Agriculture and Ranching

Ranching and farming are among the oldest businesses in the watershed, dating back to the 1840s when pioneers first settled in Carson Valley. Today, water from the **Carson River Watershed** helps to produce food, forage, and fiber.

Alfalfa and other hays are the most abundant crops produced in the watershed. Alfalfa is baled and shipped to neighboring states for dairy cattle and milk production. Alfalfa is also pressed and cubed and shipped to various parts of the world for livestock to eat.

Every valley in the watershed produces food supplies and supports a variety of livestock. Meat is harvested from beef cattle, sheep poultry, and swine. Goats, ostriches, and emus are typically raised for meat and novelty. Alpacas, sheep, and angora and cashmere goats provide fiber for use in clothing and other materials. Horses, donkeys, mules, and llamas are used for recreation and packing. Livestock graze on private and public rangelands and irrigated pastures throughout the watershed. The watershed also supports dairies that produce milk and cheese for northern Nevada and eastern California.

Crops for human and livestock consumption range from garlic, onions, corn, and sunflowers to cantaloupes, melons, wheat, and oats. Modest truck farms have been established in most communities, raising over 100 kinds of fruits and vegetables and 200 varieties of cut flowers for local farmers markets and restaurants.

The Washoe Tribe has harvested pine nuts for thousands of years from the mountain ranges of the **Carson River Watershed**. Harvested from pinyon pines, pine nuts have become famous in both Nevada and California as gourmet delicacies.