Del Monte closes its Hanford tomato plant — Kings County, 2026

In March 2026, Del Monte closed its Hanford tomato-processing plant — the only tomato-processing facility in the company's entire ten-plant U.S./Mexico roster — eliminating 378 to 500-plus jobs.

500+

Jobs eliminated (378 confirmed by WARN filing; local/trade-press reporting puts the fuller count above 500).

2.1×

Kings County's food-processing dependence more than doubled, 1990 → 2025 (Employment SDI 0.070 → 0.150) — this closure landed on a growing share of the county's economy, not a shrinking one.

What happened

Food manufacturing wasn't a marginal part of Kings County's economy when this plant closed. By our **Sector Dependence Index**, the sector's share of the county's entire export-driven economic base **more than doubled between 1990 and 2025** against the U.S. benchmark — meaning the closure landed on a *growing*, increasingly central pillar of the county's economy, not a shrinking, marginal one. That's a measurable claim, not an impression — see **the Index** for the full numbers and **Methodology** for how we calculated them.

Del Monte Foods filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in July 2025, months before this closure — see the timeline on the main **Case Studies** page for how that filing relates to both this closure and the company's larger Modesto/Hughson closure the following month.



Company housing for cotton workers near Corcoran, Kings County, 1936. Ninety years before the Hanford closure, this county's economy already ran on a single crop's hired labor, housed by the company that employed it.

Dorothea Lange, Farm Security Administration. Public domain, Library of Congress.

Impact — what we know, and what we don't

- **Jobs:** 378 confirmed by WARN filing; press coverage cites figures above 500 for the fuller count across phased layoffs.
- **What happened to the workers:** Not yet documented — this archive has not found reemployment or workforce-outcome data for the Hanford closure specifically.
- **County-level trend:** Kings County's dependence on food-processing was *rising*, not falling, when this closure hit — the opposite trajectory from Stanislaus County's **Modesto/Hughson closure**, which landed on a *declining* share. We haven't yet explained

why these two flagship closures sit on opposite economic trajectories; it's a real open question for further research.

Part of a larger pattern

Hanford is one of two Kings County towns — along with Lemoore — that have now absorbed multiple commodity-processing closures: **Olam's 2020 Lemoore tomato-plant closure** and **Leprino Foods' 2025–26 Lemoore East dairy-plant closure**. This is the clearest documented case of the pattern this project tracks: not an isolated plant closing, but the same small county absorbing multiple, sequential single-industry exits.

Sources

- WARN Act filing plus local and trade-press reporting (see the main timeline on **Case Studies** for full citation detail).

Full citation detail and source archive: **Data**. Back to **all case studies**.