^{29, 30} While causality has not been established, food insecurity is associated with greater prevalence of stroke and is likely linked to the effects of food insecurity on diet quality.³¹ Similarly, exposure to environmental pollutants is also associated with admission to the hospital for strokes, although the link is not established.³²

Diabetes

Diet quality is often associated with risk of diabetes, although the actuality of the associations is not yet well established in research.³³ It is known that high glycemic foods due promote wider glucose excursions which is a strain to the pancreas and insulin production, which can lead to the development of diabetes mellitus. Food insecurity can also worsen glycemic control due to the limited availability of higher-quality foods, and may affect the risk of diabetes, although causality has not been established.³⁴ Previously not well researched, environmental pollutants (that disrupt healthy endocrine function) may also be modifiable risk factors in the pathogenesis of diabetes; more research and clinical guidelines are needed.³⁵

Chronic Liver Disease/Cirrhosis

Chronic liver disease (whether alcoholic or non-alcoholic) is affected by diet quality. In addition to diseases, high alcohol consumption, iron or copper overload, excess consumption of trans and saturated fats and other nutrients that are stored as fat can lead to the development of chronic liver disease and progression to cirrhosis.³⁶ Food insecurity may also be independently associated with the development of NAFLD as it affect food access, quality, and healthy eating habits.³⁷ Environmental contaminants may also affect prevalence of liver disease as they can be toxic to the liver and lead to irreparable liver damage.³⁸

Suicide

Properly balance diet is a key part in the prevention and treatment of mental disorders. This is not only for overall health, but also for the high content of certain nutrients that can help with depressive disorders and may influence suicidal ideation and attempts.³⁹ Food insecurity is positively associated with suicidal ideation and attempts in older adults, as well as adolescents.⁴⁰ ⁴¹ While there is a dearth of research regarding environmental pollutants and suicide, these pollutants may lead to neurotoxic exposures that can alter the risk.⁴²

Community Nutrition Programs

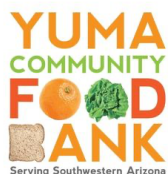
The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) is a 12-month group-based program designed and regulated by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to encourage lifestyle modification to reduce risk of developing type 2 diabetes.⁴³ It is offer to community members, free-of-charge, who are identified to be at risk for developing diabetes or are at-risk.⁴³ It is currently offered through the Yuma County Public Health Services District, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, and Regional Center for Border Health.

The Regional Center for Border Health and its subsidiary also offer other public health prevention program promoting nutrition and healthy lifestyle behaviors for all-ages. Programs

include “Eat Good, Feel Good” which is for adults interested in healthy eating and lifestyle, “Mi Cocina, Su Cocina” a culinary medicine program offered to teens, adults, and pregnant patients, and “Relaxation Sessions” offered to promote mindfulness techniques and limbering for adults.

The Healthy Kids Program is a 5-week virtual program available to children ages 7-12 and their families at no cost. It is designed to teach children about the importance of developing healthy habits and lifestyles (such as physical activity, nutritious food choices, preparing healthy meals) to promote healthful life-long habits.⁴⁴ It is offered by Yuma Regional Medical Center.

Food Assistance Programs



Logos of Yuma Food Assistance Programs

1. Yuma Community Food Bank (distributes throughout Yuma County on set days of the week)
2. Crossroads Mission
3. Department of Economic Security (SNAP and TEFAP)
4. Fr Cheridan Food Pantry
5. New Life Pregnancy Center
6. “Farmers Market on Wheels” – Regional Center for Border Health (targeted for Somerton and Cocopah Indian Tribe to increase access to vegetables and fruits)
7. Women Infants and Children (WIC) – location in Yuma, Somerton, San Luis, and Wellton
8. Adventist Community Services
9. Yuma Senior Nutrition Congregate Meal Program (located in Yuma North End Community Center; 60 and older)
10. San Luis Senior Nutrition
11. San Luis Food Pantry
12. Western Arizona Council of Governments
13. American Legion #19 (veterans and families in need)

PART 2: Food Systems Assessment

State Agriculture

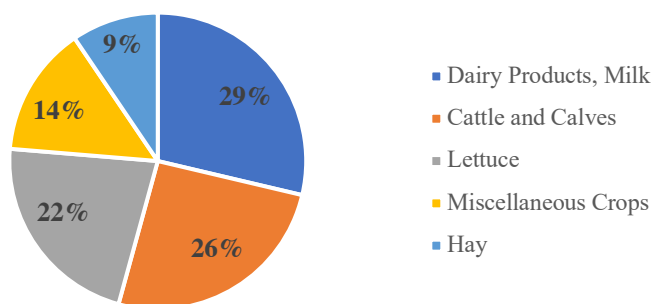
Agriculture may be defined as the “science, art, or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops and raising livestock and in varying degrees the preparation and marketing of these resulting products.”⁴⁵ In Arizona, agriculture plays an important role in the state’s economy, culture, environment, politics, academics, as well as health and wellness.



Top 5 Agriculture Commodities

In 2021, the top 5 agricultural commodities in Arizona were (1) Dairy products, milk, (2) cattle and calves, (3) lettuce, (4) miscellaneous crops, and (5) hay.⁴⁶ The “cash receipt” (or gross income from sales of crops, livestock, and livestock products during a calendar year⁴⁷) in Arizona equaled \$3,992,944,000 or approximately \$3.9 billion dollars for 2021.⁴⁶

Top 5 Arizona Agriculture Commodities, 2021
- Cash Receipts Percent of State⁴⁶



Agriculture Commodities, 2021*	Cash Receipts 1,000 dollars
Dairy Products, Milk	845,856
Cattle and calves	753,933
Lettuce	651,061
Miscellaneous Crops	418,549
Hay	281,151
All Commodities	3,992,944

**Adapted from Economic Research Service-United States Department of Agriculture. Top 5 Arizona Agricultural Commodities, Exports, and Counties. Updated 2023.*

Top 5 Agriculture Exports

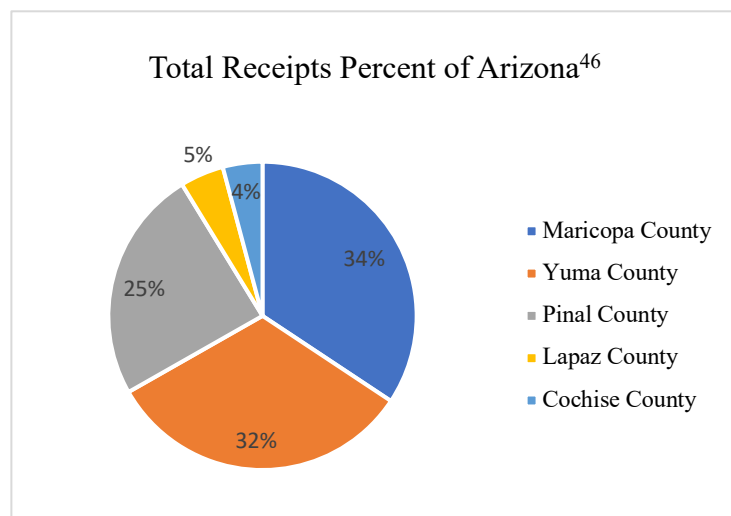
In Arizona, the top 5 agriculture exports were (1) vegetables, processed, (2), other plant products, *including sweeteners and products, other horticulture products, planting seeds, cocoa, coffee, and other processed foods*, (3), vegetables, fresh, (4) dairy products, and (5) cotton.⁴⁶ The total exports total to \$1,469,500,000 or approximately \$1.4 billion dollars in 2021.⁴⁶

Top Agriculture Exports, 2021	Export Rank Among States	Export Million Dollars
Vegetables, Processed	5	316.2
Other Plant Products	22	260.6
Vegetables, Fresh	5	156.8
Dairy Products	14	154.2
Cotton	11	127.9
Total Exports	32	1,469.5

**Adapted from Economic Research Service-United States Department of Agriculture. Top 5 Arizona Agricultural Commodities, Exports, and Counties. Updated 2023*

Top 5 Counties in Agricultural Sales

In 2017, the top 5 counties in Arizona for agricultural sales was (1) Maricopa County, (2), Yuma County, (3), Pinal County, (4) Lapaz County, and (5) Cochise County.⁴⁶ These counties are in the western and/or southern part of Arizona. The total receipt of sales for the state was \$3,852,008,000 or approximately \$3.8 billion dollars in Arizona.⁴⁶



Top 5 Counties in Agriculture Sales, 2017*	Total Receipts 1,000 dollars
Maricopa County	1,209,132
Yuma County	1,143,068
Pinal County	861,839
Lapaz County	160,152
Cochise County	144,741
State Total	3,852,008

**Adapted from Economic Research Service-United States Department of Agriculture. Top 5 Arizona Agricultural Commodities, Exports, and Counties. Updated 2023.*

Local Farm and Food Spotlights

Amigo Farms, Inc., is headquartered in Yuma, AZ and produces fresh products on approximately 7,000 acres.⁴⁸ A little over 2/3 of the growing valleys are located around Yuma, San Luis, Somerton, and Roll, Arizona and the remainder right across the Arizona-California border located in Winterhaven and Bard, California.⁴⁸

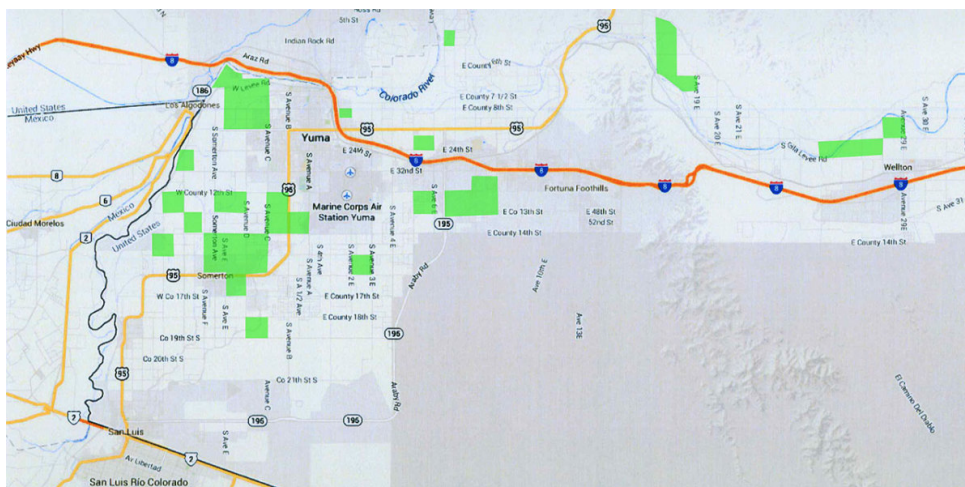


It was founded in 1992 by Bruce Williams and Bill Scott, who are from Yuma-area farming families, and currently own and operate the company.⁴⁸ In 2014, they also developed a success plan that offers minority ownership to three managers who have been with the company for over 20 years to create a sustainable future.⁴⁸

Growing/Harvest Season ⁴⁸	Product ⁴⁸
November – May	Red Cabbage, Green Cabbage
October – April	Romaine Lettuce, Iceberg Lettuce, Leaf Lettuce
November – April	Celery, Broccoli, Cauliflower
May – December (Spring & Fall)	Cantaloupe, Honeydew
June – July	Durum Wheat
July	Sudan Seed

Products are sold around the world to vegetable shippers such as Church Brothers, Dole, Fresh Express, Taylor Farms, Ready Pac, Betteravia/Bonipak, and Green Gate Fresh.⁴⁸ Production methods include mechanical transplanting and weeding/thinning machines for effective, safe, and efficient growth and harvest.⁴⁸

Doug Mellon Farms II, Inc., is a full-service farming corporation in Yuma that contracts melons and grows forage crops, wheat and cotton through Spring to Fall and seed crops all-year-round.⁴⁹ Mellon Farms owns over 6,000 acres across Yuma Valley, Gila Valley, Yuma Mesa, Dome Valley, Wellton, and Tacna and sells all over the country, but primarily in Arizona.⁴⁹



Current Growing Regions (Green) - Mellon Farms. MellonFarms.com. Accessed February 26, 2023. <http://mellonfarms.com/custom-farming/ranch-locations/>

It is a third-generation family-owned farm that has been in operation since 1945 when it was founded by Archie Mellon.⁴⁹ It was incorporated in Arizona in 1976 by his son Doug Mellon as Doug Mellon Farms, Inc., and was re-incorporated in 2008, as Doug Mellon Farms II, Inc. by his three grandsons, who currently operate it today.⁴⁹

Mellon Farms uses sustainable food production practices including maximizing water usage, alternative irrigation methods, crop rotation, GPS precision field preparation, tilling under crop residue, and solarization to kill harmful diseases and weed seed without chemicals.⁴⁹

Products Grown Include⁴⁹:

Produce:	Head Lettuce, Value-Added Head Lettuce, Romaine, Romaine Hearts, Value-Added Romaine, Green Leaf Lettuce, Red Leaf Lettuce, Butter Lettuce, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Celery, Spring Mix, Baby Vegetables, Artichokes
Fruits:	Cantaloupe, Watermelon, Dates
Seed Crops:	Onion, Broccoli, Sudan, Bermuda, Alfalfa, Radishes, Totsoi, Carrot
Forage Crops:	Sudan, Alfalfa, Bermuda Grass
Grain Crops:	Wheat, Barley



Rehrman F. Mellon Farms Crops. [Image] Accessed February 26, 2023.

Pasquinelli Produce Company was founded by Gary Pasquinelli in 1949.⁵⁰ It is headquartered in Yuma, AZ and the crops are grown on approximately 9,000 acres in Yuma County, AZ in Yuma and Dome Valley.⁵⁰ Gary Pasquinelli recently retired in 2021 and is currently run by Alexander Muller (President) and Blaine Morris (Vice President-Grower).⁵⁰



Crops grown include fennel, broccoli, butter lettuce, cauliflower, celery, cilantro, iceberg lettuce, romaine, spinach, watermelon, and durum wheat.⁵⁰ Crops are grown on a certain schedule to optimize the growing/harvesting environment.⁵⁰ These products are sold to Dole Fresh Vegetables, Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc., Steinbeck Country Marketing, Ippolito, and Grower Vegetables Express.⁵⁰ Seedless watermelons are grown, harvested, and marketed by the company.⁵⁰

The following calendar illustrates the anticipated planning (-), planting (o) and harvest (x) months for our various crops in Yuma County.

CROP	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Anise	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	o	o	o	x
Broccoli	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	o	o	o	x	x
Butter Lettuce	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	o	o	o	x
Cauliflower	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	o	o	o	x	x
Celery	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	o	o	o	x	x
Cilantro	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	o	o	o	x
Iceberg Lettuce	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	o	o	o	x	x
Leaf Lettuce	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	o	o	o	x	x
Romaine	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	o	o	o	x	x
Spinach	x	x	x	x	-	-	-	o	o	o	x	x
Watermelon	o	o	o	o	x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-
Wheat (Durham)	x	x	-	-	-	-	o	o	o	o	o	x

Crop Calendar. Pasque.com. Accessed February 26, 2023.

Pasquinelli Produce Company uses sustainable food production methods to promote soil health, minimize water use, and lower pollution levels.⁵⁰ They follow Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) designed by the FDA and USDA to prevent fields from being too close to feedlots, sewer treatment plants, and/or garbage disposal sites.⁵⁰ They also monitor irrigation water quality, safe compost, field employee sanitation and pesticide use.⁵⁰

JV Farms is a subsidiary agricultural company headquartered in Yuma, AZ, part of JVSmith Companies (which also owns JV Farms Organic, Skyline Potato, Triangle Farms in Colorado, Arizona, California, and Mexico).⁵¹ It was founded in 1988 by John and Vic Smith who still own the company and operated by Chad VanMatre who was been with the company since 2004.⁵¹



They predominately grow lettuce and broccoli, as well as a few other vegetable crops in Yuma Valley, Gila Valley, Wellton-Mohawk in Arizona and Bard California.⁵¹ They sell to major vegetable shipping operation on the domestic and international markets.⁵¹

Production methods are focused on effective and sustainable methods including crop rotation, water efficiencies (drip systems and laser leveling), solar cells, recycling programs, variable speed motors, and use organic fertilizer.⁵¹

Barkley Co. of Arizona is located in Yuma, AZ. It was the first company of Barkley Ag Enterprises, LLC headquartered in Yuma which also operates Barkley Seed Inc.⁵² It was first founded in 1918 by Les Barkley who moved to join his uncle Hugh Barkley.⁵² It is run by a 4th-generation member of the Barkley Family, Hank Auza and Chris Auza.⁵²



Barkley Co. of Arizona's grow fresh produce, winter vegetables, cotton, and grain crops in the Yuma, Dome, and Wellton-Mohawk Valley.⁵² They sell the production around the U.S.⁵² Barkley states that have sustainable farming/production methods and use solar energy, electrostatic spraying system, irrigation management to reduce water waste, and reduce fuel consumption from tractors.⁵²

Products Grown Include⁵²:

Organics	Romaine, Broccoli, Iceberg, Spring Mix, Leaf Lettuce, Celery, and Spinach
Vegetables	Lettuce (Iceberg and Romaine), Broccoli (as well as Broccoli Hybrids), Cauliflower, Spinach, Spring Mix, Parsley, Kale, Napa Cabbage, Bok Choy, Cilantro, Asparagus, Mix Leaf (Green, Red, Butter Leaf and Frisee)
Fruits and Nuts	Medjool, Dates, Olives, Lemons
Specialty	Grain Crops (Wheat, Barley, Safflower, and Sudan), Cotton (Short Staple and Pima), Specialty Items (Kosher Grains, Purple and Black Barley)

Datepac, LLC is located in Yuma, AZ and was established by local Bard Valley, CA growers in 2002.⁵³ It is the largest grower/packer of Medjool Dates offering full-year availability.⁵³ It facilitates under USDA, FDA, Arizona State regulations, and a Quality System Program based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) guidelines.⁵³ They also are committed to the organic integrity of products and use an allergen control program, chemical control program, metal detector, and product traceability and recall system.⁵³ It sells directly to customers in the US, Canada, Europe, and Asia.⁵³



True Leaf Farms is operated by Church Brothers Farms and is a grower owned fresh vegetable processor.⁵⁴ It was opened by Brian and Steve Church in 1999 and farms in California, Arizona, and Mexico.⁵⁴ The salad processing plant moves twice a year between Yuma, AZ and Salinas, CA to produce the freshest salads available.⁵⁴ They produce green onions, celery, radishes, green/red leaf and iceberg lettuce, romaine, red cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, spinach in retail and foodservice quantities.⁵⁴ They use non-chemical methods such as crop rotation and resistant seeds to promote biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability,



integrated pest management, Cogen clean power station, water management, soil management and conservation, recycling to reduce waste management, and fertilizer management to prevent nutrient loss and ground/surface water contamination.⁵⁴

GreenGate Fresh, LLLP, is a food processing company founded in 2009 by Robert K Barkley, Travis Pendleton, Jay Iverson, and Keith Bazabal.⁵⁵ They are located in Yuma, AZ, and Salinas, CA to provide year-round availability.⁵⁵ Products include broccoli, green and green cabbage, cilantro, parsley, iceberg lettuce, kale, romaine, arugula, and spinach in different cut types including chopped, diced, and shredded.⁵⁵ They sell directly to foodservice companies in the US.⁵⁵ They follow good agricultural products for on-farm production and post-production processes, good manufacturing practices, wash water disinfection, foreign matter control, HACCP guidelines, and employee training.⁵⁵



Gourmet Boutique is a food processing company headquartered in Jamaica, New York with location in Jamaica, NY and Phoenix, Arizona.⁵⁶ It was founded in 1996 by Robert Liberto.⁵⁶ They sell fresh and frozen food productions (entrées, salads, and side dishes) nationwide to retail and food service organizations as well as to neighboring countries.⁵⁶ Products include Tru Grill®, Fresh By Gourmet®, as well as entrees, sides, salads, and grill items.⁵⁶ Products are obtained as whole foods and then cooked in small batches based on recipes from research and develop labs in MAP or HPP processed fresh.⁵⁶ They are Safe Quality Food Manufactures for Manufacturing and Quality certified by the National Science Foundation International by following HACCP based food safety and quality management systems for production.⁵⁶



Growers Express, is a local food processing located in Yuma and San Luis, AZ.⁵⁷ It was founded and headquartered in South Monterey County, CA.⁵⁷ It was founded in 1987 by eight local produce growers.⁵⁷ In 1995, they became a licensed partner of Green Giant®.⁵⁷ In May 2022, B&G Foods North America purchased Growers Express.⁵⁷ It processes fresh vegetables such as cauliflower, zucchini, broccoli, cucumbers, and squash and is sold wholesale or commercial retail.⁵⁷ It also has a frozen storage facility for “pick pack” and finished goods according to best food safety and production practices before it is sold to industrial, foodservice, and retail customers.⁵⁷



The Biological Environment



Agriculture is an essential part of Arizona. While Arizona is a large desert, it's plentiful sunshine, rich soil, high-quality irrigation aided by the natural sources of water, and ample labor to support hundreds of food crops and ranches/farms for poultry, swine, and cattle.^{58,59} In 2018, Arizona was the largest producing state for fresh market vegetables and the 4th in the country in acres of organic vegetables.⁵⁸ Additionally, Yuma produces around 90% of all leafy greens to the nation and has been coined the winter vegetable capital of the world.^{58,59}

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Contributing to Arizona's agricultural success is a network of rivers and streams that provide water in the desert. These include the Colorado, Verde, Salt, Gila, San Pedro, Santa Cruz, and Little Colorado Rivers.⁵⁸ These rivers develop watersheds and are branched into numerous canals throughout the state that connect communities to sustain life and agriculture.⁵⁸ There is a growing concern that there may not be a sustainable source of water for agriculture in Arizona which necessitates an urgent need not only to be responsible for water and return it to rivers and streams when not used but to advocate for leaders in government and private sector to responsibly legislate and use water, while participating in research and change that promotes a sustainable agricultural future.⁵⁸



Arizona's climate also facilitates year-round growing for hundreds of different types of crops including cotton, alfalfa, wheat, melons, oranges, tomatoes, dates, and pecans.⁵⁸ It is an arid and semi-arid climate with an annual precipitation averaging between 3 inches near Yuma (southwest Arizona) to 40 inches in White Mountains (east-central Arizona).⁶⁰ The average daytime temperatures in winter are in the lower 60s while summer time can reach between 105 and 115 degrees Fahrenheit.⁶⁰ In Yuma County, the mild winters, rare occurrence of hard frost, and greater than 350 days of sunshine a year, allows for the longest growing season in the United States.⁵⁹ While winter time may be a particularly busy time for vegetable/crop production, something is always growing or happening in the fields throughout the year.

Arizona's soil is mainly characterized as "Casa Grande" soil with a light brown fine sandy loam surface layer, reddish brown sandy clay loam subsoil layer, and light reddish-brown clay loam subsoil lower layer and covers the predominately agricultural layers of central and southwestern Arizona.⁶¹ While the hot climate is more prone to strip the soil of nutrients, minerals, and organic matters, contemporary farms follow the practices of the Hohokam and use irrigation to leach excess salts and promote a soil conducive for growth.⁶¹ In Yuma county, the soil is particularly rich because the Colorado River deposited sediments over millions of years.⁵⁹



The Arizona Wildlife Conservation Strategy operated through Arizona Game and Fish evaluate the impact of agriculture to land, water, and wildlife resources.⁶² Conversion of natural landscapes to agricultural fields and livestock operations can result in wildlife habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation which will negatively impact soil composition and displace native plants and pollinators.⁶² The Arizona Wildlife Conservation strategy works to ensure the agricultural industry ameliorates the direct threat to riparian habitats and stress to wildlife, such as wildlife-friendly fencing, restoration of rangelands, native grass growth, crop rotation, no-till practices, partnerships with beekeepers, and wildlife escape ramps.⁶²

The Agricultural Workforce

In 2014, it was estimated that there were approximately 61,233 total Arizona migrant and seasonal farm workers during peak season and as few as 23,268 during non-peak season.⁶³ Of the 61,233, 14,988 were migrant workers, 39,890 were seasonal workers, and 6,355 were livestock workers.⁶³ The USDA released the Census of Agriculture for Arizona in 2017 and estimated that there were 32,796 producers across the state.⁶⁴ This number seems low and I would guess that it may leave out the migrant and seasonal farmworkers, unfortunately, however, I was unable to find a more recent source of information than 2014.



Farms	Average Age	All	Hispanic	Female	American Indian	Asian	Black
19,086	59.4 yrs.	33,847	1,482	15,968	19,279	122	54

Adapted from Arizona Agricultural Statistics – 2021. USDA

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Arizona/Publications/Annual_Statistical_Bulletin/2021/AZAnnualBulletin2021.pdf

Data from 2014 indicated that the migrant farmworkers were primarily from Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, and El Salvador.⁶³ The primary languages were Spanish, English, or dialects from Mesoamerican languages such as Arawakan (Peru), Nahuatl (Central Mexico), Zapotec (Southern Mexico).⁶³

Important ethical and social concerns for farmworkers in Arizona are lack of full-time, year-round work that combined with low wages often means that farmworkers live below the US poverty line.⁶³ Substandard living and working conditions and less pay with undocumented workers.⁶³ Lack of sufficient training, transportation, and technology that lower safety at work is another important ethical concern.⁶³ And lack of labor benefits which limits participation in health and support programs coupled with an already physically strenuous occupation (that contribute to musculoskeletal pain/discomfort, skin conditions) as well as limited time to take care of individual health and to seek healthcare during agricultural production time decreases the health and quality of life.⁶³

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were major ethical considerations for farmworkers, especially migrant farmworkers due to limited crossing, limited space, lack of social and system support for social distancing, vaccinations, and masking which increased risk of contracting the SARS-COV2 virus and spreading it.



Food Retailers and Foodservice Workers

In Arizona, the top 10 grocery store chains are in descending order of location: Safeway Frys Food Stores, Walmart Supercenter, Albertsons, Costco, Bashas, Walmart Neighborhood Market, Ajs Fine Foods, Food City, Mission Foods, Smiths Food and Drugs Centers.⁶⁵

Company	Number of Locations in Arizona
Safeway Frys Food Stores	149
Walmart Supercenter	61
Albertsons	33
Costco	32
Bashas	30
Walmart Neighborhood Market	11
Ajs Fine Foods	10
Food City	7
Mission Foods	6
Smiths Food and Drugs Centers	4



In Arizona, top foodservice distributors include Sysco Arizona – Wholesale Restaurant Food Supplies (Tolleson, Arizona), Shamrock Foods Distribution and Food Supply (Phoenix and Yuma, AZ), US Foods System (Phoenix, AZ), Merit Foods of Arizona (Tucson, AZ), and Peddler's Son (Phoenix, Arizona).

Sysco Arizona – Wholesale Restaurant Food Supplies distributes fresh produce, dairy and meat products, as well as dry goods to food service organizations that serve local shelters, the American Restaurant Association, as well as hospitals, nursing homes, and colleges.⁶⁶



US Foods also provides fresh produce, dairy products, meat products, and dry goods to restaurants and healthcare industry in Phoenix, around Arizona, and around the country.⁶⁷



Shamrock Foods was founded in 1922 and serves restaurants, healthcare, lodging, casinos and entertainment, and school organization. It provides products of meat, seafood, dairy, produce, beverage, dry goods.⁶⁸



Merit Foods is a 3-generation, locally owned food distribution company in Arizona. They distribute meats, fresh produce, and groceries from companies such as Hickman's, Idahoan, Golbon, Ken's, and other partners to local restaurants and foodservice organizations in Tucson such as Guadalajara Grill and Barrio Brewing.⁶⁹



Peddler's Son is a foodservice distribution company in Arizona. They distribute local brands such as Danzeisen Dairy and Hickman's Family Farms, as well as national brands such as Cloverdale and BelGiosio. They serve Arizona restaurants, schools, healthcare, government, and hospital facilities, as well as selling directly to caterers.⁷⁰



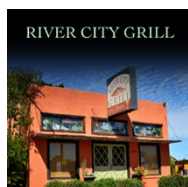
Food Service Workers

Job Role	Median Pay	# of People Employed in this field in the US	Job Outlook
Agriculture Workers ⁷¹	\$29,680/year \$14.27/hour	876,900	1% (Little or no change)
Food and Beverage Serving and Related Workers ⁷²	\$25,980/year \$12.49/hour	4,146,000	9% (Faster than average)
Food Preparation Workers ⁷³	\$28,780/year \$13.84/hour	817,400	2% (Slower than average)
Chefs and Head Cooks ⁷⁴	\$50,160/year \$24.11/hour	152,800	15% (Much faster than average)
Waiters and Waitresses ⁷⁵	\$26,000/year \$12.50/hour	1,904,400	10% (Faster than Average)

Adapted from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Modified 2022. <https://www.bls.gov/>

Regional Food Culture

Yuma, AZ has a multicultural cuisine that showcase some of Yuma’s finest agricultural products across Traditional American, Mexican/Hispanic, Mediterranean, European, Caribbean, and Asian Cuisine. It’s known for authentic Mexican foods like *tortas* and tamales to unique date and lettuce specialties of the region. Perhaps however the best way to describe the unique Yuma cultural cuisine is to showcase some of the popular restaurants of the area.



River City Grill is an upscale dining option for steak, seafood, vegetarian, or vegan options. The emphasis is on fresh fruit and vegetable sauces, low in fat and rich in flavor with food from the Mediterranean, Pacific Rim, Caribbean, and Indian cuisines all the while showcasing fresh, local seasonal ingredients.

Yuma has recently gained a variety of options for food trucks. While traditionally, food trucks and stands served some of the most authentic Mexican food such as El Jaraicho Taco and “Pancho’s Tacos” stand, Yuma now also has options for Mediterranean, Italian, and BBQ.



Another delicious option is “La Cocina by Main Street Café”. Originally opened as part of the “Food Services Management Training Program” by the Regional Center for Border Health, Inc., as a vocational education option for women seeking to leave abusive relationships, it is now a specialty restaurant that promotes locally grown agriculture in a healthy Mexican-American fusion.

Authentico Sapore Italiano is a seasonal (winter) restaurant located within the Colorado River State Historic Park. Its specialty is antipasta, sandwiches, coffee, and Italian wines with the perks of a historic and charming environment to dine and socialize.



PART 3: Local Political System and Food and Health Policy Making

Summary of Constituencies and Policy-Maker

<i>Executive Branch</i>		
<i>Top Elected Official</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Politician</i>
President	United States (Federal)	Joe Biden (D)
Vice President		Kamala Harris (D)
Governor	Arizona (State)	Katie Hobbs (D)
Secretary of State		Adrian Fontes (D)
Mayor	Yuma (City)	Doug Nicholls (R)
<i>Legislative Branch</i>		
Legislative Body	Constituency	Legislators
U.S. Congress-Senators	Arizona	Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D) and Senator Mark Kelly (D)
U.S. Congress-House of Representatives	AZ Congressional District 9	Representative Paul Gosar (R)
State Legislature-Senate	AZ Legislative District 25	Senator Sine Kerr (R)
State Legislature-House of Representatives	AZ Legislative District 25	Representative Timothy M Dunn (R) Representative Michael Carbone (R)
City Council	N/A	Michael Shelton

Executive Branch



Joseph Robinette Biden, President of the United States of America

Contact Information:

202-456-1414 (White House Switchboard)

202-456-1111 (White House Comments)

Address: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.,
Washington, DC 20500

Contact Us: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>

Bio: President Biden is the 46th President of the United States of America. He received his Juris Doctor from Syracuse University. He previously represented Delaware for 36 years as a U.S. Senator and served (with President Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States) as 47th Vice-President of the United States.

Political Affiliation: Democrat

Terms: U.S. Senate (1973 – 2009), Vice President (2009-2017), President (2021-Present)

Committees (while serving as U.S. Senator): Foreign Relations, Judiciary

Issues Championed: President Biden has supported public housing, mass transit, health care, racial justice, and civil rights. He is an advocate for gun reform, ending violence among women, and equal rights for women. He has played an integral role in U.S. foreign and national policy.



Kamala Devi Harris, Vice President of the United States of America

Contact Information:

202-456-1414 (White House Switchboard)

202-456-1111 (White House Comments)

Address: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.,
Washington, DC 20500

Contact Us: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>

Bio: Vice President Harris is the 49th Vice President of the United States. She received her Juris Doctor from University of California, Hastings. She is the first female vice president, as well as first African American and Asian American Vice President. She currently is the highest-ranking female official in U.S. History. She previously served as Attorney General of California and represented California as a U.S. Senator.

Political Affiliation: Democrat

Terms: District Attorney of San Francisco (2004 – 2011), Attorney General of California (2011 – 2017), U.S. Senate (2017-2021), Vice President (2021-Present)

Committees (while serving as U.S. Senator): Budget, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Intelligence, Judiciary

Issues Championed: Vice-President Kamal Harris supports actions on climate change, reproductive rights, marriage equality, and healthcare. She has also championed legislation to combat hunger, provide rent relief, and improvement maternal health care. As Vice-President she has worked to rebuild the economy, reduce child poverty, improve vaccination efforts, expand worker's and women's rights, and strengthening our nation's alliances and partnerships.



Kathleen Marie Hobbs, Governor of Arizona

Contact Information:

602-542-4331

Address: State Capitol, 1700 West Washington, Phoenix, AZ, 85007

Contact Us: <https://azgovernor.gov/contact/form/contact-governor-hobbs>

Bio: Governor Hobbs is the 24th Governor of Arizona and is the 5th female governor of Arizona. She holds a master's degree in social work from Arizona State University. She previously served in the Arizona House of Representatives and Arizona Senate, as well as Secretary of State for Arizona.

Political Affiliation: Democrat

Terms: Arizona House of Representatives (2010 – 2012), Arizona Senate (2012-2019), Secretary of State of Arizona (2018-2022), Governor of Arizona (2023 – Present)

Issues Championed: Governor Hobbs supports improving education in Arizona and strengthening economic growth and workforce development. Governor Hobbs works to protect our border and strengthen the binational communities. She is an advocate for affordable housing, building a resilient Arizona and securing water future, as well as expanding healthcare.



Adrian Fontes, Secretary of State of Arizona

Contact Information:

602-542-4285

Address: 1700 W Washington St Fl 7, Phoenix AZ 85007-2808

Contact Us: <https://azsos.gov/about-office/contact-us>

Bio: Secretary Fontes is the 22nd Secretary of State of Arizona. He holds a Juris Doctor from University of Denver and previously served in United States Marine Corps from 1992 – 1996. He also previously served in the role of Maricopa County Recorder.

Political Affiliation: Democrat

Terms: Maricopa County Recorder (2017 – 2021), Arizona Secretary of State (2023 – Present)

Issues Championed: Secretary Fontes is committed to preserving the integrity of elections, making voting easier for registered voters, and working to promote the Arizona business communities' partnerships with the Secretary of State's office. He is dedicated to fighting for justice and democracy.



Douglas Joseph Nicholls, Mayor of Yuma

Contact Information:

928-373-5002

Address: 1 City Plaza, Yuma, AZ, 85364

Contact Us: <https://www.yumaaz.gov/government/mayor-and-council>

Bio: Mayor Nicholls is the 27th Mayor of Yuma and is serving his third term. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Arizona State University.

Political Affiliation: Republican

Terms: City of Yuma Councilmember (2009), Mayor of Yuma (2014 – Present)

Committees: Locally, Mayor Nicholls serves as Chairman of the Governing Board and is appointed to the Environmental Protection Agency Local Government Advisory Council.

Issues Championed: Mayor Nicholls is committed to serving the residents of the greater Yuma area. He believes that quality communities are key for allowing residents to achieve success and supports a strong bi0-national community with Arizona, California, Sonora, and Baja California. He supports access to quality jobs and superior education to promote quality of life.

Legislative Branch



Kyrsten Lea Sinema, U.S. Senator

Contact Information:

(602) 598-7327 (Phoenix) // (520) 639-7080 (Tucson) // (202) 224-4521 (Washington D.C.)

Address: 3333 E. Camelback Rd, Suite 200, Phoenix, AZ 85018
20 E. Ochoa St. Tucson, AZ 85701

Contact Us: <https://www.sinema.senate.gov/contact-kyrsten>

Bio: Senator Sinema is the senior United States Senator from Arizona. She received her Juris Doctor, PhD in Justice Studies, and Master of Social Work from Arizona State University. She previously served in Arizona House of Representatives, Arizona Senate, and member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Political Affiliation: Independent (2022 – Present), Democrat (2004 – 2022)

Terms: Arizona House of Representatives (2004 – 2010), Arizona Senate (2010 – 2013), U.S. House of Representatives (2013 – 2018), U.S. Senate (2019 – Present)

Committees: Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, Veterans' Affairs

Issues Championed: Senator Sinema supports keeping Arizona families safe and secure, as well as creating jobs and helping Arizona families get ahead. She is also committed to caring for Arizona veterans and reforming Veteran's Affairs.



Mark Edward Kelly, U.S. Senator

Contact Information:

(602) 671-7901 (Phoenix) // (520) 475-5177 (Tucson) // (202) 224-2235 (Washington D.C.)

Address: 2201 E. Camelback Rd, Suite 115, Phoenix, AZ, 85016
1661 N. Swan Rd, Suite 238, Tucson, AZ 85712

Contact Us: <https://www.kelly.senate.gov/contact/contact-form/>

Bio: Senator Kelly is the junior United States Senator from Arizona. He received his masters of science in aeronautical engineering from U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and served as a Captain in the United States Navy from 1986 – 2011 and as a NASA Astronaut.

Political Affiliation: Democrat (2018 – Present), Independent (before 2018)

Terms: U.S. Senate (2020 – Present)

Committees: Armed Services, Energy and Natural Resources, Environment and Public Works, Aging, Joint Economic Committee

Issues Championed: Senator Kelly supports lower costs for Arizona families, including lower gas, food, and prescription drug prices. Senator Kelly advocates for upgrading infrastructure in Arizona and supporting Arizona-based companies. He also works to secure Arizona's water future. He is also committed to securing Arizona's border and fixing the immigration system.



Paul Anthony Gosar, US House of Representatives

Contact Information:

623-707-0530 (Goodyear) // 202-225-2315 (Washington D.C.)

Address: 1300 S. Litchfield Road, Suite 115-H, Goodyear, AZ, 85338
2057 Rayborn HOB, Washington, DC, 20515

Contact Us: <https://gosar.house.gov/forms/writeyourrep/>

Bio: Congressman Gosar is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and is currently in his 7th term. He currently serves the 9th Congressional District since 2023, prior to redistricting, he represented the 4th Congressional District from 2013 – 2023. He holds a Doctorate in Dental Studies from Creighton University.

Political Affiliation: Republican

Terms: U.S. House of Representatives (2010 – Present)

Committees: Oversight and Reform, Natural Resources

Issues Championed: Congressman Gosar supports supporting the growth of jobs, securing the border and preventing illegal immigration, and cutting extraneous government spending. He also supports empowering individuals and reforms of bureaucratic procedures that stifle job creation and personal liberties.



Sine Kerr, Arizona State Senate

Contact Information:

602-926-5955

skerr@azleg.gov

Bio: Senator Kerr is a member of the Arizona Senate and serves as the Majority Whip. She represents District 25 since January 2023 and prior to redistricting served District 13 from 2018 – 2023. She owns a dairy farm

with her husband.

Political Affiliation: Republican

Terms: Arizona Senate (2018 – Present)

Committees: Natural Resources, Energy, and Water, Appropriations, Director Nominations, Education, Rules

Issues Championed: Senator Kerr supports job growth in Arizona for improved economy through reducing taxes and business regulations. She advocates for border security, immigration, and visa reform. She supports Arizona agriculture and works to protect farmers' water rights. She also is supports education in Arizona and healthcare reform.



Timothy Dunn, Arizona House of Representatives

Contact Information:

602-926-4139

Email: TDunn@azleg.gov

Bio: Representative Dunn is a member of the Arizona House of Representatives and is currently in his 2nd term. He serves Legislative District 25 (2023 – Present), prior to redistricting, he served District 13 (2018 – 2023). He graduated from the University of Arizona with a B.S. in

Agriculture and owns Dunn farms, Dunn Grain Co., Upstream Development Co.

Political Affiliation: Republican

Terms: Arizona House of Representatives (2018 – Present)

Committees: Government, Appropriations, Natural Resources, Energy, and Water

Issues Championed: Representative Dunn believes in the importance of border security, preventing illegal immigration, supporting legal laborers, and preventing drug cartels. He also supports the 2nd amendment, pro-life, education, military community, election integrity. He works to secure the future of water in Arizona.



Michael Carbone, Arizona House of Representatives

Contact Information:

602-926-4038

Email: MCarbone @azleg.gov

Bio: Representative Carbone is a member of the Arizona House of Representatives and is currently in his 1st term. He serves Legislative District 25. He holds a master's in public administration from Grand Canyon University.

Political Affiliation: Republican

Terms: Arizona House of Representatives (2023 – Present)

Committees: Commerce, Appropriations, Land, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Ways and Means

Issues Championed: Representative Carbone supports parental rights, election integrity, and the 2nd amendment. He also advocates for order security and water rights.



Michael Shelton, Yuma City Councilmember

Contact Information:

928-373-5002 (P)

Address: 1 City Plaza, Yuma, AZ, 85364

Contact Us: <https://www.yumaaz.gov/government/mayor-and-council>

Bio: Councilmember Shelton is a member of the Yuma City Council and is currently serving his third term. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Baruch College and is became a Certified Public

manager through Arizona State University.

Political Affiliation: N/A

Terms: Yuma City Council (2015 – Present)

Committees: N/A

Issues Championed: Councilmember Shelton is an advocate for public involvement and works to help the city be more responsive, positive, and citizen involved. He also supports business retention and expansion. He believes in strategic youth emphasis to support teachers and invigorate teens. He also advocated for patients with kidney transplants, as a kidney transplant recipient himself.

Part 4: Take Action
Local Advocacy Opportunities
Congress

Bill Name: Farm Fresh Food for Families Act

Number: S.643

Sponsor: Senator Ossoff, Jon [D-GA]

Co-Sponsor: Senator Ernst, Joni [R-IA]

Committee: Senate – Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Last Action: 03/02/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Description: The purpose of this bill is to amend the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to modernize the farmers' market nutrition program under the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children. It would promote greater access to fresh produce for families nationwide through farmers market and increase access to healthy, nutritious choices for children and young families. It would also help better support partnerships between WIC and farmers in the community.

Link: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/643?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22farm+fresh%22%5D%7D&s=6&r=1>

Bill Name: Food Deserts Acts

Number: H.R. 1230

Sponsor: Representative Carson, Andre [D-IN-7]

Co-Sponsors: Representative Khanna, Ro [D-CA-17], Representative Kaptur, Marcy [D-OH-9], Representative Thompson, Bennie G. [D-MS-2], Representative Takano, Mark [D-CA-39], Representative Green, Al [D-TX-9], Delegate Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At-Large], Representative Doggett, Lloyd [D-TX-37], Representative Payne, Donald M. Jr [D-NH-10], Representative Blunt Rochester, Lisa [D-DE-At Large], Representative Titus, Dina [D-NV-1], Representative Johnson, Henry Hank, Jr [D-GA-4], Representative Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12], Representative Beatty, Joyce [D-OH-3], Representative Cherfilus-McCormick, Sheila [D-FL-20], Representative Stansbury, Melanie Ann [D-NM-1], Representative Cuellar, Henry [D-TX-28], Representative DeSaulnier, Mark [D-CA-10], Representative Lee, Barbara [D-CA-12], Representative Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9], Representative Garamendi, John [D-CA-8], Representative Moulton, Seth [D-MA-6], Representative Scholten, Hillary J. [D-MI-3], Representative Davis, Danny K [D-IL-7], Representative Larson, John B [D-CT-1], Representative Clarke, Yvette D. [D-NY-9], Representative Vargas, Juan [D-CA-52], Representative Ross, Deborah K [D-NC-2], Representative Tonko, Paul [D-NY-20], Representative Gallego, Ruben [D-AZ-3], Representative Soto, Darren [D-FL-9], Representative Barragan, Nanette Diaz [D-CA-44], Representative Cleaver, Emanuel [D-MO-5], Representative Tokuda, Jill N [D-HI-2], Representative Carter, Troy [D-LA-2], Representative Sewell, Terri A [D-AL-7], Representative Landsman, Greg [D-OH-1], Representative Garcia, Sylvia R [D-TX-29], Representative Nadler, Jeroold [D-NY-12], Representative Crockett, Jasmine [D-TX-30], Representative Nickel, Wiley [D-NC-13], Representative Adams, Alma S [D-NC-12],

Representative Frost, Maxwell [D-FL-10], Representative Budzinski, Nikki [D-IL-13], Representative Cárdenas, Tony [D-CA-29]

Committee: House – Agriculture

Last Action: 03/22/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture, and Horticulture

Description: The purpose of the Food Deserts Act is to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to States in order to support the establishment and operation of grocery stores in underserved communities. It would establish a program to provide capitalization grants that would: open a grocery store in an underserved community, support an existing grocery store in an underserved community, provide access to healthy food, and/or support the operations of a program participant located in a community that would be underserved if the program participant was not already located in the community.

The required criteria are as states:

- (a) Grocery stores or will be a grocery store,
- (b) Emphasize unprocessed, healthful foods,
- (c) Provide a variety of raw fruits and vegetables,
- (d) Provide staple foods,
- (e) Plan to keep foods in stock,
- (f) Charge affordable or below market values,
- (g) Demonstrably qualified to operate a grocery store *or* has existing partnerships with organizations that provide technical assistance.

Priority Criteria:

- (a) Workers hired reside within the underserved community,
- (b) Provide classes or other educational information about a healthful diet,
- (c) Sources food from local urban farms, and gardens,
- (d) Demonstrates existing supply chain relationship in the grocery industry.

Link: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/1230/text?s=8&r=12&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22food%22%5D%7D>

State

Bill Name: Dietitian Nutritionists, Licensure

Number: HB2558

Sponsor: State Representative Hernandez, Alma [D-AZ-20]

Co-Sponsor: State Representative Shah, Amish [D-AZ-24]

Last Action: Passed House Majority/Minority Caucus on 02/27/2023 → Transmit to Senate on 03/08

Description: The goal of this bill would be to amend an Arizona Revised Statutes relating to nutritionist to provide for the licensure in Arizona of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists. It also establishes roles and abilities of Licensed Dietitian Nutritionists in Arizona. If initially authorized or granted standing order privileges, to order diets, change in diets, enteral feeding, durable medical equipment related to nutrition, nutrition supplementation, parenteral nutrition, medical nutrition therapy, and laboratory tests related to nutrition status.

Link: <https://apps.azleg.gov/BillStatus/BillOverview/79128>

Bill Name: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Eligibility

Sponsor: State Representative Wilmeth, Justin (R-AZ-15)

Co-Sponsor: State Representative Longdon, Jennifer (D-AZ-5)

Last Action: Passed House Majority Caucus and Jouse Minority Caucus on 02/14/2023 → Transmit to Senate on 02/21/2023

Description: The goal of this bill would be to amend an Arizona Revised Statue related to nutrition assistance. This bill would increase individuals access to supplemental nutrition assistance programs eligibility after conviction, by removing excessive stipulations (related to substance abuse treatment programs, random trug testing, and date of conviction). It would simply eligibility to compliance with all terms of probation, including any drug testing requirements, as applicable.

Link: <https://apps.azleg.gov/BillStatus/BillOverview/78305>

Local

Yuma

Ordinance Number: (#02023-005)

Last Action: Adopted 7-0

Description: An ordinance from the City Council of Yuma, Arizona that would authorizing buying certain properties and temporary construction easement by donation, purchase, or by power for the North Pavement Capital Improvement Project (0430-ROAD6), traffic site visibility, and ADA sidewalk ramps. It would authorize payment and costs necessary for this acquisition (property at 400 S 6th Avenue, 444 W 2nd Street, 396 S 4th Avenue, 332 S 10th Avenue) which would increase pedestrian safety, promoting greater walkability of the city.

Link: file:///Users/lilymcnair/Downloads/Minutes-3.pdf

San Luis

Agenda Item: Memorandum of Understanding with Yuma Community Food Bank

Submitted by: Kay Macuil (City Attorney, Attorney's Office)

Last Action: Move to Approve Attached Memorandum with the Yuma community Food Bank

Description: The Yuma Community Food Bank purchased a cold food storage unit and will place the refrigerated unit and dry storage unit on city property at the Senior Center to expand services to the food-insecure residents of San Luis. The Food Bank will be able to better serve the residents by removing a barrier of transportation, improving nutrition by offering food that would otherwise not be able to be provided (due to refrigeration and/or storage), and serve a greater number of residents. The memorandum of understanding to be voted on identified that ownership of the unit would belong to the Food Bank, the city pays no rent, but the City must use it to store Food Bank food or food from programs the Food Bank approves. The City bears all risks (which are covered by a city policy) and Food Bank provides maintenance.

Link:

https://destinyhosted.com/agenda_publish.cfm?dsp=agm&seq=4329&rev=0&id=72658&form_type=AG_MEMO&beg_meetmth=1&beg_meetyr=2023&end_meetmth=4&end_meetyr=2023&mt=ALL&sstr=nutrition&dept=ALL&hartkeywords=&sortby=f.form_num,%20f.rev_num&fp=ADVSRCH&StartRow=1

Summary of Legislative Meeting

Name of Committee: Arizona Committee on Health and Human Services

Date and Time: Thursday, February 16th from 1pm-4pm

Members in Attendance: Representative Bliss, Representative Contreras P, Representative Hernandez, Representative Mathis, Representative Shah, Representative Parker B (Vice-Chairman), Representative Gress, Representative Pingerelli, Representative Montenegro (Chairman)

Summary of Issues Discussed: This legislative meeting in the Arizona House of Representatives, House Health and Human Resources committee addressed 5 bills up for discussion and action. The first bill discussed was HB2624 would require AHCCHS to redetermine eligibility for members (since new members were added during the COVID-19 pandemic and may no longer be eligible) in accordance with federal guidelines. The next bill discussed was HB 2801 which would appropriate additional monies to extend foster care including mental and physical health well-being, weekly engagement, and working with extended foster care success coaches even after individuals age out of the foster care system at age 21 years. HB 2558 was the next bill discussed which addressed the importance of licensure for registered dietitian nutritionist in Arizona. It would enable the directors of DHS to create licensure standards, establish an advisory committee to assist with administrative duties, and grants further prescriptive ordering abilities to licensed dietitian nutritionist for hospital and non-hospital facilities. The licensed is voluntary. HB 2563 is a redetermination of funds from ACHSS to provide 7.5 million dollars from the fiscal fund to provide on-call OB/GYN services in low-volume obstetric delivery areas and rural communities. 2.5 million dollars each year would be provided to qualifying community health center for unreimbursed costs necessary to ensure that availability of on-call OB-GYN services. The last bill discussed was HB 2338 that would require preventative dental care services to members using ACHSS over 21 years of age.

Recording: <https://www.azleg.gov/videoplayer/?clientID=6361162879&eventID=2023021097>

Take Action**Bill Selected:** Dietitian Nutritionists, Licensure; HB2558**Legislator Addressed:** Sine Kerr, Arizona State Senate**Contact Information:** skerr@azleg.gov

The Honorable Sine Kerr
 1700 West Washington
 Room 212
 Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Senator Kerr,

My name is Lily McNair. I am a University of Arizona dietetic graduate intern from Yuma, Arizona. As one of your constituents in LD 25, I am writing to urge you to support the Dietitian Nutritionists Licensure Act which would allow Arizona Registered Dietitians/Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RD/RDN) to voluntarily obtain licensure in Arizona.

Nationally, dietitians are recognized as the food and nutrition experts. This bill would help Arizonans better understand the role and utilize the services of RD/RDNs in promoting individual and community health and wellness in the agricultural, community, clinical, and medical settings.

The Dietitian Nutritionists, Licensure Acts is important for Arizonans because it:

- Protects Arizonan consumers against harmful, ineffective, fraudulent, wasteful nutrition advice or services provided by potentially unqualified or incompetent practitioners.
- Allows other Arizona allied health practitioners to rely on qualified licensed dietitians to be effective members of the medical team to provide optimal, patient-centered care for citizens.
- Supports healthcare reform for Arizona dietitians to practice at the top of their professional skills and abilities and to practice autonomously without having to needlessly rely on other Arizona healthcare professionals where there is already a high percentage of medically underserved communities/populations.
- Increases Arizonans access to safe, scientifically based nutrition guidance, counseling, and education in order to promoted increased health literacy and improved quality of life through effective prevention and treatment of chronic disease.

I urge you to support this bill in the Senate make it known the commitment you have to the health and wellness of the people in your district and to the state of Arizona as a whole.

Please feel free to contact with any questions or requests for additional information.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Lily McNair, BS, Dietetic Graduate Intern
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Arizona Dietitian Nutritionists, Licensure; HB2558 - Letter of Support

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