The Imperial Valley produces about 90 percent of the winter vegetables that are eaten across the United States and the number of foods grown here in ways visitors can relate to. For example, the Valley produces 10 million cartons of broccoli — enough to wrap around the world when placed end to end. We produced 1.68 million tons of hay in a year, enough hay for cows to produce 70 million gallons of milk. Watering the land Americans consume almost eight times more water through the food we eat than in our daily activities — brushing our teeth, doing the dishes, laundry, etc. On average, 500 gallons of water is needed to grow the food that you eat in just one day, while most people use only 40 gallons of water a day for their domestic activities — brushing our teeth, doing the dishes, laundry, etc. You occasionally hear grumblings about the amount of water used for farming, but it is not really used for farming — it is used for eating. And if there is one thing we like to do in this country — it’s eat.

According to the 2011 Imperial County Farm Bureau’s agriculture report:

- The average dairy cow in the United States produces about 16,000 glasses of milk per year. It takes about four pounds of hay to produce one gallon of milk, and about 6-7 pounds of hay to produce one gallon of ice cream.
- Dairy is the number one agricultural commodity in California, with 20 percent of the nation’s dairy production.
- In 2011, enough carrots were grown in Imperial Valley to serve a 3-ounce serving for one-third of the Earth’s population.
- Local farmers produce more than 120 different commodities, including bananas, sugar cane, rice, corn, artichokes, honey and olives.
- Imperial County produces about 1.68 million tons of hay. Only about 30 percent of this hay is exported to other countries, while 70 percent is used for livestock in the U.S., especially California.

The Desert Museum’s newest addition focuses on the power of the Imperial Valley. "The Power of Imperial Valley" exhibit includes farming statistics presented in a visitor-friendly format. Currently, a short version of the “Down River” video, produced by IID, is featured in the exhibit. The combination of very fertile land, thanks to ancient Lake Cahuilla and the silt it left, and irrigation systems bringing water from the Colorado River via the All-American Canal — make the Imperial Valley perfect for agriculture. Because of our mild winter weather, farmers here are able to plant, grow and harvest crops year round, making the Imperial Valley one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world.

The Desert Museum’s new installation demonstrates how vibrant and productive the Imperial Valley is today. The exhibit includes statistics and facts drawn from the county Agriculture Report, but these are shown in a visitor-friendly format.

People who visited the Desert Museum over the summer will notice something new the next time they come out: the second and final part of the Imperial Valley Desert Museum’s Phase 2 exhibit. This newest addition focuses on the power of Imperial Valley.

The Power of Imperial Valley exhibit includes farming statistics presented in a visitor-friendly format. Currently, a short version of the “Down River” video, produced by IID, is featured in the exhibit. Photography from the new exhibit.

QUESTIONS? Contact Copy Editor Sarah Malan at 760-335-3447 or smalan@ivpressonline.com

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEAL HITCH


BELOW LEFT AND RIGHT: Graphics from the new exhibit, the Power of Imperial Valley, courtesy of Neal Hitch.