

The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture

STANISLAUS COUNTY



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



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County Farm Bureau
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Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.

~ Thomas Jefferson

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2025 TRAININGS



Register here:

<https://stanfarmbureau.org/events/>

February 25, 2025 Food Safety - FSMA

9:00-10:30am - Spanish

10:30-12:00pm - English

What is FSMA? Who does it apply to?
How do I comply? What should I expect during
an inspection?

Pricing: Member \$50/Nonmember \$60

June 5, 2025 CPR & First Aid

8:00-12:00pm - Spanish

1:00-5:00pm - English

CalOSHA requires that at least 1 employee for
every 20 employees be trained.

Pricing: Member \$100/Nonmember \$125

March 6, 2025 Pesticide Handler & Fit Testing

9:00-12:00pm - Spanish

1:00-4:00pm - English

This is an annual training required by the
Department of Pesticide Regulation.

Pricing: Member \$60/Nonmember \$75

July 31, 2025 Tractor Safety

9:00-10:00am - Spanish

10:00-11:00am - English

CalOSHA requires that employees who
operate equipment be trained annually.

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

May 1, 2025 Indoor&Outdoor Heat Illness Prevention

9:00-10:00am - Spanish

10:00-11:00am - English

CalOSHA requires this training annually for
employees.

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

October 23, 2025 Hazardous Ag Materials (HAM)

9:00-10:30am - Spanish

10:30-12:00pm - English

Everyone operating a class C vehicle carrying
hazardous material must be trained.

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

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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.

Support Ag Youth: Enter the Stanislaus County YF&R Sweepstakes!

The Stanislaus County Young Farmers and

Ranchers (YF&R) are excited to announce our 2025 Sweepstakes Fundraiser—and we need your support! This year, we've put together three incredible prize packages, each valued at \$1,000, thanks to generous donations from insureCAL, American AgCredit,

and Yosemite Farm Credit.

Whether you're looking to upgrade your backyard BBQ setup, shop for the home, or purchase a new firearm, we've got a package for you! Tickets are \$100 each and give you a chance to win one of the following:

- insureCAL Gun Package: \$1,000 gift card to Alquist Arms
- American AgCredit Backyard Package: Solo stove firepit, Blackstone, and an Ooni Pizza Oven
- Yosemite Farm Credit Home Package: \$500 gift card to Williams Sonoma + \$500 to Home Goods

All proceeds from this fundraiser directly benefit our local ag community. Funds raised help us purchase livestock animals from deserving youth at the Stanislaus County Fair and provide scholarships to students pursuing degrees in agriculture. It's one of the many ways YF&R invests in the future of our industry and supports the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Tickets can be purchased through our website or by reaching out to any YF&R member. Your support makes a difference—we hope you'll join us in giving back while getting the chance to win big!

For questions or to learn more, please contact the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau office. Let's keep agriculture strong in our county—together!

YF&R Sweepstakes

Support Stanislaus County Young Farmers & Ranchers!



insureCAL Gun Package

\$1,000 gift card to Alquist Arms



American AgCredit Backyard Package

Solo stove firepit, Blackstone, Ooni Pizza Oven



Yosemite Farm Credit Home Package

\$500 Williams Sonoma gift card, \$500 Home Goods gift card

ALL PACKAGES VALUED AT \$1,000

All tickets are \$100 each and can be purchased on our website or from a YF&R member. Please call our office with any questions!





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One Big Beautiful Bill: Senate Edition

Source: American Farm Bureau

The Senate passed their version of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on July 1. This Market Intel highlights the significant differences between that bill and the bill advanced in the House of Representatives on June 22. For a full overview of provisions benefiting farmers and ranchers, see our previous Market Intel, "One Big Beautiful Bill Act: Agricultural Provisions."

The Senate provided support for farmers and ranchers nationwide by passing their version of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)." Some details of the House bill were altered to ensure compliance with the Byrd Rule, which requires that all provisions of a reconciliation bill impact the government's budget – through changing revenues or spending. This rule is enforced by the Senate parliamentarian who determines if any part of the bill is non-Byrd Rule compliant, which would require 60

–votes to pass.

The final Senate bill provides additional investments in agricultural support programs and additional certainty for farmers' and ranchers' tax bills.

Investing in Agriculture

Both the House and Senate budget reconciliation packages aim to strengthen the farm safety net by updating key commodity risk management programs. Both versions continue Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments, and increase reference prices and commodity loan rates. These updates better reflect today's higher production costs and market conditions. Overall, the Senate version invests over \$65.6 billion into the farm safety net, \$9 billion more than in the House version.

In addition, there are a few key differences between the House and Senate text. First, while the Senate keeps the updated reference prices from the House version, the Senate text increases the PLC reference

price escalator calculation to 88% compared to the current 85%. Remember, this is the provision included in the 2018 Farm Bill that can adjust the effective reference price based on past market prices. The Senate also includes a escalator that increases reference prices by 0.5% a year starting in 2031, identical to the House, but caps the increase at 113% of the original statutory reference price, slightly below the House cap of 115%. The Senate also addresses the current crop year

already in progress and allows producers to automatically receive the higher of the ARC-CO or PLC payment without having to make an election for the 2025 crop year. Additionally, the Senate does not move forward a House plan for a PLC cost-saving floor for corn that would limit support when market prices are high. Both versions improve ARC-CO by increasing the benchmark revenue cap, though the Senate increased the cap to 12%, while the House set it at 12.5% for crop years 2025 through 2032.

The Senate version updates the Federal Crop Insurance program to allow farmers to purchase the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) while enrolled in ARC. Historically, SCO was only available to those enrolled in PLC, limiting coverage options. Expanding access to both ARC and SCO will give farmers more flexibility and strengthen their risk management tools.

Secure Rural Schools was not included in this version of the OBBBA because the Senate had already chosen to reauthorize the program as a stand-alone bill. The Senate passed the Secure Rural Schools Authorization Act of 2025 in June. A companion standalone bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives, but it has not yet been taken up for a vote.

Preventing Tax Increases

The Senate provided permanency in this version of the bill. This version of the OBBBA makes additional tax relief investments beyond the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) provisions, but lowers some deductions below House levels to limit the cost of extending them into perpetuity.

For example, the standard deduction under the Senate bill will rise permanently to \$15,750 instead of the temporary increase to \$13,000 included in the House plan. Full bonus depreciation will also be made permanent under the Senate bill. However, the child tax credit will only increase to \$2,200 – but permanently – compared to \$2,500 through 2028 in the House bill.

See BILL on page 21



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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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RATES: Display rates on request. Terms are cash. Ads should be paid for at time of first insertion or immediately after receipt of bill if order is placed by telephone or mail. ERRORS: The Stanislaus Farm News will not be liable for more than one incorrect insertion. Errors must be called to the attention of the Classified Advertising Department not later than 4 p.m. on the Tuesday following publication of the ad. Claims for adjustment must be made within 15 days. We reserve the right to reject or revise any advertisement.

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Am I eligible?

The contest is open to anyone (professional photographer or not) in Stanislaus County.

How many photos may I enter?
An entrant may submit up to five photos.

What are the prizes?

The first place winner receives \$250 cash and will be featured on the cover of our Membership special.

Contest Rules

- Photos must highlight Stanislaus County agriculture.
 - Written agreement to terms and conditions is required.
 - The model release portion of the entry form must also be completed and signed by each entrant; a parent or guardian must sign for a minor.
 - All photos submitted become property of Stanislaus County Farm Bureau*.
 - Stanislaus County Farm Bureau may, without offering any consideration to or obtaining the further permission of its submitter, use any submitted photo for any purpose*.
- ** Intended uses include but not limited to newspaper, E-news, social media, general publications and marketing materials around Stanislaus County Agriculture and Farm Bureau.

Photo requirements and preferences

- Images from mobile devices may be submitted if they are high resolution.
- Turn off the date stamp option on your camera. Photos on which a date stamp or photographer's name is visible will be disqualified.
- All photos must be in .jpg format.

What is the entry deadline?

Entries must be entered by September 26, 2025.



How do I enter?

Email your photos to abid@stanfarmbureau.org or submit via our google form.

Agreement

By entering this contest, you grant to Stanislaus County Farm Bureau and to its affiliates and member county Farm Bureaus a royalty-free, worldwide, perpetual, non-exclusive license to use, publish, display, distribute, reproduce, edit, adapt, and create derivative works of the submitted photographs, in whole or in part, in any media now known or hereafter developed or discovered, including in use on websites and social media, in publications and for promotional purposes, without compensation or prior notice to you or your successors or assigns, or any other person or entity. Entering a submission in this contest constitutes your irrevocable assignment, conveyance, and transference of these rights.

Questions? Call (209) 522-7278 or email abid@stanfarmbureau.org.

Water ~ My Favorite Topic, My Favorite Drink, and Why It Matters in the Central Valley

Written by Kathryn Kim Ramos, Sisbro Innovation Website and Digital Marketing Consultant

If there's one article, I have look forward to writing this year, it's this one. Why? Because I get to gush (pun intended!) about my absolute favorite drink...WATER! That's right, you can go ahead and call me a water snob! I'm proud of it. There's something incredibly satisfying about a crisp, clean glass of water. It fuels my body, clears my mind, and, frankly, it's the ultimate refresher.

Whether it's from my filtered refrigerator or my favorite reusable bottle, I take my water seriously. And while I always advocate for drinking clean, filtered water over bottled, I'll say this: if bottled water is your only option, it's still better than not drinking any water at all. Hydration is simply too important to ignore.

Why Staying Hydrated is Essential

We've all heard it: our bodies are made up of mostly water, about 60% to 70%, depending on the source. Water is essential to keeping everything working the way it should. It regulates body temperature, cushions joints, delivers nutrients, flushes out toxins, and keeps our minds sharp. Even slight dehydration can cause fatigue, headaches, and difficulty concentrating. Whether you're working in an office, out on the farm, or running errands in Stanislaus County, staying hydrated is key to feeling



your best.

The Trouble With Bottled Water

Now, let's talk about bottled water. I'll admit—sometimes it's necessary. And if you're faced with the choice of bottled water or no water at all, please choose the bottle. Hydration always comes first. But whenever possible, I encourage reaching for a reusable bottle filled with filtered water. The environmental impact of bottled water is significant: producing, transporting, and disposing of all that plastic adds up fast.

Beyond the environmental concerns, there's also the issue of microplastics and chemical leaching in bottled water. Studies have found that bottled water can contain tiny plastic particles, in fact, a 2018 analysis by Orb Media and researchers at State University of New York at Fredonia revealed that over 90% of bottled water samples contained microplastics, with an average of 325 plastic particles per liter. These particles can come from the bottling process, caps, or the breakdown of the plastic itself. To make matters worse, when plastic bottles sit in the sun—or even in a warm car—they can leach chemicals like antimony and bisphenol A (BPA) into the water. Research, including studies by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), shows that heat accelerates this process, potentially compromising both the safety and taste of the water. Leaving bottled water exposed to high temperatures isn't just unappetizing—it could introduce unwanted chemicals into your drink.

Personally, I never leave the house without one of my water bottles. I have so many. They're like my security blanket, my emotional support water bottles. Whether it's a stainless-steel bottle for hot days or a glass bottle for work, I've always got one within arm's reach. My friends joke that if I ever left the house without a water bottle, they'd start to worry! Wherever you see Kat you see her water bottle; it is my trusted friend that never lets me down unless it is empty.

How I.J. Larsen Pumps Supports the Re-

gion

If you own a farm, ranch, or commercial property in Stanislaus County, you probably depend on a water pump system. I.J. Larsen Pumps (visit them at www.ijlarsenpumps.com) specializes in making sure your water keeps flowing properly. Their team offers everything from pump installations and repairs to well assessments and water quality testing.

A healthy water system isn't just about flow, it's about ensuring the water is safe for crops, livestock, and families. Routine pump maintenance can help prevent breakdowns that could disrupt your operations. And with decades of experience in the Central Valley, I.J. Larsen Pumps understands the unique water challenges of this area better than anyone.

So, if you're a grower, a property manager, or simply someone who relies on well water, don't wait for a problem to arise. Partner with a trusted expert like I.J. Larsen to keep your water systems reliable and your water supply clean.

A Water-Friendly Tip

One of my favorite water-wise reminders is simple but powerful: respect your water supply. It's often the small actions that add up to big savings. Fix that drippy faucet, upgrade to water-efficient fixtures, and consider drought-tolerant landscaping to reduce outdoor water use.

If you have questions about your water usage, availability, or conservation strategies, don't hesitate to reach out to the Modesto Irrigation District (MID). They're a fantastic local resource dedicated to helping our community use water wisely. And if you spot a leak at home, give a LOCAL Plumber a call. There are many excellent professionals who are members of our community who can help address plumbing issues and prevent unnecessary water waste. Together, these small steps help protect our most precious resource for future generations.

How Digital Marketing Helps Keep the Conversation Flowing

You might not immediately connect water with digital marketing, but they go hand in hand. In today's world, a strong online presence helps local farms, water service providers, and sustainability advocates share important information about water conservation, agriculture, and community resources.

Social media, websites, and email newsletters give businesses and organizations the tools to highlight their efforts, connect with customers, and promote water-friendly practices. Whether it's a farm sharing updates about irrigation improvements or a company like I.J. Larsen showcasing its work on well systems, digital platforms help spread the word in meaningful ways.

For communities in Stanislaus County and the Central Valley, staying informed and connected about water is more important than ever. Digital marketing doesn't just help sell a product or service—it helps build awareness, encourage dialogue, and foster collective responsibility for one of our most precious resources.

So, here's to water, our most essential, most refreshing, and (let's be honest) most underrated drink, but we can change that together as a community and make WATER our number one source of life – next to healthy food. Let's raise a glass (or reusable bottle) to hydration, sustainability, and working together to protect the water that keeps the Central Valley thriving.

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From Family Farm to Water Policy: Jacob DeBoer Champions Agriculture and Community

By Vicky Boyd

Jacob DeBoer has deep roots in eastern Stanislaus County as both a fourth-generation farmer and fourth-generation water customer of the Oakdale Irrigation District. After attending Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where he received an agricultural business degree, he returned to the family farm outside of Oakdale. DeBoer still lives in the house today that his great grandparents purchased in the early 1940s. He balances growing almonds and walnuts with an off-farm job in marketing and business development with an agricultural lender.

Drawing from his farming heritage, DeBoer said he felt a responsibility to advocate on behalf of the industry.

“I think it’s important to be involved,” he said. “One of my pet peeves is people complaining and not doing anything about it. DeBoer followed through, joining the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau’s Board of Directors more than six years ago and then successfully running for the OID Board of Directors Division 4 seat in 2024.

Among the pressing issues he sees facing agriculture and agricultural water users are the State Water Board’s proposed unimpaired flows, which could usurp historical water rights, as well as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Although the two laws may have been passed separately, they are intertwined because of the intimate relationship between surface and groundwater.

UNIMPAIRED FLOWS

As part of the State Water Board’s

efforts to update the Bay-Delta Plan, it established flow objectives for the Lower San Joaquin River and its three main tributaries: the Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced rivers. The so-called unimpaired flow requirements of an average of 40% would run from February through June.

The state defines unimpaired flows as surface water that would accumulate from precipitation and flow downstream if there were no reservoirs or diversions to change the quantity or timing.

The water board contended the additional water was needed to improve fisheries habitat and maintain Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta salinity standards.

During Bay-Delta hearings in the 2010s, representatives from OID and the South San Joaquin Irrigation District estimated unimpaired flows could cost the two districts together \$250 million in annual losses. They also challenged the lack of science behind the proposed flows.

In addition, the requirements could affect water rights if irrigators were not able to use some of the flow in San Joaquin River tributaries to which they’re entitled. Although the water board adopted unim-

paired flows for the San Joaquin River in 2018, they remain tied up in the courts. More recently, the water board established unimpaired flows of an average of 55% for the Sacramento River and its tributaries.

SGMA


While OID is mainly a surface water supplier, it also is involved in managing groundwater as a member of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers Groundwater Basin Association Groundwater Sustainability Agency. Formed as a result of SGMA, the agency also comprises the cities of Modesto, Waterford, Riverbank and Oakdale as well as Stanislaus County and the Modesto Irrigation District.

Together, they submitted their initial groundwater sustainability plan that the state Department of Water Resources eventually approved earlier this year. Under SGMA, groundwater sustainability agencies must balance groundwater extraction with recharge by 2040 or 2042, depending on the level of overdraft.

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Every five years, they also must submit a progress report to the state for approval. Despite the large amount of surface water delivered by OID, underlying groundwater levels are still declining. DeBoer said the OID board continues to look at projects that would help reduce groundwater overdraft without impacting district water users.

“OID is a net-recharger, contributing positively groundwater levels in the basin,” he said. The district faces the challenge of doing right by our constituents and the infrastructure investment of our forefathers, while also using seasonally available surface water to offset pumping.”

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS

DeBoer said OID is fortunate to have some of the oldest water rights, known as pre-1914, in the state. Together with SSJID, they share the first 600,000 acre-feet of inflow into New Melones Reservoir resetting Oct. 1 of each year.

As the OID board, DeBoer said members face a balancing act. They must consider long-term capital investments to improve water delivery efficiency and reliability while still being mindful of keeping user rates low.

“You don’t want to get behind on capital improvements, which requires an analytical eye on both the revenue and expenditure sides of the budget,” he said.

One of the district’s most recent undertakings is the Canyon Supply Tunnel, which it is building with SSJID.

The \$80 million project would create a 12,000-foot tunnel to bypass a landslide-prone portion of the Joint Supply Canal below Goodwin Dam. Of that, OID’s portion is 28%. Tentatively scheduled to be completed in 2028, the project would increase supply reliability to both ag and urban users, including SSJID’s 215,000 customers in Manteca, Lathrop and Tracy.

THE POWER OF FORESIGHT

DeBoer praised OID and SSJID’s forefathers for having the vision to jointly develop the Tri-Dam Project for hydroelectric generation. Located on the Middle Fork of the Stanislaus River, Tri-Dam comprises Donnells, Beardsley and Tulloch reservoirs along with associated dams, tunnels and powerhouses.

Power generation provides revenue for the

two districts, allowing them to keep water rates low while also funding capital improvements. But generation fluctuates with the water years.

“We had a good hydro year,” DeBoer said, referring to 2024. “But I have to remind myself that may not always be the case.”

THE ROAD TO ADVOCACY

DeBoer joined Farm Bureau shortly after he returned home from college, becoming active in Young Farmers & Ranchers and serving on their executive committee. More than six years ago, he joined the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau’s Board of Directors. “Farm Bureau allows me to be involved and advocate in a tangible manner,” he said.

In 2024, DeBoer successfully ran for the OID Division 4 seat. But he was not a newcomer to district issues.

Since 2016 when OID was considering a grower program, DeBoer said he attended its monthly Tuesday meetings.

“Eventually, I decided to get involved,” he said.



The gate to Jacob DeBoer’s house features the family’s cattle brand, the Rocking HC. It honors his grandfather, Henry DeBoer, and his grandmother, Carol DeBoer.



Jacob DeBoer and his fuzzy sidekick, Ranger, take a break as they recently showed off their almond orchard.



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Family grows pears in the Sacramento River Delta for generations

Story by Caleb Hampton, Ca Farm Bureau

The Elliot family, owners of Stillwater Orchards in the Sacramento River Delta town of Courtland, knows a thing or two about growing pears. They've been doing it for six generations.

"A lot of families in the area, including ours, came to California for the Gold Rush," says Ryan Elliot, sixth-generation pear grower and operational manager at Stillwater Orchards. "Once they arrived, their plans changed."

The family started out selling fruit directly to miners and settlers, with individual pears sometimes swapped for an ounce of gold, according to family lore. In those days, Elliot says, "The sweetest thing some miners could get their hands on was a nice, fresh pear."

The business evolved, with steamboats shuttling boxes of pears down the river to San Francisco and up the river to Sacramento. Later, refrigerated rail cars and container trucks carried the Elliots' pears even further.

Today, Stillwater Orchards ships its pears to stores or distributors in all 50 states, as well as to Mexico, Canada and beyond. The farm also supplies canneries and companies such as Tree Top and Gerber that use the pears for juice and baby food.

For Elliot, producing the delicious fruit is more than a job. "I have always found it rewarding to see the trees come out of dormancy every year, to see the bloom and the new crop, and then have an opportunity to do all we can during harvest to get the fruit to market," he says. "I've never really wanted to do anything else."

River pears and mountain pears
About two-thirds of California's pears are grown in the river district of the Sacramen-

to Valley, with the remaining third grown in the mountain district of Lake and Mendocino counties. The delta is ideal for growing pears, Elliot says, because of its cool nights and loamy soils, and because of the fruit's tolerance for having "wet feet" when the river swells into the orchards. "It's an optimal microclimate," he says.

A seasonal fruit

Pears are a summer fruit. In the Sacramento River Delta, they are harvested in July and August. But all four seasons are important for producing a quality crop. During fall and winter, the trees lose their leaves and go into dormancy. The branches are pruned before buds appear and blossom in spring, setting the new crop. "There is something special about seeing all the different stages of the tree," Elliot says.

Different destinations

At Stillwater Orchards, after being picked, pears are placed in bins that tractors haul to an on-site packinghouse. In the packinghouse, workers sort the pears into three categories, with small or damaged fruit sold for juice, lightly blemished pears going to canneries and the best and biggest pears packed fresh for produce aisles. "Our sorters have a well-trained eye," Elliot says.

Take your pick

Pears come in many varieties. Bartletts, with their thin green skin and sweet, soft flesh, are the most common. But Stillwater Orchards also grows Bosc, French Butter, Comice and Seckel pears, as well as two different red pear varieties. "In a standard grocery store, you might see a Bartlett, a Bosc and a red," Elliot says. "Smaller, specialty stores buy more of our French Butters and Seckels."

The human touch

Machines have revolutionized the production of crops such as winegrapes, canning tomatoes and grains. But with something as

See Delta Grower on page 25



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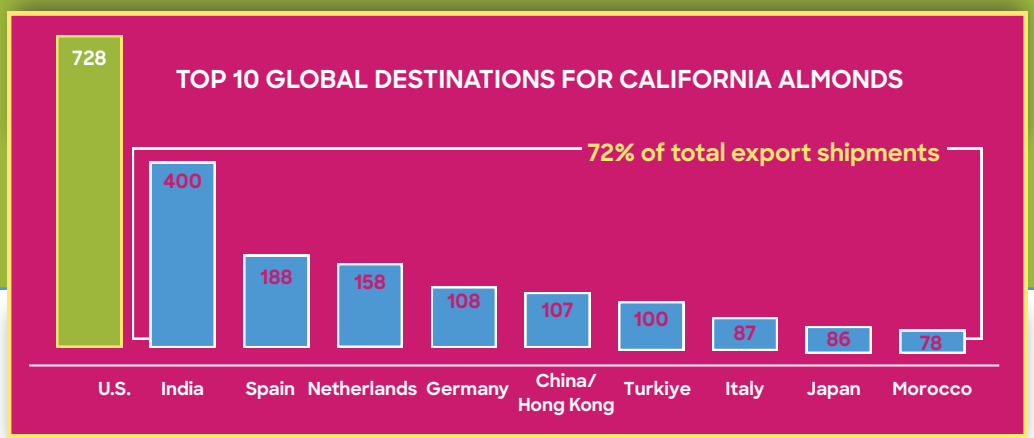
Now in it's second year, the Own Your Prime campaign with Deion "Coach Prime" Sanders continues to promote almonds for exercise recovery.



INDIA- Broadening the Appeal of Almonds in California's Largest Export Market:

ABC is growing almond appeal in India with Gen Z-focused digital ads and a cricket partnership featuring IPL player Rishabh Pant.

The U.S. is the #1 global destination for California almonds in 2023/24, with a 27% share of shipments. India remains the #1 export destination for California almonds, with shipments in 2023/24 exceeding 400 million pounds, an increase of 21% from 2022/23



To learn more about how ABC is driving demand for California Almonds, [click here](#), or scan the QR code:

Farmers Care for Animals and the Environment

By Cyndie Shearing

Chris Hoffman is president of Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. He is a first-generation hog and chicken farmer. This is the fourth in a series of "Question & Answer"-style columns with state Farm Bureau presidents on current issues in agriculture.

Q. Why do you raise hogs and chickens in barns?

A. Chris Hoffman: There are multiple reasons why we raise animals inside. Number one, it's better for the health and safety of our animals. We can control their nutritional intake, we are able to monitor and often control the temperature. We are also able to recycle animal waste by collecting it for use as fertilizer. By using science and technology we are able to optimize the health of our livestock while also undertaking environmentally smart practices.

Biosecurity is also a good reason to house animals indoors. We can protect them from diseases and parasites that they could be challenged with if they were outside, especially with chickens and pigs. Both can be vulnerable to diseases from birds and other wildlife.

Q. How do you ensure your animals are comfortable and healthy?

A. Chris Hoffman: As a farmer over the years, you get to understand how your animals respond and act, as well as their mannerisms which will show you whether or not they are comfortable and content. We also know through research what conditions are optimal for most animals and birds based on their age and size.

Farmers pay attention to the details and that's how we really optimize the environment that our animals live in.

Q. How do you manage the manure from the farm animals in your care?

A. Chris Hoffman: All of the collected manure goes into pits, under the barn or in outside lagoons. Each of our manure pits has a different nutrient makeup. There is a fascinating amount of science behind it all, which helps us develop a nutrient management plan. This guides us to make sure we apply the proper nutrients to the crops we are trying to grow to maximize their health and yield. In other words, we know what nutrients the crops need so we tailor the manure that's applied to meet those needs. It's a win-win. We reuse our manure through a careful process to get the healthiest crops.

We want to make sure that when we are spreading manure it stays in the soil and doesn't run off. I live within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, so making sure that manure does not end up in the streams is extremely important to me. We use a lot of natural



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vegetative buffers and other strategies to protect the water supply on our farm and make sure that manure doesn't end up in streams. I'm proud of our contributions to protecting the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and the regional progress toward that goal.

Q. How have advancements in technology changed day-to-day operations on your farm?

A. Chris Hoffman: In the last 35 years, we have seen a tremendous amount of technology become available to us on the farm. We have been able to use new controls that help us monitor every part of the atmosphere that our pigs live in. We make sure the humidity level is optimal, the temperature is perfect, and we're also using technology to reduce water usage. I'll add that we've also reduced energy usage by using new LED technology to reduce costs.

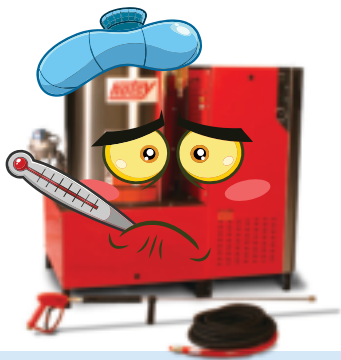
Q. How does your commitment to the health and safety of your family and neighbors impact the choices you make on your farm?

A. Chris Hoffman: Our commitment to our community is the same as the commitment to our family. We want to make sure that we keep the water clean and that we use the right technologies to keep

the soil healthy. We use every tool in our toolbox to protect health and safety as we continue to produce food for our neighbors.

Q. As policy discussions continue about improving Americans' health, what role do you see for farmers?

A. Chris Hoffman: I think that we have to make sure we tell the story of what we are doing on a day-to-day basis to produce healthy food and contribute to healthy outcomes in America. We owe it to our communities and the public to explain how we use science and technology to improve health and safety and why it's so important to continue to have access to these tools. I sometimes hear others talk about what farmers do with emotion, but without a full understanding of how farms operate. It is up to us, as farmers, to make sure that we are having conversations about our farming practices, our commitment and why we do what we do. I'm sometimes surprised when people I talk to are reassured to learn that what we feed our neighbors is also what we are feeding our families. Something so obvious to us as farmers isn't always obvious to those who have little exposure to agriculture. In my mind, that's an opportunity.



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More 1,3-D Regulation on the Horizon

Source: Almond Board of California

Almond growers in California should prepare for more changes to soil fumigation practices as the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) are set to implement new restrictions on the use of 1,3-Dichloropropene, commonly known as Telone. These regulatory changes are scheduled to take effect starting January 1, 2026.

The DPR's updated regulations primarily address worker protection, building upon previous restrictions introduced in January 2024 focused on bystander protection. The most impactful change is the addition of "people, particularly farmworkers" in the buffer zone protection language. The update will require growers to maintain buffer zones around fumigated areas, keeping workers out for seven days post-application.

"It's the seven-day restriction on workers that's going to be the challenge," explains Gabriele Ludwig, director of environmental policy at the Almond Board of California. "The buffer zones are already in effect and apply to homes and occupied buildings. Now growers must keep their own employees, and potentially their neighbors' employees, out of these buffer areas for a full week."

Required buffer zones can vary significantly, depending on factors such as the method and depth of application, rate applied, acreage treated, and whether tarps are used. Using Totally Impermeable Film (TIF) tarps can reduce buffer zone size, but Ludwig notes this practice nearly doubles fumigation costs.

Additionally, some growers may be required to have buffer zones that extend onto adjacent properties. In these cases, growers must secure written agreements ensuring

neighboring landowners will keep their workers clear of these areas for the seven-day period. This requirement could pose substantial operational disruptions, particularly for smaller farms adjacent to diverse cropping systems.

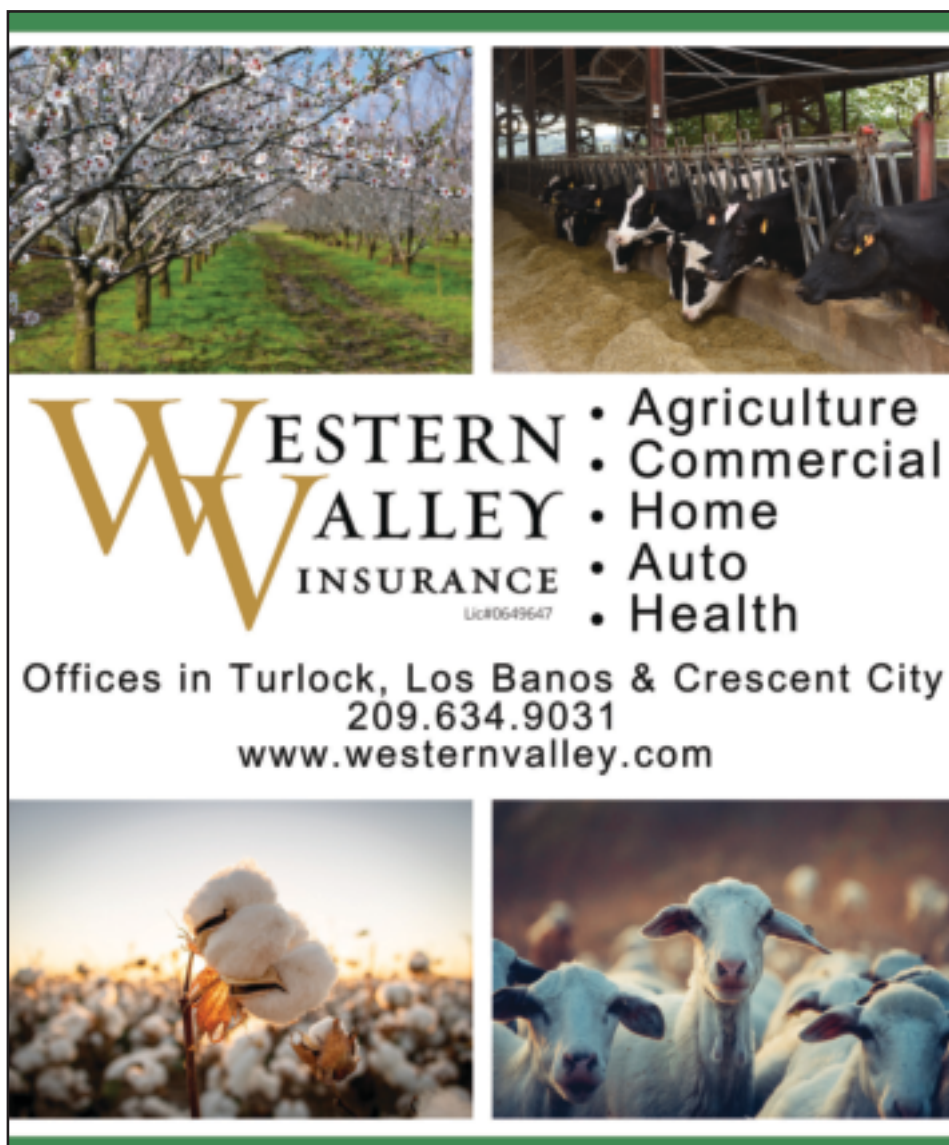
"This isn't just about posting 'no trespassing' signs," Ludwig emphasizes. "It directly impacts the ability of your neighbors to manage their own operations."

Although the official public comment period on these regulations has ended and changes appear unlikely, growers who intend to fumigate should consider completing applications before January 1, 2026, when compliance becomes more burdensome.

Soil fumigants have been in the crosshairs for quite some time and the Almond Board of California continues investing in research to develop viable fumigation alternatives. Over the past 20 years, studies have explored rootstock genetics, steam treatments, anaerobic soil disinfestation (ASD), and various methods to mitigate off-gassing.

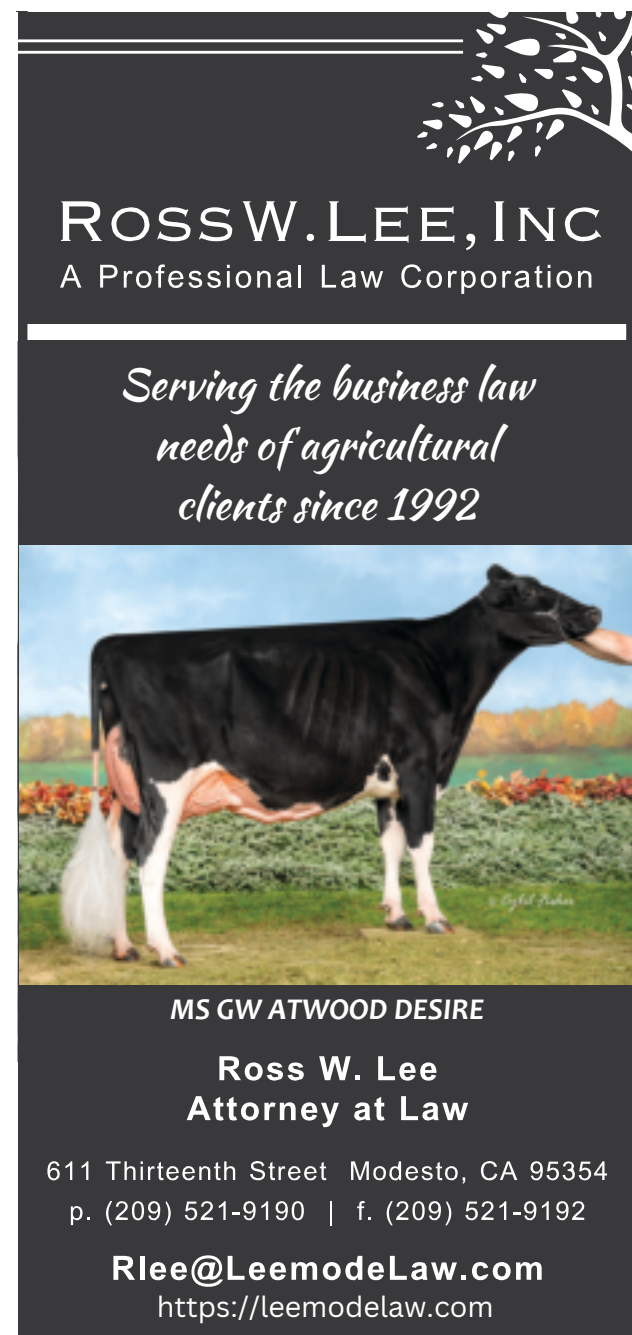
"We see that certain alternatives work under specific conditions, but universally effective and cost-efficient solutions remain elusive," Ludwig acknowledges. She further highlights the ongoing challenges, especially in sandy or hilly terrains where maintaining adequate soil moisture or conditions required for ASD proves difficult.

Ultimately, Ludwig urges growers to recognize these regulatory changes and proactively adapt their fumigation or soil pest management practices. "It's about being aware and planning accordingly," she advises. "These regulations aren't going away. DPR has listed all fumigants – including soil, post-harvest and other uses – as "priority pesticides" which are pesticides whose use would be phased out by 2050, so growers need to strategize now."



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From BILL on page 5

On the business front, farmers, ranchers and rural businesses will continue to receive tax parity to their corporate counterparts through a permanent Section 199A deduction. The Senate chose to keep the deduction at 20% and add a minimum deduction of \$400 (indexed for inflation) for any pass-through business with over \$1,000 of qualified income instead of raising the deduction to 23%.

Other crucial provisions for agriculture were also included in the Senate bill. Domestic research and development (R&D) expenses will permanently be depreciable in the year they are incurred. For domestic R&D expenses incurred between 2021 and 2024 that are still being amortized, companies will be able to deduct the remainder of their expenses in the next one or two tax years.

The Senate OBBB also includes an increased deduction for state and local taxes (SALT).

TCJA capped SALT deductions at \$10,000. The Senate's bill raises this cap to \$40,000 in 2025, followed by \$40,400 in 2026 and a 1% increase each year following until 2029. However, the cap will revert to \$10,000 in 2030. The House also starts at \$40,000 in 2025 and increases 1% per year through 2033.

Based upon the Protecting American Farmlands Act, this version of the OBBBA allows capital gains from the sale of farmland to be paid in four equal yearly installments if the land is sold to a farmer who commits to keep farming the land for at least 10 years. This gives farmers flexibility while also incentivizing keeping farmland in farming. Other provisions impacting farmers and ranchers include an extension of the 45Z clean fuel production credit through 2029 for fuel produced using North American feedstocks, which we will address in detail in a later Market Intel.

Conclusions

Many farm bill programs could not be included in reconciliation because they are policy, not budgetary. Those updates and extensions will have to be addressed in what many are dubbing a "skinny farm bill." This includes suspending permanent price support which is required to replace individual commodity support programs from the 1930s and 1940s with the new reference prices. It was tossed out of the reconciliation bill after being ruled non-compliant to the Byrd Rule but it is needed to set commodity program prices to modern levels and cover crops without their own program in permanent law.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act will now cross back to the other side of the Capital for final approve by the House of Representatives. There are two paths of action the House could take: approving the Senate bill as it stands or going to conference to reconcile differences between the two packages. President Trump has set a goal of July 4 for signing the final bill, so it is bound to be a busy few days in Washington, D.C., as this bill moves closer to the finish line.



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From Journalism to Ag-tech: Amy Wu's Mission to Tell Women's Stories—and Mentor the Next Generation

By Anna Genasci, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau

Amy Wu has spent a lifetime chasing compelling stories, but these days, she's focused on one in particular: the rise of women in agricultural technology. As the founder of From Farms to Incubators, Wu has carved out a unique niche, shining a spotlight on female innovators transforming the ag industry through technology and entrepreneurship, and now, she's helping mentor the next generation to follow in their footsteps.

A Journey from Suburbs to Storytelling

Born and raised in the suburbs of New York, Amy Wu's path into journalism started early. As a young girl, she was fascinated by newspapers and magazines, often writing letters to the editor. That curiosity evolved into a career, leading her through prominent newsrooms including USA Today, The Times Union in Albany, and several regional publications.

But it was during her time covering agriculture for The Salinas Californian that Wu's career took a pivotal turn. Immersed in California's Central Coast, she saw firsthand how agriculture and technology were increasingly intertwined, and how women were often the driving forces behind innovative solutions.

"I realized there was this emerging group of women in Ag-tech," Wu explained during a recent interview on the Farm Bureau Friday podcast. "They were scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, but their stories weren't being told."

From Farms to Incubators: A Multimedia Mission

In 2016, Wu launched From Farms to Incubators, a multimedia storytelling platform dedicated to documenting the journeys of women in Ag-tech. The project includes articles, a documentary film, photography, and online content.

"I wanted to show that women are not just part of the ag workforce—they're leading innovation," she said.

"They're creating the solutions we need for water conservation, sustainability, and food security."

Wu has interviewed dozens of women, working on everything from drone technology for crop monitoring to software platforms helping farmers manage resources more efficiently. Many of these women, she says, have faced unique challenges such as balancing family life with startup demands, raising venture capital in a male-dominated field, and navigating the often conservative culture of agriculture.

"These women are pioneers," Wu empha-

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sized. “They’re creating new paths not just for themselves, but for the next generation.”

A Growing Role in Mentorship

Beyond storytelling, Wu’s mission has expanded to supporting the very women she writes about—and those aspiring to follow similar paths. Recently, she launched a mentorship program through From Farms to Incubators, pairing young women interested in Ag-tech with professionals already working in the field.

“The idea is to help the next generation see that they belong in this industry,” Wu shared. “A lot of young women don’t know

about careers in Ag-tech, or they feel intimidated. Having someone to talk to, someone who’s been through it, makes all the difference.”

Through the program, mentees gain insight into technical skills, business development, and the realities of entrepreneurship, as well as invaluable networking connections. Wu believes mentorship is critical not only for career advancement but for ensuring a more diverse and innovative future in agriculture.

Amplifying Diversity in Agriculture

Beyond gender, Wu is passionate about highlighting diversity in agriculture overall. Many of the women she features are immigrants or first-generation Americans whose cultural backgrounds give them unique insights into farming practices and market needs.

“There’s so much innovation coming from diverse communities,” Wu noted. “It’s important that agriculture reflects the people who are working in it and being impacted by it.”

Impact and Recognition

Wu’s efforts have garnered significant recognition. From Farms to Incubators has been showcased at numerous film festivals, agricultural conferences, and industry events. Her work has inspired partnerships with educational institutions, industry groups, and technology companies interested in promoting diversity and inclusion.

Closer to home, her storytelling and mentorship resonate deeply in California, where agriculture is a multi-billion-dollar industry facing challenges like climate change, labor shortages, and sustainability demands.

“We have to think about the future of ag,” she said. “Technology is part of that future, and so are the women creating it.”

Advice for Aspiring Women in Ag-tech

Asked what advice she’d give young women considering a career in Ag-tech, Wu urged them to stay curious and seek out mentors—something she’s working to facilitate directly.

“Be bold and don’t be afraid to ask questions,” she said. “Find people who support you and who understand the journey you’re on. And if you can’t find a mentor, reach out, I’m building a network to help connect women in Ag-tech.”

Looking Ahead

Wu isn’t slowing down. She’s currently working on expanding From Farms to Incubators into new regions, growing her mentorship program, and exploring additional documentary projects. Her mission remains clear: to keep telling the stories of women who are transforming agriculture from the ground up, and to ensure those women have the support they need to succeed.

“Storytelling changes perceptions,” Wu said. “If we can see women as innovators in Ag-tech, we can open doors for many more to follow.”

You can hear Wu’s interview on the next Farm Bureau Friday podcast airing July 11 on your favorite podcast platform.

About Amy Wu

Amy Wu is an award-winning journalist and founder of From Farms to Incubators, a multimedia platform documenting the stories of women leaders in agricultural technology. She also leads a mentorship program connecting aspiring women in Ag-tech with industry professionals. Wu is based in California’s Central Coast.



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California's July 4 cookout costs higher than national average

Californians stocking up on groceries for Fourth of July holiday celebrations this week will pay comparatively steeper prices, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual marketbasket survey, which analyzed the cost of cookout staples such as ground beef, pork chops, hamburger buns and lemonade. The average Independence Day cookout for 10 guests in California will cost \$90.06, nearly 27% higher than the national average of \$70.92, the survey found. "Inflation and lower availability of some food items continue to keep prices stubbornly high," AFBF Associate Economist Samantha Ayoub said. She noted that "high prices don't mean more money for farmers," who take home an average of just 15% of food retail revenue. Nationwide, the cost of a Fourth of July cookout remained almost unchanged from last year, with the average grocery bill for a party of 10 falling by 30 cents.

Dairy farms make strides in capturing biogas and reducing emissions

During the past five years, U.S. dairy farmers more than doubled the amount of methane they capture from manure and convert into biogas using anaerobic digesters, according to data released this week by the American Biogas Council. Overall biogas capture on dairies increased by 130%, generating enough renewable energy to power 615,000 homes per year, the council reported. "The great progress by our dairy farmers in trapping a waste gas and putting it to beneficial use is something all sAmeri-

cans can celebrate," ABC Executive Director Patrick Serfass said. "Biogas systems help improve our food system by providing nutrient-rich, odor-free fertilizers, increasing farm sustainability, and helping to keep air and water clean in rural communities."

California farmers partner with state to protect groundwater supplies

A pilot program launched in 2022 by the California Department of Water Resources to help farmers conserve groundwater supplies has succeeded in saving more than 100,000 acre-feet of groundwater and protecting more than 16,000 domestic wells, according to a report published last week by DWR. By providing \$23 million in grants, the LandFlex program has enabled 52 farms to implement water conservation practices and develop infrastructure such as basins to recharge overdrafted aquifers. "The future of California is one where communities that are dependent on groundwater wells have reliable and safe drinking water, farms can stay in production with sustainable practices, and critical water infrastructure is protected from subsidence," DWR Director Karla Nemeth said.

UC Davis launches wine label with batches made by students and faculty

For the first time, the University of California, Davis, is selling wines made by students, staff and faculty. The wine is made from grapes grown at research vineyards in Napa Valley and on campus in Davis. The launch of the Hilgard631 label was made possible by a 2021 state law. The label features wine varieties including chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon. The program gives

students hands-on experience in chemistry, regulations, marketing and blending, with student winemakers labeling and bottling the wines themselves. "These wines represent our students, their knowledge, creativity and learning," said Ben Montpetit, chair of the UC Davis Department of Viticulture and Enology. "From vine to bottle, our students are involved in every step."

California farmers adopt a Southern staple to diversify their offerings

While most U.S.-grown okra is produced in the Southeast, California farmers such as Andrew and Eric Walker, owners of Farmboy Organics in Yolo County, have found success growing the tropical vegetable in the Central Valley. Okra isn't the primary crop at many California farms, but its appeal to shoppers seeking ingredients for African, Asian and Southern recipes has helped the Walkers attract new customers to their booth at farmers markets. "It adds a nice, little different thing," Andrew said, highlighting okra's role in the farm's crop mix. Eric added, "People who like okra really like it, and they want to find it."

California farmers look to 'liberate the fig from the Newton'

Most California figs end up as dried fruit, the bulk of which is turned into paste and other food ingredients, perhaps most famously at one time as the filling in fig Newtons. But the fresh fruit—in season now through October or November—is increasingly showing up in different culinary takes on familiar dishes. Figs are featured in sauces, charcuterie boards and grilled



pizzas, providing new experiences for diners and marketing opportunities for growers. “We’ve really seen it go beyond the Fig Newton,” said Karla Stockli, CEO of the California Fresh Fig Growers Association.

Sonoma County farmer grows heirloom apple varieties

At Gold Ridge Organic Farms in Sonoma County, farmer Brooke Hazen is on a mission to preserve and celebrate heirloom apples. Though only 10% of his apple production is heirloom, Hazen grows 70 varieties, making him one of the largest heirloom apple growers in the country. Some varieties, such as Strawberry Parfait and Pitmaston Pineapple, mimic the flavors of other fruits. “Because heirlooms are not grown on a large scale, they are in danger of being lost,” Hazen said. “It’s important to preserve them for the genetic diversity that protects us from disease.”

Sugar beet farmers grapple with closure of processing plant

There were once dozens of sugar beet processing facilities in California, but earlier this year, Spreckels Sugar announced the closure of its Imperial County plant, the last remaining in the state. The processing plant’s closure was due to “rising costs, water challenges, labor pressures and, of course, California’s regulatory requirements and costs,” Shelby Trimm, executive director of the California Beet Growers Association, said in a recent episode of the Voice of California Agriculture podcast, which is produced by the California Farm Bureau. Trimm spoke with podcast host Gary Sack about the consequences of the plant closure for sugar beet growers in the region.



From Delta Grower on page 14

delicate as a pear, no invention has been able to replace the human hand. At Stillwater Orchards, every pear is picked, sorted and packed by hand. “The crews take very special care to make sure the fruit arrives in the grocery store in the same condition as when it was picked off the tree,” Elliot says.

Family trees

While much has changed during the 165 years the Elliots have grown pears in the Sacramento River Delta, parts of the orchard itself have stood for more than a century. “There are some trees that have been farmed by all six generations,” Elliot says. “Hopefully, our family can continue to farm them for generations to come.”



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A Step Toward Certainty

Source: Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

Farming is an uncertain business. Every year, farmers plant crops or raise animals not knowing how the weather will impact them or what the markets will be when it's time to harvest or sell their livestock. Farmers and ranchers received some certainty, however, with the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The bill, advanced through a process known as reconciliation, which allows for expedited consideration of budget-related policy, delivers updates to farm programs and makes permanent important tax provisions that will help farmers hold on in tough times and plan with greater confidence for the future.

For far too long, farmers have faced outdated safety net programs that no longer

reflect the realities of our farm economy, and we continue to see the consolidation and loss of farmland. We lost 15,000 farms in 2024 alone, and we need modernized programs to ensure that more farmers are not faced with making the decision to close their doors.

Certainty in Farm Programs

The farm programs outlined in the 2018 farm bill addressed the needs of farmers when it was passed, and we were thankful for the short-term relief Congress provided through the past two extensions of the farm bill. But, since Congress last passed a farm bill, we have had a global pandemic, global unrest, high inflation and trade disputes. With rising expenses and falling farm income, our farm programs are outdated and have left many farmers unable to utilize the tools and safety nets crafted to protect them. The One Big Beautiful Bill

Act secures a big win for farm programs with updated reference prices – ones that will adjust for inflation – as well as investments in conservation, research and trade. There are limits to what can be done in reconciliation, and we still need to finish the job with a farm bill reauthorization to provide the long-term certainty our farmers need, but the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is an important step forward.

Certainty in Tax Reform

The package that is now law provides certainty with tax reform, making improvements and making permanent

tax provisions that were set to expire this year. Taxes can make or break a farmer's check book, and they rely on tax provisions designed to reduce small business tax burdens and promote investment to keep their farm running. If we didn't see tax reform passed this year, our farm families would have been hit with billions of dollars in taxes and many of them may not have been able to survive the cost. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act includes a permanent increase to the 199A deduction, a nearly tripled estate tax exemption, permanent lowered individual tax rates and a permanent bonus depreciation (expensing) extension. Farmers are always planning ahead – both for next season and the next generation – and having these critical tax provisions will help bring confidence when making future decisions.

Certainty in Agriculture

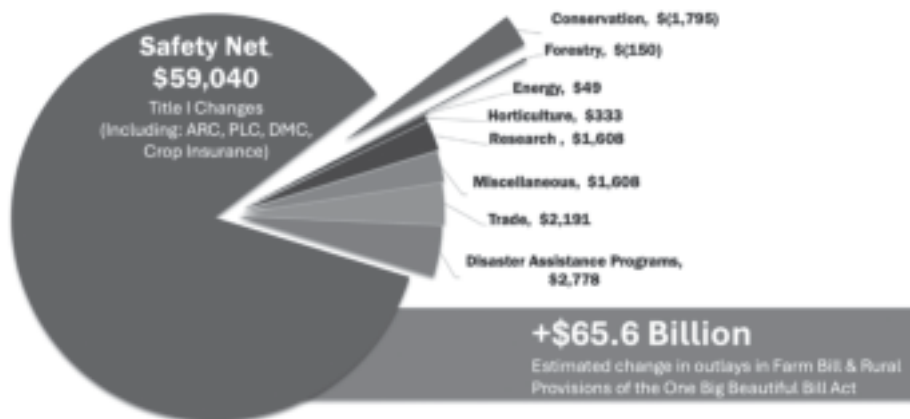
This bill included a few other wins for our farmers and small business owners including the limiting of the 45Z tax credit to only biofuels produced by domestic feedstocks. Renewable fuels have been a major success story for our rural communities, and this legislative package will continue to strengthen that success.

The wins in farm programs and tax policy within the One Big Beautiful Bill Act all closely align with Farm Bureau's grassroots policy, and I want to say thank you to all our grassroots leaders who remained engaged and helped ensure the inclusion of our priorities. We still have much to accomplish ahead

when it comes to the certainty our farmers need, but the reconciliation package is another example of how strong we are as the United Voice of Agriculture and shows that together we can get it done.

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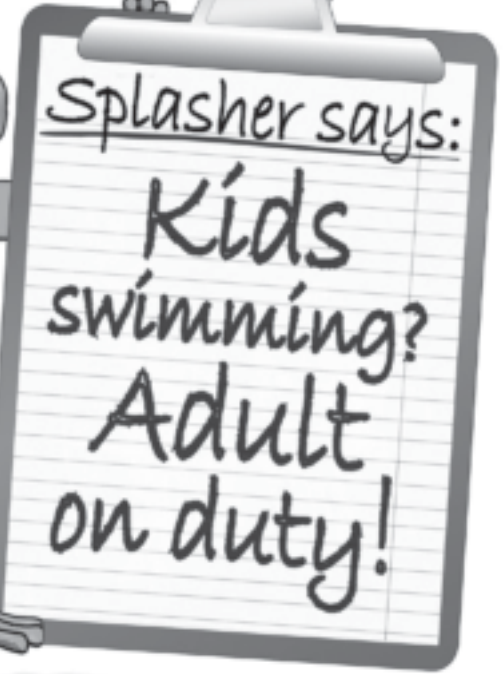
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