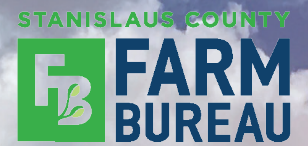
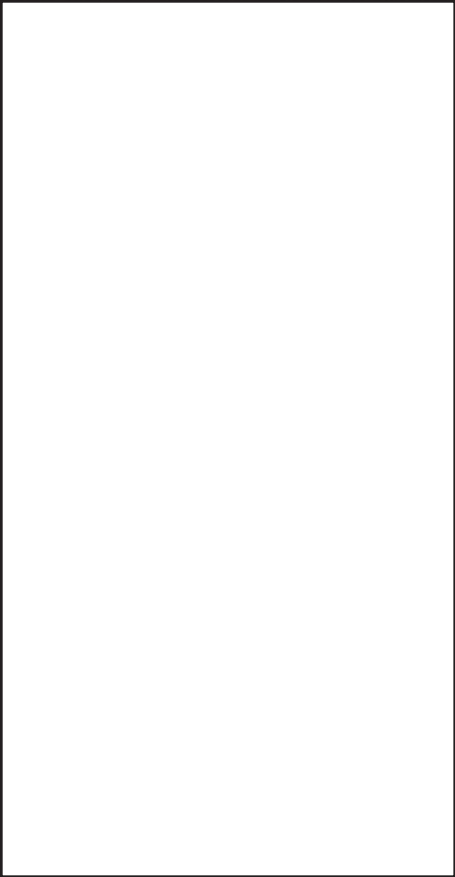


The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture



For the **good** of your **food**.



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For the **good** of your **food**.

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November 7, 2023

Pesticide Regulatory Changes to Prepare For (1 hr Laws/Regs CEUs)

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NOVEMBER

7

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FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Employment Policy “CARD CHECK” REGULATIONS PROPOSED

At its Oct. 4 public meeting, the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board considered draft regulations to implement the “card check” and appeal bond provisions contained in Assembly Bill 113, which Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law on May 15. At that meeting, the ALRB voted unanimously to open formal rulemaking intended to lead to the adoption of the proposed regulations.

At a prior ALRB workshop and in written remarks submitted to the ALRB afterwards, Farm Bureau had asserted the proposed regulations should express the right of agricultural employees to revoke their signatures authorizing a labor union to represent them for the purpose of collective bargaining. Neither the law nor the proposed regulations addressed this employee right, which is recognized by the National Labor Relations Board. The ALRB is required to follow applicable precedents under the National Labor Relations Act.

Sadly, the proposed regulations were revised to expressly prohibit an employee from revoking an authorization. At the public meeting, Farm Bureau criticized that provision and urged it not be included in the regulations. In the upcoming rulemaking process, Farm Bureau will again object to that provision as stripping employees of an important right.

The “card check” provisions of AB 113 enable a labor union to be certified as the collective bargaining representative

of an employer’s agricultural employees by merely submitting to the ALRB a Majority Support Petition backed by signed authorizations of a majority of those employees gathered over the prior 12 months. Previously, such a showing of support could be used only to trigger a secret ballot election to be held among an employer’s ag employees, whose outcome would determine whether a petitioning union would be certified as their collective bargaining agent.

Staff: Bryan Little, blittle@cfbf.com and Carl Borden, cborden@cfbf.com

Ag Tech

AB 1016, authored by Assemblymember Reginald Jones-Sawyer (D-Los Angeles) and sponsored by California Farm Bureau, was signed by the Governor. As previously discussed, AB 1016 authorizes the Department of Pesticide Regulations to update the unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) licensing pathways

in order to increase farmers’ access to precision agriculture technology. Staff: Peter Ansel, pansel@cfbf.com

CESA and Wildlife

California Farm Bureau sponsored bill AB 606, by Assemblymember Devon Mathis (R – Porterville), was signed by the Governor on October 8th. This bill extends the current sunset of the current accidental take statute from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2029. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) prohibits the taking of an endangered or candidate species. Under CESA, the Department of Fish and Wildlife may authorize the take of listed species pursuant to an incidental take permit if the take is incidental to

an otherwise lawful activity. Current law provides until January 1, 2024, that the accidental take of a candidate, threatened, or endangered species resulting from an act that occurs on a farm or a ranch in the course of otherwise lawful routine and ongoing agricultural activities is not prohibited by the act, and would require a person, when an accidental take is known to occur under these circumstances, to report the take to the department within 10 days. Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee staff expressed concerns with the lack of reporting since the reporting provision took effect in 2020. The Committee proposed language that will require the Department of Fish and Wildlife to conduct outreach to stakeholders about this reporting requirement to ensure compliance. Farm Bureau thanks both the governor and Assemblymember Mathis for their support on this important issue. Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com

Pesticides

AB 652 (Assemblymember Alex Lee, D-San Jose) was signed this week creating an Environmental Justice Committee for the Department of Pesticide Regulation. Farm Bureau opposed this legislation along with a broad coalition of agricultural interests. Staff: Chris Reardon, creardon@cfbf.com

AB 363 (Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, D-Orinda) was also signed this week which would prescribe in law when Department of Pesticide Regulation would complete neonicotinoid reevaluations. Staff: Chris Reardon, creardon@cfbf.com

Taxation

AB 1500, authored by Assembly-

member Jaqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) was signed by the Governor. In 2020, the Legislature enacted AB 2013 (Irwin), which ensured consistency between the standards that apply to owners who rebuild onsite using the new construction exclusion, who currently must meet the “substantial equivalence” requirement, and the more specific and flexible requirements that apply to owners who transfer their base year values to a newly purchased or constructed offsite property under Proposition 50. Under AB 2013, assessors would not revalue a structure that is larger in size if its value is within 120% of the value of the damaged or destroyed structure. Additionally, the assessor will only assess to fair market value that portion of value that exceeds 120% of its pre-disaster value. This treatment applies only when taxpayers’ complete reconstruction within five years of the disaster, which can be difficult if there are permits and other delays. Assembly Bill 1500 extends the five-year deadline by three years if the qualified property was substantially damaged or destroyed on or after November 1, 2018, but on or before November 30, 2018. The measure limits its provisions to property that was substantially damaged or destroyed by the 2018 Camp Fire or Woolsey Fire disaster, as proclaimed by the Governor. The bill applies its provisions to the determination of base year values for the 2018–19 fiscal year and fiscal years thereafter. Staff: Peter Ansel, pansel@cbbf.com

SB 701, authored by Senator Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger) was signed by the Governor. The bill was sponsored by the California Agricultural Commissioners & Sealers Association. The bill provides authority for any county

board of supervisors to impose a registration requirement and annual fee schedule up to \$500 on fruit and vegetable wholesalers. Staff: Peter Ansel, pansel@cbbf.com

Water

GOV. NEWSOM ACTION ON PRIORITY WATER BILLS

In the past week, the Governor:

- Signed SB 659, the California Water Supply Solutions Act of 2023 (Senator Angelique Ashby, D-Sacramento), to add recharge and storage targets to the California Water Plan.
- Signed SB 389 (Senator Ben Allen, D-Santa Monica) to clarify the State Water Board’s authority to investigate water rights. Farm Bureau moved to a “neutral” position on this bill.
- Signed AB 779 (Assemblymember Lori Wilson, D-Fairfield) to increase requirements on courts and groundwater sustainability agencies during an adjudication. Farm Bureau opposed this bill.
- Vetoed AB 676 (Assemblymember Steve Bennett, D-Ventura) to add “domestic use” as the highest use of water to the Water Code. Farm Bureau moved to a neutral position on this bill but did not favor it.

Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cbbf.com

STORAGE PROJECT UPDATES DURING WATER COMMISSION MEETING

The California Water Commission’s meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 18 in Sacramento will include a report on the Water Storage Investment Program, including an update on the Pacheco Reservoir Expansion Project, and an O&M update on the State Water Project. The meeting will also be streamed via Zoom; members of the public can comment in person or remotely. Staff:

Alex Biering, abiering@cbbf.com

WEBINAR ON IMPACTS OF ILLEGAL GROWS ON WATER SUPPLIES

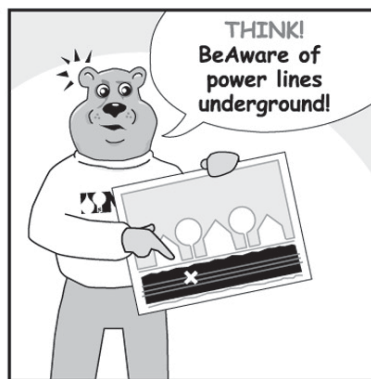
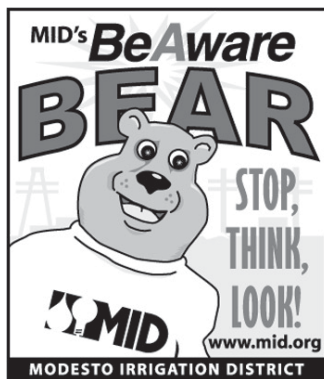
The Association of California Water Agencies is hosting a webinar on Tuesday, Oct. 17 with a panel of experts discussing the environmental consequences of illicit cannabis farming. Panelists will include San Bernardino County Supervisor Dawn Rowe, Erin Ryan of Congressman Doug LaMalfa’s office, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife senior scientist Scott Bauer. There is a \$25 fee to attend for non-ACWA members. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cbbf.com

Wildfire

AB 297, authored by Assemblymember Vince Fong (R-Bakersfield) was signed by the Governor. Farm Bureau supported AB 297. As discussed, AB 297 recognizes prescribed grazing as a fire prevention activity eligible for the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s (CAL FIRE) local assistance grant program for fire prevention and home hardening education activities and deletes a sunset date on a provision that allows CAL Fire to make advanced grant payments. Staff: Peter Ansel, pansel@cbbf.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS ORIENTAL FRUIT FLY QUARANTINE IN PORTIONS OF SACRAMENTO, SAN BERNARDINO, AND RIVERSIDE COUNTIES Portions of Sacramento, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties have been placed under quarantine for the Oriental fruit fly following the detection of multiple flies in those regions. In Sacramento County, detections in and around the city of Rancho Cordova have resulted in a quarantine

See Review on page 8



FREE ADS FOR FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

As another membership service, Farm Bureau members are offered FREE classified advertising in the Stanislaus Farm News. Ads must be 18 words or less and only one ad per month per membership (membership number required.) Ads may be MAILED to the Stanislaus Farm News, or BROUGHT to the SCFB office, 1201 L Street, Downtown Modesto. NO PHONE-IN OR FAX free ads will be accepted. Free ads are restricted to farm machinery or equipment or unprocessed farm products. Farm jobs wanted or offered will also be accepted. No real estate ads and no commercial items or services will be accepted. 209-522-7278

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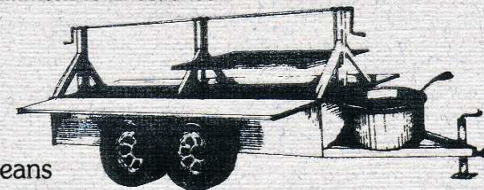
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- **Turlock Irrigation District**
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- **R & J Avila**
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- **Rocha's Valley Enterprises**
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- **Almond Board of California**
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- **CA Farmland Trust**
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Modesto 577-5757
- **Oakdale Chamber of Commerce**
Oakdale 847-2244

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From Review on page 5

zone covering 106 square miles, bordered on the north by Madison Ave. in the community of Foothill Farms; on the south by Elder Creek Road; on the west by 28th St. in Sacramento; and on the east by Douglas Road near Sunrise Blvd. In San Bernardino and Riverside counties, detections in and around the city of Redlands have resulted in a quarantine zone covering 112 square miles, bordered on the north by the San Bernardino National Forest; on the south by Highway 60; on the west by Mountain View Avenue and Redlands Boulevard in Loma Linda; and on the east by Wildwood Canyon. A link to both quarantine maps may be found here: www.cdffa.ca.gov/plant/off/regulation.html The Oriental fruit fly is known to target over 230 different fruit, vegetable, and plant commodities. California crops at risk include pome and stone fruits, citrus, dates, avocados, and many vegetables, particularly tomatoes and peppers. Damage occurs when the female fruit fly


lays her eggs inside the fruit. The eggs hatch into maggots, which tunnel through the flesh of the fruit, making it unfit for consumption. To prevent the spread of oriental fruit flies through homegrown fruits and vegetables, residents living in the quarantine area are urged not to move those items from their property. However, they may be consumed or processed (i.e., juiced, frozen, cooked, or ground in the garbage disposal) on the property where they were picked or disposed of by double bagging and placing in the regular trash, not green waste. Following the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), agricultural officials use the "male attractant" technique as the mainstay of the eradication effort for this invasive species. This approach has successfully eliminated dozens of fruit fly infestations in California. Trained workers squirt a small patch of fruit fly attractant mixed with a very small dose of an organic pesticide, Spinosad, approximately 8-10 feet off the ground on street trees and similar surfaces; male fruit flies are attracted to

the mixture and perish after consuming it. The male attractant treatment program is being conducted over an area that extends 1.5 miles from each site where the oriental fruit flies were trapped. While fruit flies and other invasive species that threaten California's crops and natural environment are sometimes detected in agricultural areas, the vast majority are found in urban and suburban communities. The most common pathway for these pests to enter the state is by "hitchhiking" on fruits and vegetables brought back illegally by travelers as they return from infested regions of the world, or in produce from other countries sent to California. The Oriental fruit fly is widespread throughout much of the mainland of southern Asia and neighboring islands, including Sri Lanka and Taiwan, and it has invaded other areas, most notably Africa and Hawaii. Residents with questions about the project may call CDFA's Pest Hotline at 1-800-491-1899. Additional information may be found here: www.cdffa.ca.gov/plant/off.


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You may have recently become aware via permit renewal appointment, continuing education (CE) classes, and/or email correspondence, about the proposed regulatory changes impacting the certification and training of pesticide applicators. As per these proposed regulations, Individuals who are currently certified as private applicators are required to take and pass the revised initial Private Applicator Certificate (PAC) Examination to demonstrate competency with the revised private applicator standards in 40 CFR Part 171.

Our office will be hosting multiple review sessions to help prepare for the revised PAC exam, followed by the exam sessions. Please make sure to register on time as these sessions will have limited seats. You can register by visiting our website www.stanag.org or by calling our office at **(209) 525-4730**.

Note: Individuals who have already taken and passed the revised initial Private Applicator Certificate Examination on or after **October 1, 2022**, have been tested on the new private applicator competency standards consistent with 40 CFR Part 171. These individuals are eligible to renew their PAC following the procedures in 3 CCR sections 6582(a) and 6584(a) for future renewals, which include CE hours. **Please see the reverse side for further details.**

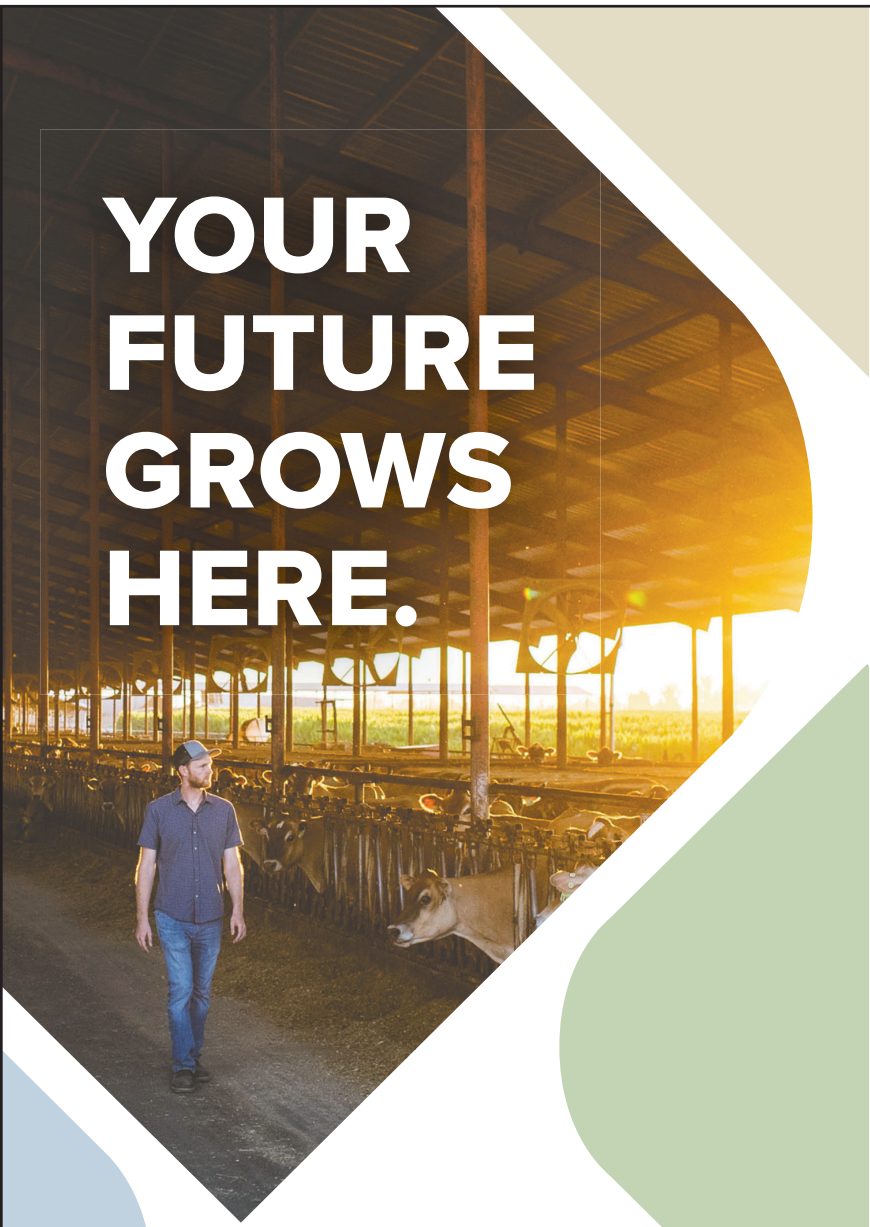
Date	Review Session (Optional)	Exam (Start time)	Location
August 2, 2023 (Wednesday)	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 80	12:30 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
August 14, 2023 (Monday)	10:30 am – 12:00 pm Seats: 36	1:00 pm Seats: 36	Stanislaus County Library – Salida 4835 Sisk Rd, Salida, CA 95368
September 6, 2023 (Wednesday)	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 40	12:30 pm Seats: 40	Mid Valley Ag Services 5225 Oakdale-Waterford Hwy, Oakdale, CA 95361
October 14, 2023 (Saturday)	8:00 am – 9:30 am Seats: 80	10:00 am Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
October 24, 2023 (Tuesday)*	10:30 am – 12:00 pm Seats: 18	1:00 pm Seats: 18	Stanislaus County Library - Turlock 550 Minaret Avenue, Turlock, CA 95380
November 6, 2023 (Monday)	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 80	12:30 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
November 15, 2023 (Wednesday)*	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 20	12:30 pm Seats: 20	Fire Station 53 8598 Kern St., Westley, CA 95387
November 27, 2023 (Monday)	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm Seats: 80	5:00 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
December 12, 2023 (Tuesday)	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 80	12:30 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
December 18, 2023 (Monday)	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm Seats: 80	5:00 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
December 28, 2023 (Thursday)	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 80	12:30 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
January 10, 2024 (Wednesday)	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 80	12:30 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358
January 18, 2024 (Thursday)	10:00 am – 11:30 am Seats: 80	12:30 pm Seats: 80	Harvest Hall (Rooms ABC & DE) 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto CA 95358

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#) or Call our office at **209 (525)-4730**

PAC exam is also offered on regular business days between the hours of **8:00 am and 2:00 pm**. Please call our office to book your appointment. We do accept walk-ins if there are no appointments already booked.

Note: Review sessions are only offered for the exam sessions listed in the table above.

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FROM THE FARM



The 2023 California Legislative Session has come to an end and Farm Bureau's Governmental Affairs Division (GAD) has been front and center from start to finish. When the session began in January, California was facing a \$31 Billion budget deficit, and the state had all sorts of ideas about how to deal with it – including cutting funding for important agricultural programs and raising taxes and fees on our inputs and permits. In 1866, an American lawyer named Gideon John Tucker wrote, “No Man's life, liberty or property are safe while the Legislature is in session” and that has never been truer than it is today. This year Legislators introduced over 2,700 pieces of legislation ranging from the mundane to the crazy. I am so grateful to our GAD team and the thousands of Farm Bureau members who helped shape and influence this year's session. There is no question that this year has been a resounding success for agriculture. We were able to beat back all new taxes, stop onerous water legislation, enable and enshrine our farmers' right to sink groundwater and facilitate solutions for Ag technology, Ag Insurance and farmers navigating the Endangered Species Act

Two of the worst bills for agriculture proposed to upend and essentially eliminate the current water rights system: AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan) and AB 1337 (Wicks). Our GAD and Legal teams worked hand in glove to fight these issues and when the critical time came, it was over a thousand Farm Bureau members who weighed in and ensured that a new freshman Senator, Steve Padilla, was the final vote to stop these bills in their tracks. Concurrent with this effort, our GAD and legal teams compelled the Governor's office to issue an executive order to allow for the sinking of groundwater to be a beneficial use and then to codify that right into law. We had been working on that effort for close to fifteen years and now farmers throughout the state can choose to use their fields to replenish the groundwater basin and, hopefully, take some of the sting out of SGMA.

Additionally, Farm Bureau successfully fought legislation aimed at restricting choice in landscape decisions, which would have negatively impacted our nursery industry. We defeated a proposal to remove the funding for the dairy digester program which provides real methane reductions; and we helped stop a bill that would upend the way sell-by dates are decided.

Farm Bureau worked to oppose several employer related bills, one of which would have allowed striking workers to access unemployment insurance after two weeks (which the Governor vetoed), another that would increase paid sick leave from three to five days (which the Governor signed) and another allowing local District Attorneys and City Attorneys to enforce labor code violations (on the Governor's desk awaiting a decision).

It will not surprise you to read that California's government is not farm friendly and so we spend most of our time opposing bills and regulations. However, we still have things we need to advance on behalf of our farmers and ranchers and we were very successful at that this year. First, thanks to former Board member and now CAFB Rural Health and Safety Chair, Al Stehly, we passed a bill that will enable farmers to use drones on their fields to apply crop protection materials. AB 1010 (Jones-Sawyer) authorizes and directs DPR to create a certification program for farmers who want to utilize this technology.

Furthermore, we worked again with the Chair of the Senate Insurance committee, Susan Rubio, to introduce a bill, SB 505 (Rubio) that improves the FAIR Plan so that it can cover more for our members, but also creates a pathway out of the FAIR Plan and back into the 'normal' insurance market. Lastly, we worked with the Vice Chair of the Assembly Agriculture committee, Devon Mathis, to introduce a bill, AB 606 (Mathis) that extends the sunset date for the accidental take of endangered species, thus alleviating our farmers and ranchers of the burdens and consequences of the ESA when they are engaged in routine farm activities. SB 505 was signed by the Governor and the other two are sitting on his desk. It is important to note that while Asm. Mathis represents farm country, Sen. Rubio and Asm. Jones-Sawyer comes from urban southern California and still saw how helping agriculture helps their constituents who eat the bounty California farmers and ranchers produce.

Each legislative session is a whirlwind, full of twists and turns, last minute changes, high impact decisions and careful negotiations, and this year was no different. I'm incredibly proud of our team and the work we did advocating for California agriculture. It's sometimes difficult to quantify the hypothetical effects of those bills left on the cutting room floor, however we can unequivocally state that due in large part to the efforts and leadership of the California Farm Bureau Governmental Affairs Division agriculture in California is in a better position today than we would have been had those bills made it to the Governor's desk. There is certainly still work to do and in just a few short months we'll convene the 2024 Legislative session where Farm Bureau will once again get into position with the GAD team keeping watch and leading the charge.

Jamie Johansson
President, California Farm Bureau

NEW CALIFORNIA LAW BOLSTERS GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AS STRATEGIC DEFENSE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Western Water, By Nick Cahill

WESTERN WATER NOTEBOOK: STATE DESIGNATES AQUIFERS 'NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE' TO BOOST FUNDING FOR WATER SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, WILDLIFE HABITAT

A new but little-known change in California law designating aquifers as “natural infrastructure” promises to unleash a flood of public funding for projects that increase the state’s supply of groundwater.

The change is buried in a sweeping state budget-related law, enacted in July, that also makes it easier for property owners and water managers to divert floodwater for storage underground.

The obscure, seemingly inconsequential classification of aquifers could have a far-reaching effect in California where restoring depleted aquifers has become a strategic defense against climate change — an insurance against more frequent droughts and more variable precipitation. The state leans heavily on aquifers, drawing about 40 percent of its water supply from the ground during an average water year and up to 60 percent during dry years.

More than \$1 billion in state funds could become available to a wide range of projects that replenish groundwater, including flood control improvements and wetlands restoration, according to the Planning and Conservation League and the conservation nonprofit River Partners, which pushed for the designation.

“There’s no question this is a critical step,” said Judy Corbett, a board member of the league. “We’re not

talking about [funding] one thing at a time anymore — flood control or recharge or improving wetlands — but now everything.”

The new law also positions local water managers and nonprofit groups to potentially tap Proposition 1 funds — a 2014 statewide bond that dedicated \$7.5 billion for water projects — and a sweeping climate resilience bond that Gov. Gavin Newsom and lawmakers are planning for the 2024 statewide ballot.

In the world of environmental policy-making, “natural infrastructure” refers to natural landscape features that provide concrete benefits to the public and to wildlife. Wetlands and floodplains, for example, can slow and retain water to reduce flooding while filtering pollutants

See WATER on page 14

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From WATER on page 13

and providing habitat for fish and water birds.

Bringing Basins into Balance

Adding the designation to aquifers opens doors to a wider array of funding programs. Water suppliers and communities looking to replenish groundwater basins and jumpstart flood control improvements can now compete for state funds on more equal footing with projects to restore riparian forests, floodplains, coastal wetlands and other types of natural or green infrastructure.

Matt Hurley, who helps farmers in Fresno County balance their groundwater use, said the additional funding opportunities could help local water managers comply with California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

The 2014 law requires local managers of the state's most depleted aquifers – many of them in the San Joaquin Valley – to end overpumping and bring their basins into balance by 2040 or 2042.

"Clearly river and floodplain-related items are going to get more water in the ground," said Hurley, general manager of the McMullin Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency. "If we're trying to deal with groundwater overdraft by recharging to offset it, sure it would be helpful to provide more funds for [floodplain projects]."

In the past, putting water back into a California aquifer wasn't considered a public benefit under the state's resources code but rather a strategy water districts and growers used to protect their interests against drought.

Projects to expand floodplains or restore wetlands for wildlife habitat or flood control didn't qualify for state grants earmarked for recharging groundwater even though these improvements would help replenish water tables tapped for drinking water and irrigation.

Likewise, many groundwater recharge projects that coincidentally provide flood relief and bird and fish habitat missed out on state funds for environmental restoration and flood control.

See WATER on page 18



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Shiloh 4-H: On October 9th, we had our second 4-H meeting of the year. Many kids got the chance to paint a pumpkin so that later on we can send them to a Retirement home for older people to enjoy. I'm sure the kids had a great time and I hope for them all to do this again next year.



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TUOLUMNE COUNTY FARM NEWS

End of legislative session brings changes for farmers

By Caleb Hampton, AgAlert

A number of new state laws are set to impact California farmers in the coming months after Gov. Gavin Newsom ended the legislative year Saturday by signing a flurry of bills.

“Each legislative session is a whirlwind, full of twists and turns, last-minute

changes, high-impact decisions and careful negotiations, and this year was no different,” said California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson.

The Farm Bureau sponsored three bills signed by Newsom within the past couple of months. Those bills relate to regulations around using drones for aerial applications on farms, commercial property insurance options in fire-prone regions and the accidental take of endangered

species on farms and ranches.

Assembly Bill 1016, introduced by Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer, D-Los Angeles, authorizes California’s Department of Pesticide Regulation to modernize the certification process for farmers to use drones to spray pesticides and beneficial biological treatments on farms.

The bill passed the state Assembly and Senate with unanimous bipartisan sup-

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port and was signed by Newsom earlier this month.

Currently, farmers who wish to use drones to spray pesticides must navigate what they say are burdensome requirements that were created before drones existed.

To use drones for commercial aerial applications, farmers must obtain a license from the Federal Aviation Administration. Then, they need to get a special exemption to apply pesticides using drones weighing 55 pounds or more. Accomplishing these steps often takes upwards of six months.

Afterward, farmers need to get a journeyman pilot's license. In California, DPR rules require applicants for that license to apprentice for a journeyman pilot for a year. With only a handful of journeyman drone pilots in the state, that usually means apprenticing for a fixed-wing or helicopter pilot to be allowed to fly a drone.

"That makes little sense," said Al Stehly, a San Diego County farmer. Stehly initiated the push for legislation around agricultural drones after seeing the technology's benefits and encountering regulatory hurdles. Farmers across the world have supported the use of drones to improve worker safety, lower costs, conserve water and increase crop yields.

"We think the technology, in 10 to 20 years, is going to be significant in this state," said Chris Reardon, director of government affairs for the California Farm Bureau. "We're excited about this bill."

In September, Newsom signed Senate Bill 505, which was created to improve commercial property insurance options for people who have struggled to access coverage due to the impact of wildfires.

Over the past several years, many farmers have had their property insurance policies non-renewed due to the increasing prevalence of wildfires in California.

The cancellations have threatened farm businesses. Without insurance, business owners, similar to homeowners, are generally ineligible for the loans they need to purchase properties along with the structures and equipment their businesses require.

As a result, some farmers sought coverage under the California FAIR Plan, the state's insurer of last resort, which is funded by a levy on insurance companies. The FAIR Plan gives farmers an option. But its policies, intended to be temporary, are expensive and do not provide comprehensive coverage.

To help policyholders leave the FAIR Plan, the program has a clearinghouse where insurance companies can browse its policies and make coverage offers. However, the clearinghouse lists only residential policies, not commercial ones, preventing farmers from bringing all their properties back under the same, competitive insurance policy.

SB 505, introduced by state Sen. Susan Rubio, D-Baldwin Park, will add commercial policies to the FAIR Plan clearinghouse so that they can re-enter the competitive market and get better insurance coverage.

Farmer advocates are hopeful the new law will complement regulatory changes announced last month by California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara intended to win back the business of several major insurance companies that stopped or limited their writing of new policies throughout the state earlier this year.

California will loosen some regulations in exchange for a commitment from insurance companies that they offer coverage

to property owners in fire-prone areas and help depopulate the FAIR Plan.

AB 606, introduced by Assembly Member Devon Mathis, R-Visalia, and signed by Newsom last week, extends the sunset date for an agricultural exemption from laws regarding the accidental take of endangered species. The exemption was set to expire in January. It has been extended to Jan. 1, 2029.

"It basically means that if for some reason you accidentally run over an endangered species in the process of doing your job, you're not going to receive a violation," Reardon said. "It's important that we have those protections."

Johansson emphasized the California Farm Bureau's success in working with lawmakers across the political spectrum and from different communities in California to shape the three bills and get them signed into law.

"It is important to note that while Assembly Member Mathis represents farm country, Sen. Rubio and Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer come from urban Southern California and still saw how helping agriculture helps their constituents who eat the bounty California farmers and ranchers produce," he said.

In addition to these new laws, this past spring Newsom issued a series of executive orders temporarily exempting diversions of floodwater for recharge from state permitting requirements. Those executive orders were made permanent this July with the signing of a budget trailer bill.

"Farmers throughout the state took advantage of these opportunities to use their fields to replenish groundwater basins, and we understand that hundreds of thousands of acre-feet were successfully stored underground this year," Johansson said. "There is no question that this year has been a resounding success for agriculture."

(Caleb Hampton is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. He may be contacted at champton@cbbf.com.)

From WATER on page 14

Recasting Aquifers for Public Good

The solution, proposed by environmental groups, former Assemblyman Roger Dickinson and officials with the California Department of Water Resources, was to expand the state's view of natural infrastructure.

Following a winter of historic snowfall and widespread flooding, lawmakers were eager to talk about ways to store more water underground.

In April, Assemblymember Steve Bennett, D-Ventura, proposed bringing aquifers under the umbrella of natural infrastructure in Assembly Bill 900, saying the expanded definition would increase state grant opportunities for a wider variety of recharge projects.

Bennett's proposal eventually ended up as a single sentence in Senate Bill 122, a 62-page "trailer" bill needed to implement the state budget for the 2023-24

Ann Hayden, who promotes "climate resilient water systems" for the Environmental Defense Fund, applauded the change, saying it was far overdue for the state to invest in aquifers like it would a dam or irrigation canal.

"We're learning – far too late – that the aquifers need ongoing care and management," Hayden said in an email. The move comes as California steps up efforts to protect its underground water supply.

Earlier this year, Newsom signed an executive order that temporarily allowed water managers and property owners to pull water from flooded streams and store it underground without a permit. The state estimates nearly 4 million acre-feet of water went back into aquifers this year, enough water to supply 11 million households for a year. The budget trailer bill extends the streamlined floodwater diversion rules through 2028.

The banner 2022-2023 water year created a flood of interest in groundwater recharge and inspired the relaxed regulations, said Paul Gosselin, California Department of Water Resources deputy director of sustainable groundwater management.

"This allows people to plan ahead, invest and start thinking about how to divert water if and when the next big atmospheric river event occurs," Gosselin said. Capitalizing on 'Climate Resilience' With aquifer replenishment now deemed a public benefit, more recharge projects are certain to come online before the next banner water year and increase the state's ability to corral floodwater. The change in law also appears to be designed to help aquifer projects capitalize on a new "climate resilience" bond that is likely to land on the 2024 ballot. A bond proposal still pending in the Legislature includes hundreds of millions of



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dollars for groundwater-related projects and states “preference shall be given to natural infrastructure projects.”

The decision to invest in aquifers mirrors a policy California adopted in 2016 when then Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation that defined the upper mountain watersheds that are the source of water for the State Water Project and federal Central

Valley Project as “integral components of California’s water infrastructure.”

A key function of the bill was to make source watershed restoration projects eligible for the same funding as other water collection and purification infrastructure, such as wastewater treatment plants. Many California water experts cast the expanded natural infrastructure definition as a simple fix that will benefit farms, communities and ecosystems.

“It’s another tool in the box, it means there’s more channels for funding,” said Charles Delgado, policy director at Sustainable Conservation, a California advocacy group.

“It’s really important that we find ways to do projects that not only put water back into the ground,” he said, “but shore up community drinking water supplies, address water quality issues and also safeguard the environment.”



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California rice harvest rebounds amid fears of rain

After idling half the state's normal rice acreage last year due to water shortages, farmers of the grain are back in full force with harvest underway in the Sacramento Valley. They're off to a later start because of planting delays in the spring, which has pushed harvest into the rainy season. Substantial downpours this time of year could cause muddy fields, further delays and rice plants to fall over, dramatically reducing yields and quality. With days getting shorter and cooler, the race is on to get the crop off and into mills.

Water users in Scott, Shasta watersheds discuss potential flow mandates

Farmers, ranchers, tribal members and others who rely on water from the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds turned out last week to offer insights to state officials considering an emergency regulation to set minimum flows on the tributaries. The gathering at an informational workshop on Oct. 6 in Sacramento came in response to a July 1 petition by the Karuk Tribe. The petition seeks permanent minimum instream flows to prevent the extinction of coho salmon.

Insurance, drone bills top new laws of interest to farmers

A number of new state laws are set to impact California farmers in the coming months after Gov. Gavin Newsom ended the legislative year Saturday by signing a flurry of bills. Assembly Bill 1016 authorizes California's Department of Pesticide Regulation to modernize the certification process for farmers to use drones to spray pesticides and beneficial biological treatments on farms. Senate Bill 505 was created to improve commercial property insurance options for people

who have struggled to access coverage due to the impact of wildfires.

Researchers eye agave as a crop for state's changing climate

After years of drought, some California farmers are planting agave, a drought-tolerant succulent used to make sweeteners and distilled beverages such as tequila and mezcal. Calling agave an emerging, low-water crop, researchers at the University of California and partners in the state and in Mexico are sharing research and growing guidelines for growers interested in sustainably growing agave. Researchers said agave plants carry significance in Latino and indigenous cultures, having provided food, fiber and tools for sewing and medicine for thousands of years.

Walnut growers are upbeat about harvest, prices

After a late-season heat wave pummeled their 2022 crop, California walnut growers are much more upbeat about their harvest this year. Favorable growing conditions and increased rainfall have allowed them to produce higher yields and quality nuts that marketers say will be easier to sell. A top concern now is whether buyers who may have gotten used to discounted walnuts are willing to pay more for this year's crop. Don Barton, a San Joaquin County walnut grower and marketer, said pricing at the start of the current marketing year is already 40% higher than where it ended last year.

Quarantine established in Ventura County amid threat to citrus

A new quarantine has been established in Ventura County, a key commercial citrus-growing region, after two residential citrus trees in the city of Santa Paula tested positive for the fatal citrus disease huanglongbing, or citrus greening. The

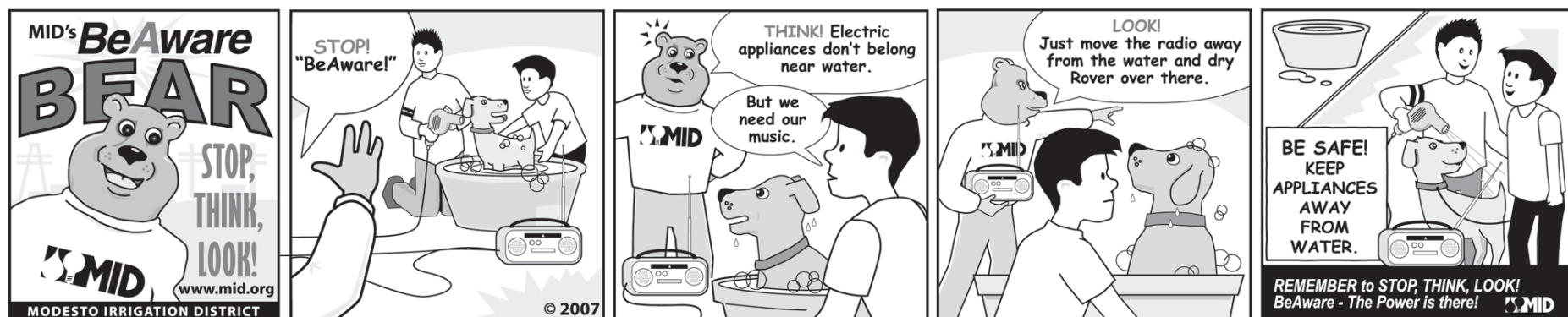
quarantine, which covers a minimum 5-mile radius around where the diseased trees were found, is mandated by law to restrict movement of citrus fruit, trees and related plant material, so as not to artificially spread the disease. State officials said they may expand the quarantine area if more infected trees are found.

Use of drones in agriculture gets boost from new legislation

Farmers will soon face fewer obstacles in getting approved to use drones for aerial applications thanks to a bill, signed into law Saturday by Gov. Gavin Newsom, that will modernize the California Department of Pesticide's certification process. Growers of various commodities have touted the technology's ability to improve worker safety, lower labor costs and boost crop yields. However, farmers say an outdated regulatory process has made it difficult for them and their employees to get licensed to use drones to spray pesticides and biological treatments.

Forecast of another El Niño raises water hopes, flooding fears

California has seen dramatic increases in reservoir levels and surface-water supplies as a result of an El Niño weather pattern this year that brought drenching atmospheric river storms. It followed a La Niña pattern that delivered three years of searing drought. But with farmers and ranchers suddenly blessed with ample water supplies, state and federal officials said last week they expect to release water from reservoirs to create more water-storage space. That is because of fears of potential severe flooding from a predicted second consecutive El Niño year.



Important first steps to protecting your farmland investment

Every piece of ag land is different. And in a skyrocketing farmland market, it's more important than ever to make sure you're protected from the many liabilities that come from farmland ownership.

Learn about your land

If you're a first-time landowner, that process starts with getting familiar with your land. A clear picture of what is raised on or supported by your farmland is the first step in identifying the liabilities you may face as a landowner. Consider the following in that process:

- What happens on your farmland? Con-

sider the primary work that happens on your land, such as crop or livestock production. Identifying the primary working purpose of your land can clarify the specific hazards for which you should seek insurance protection.

- What are the farmland operations, features or other variables that put you at risk? Ag operations such as spraying weeds on crop fields, maintaining fencing or grazing cattle on pastures can open the door to liability on your farmland. And any commercial businesses — such as a produce stand, for example — on your owned farmland carry with them specific liability risks. Also consider activities such as hunting, as they could potentially bring visitors onto your land and create liability. Having a strong relationship

with your leasing farmer or rancher can help with this effort.

- What level of coverage do you need? Do you need additional options? Farmland values are surging, and it's important to first ensure that you have the right coverage levels in place to cover any potential losses. Given the diverse potential for liabilities on farmland, you'll also want to match specific policy options and endorsements to the work and any other activities that take place on your land.

- What are your long-term financial plans for your land? Farmland is often a financial component of a larger portfolio, such as an estate or trust. Given the financial implica-

tions to such long-term financial planning, consider how to protect your farmland assets, especially if they're intended to go to an heir as part of a succession plan.

"How you use the land determines the specific liabilities you are exposed to. As a new farmland owner, think about how you plan to use the land today and in the future," said Nationwide Senior Consultant Erin Cumings. "Any activities that take place on that land create exposure and the type of activity and exposure can vary significantly."

Enlist the right help to find the right liability protection

Once you've discussed these working details about your farmland, you're armed with the right information to help select insurance coverage to protect you from potential liabilities. In many cases, a simple endorsement on a homeowner's insurance policy doesn't provide adequate coverage. It's best to discuss your options with someone who not only knows your land well, but also your specific insurance coverage options, whether they're endorsements or entirely new policies. "Connecting with the previous owner or other local farmers can help you paint a picture of the history of the land and provide information that may help you make a decision about the future use of the land," Cumings said. "A Certified Farm Agent can help match your insurance coverage to the activities on your land, just be sure to let them know if the activities change over time."

Your long-term plan for your farmland also contributes to how you insure for potential liabilities. If your land is an asset in a succession plan or other long-term financial agreement, for example, you may seek different coverage options than if it's simply to generate annual income from rent payments or the crops or livestock it supports.

Your local Nationwide Farm Certified agent or financial advisor can help you adequately account for those types of variables in finding the right liability protection. Nationwide Land As Your Legacy® can also help you protect your farmland investment through legacy planning.

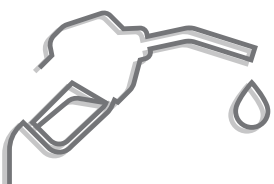


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October Report Details Water Recharge Capacity for Water Year 2023

Source: Brian German
 Ag News Director / AgNet West

The October 2023 Semi-Annual Groundwater Conditions Update, from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) highlights how impactful the series of atmospheric rivers were during the Water Year 2023. Data collection through August 31, 2023, reveals a remarkable turnaround compared to 2022. Groundwater levels experienced notable improvement propelled by managed aquifer recharge and natural processes.

DWR estimates 3.8 million acre-feet of recharge capacity accumulated in Water Year 2023. Notably, over 1.2 million acre-feet resulted from permitted groundwater recharge by state agencies. Additional contributions came from floodwater recharge and various managed and natural sources. The Central Valley played a pivotal role, contributing to over 15 million acre-feet of groundwater pumping, constituting 90 percent of California’s total extractions. Extraction rates were particularly high in the Chowchilla, Kaweah, and Fillmore basins, with Kern County, Kings, and Kaweah basins extracting the greatest volumes.

While satellite data indicates a temporary decline in land subsidence rates, concern remains for future dry periods. Subsidence is anticipated to rise unless sustained efforts to reduce long-term groundwater extraction are implemented under ongoing sustainable groundwater management. The Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region experienced the most subsidence, covering approximately 2,400 square miles, followed by the San Joaquin River Region and the Sacramento River Region.

Despite fewer voluntary reports of dry domestic wells in 2023 compared to previous years, with 650 reported, the state still faces challenges. The installation of domestic and irrigation wells reached a nine-year low. Groundwater recharge projects played a central role during floods, diverting water away from vulnerable areas and replenishing groundwater basins. The focus now shifts to enhancing real-time groundwater monitoring infrastructure to fortify California’s resilience against future climatic extremes. More detailed insights will be available in the annual Groundwater Conditions Report in the spring of 2024.



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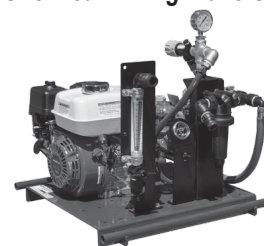
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Stanislaus County Farm Bureau News Article, October 2023

By: Inspector Charizma R. Mendoza

With Halloween quickly approaching, one may contemplate what scary things lurk around the corner. For some, they can be monsters. But for others, nothing can give them nightmares like handling a restricted material without a valid Private Applicator Certificate (PAC) and getting inspected. Don't let this be you! The Stanislaus County Agricultural and Sealers office is here to assist you and provide updates to help you stay updated and in compliance. Although you can always visit our website at (<https://www.stanag.org/>), email us (agofficeduty@stancounty.com), or even call us at (209-525-4730), but keep an eye out for our emails and mailers as these are a couple of the many tools we use to inform you of any key events which may directly affect your business.

For instance, did you know that there have been changes to the Private Applicator standards (40 CFR Part 171), which require PAC holders to take and pass a revised exam? If not, don't fret as the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner and Sealers office is offering review sessions to help in preparation for the revised PAC exam, followed by the actual exam. To aid with suggested studying, our office purchased English and Spanish PAC study guides and partnered with the Stanislaus County Libraries to make them available for check out at each location.

Once you have prepared for the test, simply register on our website (<https://stanag-ext.org/pac/>) or call our office at (209) 525-4730 for further assistance. Keep in mind that seats are limited, and the deadline is looming ahead. Also note that there is one temporary exception to taking the new exam. Those with a license expiring on December 31, 2023, and having a last name beginning with 'R-Z' can renew with Continuing Education (CE) hours if renewed prior to January 1, 2024, but

must take the new exam upon the next renewal. All others must take the new exam once their card expires. Also, effective January 1, 2024, regardless of expiration date, if planning to use fumigants to control burrowing vertebrate pests in the farm, you must pass the revised competencies PAC exam and pass the Burrowing Vertebrate Fumigation examination. Another great resource which offers many benefits is the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau (SCFB). One of the perks of becoming a member of SCFB include print and digital news updates related to the agricultural industry. However, if you're too busy to read you can now catch up via the AgNet News Hour monthly podcast where the SCFB is a regular feature. You will also gain access to local and state Farm Bureau member discounts with organizations such as AgSafe, which provides worker safety, health, human resources, and food safety solutions. Furthermore, you get someone who advocates on your behalf at legislative proceedings when certain bills may affect your business.

SO, WHERE DOES YOUR BUSINESS GO FROM HERE?

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Even though farming in California seems to be getting more complicated year after year, know that you're not alone. Reach out to the Stanislaus County Agricultural and Sealers Office and the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau for assistance and guidance and utilize their many tools to stay connected and help your business stay in compliance and thrive. You would be surprised to learn just how much we can help.

Commodity Fact Sheet

Processing Tomatoes

Information compiled by the California Tomato Growers Association, Inc.

How Produced – Tomato plants are planted in the field as seeds or as young plants, called seedlings. If sowing seeds directly into the ground, the producer sows seeds in late January or early February. If planting by seedling, plants are grown in greenhouses until they are hardy enough to be planted outside in the spring.

Tomatoes are ready for harvest between early July and mid-October. Mechanical harvesters move through the fields picking the entire tomato plant and shaking the tomatoes off the vine. Specially designed electronic sensors on the harvesters sort the ripe, red tomatoes from the vine and transfer them into a gondola pulled by a tractor following alongside. The tomatoes are immediately transported from the fields by trucks, which can hold approximately 50,000 pounds of tomatoes. Trucks haul the crop to a nearby state-controlled grading station to be graded, then on to a tomato processing plant where they are peeled, sliced, diced, or sauced into the familiar canned tomato products seen on store shelves.

History – The first tomatoes can be traced to the South American Andes Mountains where they grew wild as cherry-sized berries. Padres following the Spanish conquistadors most likely sent the first seeds to Spain in the early 1500s. The fruit gained little attention in Spain, but soon traveled to Italy—a country that embraced tomatoes with great passion and developed numerous recipes which are still popular today. By the mid-sixteenth century, tomatoes made their return to America via English colonists. They did not become an important part of the American diet, however, until after World War I. Today, tomatoes are grown in every state except Alaska.

Varieties – There are more than 2,750 genetic varieties of fresh market and processing tomatoes at the Tomato Genetics Stock Center at the University of California, Davis. These varieties have been developed to suit the various growing conditions around the state, taking into account soil type, climate, and disease. Processing tomatoes have been selectively bred for more than 60 years to differ from fresh market tomatoes. The varieties designated for processing have a thicker skin and firmer consistency than fresh market tomatoes. These qualities enable the mechanical harvester to pick the fruit when it is ripe without damaging the fruit and

ensure tomatoes can survive transportation. The processors prefer the “meatier” character of the processing tomatoes because it provides consumers with more of the tomatoes’ essence.



Commodity Value – California leads the nation in processing tomato production, accounting for 100% of the nation’s total. In 2020, California’s processing tomato growers grew approximately 228,000 acres, producing 11 million tons of tomatoes valued at nearly \$1 billion. Canada is the top export market, valued at \$243 million.

Top Producing Counties – As of 2022, Fresno County leads production followed by Yolo, Kings, Merced, and San Joaquin counties. However, nearly the entire state is involved in producing processing tomatoes, with some being grown as far south as Kern County and as far north as Colusa County.

Nutritional Value – Processing tomatoes are a nutrient dense food. One, four-ounce tomato supplies about one-third of the recommended daily allowance for vitamin C, plus contains beta-carotene, potassium, folic acid, and other B vitamins, iron, and fiber. Tomatoes are a naturally low-calorie food.

Studies show processing tomatoes are the leading source of lycopene in the American diet. Lycopene, the ingredient that makes tomatoes red, is an antioxidant that blocks cellular damage and is highly effective in preventing cancers. Tomatoes do not lose their health benefits as they are processed and cooked. In fact, lycopene in cooked and processed tomatoes (sauce, paste, salsa, canned tomatoes) is more easily absorbed than fresh tomatoes. This fact, along with their popularity, makes tomatoes a leading nutritional source in the American diet.

For additional information:

California Tomato Growers Association, Inc.
(916) 925-0225
www.ctga.org





On September 23rd the Agriculture Leadership class went up to Camp Sylvester to put on 4 different workshops for Tri-Rivers FFA Section. The four workshops were:

Social media - workshop went over uses of social media in our everyday lives and affects it has, even something posted meaning to be positive can be misinterpreted as



something negative.

Minute to win it games - focused on the idea of teamwork and effective communication within your team to get task done efficiently and effectively.

Networking- building deep connections with people through conversations and effective strategies to engage or continue conversations.

Career success/ Building connections - stressed the importance of bridging out to related careers to see what aspects you do or don't like, as well as building meaningful connections with people along the way.

The event was a huge success and received multiple appraises from teachers and advisors. Lots of fun was had and we can't wait to return.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Modesto FFA Sophomore Isabella Pires Shines as World Dairy Expo Champion with MS GW Atwood Desire

[MADISON, WI] – Modesto FFA sophomore Isabella Pires, daughter of Lourence and Leslie Pires, won first place Senior 3-year old cow and Reserve Intermediate Champion honors in the junior division at the World Dairy Expo on October 1st in Madison, Wisconsin, with her Registered Holstein cow MS GW Atwood Desire.

Desire was bred by Modestans attorney Ross Lee, Manuel Furtado, Billy Silva, and the late Robert Soares. Desire was exhibited previously in 2023 by Lee and Modesto dairyman Tony Garcia when she

won All-California Senior 3-year old and Intermediate Champion cow honors, and the same honors at the Western National Holstein Show in Richmond, Utah.

“This is a great achievement rarely seen in the course of a lifetime of breeding Registered Dairy Holstein dairy cattle,” said Lee. “Exceptional genetics, an outstanding show team, and great friendships have made this accomplishment possible for Desire.”



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Grimbleby Coleman Advisors & Accountants Celebrates Its Golden Anniversary — 50 Years & Accounting!

MODESTO, CALIFORNIA, October 9, 2023 — Grimbleby Coleman Advisors & Accountants, a leading accounting and business advisory firm, is excited to announce our Golden Anniversary — 50 years of advising, accounting, and growing Central Valley agriculture and construction businesses.

Back in 1973, Roy Grimbleby started a company in the heart of Modesto, providing accounting and bookkeeping services to the area for a decade. His son, Clive Grimbleby, carried on the legacy, expanding GC into the multi-faceted realm of public accounting and becoming the Modesto area's largest accounting firm over the following 4 decades. Now, Ian Grimbleby, Managing Partner, President, and CEO, has grabbed the

torch and proudly leads an agile and diverse team of 90 professionals.

Though we have undergone transformations, not just to recognize trends of the eras but also our identity, our brand tone remains the same. In May, Grimbleby Coleman announced an exciting rebrand, welcoming a more modern website interface while staying true to our constant — a people-first approach. In addition, we enhanced our name by adding "Advisors" to recognize not only the expansion of our services, but our continual quest to walk more closely alongside our clients as a trusted partner.

"Our firm name and logo have evolved to reflect the needs of our clients, but our mission and core values remain unchanged. Our ethos of truly building success for all of our people and connections will never change," says Ian Grimbleby.

We invite you to pause and take a tour of 50 years, past and present, and offer cheers to our future — it's the people

behind the numbers®.

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About Grimbleby Coleman Advisors & Accountants


Grimbleby Coleman Advisors & Accountants is the Central Valley's most trusted full-service business advisory and accounting firm, headquartered in Modesto, California. The firm has earned the confidence of local families and businesses thanks to its rich history and deep accounting knowledge in the agriculture and construction industries dating back to 1973. Firm values strongly promote the personal and professional success of our colleagues, clients, and community. The team consists of over 90 staff members, including 10 highly-skilled Principals, and is committed to providing deep expertise, keen insights, and extensive experience in tackling diverse financial challenges. Connect with us on LinkedIn, and Facebook.



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