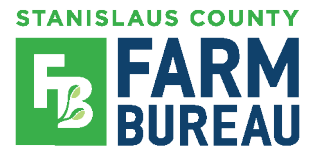


The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture



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



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*Stanislaus County Awarded "County of the Year" at
California Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting, See page 10*

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FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CDFA AWARDS FUNDING FOR 2023 CALAGPLATE GRANT PROGRAM

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has awarded \$195,838 for organizations to enhance agricultural education and leadership opportunities under the 2023 California Agriculture License Plate (CalAgPlate) grant program. The CalAgPlate program is funded with proceeds generated through the sale of special interest, agriculture-themed license plates through the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Since inception of the CalAgPlate grant program, CDFA has awarded over \$2 million to support agricultural education and leadership development. Current grant recipients include:

1. California Association, Future Farmers of America (FFA): \$166,000 CalAgPlate grant funding will continue to provide support for student leadership and program development for California's statewide FFA program, which has 360 school chapters throughout the state that provide integral leadership instruction through the FFA student organization to 103,280 student members. This program will increase student access to information about career, leadership, and programmatic opportunities.

2. California Association of Winegrape Growers: \$9,908 This project aims to foster a beneficial collaboration between the California Association of Winegrape Growers and California FFA chapters and offer students hands-on experience crafting practical solutions for sustainable agriculture. Students will gain woodworking

experience and insight into biodiversity, pest management, and the significance of preserving ecosystems by constructing owl boxes. This promotes stewardship, enhances vineyard sustainability, and provides long-term productivity. FFA students will gain practical skills and environmental awareness, furthering their appreciation for the agriculture industry.

3. Merced Stone Ridge FFA: \$9,933 The project will educate and create awareness among 6th-12th grade students on the practice of hot metal work, and why specific tools and metals are used. The students will learn and complete skills objectives such as metal preparation, understanding the basics of durability, types, and purpose of metals, as well as the weaknesses and strengths of each metal for this task. The objective is to provide opportunities for students to prepare for agricultural skills needed for jobs in the county of Merced.

4. Merced Stone Ridge FFA: \$9,997 This project will provide a socially disadvantaged school access to agricultural skills education, awareness, training, and development within the community, whose workforce is largely based in agriculture. Students will be introduced to electrical wiring and woodworking, learning the necessary skills and introduction to tools and materials used to complete basic projects. This program will also include education and career training and awareness discussions about different tools and materials, as well as safety precautions and tool skills. Please support agricultural education and the CalAgPlate program by purchasing a special interest license plate from the DMV

VACANCIES

CDFA ANNOUNCES VACANCY ON FERTILIZER INSPECTION ADVISORY BOARD

CDFA is announcing one vacancy on the Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board. The board advises the CDFA secretary on the Fertilizing Materials Inspection Program (FMIP), which ensures fertilizing materials are safe, effective and meet quality guarantees. FMIP inspectors and investigators located throughout the state conduct routine sampling and inspections, respond to consumer complaints, and enforce laws and regulations that govern the manufacturing and distribution of fertilizing materials. FMIP is funded by fertilizing materials license and product registration fees and mill assessments.

The term of office for advisory board members is up to three years. Board members receive no compensation but are entitled to reimbursement of necessary travel expenses in accordance with the rules of the California Department of Human Resources. Board applicants must hold a current fertilizing materials license or be a representative of a licensed firm. Individuals interested in a board appointment must submit a resume and a completed Prospective Member Appointment Questionnaire (PMAQ). The PMAQ is available on the CDFA website at http://www.cdca.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/pdfs/PMAQ_Fertilizer_IAB.pdf. Both the resume and PMAQ are due by

See "REVIEW" on page 4

From "REVIEW" on page 3

January 12, 2024. Send resume and PMAQ via email to Elizabeth.Moseby@cdfa.ca.gov or by mail to:

CDFA Feed, Fertilizer and Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services Branch Attn: Elizabeth Moseby 1220 N Street Sacramento, CA 95814

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS CDFA SEEKS APPLICATIONS FOR FARM TO COMMUNITY FOOD HUBS PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CDFA's Office of Farm to Fork is accepting applications through January 19, 2024 for those interested in serving on the inaugural Farm to Community Food Hubs Advisory

Committee. The 10-member committee will advise CDFA's secretary on education, outreach and technical assistance for the Farm to Community Food Hubs Program, which will provide planning and implementation grants to mission-driven food hubs throughout California. CDFA is seeking applications for 10 primary members, with three members from Northern California, three members from Central California, three members from Southern California and one member who is a farmer or rancher from any region.

- Four members must be executives / managers of a food supply chain business, including a producer, processor or purchaser, headquartered in California.

- Four members must be executives / directors of a non-governmental organization or representative of an academic institution, including K-12 schools, with expertise in advancing food system improvements supportive of local food systems, equitable access to healthy food, labor in the food system, or climate-adaptive and climate-resilient food systems.

- One member must be a representative of UC Agriculture and Natural Resources' Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education Program.

- One member must be a farmer or rancher who qualifies as one or more of the following: socially disadvantaged, beginning,

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limited resource, veteran, disabled and/or operates a farm or ranch that is 500 acres or less.

To apply to serve on the Farm to Community Food Hubs Advisory Committee, please complete the Prospective Member Appointment Questionnaire located on the program webpage. Applications are due by January 19, 2024, for review and consideration. Click here to view a flyer with further details about serving on the committee. Questions about the program? Please email cafoodhubs@cdfa.ca.gov

APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR CDFA STATE WATER EFFICIENCY AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

CDFA is now accepting applications from farmers and ranchers for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET), a competitive grant program that incentivizes farmers to invest in irrigation water and energy efficiency. Agricultural

operations can apply for up to \$200,000 for projects that save water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Projects funded through SWEET commonly include technologies such as soil, plant, or weather sensors; micro-irrigation systems; pump retrofits or replacements; renewable energy; and variable frequency drives.

“Amid unpredictable and extreme swings in weather, water conservation remains a top priority here in California,” said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. “These investments also facilitate greenhouse gas reductions as well as adaptation strategies for farmers and ranchers contending with climate change impacts.”

The application window will end on Friday, January 26, 2024, at 5 p.m. PST. CDFA will award at least 25 percent of funding to projects submitted by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFR). “Applying for SWEET can be transformative for first-time applicants as it opens the

doors to technical service (TA) providers, documentation of the farm’s current irrigation infrastructure, exposure to irrigation efficiency technologies, and most importantly detailing the bottom-line water and energy savings,” said Dr. Jeff Dlott, Chair of the CDFA Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel. “Applicants and awardees gain valuable experience and know-how applying for and managing incentive programs with CDFA and other local, regional, State, and Federal entities that offer incentives to farmers, typically with the help of no-cost TA providers.”

A list of CDFA-contracted technical assistance providers across California is available on the SWEET webpage. These organizations are available to provide no-cost application assistance to farmers who would like to apply for a SWEET award. CDFA will host two application webinars to review program requirements and the application process. Potential applicants should review the application materials and register to attend a webinar by visiting the SWEET webpage at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/sweet>



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Festive family tradition November/December 2023 California Bountiful magazine

Visit to Christmas tree farm makes a fun outing for all ages

*Story by Christine Souza
Photos by Silas Fallstich*

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at Holloway's Christmas Tree Farm in Nipomo.

Each year since its opening in 1962, the San Luis Obispo County tourist destination hosts thousands of visitors who come to the farm to sip hot chocolate, drive pedal cars, pet farm animals and search for the perfect Christmas tree.

The 45-minute trek to Holloway's Christ-

mas Tree Farm, owned by Carl and Debbie Holloway, is a seasonal highlight for Carly and Danny Ender of Cayucos. The couple travels to the farm with daughter Raylan, 8, and son Greyson, 6, to locate the centerpiece to their holiday.

"It's a special tradition to go and cut down your Christmas tree with the family," Carly Ender says. The foursome selects a Monterey pine, which she describes as a "beautiful, vivid green." Once the tree is home, "the house smells beautiful for the entire month."

Of the farm, Ender describes the scene there as "festive and fun," adding, "The kids love running around and choosing the tree. Plus, they love the rides and get hot chocolate with a candy-cane straw."

Tree farming

Holloway's Christmas Tree Farm grows a few thousand choose-and-cut Monterey pines and sells an equal number of pre-cut Noble firs and Fraser firs from farmers in Oregon and Washington. After pre-cut trees arrive, Carl Holloway and his employees trim the trunks and place the trees in shaded ponds that contain a few inches of water to keep them fresh.

"Everything is kept watered all the time, which has made a ton of difference with the way we keep trees," Holloway says. "We get people calling us in January and February saying, 'We loved our tree. It was the freshest tree we've ever had.'"

At Holloway's, choose-and-cut Monterey pines and pre-cut firs sell for between \$69.95 for 4-to-6-foot trees and \$300 for 12-to-13-foot trees. The farm also offers potted trees and wreaths and kicks off the sea-

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son by distributing about 400 free seedlings to customers on opening weekend—this year starting Nov. 17.

The Monterey pine, Holloway says, has sturdy branches and a wonderful smell. The variety “grows extremely fast, about 3 or 4 feet per year, and must be trimmed as it grows to take the shape of a traditional Christmas tree.”

A fun day trip
San Luis Obispo resident Joe Benson says his family’s visits to Holloway’s Christmas Tree Farm provide a welcome change of pace after spending most of his workdays behind a desk.

“I like the excitement that comes from grabbing a handsaw and cutting down the tree on my own. It makes me feel like a lumberjack,” he says, and adds, “I love seeing my now-8-year-old daughter, Carmen, running through the farm to find the perfect tree. I look forward to ushering her towards a tree that will actually fit in our house.”

The Benson family makes it a priority to experience all the farm has to offer. Benson says his wife, Erin, may not admit it, but she is first in line to hop aboard Holloway’s quad train ride that loops around the farm and carries riders of all ages over small hills.

A pipefitter welder by trade, Carl Holloway says “everything we do is pretty much

farm-grown or farm-built.” He built the quad train and the pedal cars, which “are so popular that people crowd in line to ride them every year.”

Rewarding business

Holloway says purchasing farm-raised Christmas trees is good for the environment because they are 100% natural and are recycled annually as more trees are planted. “A Christmas tree is a carbon scrubber and an oxygenator,” he says. “It is just the only way to go because it’s a real tree.”

He also points out that locally grown trees support the local economy: “Nipomo is a pretty small town, and we employ about 70 young people, so they can have that first-job experience.”

The number of Christmas tree farms has been declining as the farms close and farmers retire. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Golden State experienced a 15.8% drop in Christmas tree farms from 2012 to 2017—from 385 to 324—while the number of farms nationally declined by 3.1% to 15,008. The National Christmas Tree Association estimates 22.34 million farm-grown Christmas trees were sold in the U.S. last year, at a median price of \$80. Holloway says he and his wife, who oversees the business side of Holloway’s Christmas Tree Farm, are proud that their Christmas tree farm has brought joy and provided an important tradition for so many people over the past 60 years.

“We will have several generations of families come through the gate,” he says. “We may have two or three brothers and sisters come with their kids, and here comes Grandma and Grandpa, and they’re bringing the other half of the family, so everybody comes. It’s just a family thing.”

Says visitor Joe Benson, “Going to Holloway’s is a wonderful part of my family’s holiday tradition and I hope it stays that way.”

Water is key to a long-lasting Christmas tree

Few things put the kibosh on a holiday like a bone-dry Christmas tree. To keep the tree fresh and prevent needles from falling to the floor before Santa arrives, California Christmas tree farmers say hydration is key.

“Trees are expensive, so if people get their tree home and it dries out and looks terrible by Christmas, they’re not happy with the experience,” says Carl Holloway, owner of Holloway’s Christmas Tree Farm in Nipomo. “We suggest always keeping it watered so that it lasts throughout the season.”

To ensure farm-grown trees stay fresh, the National Christmas Tree Association recommends the following:

- For pre-cut trees, ask when the trees were delivered and ask for recommendations about which species perform best in your climate.
 - Do a branch or needle test by running a branch through your enclosed hand. Needles of a fresh tree will remain intact, whereas those of a dry tree will release easily. Look for other indicators of dryness, such as needle pliability, discolored foliage, musty odor and wrinkled bark.
 - Once home, place the tree in water as soon as possible. Most species can take up water for six to eight hours after being cut from the trunk.
 - Display the tree in water in a traditional reservoir-type stand with adequate water-holding capacity. As a general rule, stands should provide 1 quart of water per inch of tree stem diameter.
 - Keep trees away from major sources of heat (fireplaces, heaters, heat vents and direct sunlight). Lowering the room temperature should slow the drying process.
- Learn more about farm-grown Christmas trees at realchristmastrees.org.



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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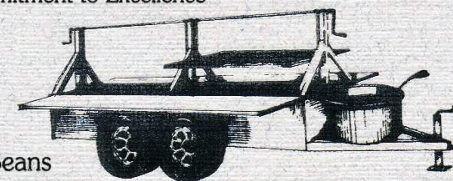
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How Christmas Trees Became a Holiday Tradition

Source: *TIME Magazine*

Many people who celebrate Christmas have already decorated their own evergreens this year. But shortages of Christmas trees and price hikes have also become somewhat of a holiday tradition.

Here's a look at how Christmas trees — both real and artificial — became such a popular holiday tradition in the first place.

The Origins of Christmas Trees

Records of using greenery to celebrate the holidays predate widespread use of the phrase "Christmas tree." Rural English church records from the 15th and 16th

centuries indicate that holly and ivy were bought in the winter — hence the British carol "The Holly and the Ivy." Private houses and streets were also decorated with greenery at this time, according to Judith Flanders' *Christmas: A Biography*. Flanders posits that a precursor to the Christmas tree can be seen in the pole that parishes would decorate with holly and ivy, like a winter Maypole; one account describes a storm in London that knocked over a pole that's described as "for disport of Christmas to the people."

A lot of myths surround the origins of Christmas trees. One legend says that Martin Luther, who catalyzed the Protestant Reformation, believed that pine trees represented the goodness of God. Another myth popular in the 15th century tells the story of St. Boniface, who in the 8th century thwarted a pagan human sacrifice under an oak tree by cutting down that tree; a fir tree grew in its place, with its branches representing Christ's eternal truth. Some versions of this St. Boniface legend say he cut down the new fir tree and hung it upside down, which is believed to have led to the tradition of trees being hung upside down to represent the Holy Trinity — sometimes with an apple wedged at the point instead of a star. All of these stories may have helped the Christmas tradition spread.

But the real origins of Christmas trees appear to be rooted in present-day Germany during the Middle Ages.

In 1419, a guild in Freiburg put up a tree

decorated with apples, flour-paste wafers, tinsel and gingerbread. In "Paradise Plays" that were performed to celebrate the feast day of Adam and Eve, which fell on Christmas Eve, a tree of knowledge was represented by an evergreen fir with apples tied to its branches. Flanders finds documentation of trees decorated with wool thread, straw, apples, nuts and pretzels.

The oldest Christmas tree market is thought to have been located just over the southwestern German border in Strasbourg in Alsace (which was back then part of the Rhineland, now in present-day France), where unadorned Christmas trees were sold during the 17th century as *Weihnachtsbaum*, German for Christmas tree. Flanders says the "first decorated indoor tree" was recorded in 1605, in Strasbourg, decorated with roses, apples, wafers and other sweets, according to her research.

Demand for Christmas trees was so high in the 15th century that laws were passed in Strasbourg cracking down on people cutting pine branches. Ordinances throughout the region of Alsace limited each household to one tree in the 1530s.

How Christmas trees got popular in U.S.

References to Christmas trees in private homes or establishments in North America date back to the late 18th century and early 19th century. Flanders mentions a reference to a pine tree in North Carolina in 1786. In 1805, a school for American Indians run by Moravian missionaries sent students "to fetch a small green tree for Christmas." Similar examples pop up in the first half of the 19th century in the Midwest and further West, such as the German immigrants in Texas who decorated trees with moss, cotton, pecans, red pepper swags and popcorn.

But the image of a decorated Christmas tree with presents underneath has a very specific origin: an engraving of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and their children gath-

See "Tree" on page 11



County Farm Bureaus honored for outreach, community service

Four California county Farm Bureaus were honored for their contributions this year in facing up to major challenges for agriculture, including historic flooding, Colorado River water-supply issues, massive acquisitions of farmland by a development group and state regulations affecting farmers and ranchers.

The awards for the Monterey County Farm Bureau, Solano County Farm Bureau, Imperial County Farm Bureau and Stanislaus County Farm Bureau were presented at the 105th California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Reno.

The Monterey County Farm Bureau was honored in the small Farm Bureau category for its crisis management during 2023's devastating atmospheric storms, which caused more than \$600 million in damages to the regional agricultural sector.

The county Farm Bureau engaged with seven public agencies on improving Salinas River maintenance and flood control systems. It also worked closely with the California Office of Emergency Services on flood response and emergency communications and conducted scores of media interviews, drawing international attention to the region's agricultural importance.

The Monterey County Farm Bureau additionally awarded \$16,000 in scholarships to college students pursuing agricultural degrees and held three "Farm Day" events for local third graders and their parents.

The Solano County Farm Bureau was also honored in the small Farm Bureau category for efforts including securing \$10 million in grants for regional farmers from the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program and the Healthy Soils Program of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The Farm Bureau also brought in \$383,000 in funding in micro-grants for small farmers.

Meanwhile, the Solano County Farm Bureau engaged in extensive advocacy to protect the local agricultural character in the face of efforts by Silicon Valley billionaires seeking to rezone 55,000 acres of farmland to build a new city. The Solano County Farm Bureau additionally increased its membership by 33%.

The Imperial County Farm Bureau was awarded top honors for mid-sized Farm Bureaus in recognition of its outreach efforts on Colorado River issues. The Farm Bureau worked with the late California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, hosting a staff delegation for discussions on water needs for the region's \$3 billion agricultural sector.

The Imperial County Farm Bureau also raised more than \$12,000 for a public relations outreach campaign to educate other elected officials and the public. Farm Bureau board members were additionally featured in a documentary, "The Green Desert," on farmers in the Imperial and Coachella valleys who depend on the Colorado River to supply America with produce during the winter months.

Among large county Farm Bureaus, the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau was recognized for its "Farm News" publications, political activities and membership efforts, which included a membership retention rate of more than 90%. In addition, it was honored for working with farmers and ranchers on compliance matters, including irrigated lands, pesticides, stock pond and trucking regulations.

The Stanislaus County Farm Bureau also partnered with the Modesto Rotary to present a "Farmworker of the Year" award, recognizing the critical contributions of agricultural employees. Additionally, the group hosted 1,200 elementary school students for its annual "Ag EdVenture Day," providing hands-on experiences in agriculture.

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 29,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.3 million Farm Bureau members.

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From "Tree" on page 9

ering around a Christmas tree, eyeing the presents underneath, published in the Illustrated London News in 1848. The premier women's magazine in America back then, Godey's Lady's Book, reprinted a version of the image a couple of years later as "The Christmas Tree."

"This single image cemented the Christmas

tree in the popular consciousness, so much so that by 1861, the year of Albert's death, it was firmly believed that this German prince had transplanted the custom to England with him when he married," writes Flinders.

The tradition of gigantic Christmas trees in public spaces seems to be an American one that dates back to the late 19th century. The electricity lobby pushed for the first

"National Christmas Tree" at the White House as a publicity stunt for the glories of electricity: a nearly 60-ft.-tall balsam fir tree covered in 2,500 light bulbs. A 20-ft.-tall Christmas

tree at Rockefeller Center first went up in 1931 when the building was still under construction; by putting so many people unemployed during the Great Depression back to work, the tree became a symbol of hope.

The changing Christmas tree

In December 1964, TIME magazine heralded a new Christmas trend: fake trees. The Polyvinyl versions looked more realistic than ever before, and they made up about 35% of the \$155 million Christmas tree business in the U.S., according to an article headlined "And a Profit In A Polyvinyl Tree."

Fifty years later, artificial trees still dominate the Christmas tree industry. Of the roughly 95 million American households with Christmas trees in 2018, 82% of the trees were artificial and 18% were real, according to a Nielsen survey. The reasons for this ratio are many. Climate change has made trees more difficult to grow. Farmers planted fewer trees during the Great Recession, and in general, trees take 7 to 10 years to grow. And there are even shortages of the farmers who grow them, as they age out of the business. Artificial trees are also hailed as having a lower environmental impact than buying trees, when the transporting them to retail outlets is factored in. But the National Christmas Tree Association is appealing to those same environmentally conscious consumers by arguing that real trees support local economies — they are grown in the U.S. and in Canada, while many plastic trees are manufactured in China — and that real trees are renewable resources and recyclable, while the artificial kinds could contain some non-biodegradable parts.

Five decades ago, a professor in Montreal who was hard at work trying to develop a longer-lasting real tree explained to TIME the larger philosophical argument for preserving the tradition of real Christmas trees: "We live in an artificial environment. The Christmas tree is one of the few things left that is natural."

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CDFA Accepting Proposals for New Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

*Source: Brian German
Ag News Director / AgNet West*

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is set to receive a substantial boost of \$38 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for its innovative Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI). Aimed at fortifying the middle of the supply chain, this initiative focuses on supporting processing, aggregation, and distribution activities for domestic food and farm businesses. CDFA Secretary Karen Ross expressed gratitude for the USDA's commitment to strengthening food systems across the board.

Eligibility for the RFSI funding extends to agricultural producers, processors, non-

profit organizations, local government entities, tribal governments, and middle-of-the-supply-chain institutions. The CDFA plans to fund projects that align with specific priorities, such as those submitted directly by growers, benefiting historically underserved farmers, enhancing worker safety, promoting traceability capacity, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Projects eligible for funding range from expanding processing capacities and acquiring specialized equipment to enhancing worker safety through technology adoption. The CDFA is particularly interested in projects that align with USDA climate action goals, modernize equipment for food safety, and provide training opportunities related to food safety and equipment use.

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has partnered with California under the new infrastructure program,

contributing over \$30 million in competitive grant funding. The RFSI program, authorized by the American Rescue Plan, has a broader reach, offering up to \$420 million to strengthen local and regional food systems. Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt from USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs emphasizes that this partnership will vitalize critical areas of the supply chain, fostering opportunities for small and midsize producers, expanding access to nutritious food, and enhancing overall supply chain resiliency.

Those interested can submit proposals by February 26, 2024. AMS encourages applications that prioritize smaller farms, new and beginning farmers, underserved producers, veterans, and underserved communities.

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Difference in Conditions program helps provide adequate coverage to California farm owners

Source: Nationwide

Fire risk is high on many farms, ranches and agribusinesses in western states which can make it more difficult for insurance providers to help customers protect property. An expansion of a state program and new coverage option can help make farm fire protection available when and where it wouldn't be with conventional insurance.

California insurers have worked together for decades to protect customers from fire risk. The California FAIR Plan Association provides coverage options in cases when conventional insurance coverage isn't available.

What is the California FAIR Plan?
The California FAIR Plan Association is a

group, including Nationwide, comprising all licensed property and casualty insurers in the state. Its goal is to pool resources to issue policies to cover fire risk on behalf of member companies. It creates insurance coverage the companies can't provide alone. And demand for FAIR Plan coverage is booming.

"In the last decade, more Californians have turned to the FAIR Plan as wildfires have devastated California and some insurers have pulled back from these markets. While we will support homeowners regardless of a property's fire risk, unlike traditional insurers, our goal is attrition," according to the FAIR Plan website. "For most homeowners, the FAIR Plan is a temporary safety net — here to support them until coverage offered by a traditional carrier becomes available."

FAIR Plan coverage helps provide peace-of-mind until conventional policy options are available for homeowners and now for farm owners.

"Basic property insurance is provided for farms by the plan's Commercial Property policy. It's a named peril policy that can cover fire, lightning and internal explosion losses," said Emily Berrier, Associate Vice President of Farm Underwriting & Sales at Nationwide.

When FAIR Plan policy options aren't enough
But for ag customers, FAIR Plan options aren't always enough for working farm assets beyond a home. "FAIR Plan policies are not comprehensive. Farm and ranch customers may need more coverage to adequately protect their personal and farm

property from other causes of loss," Emily said.

That's where the Nationwide Difference-in-Conditions (DIC) program steps in for farm owners. It surrounds the FAIR Plan policy and provides ag-specific home and farm out-building coverage for losses other than fire. The DIC endorsement extends coverage for losses to equipment and includes farm and personal liability. All coverages are subject to terms and conditions in the policy.

"I can appreciate why insurance carriers are having to make challenging business decisions," said Johnnie White, California Farm Bureau board member representing Napa, Sonoma and Marin County Farm Bureaus. "The DIC policy offered through Nationwide has been helpful to our operation because it fills in the coverage gaps we would have experienced with just a standalone California FAIR Plan."

How to find the right DIC coverage Emily said there are a few steps in finding the right DIC option for your farm or ranch. First, confirm existing Nationwide coverage with your Farm Certified agent. Your agent will then work with a Nationwide Farm Underwriter to create a coverage quote that matches the value of your covered assets. Finally, your agent will identify the specific coverage you need. Then you'll work together to determine the most cost-effective policy options.

"With fire risk making it increasingly difficult for residential and commercial property owners in California to get appropriate protection, Nationwide agents play a critical role in ensuring you have adequate coverage," Emily said.

Added White: "As a member, I appreciate that California Farm Bureau and Nationwide continue to collaborate to create business solutions that meet the needs of the farming and ranching community in today's business environment."

Make sure you're adequately managing the risk fire poses to your operation. Talk to your Nationwide Farm Certified agent about FAIR Plan coverage and DIC options.

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and oriental fruit moth — are projected to increase mainly due to rising temperatures.

The three pests are “notorious for infesting most of the walnut, almond and peach orchards of California, causing extensive damages by reducing quality of fruits and nuts,” researchers say. Climate change can lead to shifts in the timing of seasons, including warmer winters, earlier springs and hotter summers, and these conditions can disrupt the natural life cycles of pests.

The study revealed that due to temperature increases, these insects are expected to appear up to 28 days earlier in the spring, and the time between generations is expected to shorten by up to 19 days. The changes may be gradual, with major changes noticed within 20 years.



Changing Climate Means More Pests for Almonds, Peaches, Walnuts

*Source: Sabrina Halvorson
National Correspondent / AgNet Media,
Inc.*

How a changing climate could mean more pests for some tree crops. That’s coming up on This Land of Ours.

Department of Agriculture research shows climate change may increase the insect population that poses a threat to the specialty crops industry. Led by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the University of California, the research shows populations of three major insect pests – codling moth, peach twig borer



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Fast Facts About Agriculture & Food

Source: American Farm Bureau

- 2 million farms dot America's rural landscape, and 98% are operated by families – individuals, family partnerships or family corporations (America's Diverse Family Farms, 2020 Edition).
- About 11% of U.S. farmers are serving or have served in the military.
- 86% of U.S. agricultural products are produced on family farms or ranches.
- After accounting for input costs, farmers and ranchers receive only 8 cents out of every dollar spent on food at home and away from home. The rest goes for costs beyond

the farm gate: wages and materials for production, processing, marketing, transportation and distribution.

- 25% of all farmers are beginning farmers (in business less than 10 years); their average age is 46.
- Americans enjoy a food supply that is abundant, affordable and among the world's safest, thanks in large part to the efficiency and productivity of America's farm and ranch families.
- One acre of land can grow a variety of crops, including 50,000 pounds of strawberries or 2,784 pounds (46.4 bushels) of wheat.
- Compared to 2012, the number of farm

operators of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino origin is higher, up 13% to 112,451. There also are more Black farm operators (45,508, up 2%) today compared to 2012.

- One day's production for a high-producing dairy cow yields 4.8 pounds of butter, 8.7 gallons of ice cream or 10.5 pounds of cheese.
- Farm and ranch families comprise less than 2% of the U.S. population.
- Total U.S. corn yield (tons per acre) has increased more than 360% since 1950.
- Of the 10% of disposable income Americans spend on food each year, 46% is for

See "Facts" on page 19



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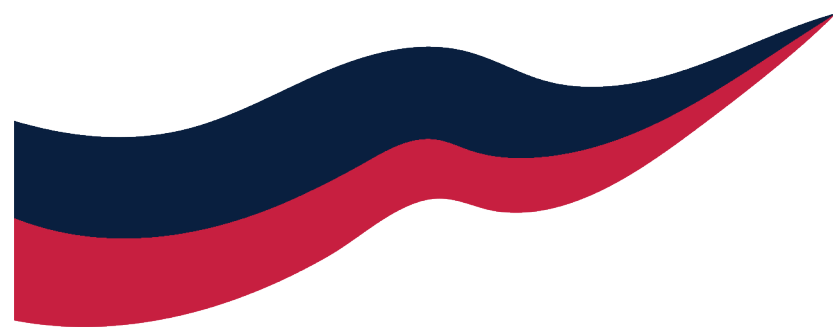
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Ag Groups Express Concern Over Trade Relations with China

*Source: Brian German
Ag News Director / AgNet West*

A coalition of major agricultural organizations has expressed concerns about potential changes in trade relations with China. The group sent a letter to the U.S. Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party outlining reservations about the revocation of China's Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status. A variety of negative impacts would be felt within the agricultural industry if China's PNTR status was removed.

Signatories of the letter include The Almond Alliance, Farmers for Free Trade,

and the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives. The letter emphasizes the lessons learned from the 2018 and 2019 tariff increases, which resulted in significant consequences for American farmers. The signatories are worried that revoking China's PNTR status could invite retaliation from China, putting the livelihoods of U.S. farmers, ranchers, and food producers at risk. The letter cites an estimate from Oxford Economics, suggesting that revoking China's PNTR status could result in a more than 30 percent reduction in U.S. agricultural exports to China. The U.S. agricultural sector has greatly benefited from access to the Chinese market, with exports soaring from \$1.73 billion in 2000 to a staggering \$38.11 billion in 2022.

The letter urges the Committee to consider alternative approaches to address concerns about China's trade practices. It suggests

that members of Congress should focus on providing alternative market access in the Asia-Pacific region to reduce reliance on the Chinese market. Diversifying markets not only mitigates risks for U.S. farm goods but also strengthens diplomatic ties and diminishes China's global influence.

As the House Select Committee on China finalizes its report, the coalition is urging the committee not to recommend revoking China's PNTR status. The ag groups emphasize the need for a thoughtful and sustainable approach to maintain crucial trade relations with China. A copy of the letter was also sent to the House Ways and Means Committee and House Committee on Agriculture.

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Shannon Douglass elected president of California Farm Bureau

Shannon Douglass, a diversified farmer in Glenn County, has been elected to a two-year term as president of the California Farm Bureau.

Douglass, who previously served three terms as first vice president, is the first woman to head the organization, which was founded in 1919.

“This is an exciting moment,” Douglass said. “Farm Bureau has provided me with tremendous opportunities as a first-generation farmer. I’m excited to be part of the leadership of this organization, which represents the diversity of farmers and ranchers in our state.

“The California Farm Bureau has long played an important role in working to protect the future of America’s most productive agricultural economy,” Douglass added. “We face abundant challenges in farming and ranching today. But California remains a great place to grow food, and Farm Bureau is committed to helping our state farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses thrive for generations to come.”

Douglass succeeds Jamie Johansson, who served three terms as president, beginning in 2017. She was elected Tuesday at the Farm Bureau’s 105th Annual Meeting in Reno.

Douglass is an owner of Douglass Ranch in Orland, which raises cattle and grows walnuts, corn and forage crops, She also co-founded CalAgJobs, an online listing of employment opportunities in California agriculture.

Douglass has served as a director of the Glenn County Farm Bureau and as chair of the California Farm Bureau’s Young Farmers & Ranchers State Committee. She is a graduate of the Leadership Farm Bureau program and the California Agricultural Leadership Program and participated in the

American Farm Bureau Federation Partners in Advocacy Leadership program.

Douglass earned a master’s degree in agricultural policy, a bachelor’s degree in agriculture and a minor in agriculture business from California State University, Chico.

Shaun Crook, vice president of a family timber business and a real estate agent specializing in ranch, commercial and residential properties, was elected as the Farm Bureau’s first vice president. Crook has served three terms as the organization’s second vice president. He was first elected as president of Tuolumne County Farm Bureau in 2015.

Ron Peterson, a member of California Farm Bureau Board of Directors and past president of the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, was elected as second vice presi-

dent. Peterson is a cattle rancher and dairy farmer who also grows silage crops and almonds.

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 29,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.3 million Farm Bureau members.



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From "Facts" on page 16

food eaten at home and 54% is for food eaten away from home.

- Many Americans celebrate holidays with food, spending a total of nearly \$14 billion each year.
- One U.S. farm feeds 166 people annually in the U.S. and abroad. The global population is expected to increase by 2.2 billion by 2050, which means the world's farmers will have to grow about 70% more food than what is now produced.
- Cattle and calves, corn, and soybeans are the top three U.S. farm products.

- Farming accounts for about 1% of the U.S. gross domestic product.
- About 8% of U.S. farms market foods locally through direct-to-consumer or inter-mediated sales.
- The pounds of feed (grain, forage, etc.) a dairy cow needs to eat to produce 100 pounds of milk has decreased by more than 40% on average in the last 40 years.
- Farm programs typically cost each American just pennies per meal and account for less than one-half of 1% of the total U.S. budget.

- Careful stewardship by America's food producers has spurred a 34% decline in erosion of cropland by wind and water since 1982.
- Americans throw away about 25% of the food they purchase for at-home consumption.
- A whopping 40% of all food grown and produced in the U.S. is never eaten.
- About 25% of U.S. farm products by value are exported each year.
- Women make up 36% of the total number of U.S. farm operators; 56% of all farms have at least one female decision-maker.



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Commentary: How some pesticide policies can harm food security

Modern pesticides have provided safe and effective tools for California farmers. But restrictions that target whole classes of pesticides can threaten farmers' ability to meet global food demands.

By Amrith Gunasekara, CFBF

In 2022, the Breakthrough Institute global research center advanced a concept called “deregulating abundance.”

The idea is that we have an abundance of tools and technologies that for various reasons—namely due to excessive regulation—are no longer “abundant.”

This is concerning when it comes to ensuring our food security. For example, we have seen unneeded pesticide restrictions limiting valuable crop protection materials that have helped provide us with a safe, affordable, high-quality food supply.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state regulatory bodies are tasked with evaluating and protecting against environmental, animal and human health impacts of pesticides used in homes, gardens and agriculture. That involves testing of new and existing pesticides to understand potencies and safe use in controlling pests that either bother us, harm us or harm our food supply.

Yet some environmental mandates have pushed regulatory agencies to set unneces-

sary limits on technologies that help us in everyday life and in protecting our food supply. It is arguable that the environmental agenda has gone too far in restricting tools we need for food security, including our need to feed 10 billion people on Earth by 2057.

Modern science has given us the opportunity to deregulate abundance to ensure global food security and economic growth, even in the face of climate change.

Modern pesticide science can now mimic natural insecticides and their chemical structures to produce safe and useful materials for protecting crops. A good example is pyrethroids. Pyrethroids are derived

See "Food Security" on page 25



In February 1923, Miriam Minton, a senior at Lodi Academy, took a trip to the Sierra Nevada for her 18th birthday. After graduating, Miriam studied nursing at Loma Linda University where she met and later married fellow medical student, Lawrence Peterson. The two would settle in Lodi, where Miriam managed her husband's medical practice and successfully raised five children. At the time of this photo, the Bank of Stockton had been serving customers for 56 years.

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Source: Kim Baldwin

It wasn't that long ago that fall harvest was in full swing on our central Kansas farm. Our dryland and irrigated field corn had all been picked and the only thing left in those fields was corn stalks and a lot of dry organic material that kicked out the back end of a combine.

The only corn remaining in the middle of one of the recently harvested fields was our popcorn crop.

We baby our popcorn like no other crop on our farm. It is strategically planted in areas near windbreaks that will hopefully help protect the plant from the brutal winds we sometimes experience. It's always planted on irrigated acres to ensure it gets the water it needs during the growing season. It also receives the most verbal affirmations and words of encouragement from me during the growing season compared to any of our other crops. And it's the crop that generally tests my patience and my nerves the most as harvest time is determined by a very narrow range of moisture present within the grain.

If field corn is cut a little too wet, the elevator will pay a little less for it and you move on. If the popcorn is a little too wet,

the popcorn won't pop, thus defeating the purpose of growing popcorn. Making sure we harvest the popcorn within that tiny window of acceptable moisture levels determines whether or not we have popcorn available for our customers for the next year.

As we get closer to popcorn harvest, I tend to worry about a potential rain that could flood the field. During my time on the farm, we have had instances where heavy rains have flooded shut the roads and flooded fields of sorghum and field corn in water so deep we've been able to kayak in it.

The potential for a heavy downpour in the fall always enters my mind as we get closer and closer to the popcorn harvest. The potential threat of a flood had me overlooking a more obvious threat – especially with it being so dry out here: fire. I was completely caught off guard when we received a phone call late one night from a neighbor who had noticed flames in a corn field. He wanted to know if it was a planned burn. It, in fact, was not a planned burn!

Phone calls were made to 911 as my husband drove off to get a tractor and disc while I drove off to meet my father-in-law in the field.

As I approached the popcorn field, the

growing glow ahead of me confirmed we were not going to be able to snuff out this fire with a couple of shovels.

Soon sirens could be heard in the distance coming down our rural roads enroute to our location. Those emergency trucks and water tankers and even personal vehicles responding to the fire were all driven by volunteers. It's amazing how quickly they all responded and helped put out the fire – especially considering many of them were coming from their own farms located throughout the countryside in every direction.

This team of volunteers quickly drove through the field and extinguished the flames spreading through the corn stalks. When it all was said and done, the popcorn was spared with the fire line just a few hundred feet away from the start of the popcorn rows.

I'm thankful for the willingness of these men and women who serve their neighbors and assist in times of emergencies whether it be day or night. This wasn't the first time we've needed help from emergency responders, and it probably won't be the last time either. But this event reaffirmed my appreciation for the helpers in our community who are willing to assist their fellow rural neighbors. After all, if we didn't have these organized and trained volunteers available and willing to help, who would?

They sacrifice their time and resources at the drop of a hat when an emergency call goes out to help save or protect people and property.

Neighbors helping neighbors – it's part of what makes rural America such a special place.

Kim Baldwin is a farmer and Farm Bureau member in Kansas. She is a past president of her county Farm Bureau (McPherson) and current board member. This column was originally published as a Kansas Farm Bureau Insight column.



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*Natural Resources Fact Sheet***Forest Resources***Information compiled by the Forest Foundation*

Sources – Due to California's diverse topography and climate, the state has diverse forests with many tree species only found in California (endemic). One-third of the state's 100 million acres includes forests, and half of this land is designated as timberland—land managed for timber products.

Forest types include mixed conifer, true fir, east-side pine, and redwood. Another important vegetation type, especially in Southern California, is chaparral. There are 52 species of conifers; these trees produce cones, have needle-like leaves, and most are evergreen. Hardwood trees, including oak, maple, and madrone, have broad leaves and may be deciduous.



History – California was initially home to approximately 100 language groups of Native Americans who used the forests to meet their needs for food, forage, and homes. In the early days of the gold rush (1850s), forests were unmanaged, and there was little planning for the future. Today, forests are now owned and managed by the federal government (57%), industry (14%), non-industrial private (26%), state and other public entities (3%), and tribal groups (less than one percent). Diverse ownership ensures diverse management goals and diverse forest structures.

Management – All forest lands, except wilderness areas, are managed. Even parks carry out thinning and prescribed burning to limit invasive species and to control stand density. Forest management goals and practices differ among the various forest managers. Industrial forests are managed primarily for wood products, and non-industrial owners have goals of recreation, wildlife habitat, and retention of healthy forests for the next generation.

The goal of national forests is to sustain forests for multiple long-term benefits. Forest practices such as trimming, harvesting, and prescribed burning are aimed at maintaining forest health—limiting the effects of insects and disease, windstorms, and catastrophic wildfires. All forest managers ensure sustainability through planting and restoration—on average, about 30 million seedlings are planted annually.

To ensure the highest forest management standards for private forests, California has the nation's most restrictive forest practice rules. In addition to these rules, most private timberlands are certified to ensure managers adopt sustainable practices. Three organizations provide

sustainability certification: the Sustainable Forest Initiative, the Forest Stewardship Council, and the American Tree Farm System.

Uses – Wood and its components (cellulose, lignin, and oils) are used in many products, including houses, furniture, musical instruments, fences, paper, boats, biofuel, cosmetics, ice cream, toothpaste, plastics, and clothing. Everything that grows above

ground can be used to produce more than 5,000 products. Using wood has many advantages over other materials due to it being renewable, biodegradable, and requiring less energy to produce. In addition to these products, forests contribute to our environment. Forest cover is largely responsible for ensuring water quality as snowpack moves through the soil profile and into streams. Forests are also critical in mitigating climate change through the absorption of carbon dioxide and the emission of oxygen, which is fundamentally important for sustaining life.

Economic Value – California has more than 31 million acres of forestland. Forestry and forest product industries contribute 177,000 jobs and \$39 billion to the state's economy. At a value of \$77.4 billion, Humboldt County leads the state in timber production and accounts for 24 percent of the state's total timber value. Other top producing counties include Mendocino, Shasta, Siskiyou, and Del Norte.

For additional information:
The Forest Foundation
(866) 241-TREE
Website: www.calforestfoundation.org



At-Will Employment is a Fairy Tale

Source: FELS

Fiona W. Ong, Shaw Rosenthal, LLP

Once upon a time, employees in all states but Montana (always bucking the establishment!) were presumed to be employed at-will, absent some sort of employment agreement (e.g. individual contract for a term, a collective bargaining agreement, policies that contemplate termination for cause, etc.). That means that either the employer or the employee may terminate

the employment relationship at any time, for any or even no reason (as long as it's not illegal – like, say, discrimination or retaliation). And so our well-meaning but foolish Employer is terribly excited by that principle because they want to get rid of an Employee. But ... as with all good fairy tales, there is a dark side.

Now the Employee is often late, and makes a lot of errors in her work. The Employer doesn't have anything documented about poor performance or inappropriate conduct because, gosh, the manager has just been so busy (or doesn't like confrontation, or has

never been trained on how to be a manager and to hold their employees accountable). But the manager has had it with the Employee. So the Employer thinks that all they have to say is, "You're an at-will employee," and *poof* the Employee will disappear!

But not so fast! So let's say that the Employee is a minority. Or over 40. Or has a disability. Or is a Wiccan. Or took leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act, or even a couple days of sick leave (as provided for under state law). Or complained about discrimination or some other illegal activity in the workplace. Or filed a workers' compensation claim. Or has been talking to co-workers about how great it would be to

be unionized. Or, or, or ... Now, because she's never been given warning of her performance and conduct, and because the Employer does not give her an actual reason for her termination, the Employee may will likely assume that the REAL reason is:

Discrimination on the basis of one of her protected characteristics (e.g. race, age, sex, religion, disability, etc.). Frankly, every employee has some personal characteristic that is different from their co-workers – which may lead to a belief that they are being treated less favorably because of that difference.

Retaliation for engaging in some sort of protected activity (e.g. taking protected leave, or complaining of discrimination, or being a whistleblower, or trying to unionize co-workers, etc.).

The Employee then finds the evil Plaintiff's Attorney, who describes in extensive detail in a letter to the Employer how the Employee was mistreated – that she was fired while her co-workers who have different personal characteristics or who didn't engage in the protected activity were not. And the evil Plaintiff's Attorney will demand back pay and an astonishing amount of compensatory damages for all that the Employee has suffered. If the Employer refuses to pay, the evil Plaintiff's Attorney threatens to file a lawsuit or a complaint with a Government Agency (see next paragraph).

In an alternative plot development, the Employee runs off to a all-powerful Government Agency to file a complaint. This includes a Charge of Discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to file a Charge of Discrimination, or maybe a charge with the National Labor Relations Board (that their right to engage in protected concerted activity regarding their terms and conditions of employment have been violated), or a whistleblower complaint with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (that they have been subjected to retaliation for making a



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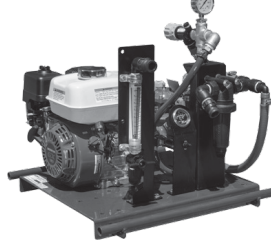
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See "Employment" on page 31

FARM BUREAU SUPPORTING BUSINESS MEMBERS



- **Aemetis Biogas LLC**
Keyes 497-4034
- **American AgCredit**
Turlock 667-5101
- **Basi Insurance**
Oakdale (209) 847-3065
- **Bays Ranch**
Westley 894-3472
- **BBSI**
Modesto 576-0322
- **Beard Land Improvement Co**
Modesto 524-4631
- **Burchell Nursery**
Oakdale 845-8733
- **Cortez Growers Association**
Turlock 632-3118
- **Flory Industries**
Salida 545-1167
- **Frantz Nursery**
Hickman 874-1459
- **Grower Direct Nut Company**
883-4890
- **Haidlen Ford**
Oakdale 847-0356
- **Heinrich Farms Inc**
Modesto 595-2207
- **Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc.**
Hilmar 667-6076
- **InsureCAL Insurance Agency**
Turlock 250-0269
- **Mapes Ranch**
Modesto 522-1762
- **MidValley Agricultural Services Inc**
Oakdale 851-3200
- **Modesto & Empire Traction Co.**
Modesto 524-4631
- **Nationwide Insurance**
Sacramento (530) 701-4486
- **Wenger Ranch Inc.**
Modesto
- **PG&E**
Modesto 726-6303
- **Sierra Grain Terminal**
Turlock 667-2002
- **Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department**
Modesto 525-7117
- **Stanislaus Farm Supply**
Modesto 765-1142
- **TriCal**
Oakdale (831) 245-7611
- **Yosemite Farm Credit**
Turlock 667-2366

Ag Services

- **Anteris**
Turlock (559) 472-6415
- **All West Select Sires**
Turlock 667-8378
- **Boyette Petroleum**
Modesto 281-7134
- **Exact**
Modesto 544-8600

Sales

- **Honda Kawasaki of Modesto**
Modesto 529-5424
- **Intero Stanislaus**
Sacramento (916) 671-2358
- **Smith Chevrolet Co Inc.**
Turlock 632-3946

Farms/Dairies

- **Ahlem Foothill Farm**
Turlock 874-2477
- **Bobby Yamamoto Farms**
Westley 835-1750
- **Braden Farms**
Hughson 883-4061
- **Brian Stewart**
Oakdale 847-8025
- **Carol Morrett**
Hughson 537-6658

Farm Management

- **Benchmark Farm Management**
Riverbank 869-4290
- **Grover Farm Management**
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- **Lake Road Grizzly Ranch**
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- **Fisher Capitol Investments**
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Irrigation/Utilities

- **Customized Water System**
Turlock 988-4833
- **Don Pedro Pumps**
Turlock 632-3161
- **IJ Larsen Pumps**
Modesto 529-2020
- **Modesto Irrigation District**
Modesto 526-7373
- **Oakdale Irrigation District**
Oakdale 847-0341

Nurseries/Horticulture

- **Blumen Flower Farm**
Modesto 648-8995
- **California Transplants**
Newman 862-9420
- **Dutch Hollow Farms**
Modesto 287-6010

Safety

- **AgSafe**
Modesto 526-4400
- **Cal Ag Safety**
Oakdale 351-7092

Construction/Engineering

- **Stump Construction**
Modesto 505-9730
- **Branelle Properties LLC**
Oakdale 595-0256
- **Hawkins & Associates Engineering**
Modesto 575-4295

Insurance

- **Andreini & Company**
Modesto 512-3698
- **Arrowhead Insurance Agency**
Modesto 524-6157
- **Crivelli Ins & Fin Sv Inc**
Turlock, 668-3319
- **DiBuduo & DeFendis**
Fresno 557-2759

Veterinary

- **Adian Equine**
Oakdale 847-8258
- **Dairy Veterinary Services**
Escalon 551-3949

Attorney

- **Ross W. Lee**
Modesto 521-9190
- **Jensen & Jensen**
Modesto 529-0791

Feed/Farm Supplies

- **A.L. Gilbert**
Keyes 632-2333
- **Blue Mtn. Minerals**
Columbia, 533-0127
- **Conlin Supply**
Oakdale 847-8977
- **NuWest Milling LLC**
Hughson 883-1163

Misc. Services

- **GDI Insurance Agency**
Turlock 991-2929
- **Giddings Corby Hynes Inc**
Modesto 526-3110
- **Hoobler Insurance Services**
Patterson 601-0418
- **LG Crop Ins.**
Turlock 262-8140

Petroleum

- **George W. Lowry**
Salida 545-0791
- **Valley Pacific Petroleum**
Stockton (209) 948-9412
- **Hunt & Sons, Inc.**
Modesto 522-7291
- **Van de Pol Enterprises**
Keyes 667-0236

Banking/Financial

- **Agri Business Financial Inc**
Oakdale 607-0037
- **Central Valley Community Bank**
Fresno 559-323-3472
- **Edwards, Lien & Teso**
Hilmar 634-9484
- **Farmers & Merchants Bank**
Riverbank 571-4023

Equipment & Repair

- **Acosta & Daughters LLC**
Waterford 872-4815
- **Belkorp Ag LLC, John Deere Dealer**
Modesto 538-3831
- **Coit & Hewes LLC**
Modesto 985-0559
- **Garton Tractor Inc.**
Turlock 632-3931

Misc. Services

- **Modesto Nuts Baseball Club**
Modesto 572-4487
- **Randal Edwards**
Hilmar 634-9484
- **R & J Avila**
Hilmar 678-1723
- **Rocha's Valley Enterprises**
Oakdale 581-1473
- **Turlock Driving School**
Turlock 916-5167
- **Quality Rodent Control, Inc.**
Modesto 225-4124

Processors

- **Grizzly Nut**
Waterford 874-5223
- **Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc**
Terra Bella 559-535-6050
- **Turlock Walnut Co.**
Turlock 668-0955
- **Travaille & Phippen**
Manteca 599-6111

Banking/Financial

- **Grimbley Coleman CPA's Inc**
Modesto 527-4220
- **Moss Adams**
Stockton 955-6100
- **Oak Valley Community Bank**
Oakdale 844-7500
- **Vermeulen Company CPA**
Ripon 599-5051

Equipment & Repair

- **G&F Ag Services**
Escalon 599-8911
- **Golden State Dairy Service**
Modesto 557-9484
- **Hotsy**
Modesto 578-3925
- **Pacific Distributing Inc.**
Hughson 883-4032

Non-Profit

- **Stewart Kriese Ins Agency**
Oakdale, 847-8025
- **Toste Insurance Services Inc**
Modesto 338-3585
- **Western Valley Insurance Associates**
Turlock 634-9031
- **Winton Ireland Strom & Green**
Turlock, Modesto, Livingston and Hilmar 667-0995

Restaurant

- **Almond Alliance**
Modesto 559-5800
- **Almond Board of California**
Modesto 672-9743
- **CA Farmland Trust**
Elk Grove 916-544-2712
- **Central Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**
Modesto 789-5123
- **Modesto Chamber of Commerce**
Modesto 577-5757
- **Oakdale Chamber of Commerce**
Oakdale 847-2244

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- **Medlen's House of Beef**
Oakdale 847-4379
- **The Fruit Yard**
Modesto 577-3093
- **Rodin Ranch**
Modesto 577-3224

For the good of your food.

From "Food Security" on page 20

from pyrethrins or pyrethrum, a naturally occurring chemical produced by the chrysanthemum plant and flower.

Pyrethroids are now a class of chemical pesticides that has gone on to become an important tool in controlling insect pests in agriculture and around the home. Controlling insect pests is critical for human health and protecting against insects that carry disease. Insect-damaged crops cannot be sold to consumers and must meet certain food quality standards to be sold at grocery stores.

These pesticides must be registered first with the EPA and state programs, including the California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Pesticide Regulation. To be registered, the pesticide must be tested in a controlled laboratory or field setting for toxicity to microorganisms, animals and humans. If there are any toxicity issues other than for the targeted insects, the product does not get registered.

Yet, over time, regulations and restrictions on pesticide use have moved from targeting single products to whole classes of pesticides. In California, that is resulting in efforts to restrict further use of pyrethroid pesticides, which have provided a safe and important tool for farmers.

California leads the nation in crop production, including the production of many of the nutritious crops we use in our salads. Taking pesticides away from growers is akin to taking cars away from people when they have to get to work. How will the job—or in this case, our food production—meet the demands?

Of late, the EPA has focused on restricting rodenticide use. Rodenticides control rats and mice that spread diseases in urban settings and are significant nuisances in agricultural systems. The restrictions undercut efforts to save water in California agricultural systems

because unmanaged rodents chew on drip lines that carefully deliver water and fertilizers to root zones.

Our abundance of tools to effectively control pests is significant. Yet, with a philosophical approach that targets the use and application of whole pesticide classes under a guise of protecting the environment, regulatory agencies appear to be invoking European-style precautionary principles over actual, evidence-based scientific data. Those precautionary principles hold that certain policies can be made simply based on a "potential" harm, even though scientific data can be collected to support or unsubstantiate the policies.

In the U.S., evidence-based science has thankfully dominated policymaking even in liberal states such as California. But policies based on good science can be threatened by environmental agendas that wrongly target whole classes of pesticides. As a result, deregulating abundance must be a critical piece of policymaking if we are to move forward with good science and technological tools that have allowed modern agriculture to thrive and that are key to their future.

Deregulating abundance to safeguard California farmers and ranchers responsible for America's most productive agricultural sector should be accomplished through critical evaluation by federal and state agencies. It should be based on science and free of bias or political agendas.

These technological developments have had profound and positive impacts. They can protect and enhance the future of agriculture and the natural habitat we all need to survive.

(Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D., is director of science and research for the California Bountiful Foundation, an affiliate 501(c)(3) of the California Farm Bureau. He may be reached at agunasekara@cbbf.com.)



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Being resilient and working for solutions

Source: *Ca Farm Bureau*

As the end of 2022 neared, California was still in the grips of a devastating three-year drought that resulted in the fallowing of an estimated 1.3 million acres of farmland. Then, 2023 brought the state a deluge including 31 atmospheric storms and 1 tropical storm. Statewide precipitation was 141% of normal. The Sierra Nevada snowpack peaked at 237% of normal in April. While suddenly blessed with ample water supplies for the season, farmers and ranchers faced starkly different challenges.

Heavy rains in January and March caused massive flood damage in agricultural regions. In Monterey County alone, the famed vegetable-growing Salad Bowl reported \$600 million in damages to crops and farm infrastructure.

In the San Joaquin Valley, hundreds of millions of dollars in losses were reported as the former Tulare Lake filled with floodwaters that inundated farms and dairies. Damages in Kings and Tulare counties from March and January atmospheric storms were respectively estimated at \$168 million and \$76 million.

In August, the freakish Tropical Storm Hilary caused severe damage to the San Joaquin Valley's annual grape growing industry, valued at \$2 billion. Wind and rain damaged 35% of grapes that remained on vines when the storm struck.

In Sacramento, Farm Bureau's Government Affairs Division worked

with lawmakers, Gov. Gavin Newsom and state agencies to secure relief. Our policy advocates helped bring in \$160 million in emergency aid that was added to the state budget. It included \$20 million for agricultural business impacted by the storms. Another \$20 million went to Monterey County for direct relief for residents in Pajaro, a farming community inundated after levee breaks on the Pajaro River. \$20 million was delivered to Merced County to help residents in the flooded town of Planada. In addition, \$95 million was allocated in statewide support, including for storm preparedness, response and direct relief. And \$5 million was provided to the California Under-served and Small Producer Program. That included grants of up to \$100,000 for small organic dairies that suffered either flooding or drought impacts.

In Washington, D.C., our Federal Policy

Division worked on long-term disaster assistance for multiple events in recent years. Our team worked on legislation that helped secure \$16 billion from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to distribute for numerous recovery efforts nationally, including disasters experienced in California.

In addition, \$549 million was distributed to California agricultural producers under the Emergency Relief Program for catastrophic events, to help recover from disasters such as the devastating wildfires in 2020 and 2021.

Funding included \$171 million for specialty crop growers impacted by disasters. In addition, millions of Californians in 44 counties affected by 2023 flooding were offered extensions until November to submit individual and business tax returns to the Internal Revenue Service.

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Farm Bureau president urges lawmakers to secure water for agriculture

Former California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson called on lawmakers to work to sustain agriculture into the future by securing water supplies and rejecting policies that merely ask farmers and ranchers to be resilient in the face of unaddressed challenges. Speaking before the 105th Annual Meeting of the California Farm Bureau in Reno, Nevada, this week, Johansson took issue with California's failure to complete water infrastructure projects that could have stored water during wet years and enhanced flood-control protections in years with heavy rains.

Two beetle pests raise concerns for almonds, pistachios and pears

Two different beetle pests found in California orchards this year have growers on alert and researchers looking to learn more as they try to develop treatments to control infestations. One is the arrival of a new invasive beetle, the *Carpophilus truncatus*, which was found infesting almonds and pistachios in the San Joaquin Valley earlier this fall. The other is an existing native pest—a species of flatheaded borer that historically attacked only wood but was found feeding on pear fruit in Lake County. Growers are urged to be on the lookout for the pests.

Park Farming Organics is winner of 2023 Leopold Conservation Award

Park Farming Organics in Sutter County has been named winner of the Leopold Conservation Award, which recognizes farmers and ranchers for their achievements in environmental stewardship. The award, honoring conservationist Aldo Leopold, celebrates farmers and ranchers improving the land under their care. The Park family grows rice, corn, wheat, flax, alfalfa, tomatoes, seed crops and vegetables using production methods that mimic natural systems. Bowles Farming Co. in Merced County, owned by the Bowles and Lawrence families, was an award finalist.

Farm Bureau foundation secures \$574,750 grant to mentor emerging farmers, ranchers

The California Bountiful Foundation, the nonprofit science, research and educational organization of the California Farm Bureau, has received a \$574,750 grant to support the California Farm Bureau Beginning Farmer and Rancher Mentoring Program. The program has been named "Expanding our Roots" and is dedicated to supporting emerging agriculturalists in California. The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The funds will support development of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Mentoring program.

Almond farmers remain optimistic despite recent challenges

California almond growers have faced tough economic conditions in recent years as production costs soared while earnings plummeted. Yet the Almond Board of California maintains that the long-term outlook for the tree nut remains positive, even as the industry struggles through some growing pains. At the recent 2023 Almond Conference in Sacramento, industry leaders said changing times and shifts in consumer behavior mean the sector will need to evolve and innovate to remain competitive and drive global demand for the state's 3.5-billion-pound crop.

Shannon Douglass becomes first woman to lead California Farm Bureau

Shannon Douglass, a diversified farmer from Glenn County, has been elected as the new president of the California Farm Bureau. Douglass, who served three terms as first vice president, becomes the first woman to head the organization, which was founded in 1919. The election took place at the organization's 105th Annual Meeting Dec. 1-6, in Reno, Nevada. Douglass is an owner of Douglass Ranch in Orland, which raises cattle and grows walnuts, corn and forage crops. She succeeds Jamie Johansson, a Butte County olive and citrus fruit grower who served three terms as president.

Farm Bureau joins coalition backing tax-reform initiative

The California Farm Bureau has endorsed a 2024 ballot initiative that would give voters the final decision on approving new local and state taxes. The Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act is backed by a coalition that also includes the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, the California Business Roundtable, the California Business Properties Association and other supporters. The new measure would require all new taxes passed by the California Legislature be approved by voters and would reaffirm a two-thirds voter approval for all new local special tax increases.



Sacramento County teacher wins agricultural educator award

A Sacramento-area teacher who created a garden and horticulture program to introduce students to agriculture has been honored with the Outstanding Educator Award, presented by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom. Kevin Jordan, a science and horticulture teacher at Leo A. Palmiter Junior and Senior High School in the Sacramento County community of Arden-Arcade, received the award at the 105th California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Reno, Nevada. Jordan was also named the 2023 Teacher of the Year by the Sacramento County Office of Education.

Sharing knowledge

and providing services

Farm Bureau in 2023 provided educational opportunities for members and aspiring farmers and ranchers and supported school agriculture programs. Along the way, we made benefits available to our members and helped celebrate agriculture—from honoring farmland scenes to saluting the quintessential farm dog.

Farm Bureau Extension's 2023 series attracted **1,901 class registrations** from **313 participants** for **10 continuing education sessions**. Meanwhile, Farm Bureau held **4 retirement plan webinars** and conducted **27 farm and ranch health and safety seminars** in English and Spanish.

The California Farm Bureau Scholarship Foundation awarded **\$195,000 in scholarships** to **40 students** who intend to pursue careers as farmers, ranchers or in occupations related to agriculture. Farm Bureau also awarded **75 collegiate memberships** to California FFA members who attended the Sacramento Leadership Experience conference. Our Young Farmers & Ranchers organization hosted **32 attendees** at the YF&F Leaders Meeting in Fresno in July, which included farm tours, leadership development sessions, networking and program planning.

In a partnership with Nationwide, Farm Bureau members **raised nearly \$34,000** for the Blue Jacket Bonanza program. Throughout the year, Farm Bureau **awarded over 200 FFA jackets** to regional and sectional officers in California.

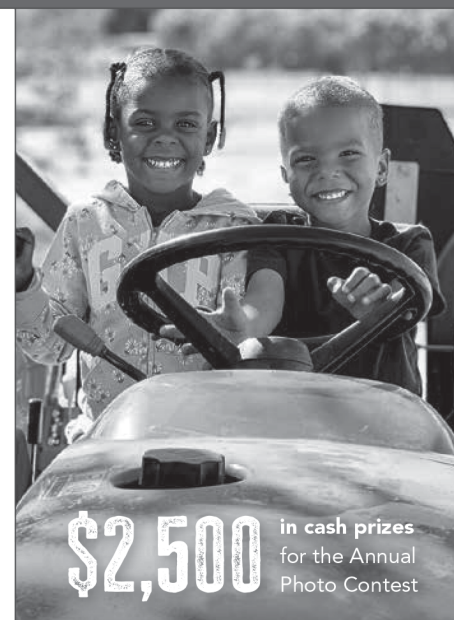
The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom program, supported by Farm Bureau, attracted **20,000 students throughout California** to tune into California Farm Day presentations to celebrate agriculture and learn how the weather impacts California agriculture. **213 agriculture teachers** attended the state Ag in the Classroom Conference in Sacramento, **65% being first-time attendees**.

Ag in the Classroom awarded **\$52,500** to **425 educators** throughout California through grants to expand agricultural literacy efforts in 2023. **25 teachers** were awarded Literacy for Life grants, and **400 teachers** received Taste and Teach Grants. **12,031 teachers** viewed Ag in the Classroom resources on the Teachers Pay Teachers online marketplace, downloading more than **15,723 resources and lesson plans**.

More than 100,000 copies of Agriculture in the Classroom's **16-page** educational newspaper *What's Growin' On?* were distributed.

Meanwhile, Farm Bureau hosted its **42nd annual** photo contest, awarding **\$2,500 in cash prizes**. The contest drew **64 participants**, including **4 budding artist contestants**, with **183 photos** submitted, **double** the number of submissions from 2022. The 4th Annual Farm Dog of the Year contest drew **45 canine contenders**, with **\$1,000 awarded** to the grand prize winner.

In 2023, Farm Bureau provided **32 benefit offerings** for members. They included Farm Bureau Retirement Plan benefits administered by Nationwide, citizenship services through the National Immigration Forum for employees of Farm Bureau members, plus home, auto, apparel and travel discounts, including **savings up to 30%** at Great Wolf Lodge resorts.



\$2,500 in cash prizes
for the Annual
Photo Contest



1901 Farm Bureau
Extension's series
class registrations



45

canine contenders
for the 4th Annual
Farm Dog contest



Stanislaus, San Joaquin growers win Young Farmers & Ranchers awards

Young farmers from Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties have been awarded top prizes for agricultural achievement and excellence as well as their commitment to the California Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers program.

Mark Avilla, a farm manager for family walnut orchards in Stanislaus County who has engaged with state legislators on agricultural issues and used his multimedia skills in encouraging students to pursue farming careers, is the winner of the YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award.

Avilla, of Modesto, was also honored with the YF&R Star Member Award for his contributions to the program. A graduate of Kansas State University, where he studied agricultural communications and journalism, Avilla served as president of the Stanislaus County YF&R Committee from 2019 to 2021.

Jacob Samuel, an almond and walnut farmer from San Joaquin County who also helped develop his family's dried-fruit brand into a top seller of unsweetened cherries on Amazon, is the winner of the Young Farmers & Ranchers Achievement Award.

Samuel, a graduate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and a resident of Farmington, is part-owner of Shade Tree Farming,



which he helped found in 2016. He also helps manage walnut, cherry and almond production for the family-owned Samuel Farms and has played a key marketing role in the family's dried-fruit business, Sunrise Fresh.

In other awards, the Kern County YF&R Committee took home the Committee of the Year Award. The Sonoma-Marín YF&R Committee was honored for Harvest for All projects in collaboration with local food charities. The Napa County YF&R Committee won the Most Innovative Event prize and the Gold Country YF&R Committee won the top award for Community Involvement. The awards were announced at the 105th California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, which was held in Reno this year in conjunction with the California YF&R State Conference.

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 29,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.3 million Farm Bureau members.

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Tuolumne County : Confirmed Case of A Horse/Cattle Disease In Mother Lode

Sonora, CA – Local shelter officials are warning of a viral disease that primarily impacts horses and cattle, and there is now a confirmed case in the Mother Lode.

Tuolumne County Animal Control (TCAC) reports that one case of vesicular stomatitis (VS), a viral disease that can also occasionally affect swine, sheep, goats, llamas, and alpacas, has been confirmed. Although it is rare, humans can also become infected with the disease when handling affected animals.

As the picture in the image box shows, infected animals shed the virus from blisters they develop, allowing for transmission due to direct contact with infected animals. Water, feed, buckets, and other materials contaminated with saliva from infected animals can also transmit the disease. The virus can also be spread on shoes, clothing, hands, and contaminated equipment.

“Practice good biosecurity and isolate new horses when introduced to the herd. Keeping the insect population down may also help in the prevention of VS,” shelter officials advise animal owners.

Experimental vaccines have been developed, but none have been approved for use in horses. The main spreader of the disease is insect bites from mostly black flies, sand flies, and midges, but other insects may also be capable of transmission, say TCAC officials.

TCAC provided these symptoms to watch out for in your animals:

- Blister-like lesions in/around mouth, nose, coronary band, and/or sheath/udders
- Fever
- Drooling/frothing at mouth
- Reluctance to eat
- Lameness or laminitis if lesions develop around coronary band

Any owner seeing signs of the disease should contact a veterinarian. Shelter officials added that the VS has a low mortality rate.

Written by Tracey Petersen.



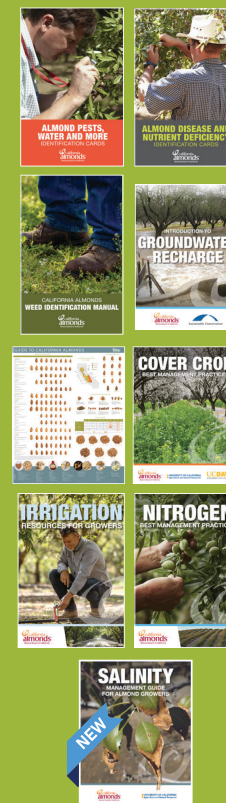
Almond-Specific Resources Now Available

To further support almond growers and allied industry partners, the Almond Board of California has partnered with UC ANR and other industry experts to develop almond-specific resources. These resources are available, free of cost. Scan the QR code below or visit Almonds.com/GrowerTools to view and order resources.

Available Resources:

- Almond Pest ID Cards
- Almond Disease & Nutrient Deficiency ID Cards
- Almond Weed ID Cards
- Introduction to Groundwater Recharge
- Guide to CA Almonds Variety & Grades Poster
- Cover Crop BMPs
- Irrigation Resources
- Nitrogen BMPs
- Salinity Management Guide

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From "Employment" on page 23

complaint under one of more than 20 federal statutes). Plus all those analogous state agencies.... And the Government Agency will do an investigation into the Employee's complaint, setting impossible tasks for the Employer to perform (like producing extensive, arguably irrelevant information in a very short timeframe).

The foolish Employer has no documentation to back up the Employee's performance or conduct issues. And in our vast litigation experience, we can assure you that juries and Government Agencies hold employers to a higher standard – if the documentation doesn't exist, it didn't happen. Plus juries, in particular, have a real sense of fair play (which is not in the laws, but...) – did the Employer give the Employ-

ee warning of the issues that led to termination and a chance to fix it?

So, employers, the moral of this tale is that there are no shortcuts to happy endings. Do the hard work of performance-managing your employees – and document it!!! (And do the hard work of training your managers to manage their employees and avoid discrimination and harassment). If you decide to terminate an employee, make sure you have the documentation to back it up, that they were given fair warning of their performance/conduct deficiencies, and that they are being treated consistently with how you've treated other employees with similar issues. Do NOT rely on at-will employment as the reason for an employee's termination,

or you may find a sad ending to your fairy tale.

The End.

Fiona W. Ong defends employers in the areas of employment discrimination, wrongful discharge, and wage/ hour regulation, both in court and before federal and state agencies. She also provides advice to managers and human resources on a wide variety of personnel matters, and conducts training on harassment, reasonable accommodations, and other issues for both supervisors and employees. She can be reached at 410-752-8861 or ong@shawe.org

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