

The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture

STANISLAUS COUNTY



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



Official Publication of Stanislaus
County Farm Bureau
Vol.75 No.6 April 12, 2024

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employment of man."
– George Washington*

Published Fridays by the
Stanislaus County Farm Bureau

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advertising@stanfarmbureau.org

Stanislaus Farm News (ISSN: 8750-4960) Copyright © 2023
is published 24 times per year by the Stanislaus County Farm
Bureau 1201 L St. Modesto, CA 95454. Call (209) 522-7278
to subscribe. Application to mail at Periodicals postage
prices is pending at Modesto, CA.

The Stanislaus Farm News will publish on the following dates
in 2024: Jan 12, Feb 2, Feb 16, March 8, March 22, April 12,
April 26, May 17, May 31, June 21, July 5, July 26, Aug 9,
Aug 30, Sept 13, Oct 4, Oct 18, Nov 8, Nov 22, Dec 13

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: 1201 L Street
Modesto, CA 95354. Stanislaus County Farm Bureau does
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STANISLAUS COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING

GUEST SPEAKER

Amberley Snyder

Thursday, April 25, 2024



SCFB MISSION STATEMENT

To serve as the voice of Stanislaus County agriculture at all levels of government, while providing programs to assist its farms and family members and educate the general public of needs and importance to agriculture.



FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture Employment Policy

The week of April 1 saw the beginning of policy committee movement of legislation related to agricultural employment.

On April 3, the Assembly Committee on Public Employment & Retirement passed AB 2421 Assemblymember Evan Low (D Campbell), and referred it to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for further consideration of its fiscal impact, a potentially important legislative waypoint given the current state fiscal situation. AB 2421, though limited in scope to public employment in California, sets a terrible precedent of conferring an attorney-client-like privilege on communications between an employee and a union or union representative, potentially hampering an employer's ability to investigate safety problems, harassment allegations and to engage in other employee communications that could result in disciplinary action against an employee. Should AB 2421 pass, it is certainly possible that a future legislature could expand this bad precedent to private sector employers. Farm Bureau opposes.

Staff: Bryan Little, blittle@cfbf.com

Also on April 3, the Assembly Labor & Employment Committee moved two Farm Bureau-opposed measures.

AB 2499 Assemblymember Pilar Schiavo (D Chatsworth), expands the availability of job-protected leaves to employers of five employees (presently 25 employees) for virtually any conceivable eventuality related to supporting a family-member crime or violence victim (defined so broadly as to include non-family members) including seeking medical services, public support servic-

es, counseling, moving to a new residence, seeking civil or criminal services, financial services or benefits, preparing for legal proceeding, seeking or providing care for a dependent adult, or making safety-related modifications to a victim's home or vehicle. AB 2499 also requires an employer to offer reasonable accommodation for employees in these situations. These leave rights are redundant to leaves provided for under the California Family Rights Act or the Healthy Workplace Healthy Families Act (Paid Sick Leave), but AB 2499 would effectively lift existing caps on those leaves (CFRA leave is presently limited to 12 weeks; PSL is limited to 5 days or forty hours per year). The bill attracted some concerned questions from committee members about its impact on small employers. The committee passed AB 2499 and referred it to the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Farm Bureau opposes. Staff: Bryan Little, blittle@cfbf.com

Assembly Labor & Employment also passed AB 2738 Assemblymember Luz Rivas (D Sylmar) on April 3, referring it to the Assembly Judiciary Committee for further consideration. AB 2738 will encourage local prosecutor litigation against employers for alleged Labor Code violations (permitted for the first time by Farm Bureau-opposed AB 594, Assemblymember Brian Maischein (D San Diego) 2023 by requiring a California court to award attorney's fees to a public prosecutor prevailing in a Labor Code-related civil action. Farm Bureau opposes. Staff: Bryan Little, blittle@cfbf.com

On March 21, the Cal/OSHA Standards Board opened its meeting with an announcement from Board Chair Dave Thomas that the state Department of Finance had

withdrawn previously granted approval for the cost analysis portion of the Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment (SRIA), required of all proposed regulations reasonably anticipated to entail economic impact in excess of \$50 million. Chair Thomas then announced the Board would not be considering the proposed regulation, causing the one-year regulatory proposal clock to run out at the end of March requiring the regulatory procedure for indoor heat to start over.

Several hours of public comment ensued, with Labor and worker advocates growing increasingly agitated until they shut down the meeting with a marching picket line through the meeting, chants, and a bull-horn until sheriff's deputies removed them. During the disturbance, Chair Thomas adjourned the meeting.

After the disturbance was quelled, Chair Thomas resumed the meeting as though his ruling adjourning the meeting had been forgotten, and the Board undertook a discussion about what to do next about indoor heat illness. Chair Thomas was particularly withering and pointed in his criticism of the Newsom Administration, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, who he said he had been told had objected to DOF's approval of the SRIA over concerns about implementation costs and CDPR's budgetary constraints (not surprising given the state's current fiscal straights.)

Reluctant to start over on a regulation, options including another meeting before the

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From "REVIEW" on page 3

end of March, adopting the rejected regulation as an emergency regulation (which does not require a regulatory impact assessment) and simply passing the proposed regulation originally slated for consideration were all discussed. In the end, the Board opted to pass the original proposed regulation in spite of its regulatory legal impediments.

It is unclear at this point what will be the fate of the indoor heat illness regulation; will it be implemented as the Standards Board approved it in spite of the lack of approvals required by the Administrative Procedures Act? If it is, it seems virtually certain to attract legal challenges on that basis alone. If it is not permitted to proceed, will the Board attempt to pass it as an emergency regulation not requiring a SRIA assessment? Given that the regulation was originally mandated by legislation passed in 2016, can it possibly be an "emergency?" Doesn't an emergency entail some actual urgency? Will the Legislature simply pass some version of the indoor heat illness regulation, as it recently did with the Workplace Violence Prevention Plan requirement?

The Office of Administrative Law acknowledged receipt of the Standards Board-approved indoor heat illness regulation on April 3, and has 30 days to approve or reject it. Farm Bureau and a number of other employer organizations filed a letter with OAL on April 3 lodging objections to approval of the regulations, pointing out the defective SRIA and cost impact analyses, and possible violations of open meetings laws with the Board's handling of the March 21 meeting. Staff: Bryan Little, blittle@cfbf.com

Dairy

CDFA is publishing their requirements for dairy breeds moving into California, that they:

- 1) Cannot have come from a premise that has H5N1.
- 2) If they are from an infected state, they must get a certified vet inspection within 7 days of shipment into CA.

They note that enforcement will be increased by Monday. Currently those states that have tested positive are Texas, New Mexico, Idaho, Ohio, Kansas, and Michigan. Haulers will not be turned around, but if they do not have appropriate paperwork, the cattle destination is immediately sent to the District Animal Health Branch Office for follow-up. Continuing or egregious violations can result in fines up to \$1,000 per head per day. High risk cattle moved in violation may be quarantined by CDFA for 21 days. For international trade purposes, it is important to be clear that we are not stopping imports but rather are enforcing the existing import prohibition against bringing diseased cattle into California by adding more specifics.

HPAI (HIGH PATH AVIAN INFLUENZA) CONTINUES TO BE A CONCERN IN DAIRY CATTLE

What we know so far:

1. The commercial milk supply remains safe due to both state and federal animal health regulations and our universal pasteurization of milk.
2. Dairies in Texas, Kansas, New Mexico, Michigan, Idaho, and Ohio have tested positive for HPAI.
3. This is the same strain of HPAI virus that has been detected migratory birds in the Pacific and Central flyways since November and it seems likely that the disease was

introduced onto dairies by infected wild birds.

4. There is now indication that it has spread from mammal to mammal (cow to cow).
5. A worker at an infected dairy tested positive for H5N1 (Bird Flu). It is the first case of avian influenza in Texas.
6. USDA has released recommendations for HPAI H5N1 virus in livestock. It is accessible here

California Farm Bureau is in contact with federal, state, and local officials and will continue to monitor the situation. Staff: Steven Fenaroli, sfenaroli@cfbf.com

Energy

Farm Bureau submitted several letters on bills being heard in the respective Energy and Utility committees this week.

- CAFB authored a coalition letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 1374 authored by Senator Josh Becker (D Menlo Park). The bill, among other things, would allow Net Energy Metering Aggregation (NEMA) customers to net or "self-consume" energy in 15-minute intervals, which restores some of the benefits that were removed in the latest Public Utilities Commission (Commission) decision at the end of 2023. It does not fully restore the prior NEMA subtariff but is a step in the right direction. The bill was pulled at the last minute and will now be heard on April 22.
- CAFB filed an opposition letter for SB 1165 authored by Senator Steve Padilla (D San Diego) which is identical to SB 619 from last year which was ultimately vetoed by Governor Newsom. The bill would allow an electrical corporation that files an electrical transmission project application with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to simultaneously file an application with the Energy Commission. As the Governor noted



in his veto, “[D]ecentralizing permitting between two agencies creates new coordination challenges, requires duplicative staffing, disrupts the sequencing of permitting workstreams and impedes the ability of either agency to consider the full scope of an electric transmission project. Ensuring that a single agency can account for and mitigate both significant costs to electric ratepayers and environmental impacts can lead to better results for Californians.” The bill passed with 15 ayes and 1 no from Senator Kelly Seyarto (R Murrieta) and 2 abstentions. The bill is now headed to Senate Environmental Quality.

- CAFB filed an opposition letter to Assembly Bill (AB) 2292 authored by Cottie Petrie-Norris (D Irvine) which would remove the requirement to evaluate cost-effective alternatives in approving transmission projects at the Commission. The author contends the bill removes a duplicate procedure

at the California Independent System Operator (CAISO). CAFB opposition rises from the removal of a review process at the Commission which is responsible for ultimate approval of transmission projects and their cost. CAFB pointed to the burden on stakeholders of tracking the process in two arenas and the less forthcoming process at the CAISO. The bill passed with 14 ayes and 2 abstentions and is now headed to Assembly Appropriations. Staff contact: Kevin Johnston, kjohnston@cbbf.com

Insurance

AB 1844 and AB 2260 authored by Assemblymember Lisa Calderon (D Whittier) and supported by the California Farm Bureau passed from the Assembly Committee on Insurance.

AB 1844 requires the Speaker of the Assembly and the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Rules to serve as nonvoting, ex officio members of the governing committee

of the California FAIR Plan and would authorize each to name a designee to serve in their place. At a time when the FAIR Plan is growing at unprecedented rates, it is imperative for the Legislature to fully grasp the challenges facing California’s in a chaotic insurance market by gaining transparent access to the FAIR Plan governing committee.

AB 2260 requires the FAIR Plan, until December 31, 2027, to quarterly provide specified information about policies and clearinghouse program progress to the Insurance Commissioner, the Assembly Committee on Insurance, and the Senate Committee on Insurance, and to post the information on the association’s public internet website. You may recall that Farm Bureau sponsored SB 505 last year to establish the commercial policy clearinghouse in the FAIR Plan. AB

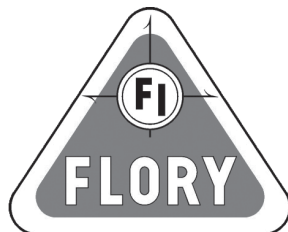
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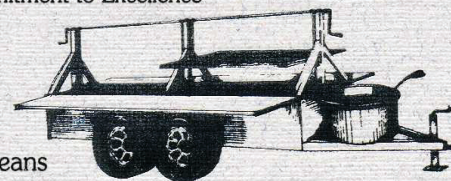
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From "REVIEW" on page 5

2260 brings transparency to the efforts of depopulating the volume of residential and commercial policies in the FAIR Plan. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cbbf.com

Land Use

AB 2528, authored by Assemblymember Joquin Arambula (D Fresno) has been amended. The bill is sponsored by the Large Solar Association and would allow for the cancellation of Williamson Act and Farmland Security Zone contracts without a cancellation fee, and with a ministerial process whereby a landowner and county board of supervisors would determine that the contract is suitable for immediate cancellation due to limited groundwater supplies. While Farm Bureau understands that groundwater management may result in the shifting of water use, we oppose AB 2528. The bill unnecessarily ties water availability to Williamson Act contracts to solar developments. Monterey County Farm Bureau and Tulare County Farm Bureau are also in opposition to AB 2528, with an open invi-

tation for other county farm bureaus to add on. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cbbf.com

Transportation

A FarmTeam alert was pushed out regarding AB 2870 Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (D Torrance) which would prohibit the California Air Resources Board (CARB) from including avoided methane emissions in the calculation of carbon intensity under the Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) program. It would prohibit a fuel pathway holder from including avoided methane emissions in their calculation of carbon intensity and would provide that the LCFS regulations are null and void as applied to fuels derived from livestock manure. To send your legislator a letter, click here. Staff: Steven Fenaroli, sfenaroli@cbbf.com

Wildfire

SB 1159, authored by Senator Bill Dodd (D Napa) and supported by the California Farm Bureau requires that the state agencies with oversight of the California Environ-

mental Quality Act (CEQA) to evaluate the inclusion of roadside projects no more than 5 road miles from a municipality or census designated place that are undertaken solely for the purpose of wildfire risk reduction in the classes of projects subject to a categorical exemption. The bill could help to expedite fuels mitigation work in those areas. The bill passed from Senate Environmental Quality Committee this week. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cbbf.com
 SB 1101, authored by Senator Monique Limon (D Santa Barbara) includes in the list of exceptions to a contract entered into by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for the purpose of providing logistical support for large-scale prescribed fire operations, and encourages detailed mapping to ensure that the best locations for prescribed fire operations are identified. Farm Bureau supports SB 1101 if amended to include other types of wildfire mitigation operations in addition to prescribed burns, seeking to ensure that all of the tools being utilized to reduce wildfire risk benefit from the same type of expedited contracting. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cbbf.com

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It's a bountiful life: Cultivating new farmers

Director leads nonprofit that trains future ag professionals

*Source: California Bountiful
Interview by Linda DuBois & Photos by Steve German*

New generations will continue to grow food in California thanks in part to the Center for Land-Based Learning, a Yolo County nonprofit that works to develop new farmers, agricultural leaders and natural resource stewards.

In 1993, walnut farmers Craig and Julie McNamara started a program for 30 high school students to give them hands-on training in farming on a 5-acre site in Winters. Then called the FARMS Leadership Program, it was run by volunteers who worked with a couple of other established organizations. Then in 1998, the center

hired its first employee, Mary Kimball, who went on to become the chief executive officer.

Under her leadership, the center has grown into several youth and adult programs in more than 25 California counties, with 20,000 alumni, 30 employees and 75 to 100 volunteers. After outgrowing the original 1,500-square-foot farmhouse office, the headquarters moved into a 6,000-square-foot building on more than 30 acres in Woodland in 2020.

Adult programs train beginning farmers to grow and sell produce, provide land to get them started, offer farm-management apprenticeships and more.

The center has earned numerous regional, state and national awards and in the spring of 2023, Kimball was named Yolo County Woman of the Year.

What first drew you to your job?

I started part-time when it was a very dif-

ferent job—basically to take a little fledgling high school education program to different places in the state. What drew me is I've always loved agricultural education. I was raised in 4-H and FFA, and those were incredibly important programs to me growing up.

I have my master's degree in agricultural education from Ohio State University, and my undergrad is from UC Davis in plant science and ag business.

I was intrigued by the hands-on program model that brought out high school students from different schools and different backgrounds over a school year, multiple times, to learn about farming, resource management and leadership skills. And I loved that it focused on sustainability. In that era, it was a very innovative program. Tell us how the youth programs have grown.

The original FARMS (Farming, Agriculture, and Resource Management for Sustainability) was a one-year program when I started. Now, they have the option

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At the UC Davis Student Farm, Mary Kimball speaks with high school students in the FARMS Program.

Our Watersheds around 2009. It has students research their local watershed and come up with solutions for environmental problems.

Tell us more about the farmer training for adults.

The California Farm Academy Beginning Farmer Training is a seven-month program where students learn to grow, market and sell their products. There are lectures by agricultural professionals, field experience and farm visits. One of the really cool things is it includes instruction on writing a business plan. Even if you grew up on a farm or studied crop science in college, you're not necessarily going to learn how to do a business plan.

The Explorer Course teaches what it takes to start and manage an agricultural business and helps students decide whether this is a path they want to take.

The Farm Business Incubator program gives beginning farmers access to land, infrastructure and ongoing training for up to four years to help get their businesses going. The locations are Maples Farm at our headquarters in Woodland and several West Sacramento urban farms.

The two-year apprenticeship program trains people for farm-management jobs by connecting them with mentors and giving them practical experience.

The Farm and Climate Program is our newest program, begun in 2022 to support new farmers in climate-friendly farming practices. It covers carbon sequestering, habitat restoration, research, education and outreach.

Who is drawn to the adult farmer-training programs?

See "FARMER" on page 13

of a second-year advanced program and then a paid internship.

In 2001, we became an official nonprofit and created SLEWS (Student and Landowner Education and Watershed Stewardship) where students work on habitat restoration. Now, it's a model that we teach other organizations. We started Caring for



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Ardis Cattle Co.

By Vicky Boyd

Like his father and his father before him, Ross Ardis works his family's cattle from the back of a horse. The activity isn't so much a nod to days gone by but more a part of the family's overall philosophy of raising cattle with as little stress as possible.

"When we work the cattle, there are no hot shots or yelling — we stay very calm," Ross said. "I also try to walk to the cattle and get them used to me. It creates calmer cattle and reduces stress. The animals have better gain and they're just treated better."

Keeping animals calm also may lead to better tasting and more tender beef. Cattle under stress release adrenaline, which research has shown may reduce meat quality and increase toughness.

Along with wife Ashley and son Ayden, Ross

raises Angus-cross cattle in the hills east of Oakdale on land that's been in his family since 1873. Ross is the fourth generation to work the land, while Ayden, a junior at Oakdale High School, is the fifth. In fact, Ayden has two steers he's feeding out for the first time this season.

For Ashley, the beef business was new. She grew up in Waterford and showed horses but had never been around cattle until she married Ross.

Since 2012, when the Ardises wanted more control over their production, they have marketed their beef directly to consumers, first as shares of animals and more recently with the addition of U.S. Department of Agriculture-inspected cuts. The family-owned Ardis Cattle Co. also supplies ground beef hamburger patties to Oakdale High School.

Ross' forebears moved to the Central Valley from Louisiana in 1873 and began dryland farming grains and wheat. When the Great De-

pression struck, they switched to cattle. Ross' father ran a cow-calf operation. When his father passed, Ross took over and transitioned to stockers, which he bought from like-minded local producers and grazed them before shipping to a feedlot for finishing. Having cows required two to three times more acres per head than 400- to 500-pound stockers.

Happy cows mean better beef

But the family wanted to become more involved with their beef production. So they quit shipping to feedlots and instead began hand selecting animals when they reached about 900 pounds and finishing them on the ranch for another 100 days with a grain-based diet. The animals receive no hormones or antibiotics. That was essentially the start of the Ardis family's direct-to-consumer business.

"I wanted to know where my meat came from and how the animals were treated," Ross said. "I started finishing them for myself and friends and family, and it just kind of grew from

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there.”

Customers can buy a share, which is a whole, half or quarter animal. A mobile butcher comes to the ranch for harvest to minimize stress. Then the carcass goes to the House of Beef in Oakdale to be processed, aged for 14 days and packaged.

But the Ardises heard from potential customers who wanted to buy local beef but didn't have the freezer space to handle even a quarter share. So they began offering bundles, subscriptions or individual cuts, all of which are aged for 10 days.

Animals are taken to Modesto, where they are harvested and processed under USDA inspection. Even during transport, Ross said he tries to minimize stress by providing hay to the cattle.

In addition, Ross is certified under Beef Quality Assurance, a national program that educates producers about common-sense cattle husbandry techniques coupled with scientific knowledge. The guidelines also are designed to instill confidence among consumers about how their beef was raised.

Educating consumers

This will be the Ardises' second year selling USDA cuts at the Oakdale Morning Market on

Saturdays. They also will be at the Ripon Farmers' Market Thursday evenings when it opens in May. In addition, they're trying out the Pleasanton's Farmers Market, alternating every other Saturday morning.

Ashley said the local markets have entirely different vibes than the one near the Bay Area. There, customers typically grocery shop, grabbing their produce or meat and leaving. But in Oakdale, she said it's definitely more of a social event and shoppers tend to stock up more.

“It's been fun for us,” Ashley said of Oakdale. “It's been like a class reunion. We see teachers and people I went to school with.”

One reason why the Ardises like these outlets is they provide an opportunity to educate consumers about their beef. When consumers purchase beef at a grocer, they frequently don't know whether the meat was raised domestically or came from a foreign country, such as Brazil.

“We can explain our whole process and show pictures of how the animals are treated,” Ross said. “People feel like they're connected to where their food comes from.”

That's another reason why Ashley maintains their social media presence. For those who can't make the markets, the Ardises also offer local

delivery for a small additional fee.

More than just tomahawk steaks

Trying to forecast what cuts will resonate with customers is always a challenge. But Ashley said they've learned through trial and error the ones that tend to be the most popular. Among them are tomahawk steaks, which they frequently sell out of, and ribeyes.

Ross said they also try to bring different cuts to increase consumers' awareness about the wide variety that are available.

“It's not just your New York, ribeye or ground beef,” he said. “We also educate them on how to cook it.”

In March, Ardis Cattle Co. provided beef for the Oakdale Farm and Ranch to Table fundraiser benefiting the Oakdale Chamber of Commerce's ag scholarship efforts. The chef decided to use picanha steak, a highly prized cut in Brazil but relatively unknown in the United States. It's similar to a coulotte steak. After experiencing picanha at the dinner, an attendee bought seven.

Personally, Ross said his favorite cut is probably ground beef while Ashley likes a good petit filet. Ayden prefers a ribeye.

Ross said one big difference with their ground beef is it likely came from only one or two animals. Commercial ground beef may come from up to 400 animals.

“There's a taste difference — you'll definitely notice it right away,” he said about their ground beef.

Ross, a former engineer with the Stanislaus Consolidated Fire Protection District, now is a Tuolumne County Sheriff's deputy. Each day he's up before dawn to care for the cattle before he heads to work. Calling it his “zen time,” Ross said he's always amazed how much he can get done early in the morning.

With Ashley and Ross working full time and Ayden attending high school, their schedules are no doubt hectic. But Ashley said they manage because they believe strongly in what they're doing.

“We make it work — it's a family thing,” she said.



(from right) Fourth-generation rancher Ross Ardis, his wife Ashley and son Ayden are part of the family-run Ardis Cattle Co. in the hills east of Oakdale. They sell their grass-fed, grain-finished beef directly to consumers.

Smart Farms and Precision Technology – A New Age for Pork Farming

By Teresa Bjork, Iowa Farm Bureau

I'm stubborn about keeping my phone for as long as I can. My last one lasted four years until I got fed up with the dying battery.

I recently upgraded my phone with a newer model, and I didn't realize how much the technology has improved.

My new phone can connect to my car's hands-free navigation system, making my morning commute easier. The camera automatically filters photos to smooth out wrinkles (a cool feature, but also a little creepy).

Last night, the phone sent me a notification asking for permission to record my coughs and snores at night to monitor my sleep quality. (Again, cool but creepy.)

While I'm catching up with the latest innovations, pig farmers have already embraced it.

For example, scientists have created microphones to record pigs' coughs and thermal cameras to measure body temperature. This helps farmers promptly identify, treat and isolate potentially sick pigs, ensuring the herds' health.

At home, the "Internet of Things" lets us manage the lights, heating and cooling, garage doors, kitchen appliances and cars with smartphone apps.

Modern livestock barns also run like smart homes. Precision livestock farming uses advanced innovations to care for farm animals.

For example, pig farmers use smart farm technology to control the lighting and temperature in the barns, automatically opening or closing ventilation curtains to adjust air circulation.

Farmers receive an alert on their phone if, say, in the middle of the night, the temperature in the barn isn't optimal for the pigs.

Sensors also track how much the pigs eat and drink. If a pig stops eating, it could be an early sign that the animal isn't feeling well and needs treatment.

Farmers take seriously their responsibility to meet the growing demand for healthy, high-quality food while also providing the best possible care for farm animals.

In the near future, we will have access to emerging innovations – such as augmented reality and blockchain traceability – offering consumers more transparency about their food's journey from farm to plate.

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From "FARMER" on page 9

They draw a pretty diverse group of people, but the average age is mid-30s to 40.

Some grew up on a farm or studied agriculture, but we also have bankers, investment property owners and others who want a career change.

We have a bunch who came to farming because of health issues, like cancer. Learning more about food and healthy eating became a life goal, and they wanted to help provide healthy food for others.

How do potential participants hear about

your programs?

Interestingly, at this point, a lot of it is word of mouth because we've been around as a training program now for 12-plus years. We love it when our alumni tell great stories about everything that they learned and how important the program was to them. But we do a lot of recruitment as well. We also go to lots of conferences and trade shows and do lots of presentations and online seminars.

How are the center's programs funded?

About 70% of our funding is coming from grants and contracts with USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture), with CDFA (California Department of Food and Agriculture) and with other state agencies. We also have contracts with two cities, Woodland and West Sacramento, and two with Yolo County.

There's some tuition, but we don't charge anywhere near the actual cost of our programs.

We also have earned income. We have sales from the Mobile Farmers Market (a mobile farm stand in West

Sacramento that sells food grown in the incubator program).

We also have donations from individuals, family foundations and agricultural companies. Every few years, we also do larger campaigns to help fund larger initiatives.

Do most alumni go on to become full-time farmers?

Some are super excited and raring to go. Others are still not quite at that point in their life yet where they can take it full-time or even take it part-time because it means such a change in lifestyle. It takes a significant number of hours if you're going to become a farmer. So, everybody's different. But we do have alumni doing an amazing job as farmers. We have alumni who are farm managers of very large farming operations and very small farming operations and everything in between.

What's the most rewarding aspect of your job?

I think just seeing the difference our programs make. There are very few ag programs out there that look at the production side, the marketing side, the environmental side, the research side and the technology side.

Like, a young man was in our program in high school and then went on to Cal Poly and we helped him with an internship at Driscoll's. Now he's got a full-time job as a farm manager. There are stories like that happening every day.

So, to me, the most fun part is to see people really learning and going, "Oh my gosh, I could have a career in this ... and these people are here to help me."

Another piece, I think, is seeing the difference we make on the landscape. After 21 years of the SLEWS program, I'll be driving around all these different counties and be like, "Oh, that hedgerow we planted 15 years ago. I remember that one."

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California Farm Bureau responds to governor's updated water plan

California Farm Bureau President Shannon Douglass commented on the release of Gov. Gavin Newsom's updated California Water Plan.

"Farm Bureau congratulates Gov. Newsom and his administration on the update of California Water Plan 2023, the latest iteration of a long-term strategy that has guided our state's water management approach for nearly 70 years," Douglass said. "We're encouraged that the plan highlights infrastructure projects to capture, store and convey water supplies. We're also pleased that it seeks to reduce permitting burdens for projects that support water resilience, including through groundwater recharge and habitat restoration."

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of more than 26,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.8 million Farm Bureau members.

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New Almond Export Opportunities in the UK Begin April 11th

Source: Brian German, AgNet West

Beginning April 11th, California almond growers will have some increased export opportunities in the United Kingdom. The UK has decided to suspend tariffs for at least two years on a variety of commodities including raw kernel and inshell almonds starting April 11. The announcement follows several years of collaboration between the Almond Board of California (ABC) and the UK's Nut and Dried Fruit Trade Association (NDFTA).

Since the UK left the European Union in 2021, four percent tariffs on in-shell almonds and two percent tariffs on raw kernels have been in place. While tariffs ranging between eight and 20 percent on other almond products including roasted almonds, almond flour, and almond paste will remain in effect, UK trade officials are suspending tariffs on raw and in-shell almonds until June 30, 2026. The announcement should bring additional export opportunities for almond producers.

"We plan to work with NDFTA to assess further tariff suspensions in the UK, and with other partners overseas to identify opportunities for additional tariff suspension requests to lower costs for importers and processors and boost demand for California almonds," ABC's senior advisor on trade policy, Keith Schneller said in a press release.

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Nominating Committee Report

As directed by President Eric Heinrich, through careful thought and consideration, the Nominating Committee of the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau makes the following recommendation for the term 2024-2026:

The following members will be nominated as Officers of the organization at the 110th Annual Meeting of Members, April 25, 2024 at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, Turlock, CA.

President: Kelly Fogarty Tilma, Oakdale

First Vice President: Vance Ahlem, Denair

Second Vice President: Vince Dykzeul, Grayson

Secretary: Corinne Santos, Oakdale

Treasurer: Daniel Bays, Westley

Thank you to the Board Members who served on this year's Nominating Committee and the candidates who have volunteered to lead the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau.

Sincerely,

Kurt Hoekstra, Chairperson
SCFB Nominating Committee 2024

Commodity Fact Sheet

Beef

Information compiled by the California Beef Council

How Produced – There are approximately 670,000 beef cattle on about 11,000 ranches in California. In addition, there are 1.72 million dairy cows, which also play an important role in the state's beef industry. Cattle are ruminants, which means they have a four-chambered stomach. Most beef cattle in California graze on land that cannot be used for raising other crops. There are four types of cattle operations; cow-calf, seed stock, stocker, and feedlot. Many producers have a combination of these operations.

Cow-calf producers make up the largest segment of California cattle operations. These ranchers have a herd of breeding cows, replacement heifers (young cows), and bulls. The cows are bred to calve in the spring or fall. Calves are usually sold after they are weaned, at about seven months. After weaning, cattle are sent to feedlots for approximately 120 days where they are fed a high-energy ration of grain and hay. Nineteen percent of cropland in the nation is used to raise feed grains for livestock. Cattle are good recyclers and are often fed agricultural by-products such as almond hulls or rice straw.

Once cattle weigh approximately 1,200 to 1,400 pounds, they are processed. Ninety-eight percent of each animal is used, but less than half is eaten as beef. Cattle provide a multitude of by-products that consumers use every day, including photographic film, soap, tires, leather, and pharmaceuticals.

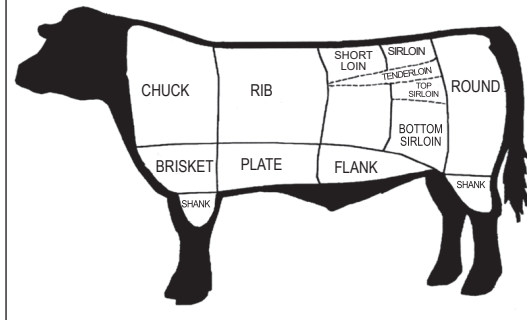
Breeds – There are 275 recognized breeds of cattle throughout the world. Most breeds in California originated from Europe or have a Brahman influence. Brahman cattle from India are known for their tolerance to heat.

Cattle brought to the Western Hemisphere by the early Spanish explorers were the ancestors of the Texas Longhorns. While extremely hardy, these cattle did not produce a palatable product. As a result, nineteenth century cattle producers imported purebred cattle, including European Angus and Hereford, to improve the quality of their herds. During the twentieth century, breeds such as Charolais, Limousin, and Gelbvieh became more prevalent due to their leaner meat characteristics.

Commodity Value – The sale of cattle and calves accounted for \$195.8 billion in cash receipts in 2021 and was fourth in terms of value in the state's top 10 commodities in 2021. Nationally, California ranks fourth in

total cattle numbers behind Texas, Nebraska, and Kansas. Beef and beef products are in the top 10 of California exports, bringing in \$413 million in 2020.

– BEEF CUTS – Where They Come From



Top Producing Counties – Beef cattle are raised in every county in California except San Francisco. Top beef cattle producing counties include Tulare, Kern, Merced, and Imperial.

History – The introduction of cattle to North America mirrors the exploration and settlement of the continent by Europeans. Columbus introduced cattle to the Western Hemisphere on his second voyage to the New World in 1493. Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez took offspring of those same cattle to Mexico in 1519. In 1773, Juan

Bautista de Anza brought 200 head of cattle to California to supply the early California missions.

The hide and tallow trade sustained the California economy while it was still under Mexican rule and hides were used as currency to buy supplies from Boston trading ships. When James Marshall discovered gold in 1848, the beef business boomed, feeding the fortune seekers who came to the gold fields. Many of the miners soon realized there was more money to be made in cattle than in prospecting.

Nutritional Value – Beef is a nutritionally dense, high-quality protein. One three-ounce cooked serving of lean beef provides 10 essential nutrients and about half your Daily Value of protein. Beef is an excellent source of zinc, selenium, niacin, vitamin B12, and vitamin B6, and a great source of phosphorous, iron, choline, and riboflavin. There are more lean cuts available today than ever before. More than 60 percent of beef cuts found in a supermarket are considered lean by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) standards. Beef is also a primary source of monounsaturated fat in diets which is the same type of healthy fat found in avocados and olive oil.

For additional information:

California Beef Council
(916) 925-BEEF
Website: www.calbeef.org



California imposes restrictions on cattle imports due to avian flu

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has implemented import restrictions on cattle from premises with confirmed or suspected cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza. The move comes as agricultural officials acknowledge the H5N1 virus has spread between cows, affecting dairy herds in six states. This has prompted calls to minimize dairy cattle movement. Some affected states had received cattle from an affected dairy in Texas. Dairy cattle entering California from states with infected cattle must be inspected by a veterinarian within seven days of shipment.

Research supports clustering of organic farms for curbing pesticide use

Researchers have found that organic agriculture can increase pesticide use on nearby conventionally farmed fields. The findings, based on data from Kern County, suggest that organic farms can further reduce their pesticide use when organic fields are clustered. But when organic acreage is interspersed among conventional fields, overall area-wide pesticide use can increase in some scenarios, researchers found. The new research could have impacts for farmers and policymakers worldwide as governments set targets for converting more farmland to organic agriculture.

Organic strawberries benefit from new soil treatment

Organic strawberry growers in California have increased adoption of a technique that suppresses soil-borne pathogens and, in some cases, weeds, leading to more robust plants and improved yields. The preplant soil treatment known as anaerobic soil disinfestation, or ASD, has emerged as a non-chemical alternative to methyl bromide, a phased-out fumigant used in conventional strawberries that proved effective in controlling pathogens, weeds and nematodes. Growers apply the ASD technique in the fall before planting to initiate a biological process of anaerobic decomposition.

Spring snowpack raises hopes for California water year

California's snowpack has reached 110% of its seasonal average, up from 28% of average on Jan. 1, according to the state Department of Water Resources. The April 1 measurement was closely watched by California water managers because it is an indicator of peak seasonal snowpack. It also signals the transition to spring snowmelt into rivers and reservoirs. The snowpack survey results came after state and federal water officials on March 22 increased water allocations after accounting for storms that improved snowpack and reservoir levels.

State, federal agencies increase 2024 water allocations

State and federal water providers have increased promised allocations after accounting for recent storms that improved snowpack and reservoir levels. The California Department of Water Resources doubled the amount of water it expects to deliver this year to most contractors that rely on the State Water Project from 15% to 30% of requested supplies. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation increased Central Valley Project allocations for south-of-delta agricultural water users from 15% to 35% of their contracted allotment and from 75% to 100% for those north of the

delta.

Dairy industry eyes continued steps to curb methane emissions

With a construction boom of methane digester projects on California dairy farms in recent years, milk producers have begun to reduce a powerful greenhouse gas emitted by the manure coming from their cows. Now they must tackle the methane coming from the front end of their animals. Cow burps emit what's known as enteric methane, and the race to reduce it represents a new frontier for the dairy industry. The



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California Dairy Sustainability Summit in Davis last week shed light on some of the latest innovations in feed, genetics and vaccines showing promise.

United Kingdom suspends tariffs on almond imports

The Almond Board of California is praising the United Kingdom's announcement that it will suspend tariffs for at least two years on raw kernel and in-shell almonds from the U.S. and other countries. The tariffs—4% on in-shell almonds and 2% on raw kernels—have been in place since the UK left the European Union in 2021. They are to be lifted on April 11. The tariff suspension is expected to save UK almond importers about \$4 million a year, allowing them to offer a more competitive price on

raw California almonds to UK processors and ultimately to consumers.

Judy Culbertson, guiding force of 'Ag in the Classroom,' retires

Judy Culbertson, executive director of the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, has retired after more than 40 years of guiding the organization. Ag in the Classroom provides educational resources to about 1 million students and thousands of teachers each year. California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross praised Culbertson for her dedication to agricultural education. "Judy has touched so many lives of children, teachers and parents...who

have benefitted from her passionate commitment to ag literacy," Ross said.



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The Friends of the Stanislaus County Fair Foundation Announces First Annual Friendship Dinner

From preferred parking, admission tickets, and unique hospitality experiences, The Friends of the Fair Foundation, a nonprofit that supports the Stanislaus County Fair, is now offering our Friends special perks. We are growing the Foundation and adding more Friends to the Fair. Come and be a part of our First Annual Friendship Dinner!

This year, our dinner will be on Saturday, April 27th, 2024, at the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds, Bldg. E-2. We are offering a chance for the community to join fellow Friends of the Fair and take advantage of the perks of being our Friend during fair time.

Sponsor a table for \$500 and treat your guests to an exclusive bottle of wine. Indi-

vidual tickets are also available for \$40 per person. There will be a host bar, raffle, and lots of fun! Be the first to hear about the new major project we have underway: a new Exhibit Pavilion located in our Legion Field area. The Pavilion will give home to a brand-new Livestock sales office and sales ring for our animals; not to mention, it will be a building that the Fair can rent out to the community throughout the year to come.

We look forward to expanding our Foundation and continuing our involvement in improving the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds for the community. If you're an avid Fair patron or you would like to be more involved in the community, then you will not want to miss out on all the perks of being our BFF!

Purchase tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/friendship-dinner-tickets-829026499577>



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Livestock Scales

By: Wendy Hahn, Deputy Sealer of Weights & Measures

California has a large and diverse livestock industry. Based on the 2022 Stanislaus County Agricultural Report, cattle and calves, goats, sheep, and swine in the county was valued at \$201,225,000. Whether for the purpose of sale or determination of weight gain from pasture or rangeland, livestock and animal scales play their role. A livestock scale is one equipped with stock racks and gates and adapted to weighing livestock standing on the scale platform. Animal scales are designed for weighing single heads of livestock. These scales may be stationary, mobile, or portable in their design. Scales serve as a tool for ranchers to evaluate the performance of their stock throughout their life stages.

Stanislaus County has 37 livestock scales and 6 animal scales registered as commercial devices. Some are in the remote corners of the county unbeknownst to most

everyone, while auction and sales yards are more prominently observed. Most of the livestock scales we inspect are used in the production of beef cattle. Cattle are grazed seasonally to take advantage of winter rainfall and the annual grasses it produces. This typically occurs between November and April. Once forage quality begins to decline the cattle are often moved to irrigated pasture or mountain meadows through summer and fall months. It is at these times that livestock scales on the ranch get the most use.

Accurate weighing prior to market ensures the maximum return on every animal. The scales, however, must be properly calibrated and maintained. It is important that scales are frequently inspected for environmental causes of inaccuracies. They must be cleaned out of manure and debris so the weighing element moves freely without binding. Rocks may lodge between the weighing platform and the scale frame causing the scale to read incorrectly. Scales with wood components may be affected by the environment, expanding with moisture

and contracting with heat, also causing incorrect readings. Electronic components must be inspected frequently for signs of rodent damage.

Scales subject to the Packers & Stockyards (P&S) Act of 1921 must meet commercial standards and are subject to additional regulatory standards. Scale owners are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of their scales to these standards. They often hire a registered service agency (RSA) to perform routine service or repair of their devices. A Packers & Stockyards inspection is conducted at least twice each calendar year at intervals of approximately 6 months, often involving an RSA and/or weights & measures officials.

Livestock and animal scales are an instrumental part in bringing our ranchers' products to our tables. Each point in which the livestock are weighed can help a rancher make decisions on their care, feeding, knowing when they are ready for market, and being paid for their product.

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