

The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture



For the *good* of your *food*.



**Official Publication of Stanislaus
County Farm Bureau
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Grassroots Advocacy & Education, See Page 8

Pictured above: DPR Director, Julie Henderson &
Richard Roberts with Burchell Nursery

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

Stanislaus Farm News

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Upcoming Class Schedule

Thursday, May 25th
Cooperative Extension Updates | 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
1 Hour L/R or Other DPR
1 Hour CCA

Save the Dates for 2023

- Thursday, June 29th
- Thursday, July 20th
- Thursday, August 24th
- Thursday, September 21st
- Thursday, October 26th
- Thursday, November 30th



Agricultural Commissioner's Office & **Stanislaus County Farm Bureau**

2023 Continuing Education (CE) Schedule

Classes will be offered both in-person and hybrid (Both In-person & Online)

Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is happy to announce our continued partnership with the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau for the 2023 Continuing Education Series. With this partnership will come the ability for us to host a wide variety of other topics and increase your access to continuing education credits.

In-Person CE Workshop Schedule

Date	Time	Topics	CE Credits
June 13, 2023	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Regulatory Compliance and Safety During Mixing and Loading Pesticides	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
June 13, 2023	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Pesticide Label Review	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
August 8, 2023	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Mitigating Pesticide Dependence	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
August 8, 2023	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Drift Minimization and Calibration Demonstration	1 Hr.- Other
October 25, 2023	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Promoting Bee Protection and Beneficials	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
October 25, 2023	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	New Technologies in Pest Management	1 Hr.- Other

Hybrid Schedule (Both In-Person & Online)

Please visit our website <http://www.stanag.org> and click on continuing education to register for your spot at our continuing education class. Once you register for the class, you will receive an email confirming your spot has been saved.

Date	Time	Topics	CE Credits
June 6, 2023	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Dealer Regulations	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
June 6, 2023	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Cannabis Regulations	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
July 14, 2023	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Farm Labor Contractor Worker Safety	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
July 14, 2023	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Oxyfluorfen Best Management	1 Hr.- Other
August 31, 2023	5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	CDPR Top 10 Violations	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
August 31, 2023	6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Grower/ PCB Farm Pesticide Compliance Requirements	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
October 10, 2023	5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Private Applicator and QAL Regulatory Information	1 Hr.- Laws & Regulations
October 10, 2023	6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Telone Regulatory Information	1 Hr.- Other

All classes are still pending approval from CDPR. For verification of CE hours and category approval, please call (209) 525-4730 one week prior to the class or workshop. If you need Spanish translation of any of our scheduled classes, please contact our office one week prior and we will make arrangements. Si desea una traducción al español de una de nuestras clases programadas, comuníquese una semana antes de la fecha de la clase, para intentar hacer acomodación. ***Coming Soon: Private Applicator Certificate Test Dates and Study Sessions.**



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FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

BUDGET

This week the governor, along with the State Legislature, passed the Budget Act of 2023. In total, the Budget Act of 2023 contains \$310.3 billion in total spending, including \$225.9 billion from the General Fund. The budget contains \$31.7 billion in solutions to close the budget gap and includes a total General Fund Reserves of \$37.8 billion. The following is a brief synopsis of key funding allotted to various departments affecting the agricultural sector.

California Department of Food and Agriculture:

- \$10 million shall be available for the Organic Transition Pilot Program that shall provide incentives for grants, technical assistance, and educational materials and outreach, to farmers and ranchers.
 - \$10 million shall be available for the Healthy Soils Program.
 - \$14.5 million for the Pollinator Habitat Program.
 - \$40 million for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program
- Climate:
- \$35 million for the Enteric Fermentation Incentive Program, which the Department of Food and Agriculture shall, in consultation with the State Air Resources Board, develop to encourage the voluntary use of products or strategies, such as feed additives, that are scientifically proven and safe for enteric emissions reductions in the state's dairy sector.
- Emergency Response Funding:
- \$20 million for ag businesses impacted by winter storms.
 - \$25 million shall be available for the California Underserved and Small Producer Program for purposes of providing drought or flood relief with

priority for flood relief.

- \$20 million shall be disbursed to the County of Monterey for it to administer in support of flood relief for the community of Pajaro.
- \$20 million shall be disbursed to the County of Merced for it to administer in support of flood relief for the community of Planada.
- \$125 million to support costs associated with preparedness, response, recovery, and other associated activities related to the 2023 storms, the resulting snowmelt, and other flooding risks, including, but not limited to, supporting communities and vulnerable populations, such as farmworkers, from these impacts and to better withstand future flood events.

Transportation:

- \$75 million for agricultural sector emissions (FARMER) by providing grants, rebates, and other financial incentives for agricultural harvesting equipment, heavy-duty trucks, agricultural pump engines, tractors, and other diesel equipment used in agricultural operations.

Water:

- \$25 million for the Agriculture Drought Response Program and Delta Drought Response Pilot program

CEQA

SB-149, authored by Senators Anna Caballero (D-Merced) and Josh Becker (D-Menlo Park) is a budget bill that is part of the state's infrastructure development strategy. The bill aims to streamline lawsuits brought under the California Environmental Quality Act by setting a 270-day limit e, including all appeals for courts to complete environmental challenges for

water, energy, transportation and semiconductor projects and a requirement that public agencies concurrently prepare the record of proceedings and the administrative process.

The projects must be certified by the Governors by 2032 and approved by the lead agency conducting CEQA review by 2033. These could potentially include water recycling plants, aqueduct repair, bikeways and railways, wildlife crossings, solar and wind farms, zero-emission vehicle infrastructure, among others. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cbbf.com

Energy

SB 688, authored by Senator Steve Padilla (D-San Diego), passed from the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Energy with 14 ayes and 1 abstention and has been referred to Assembly Appropriations. The bill would require the California Energy Commission (CEC) to award grants for agrivoltaic system projects to support research and development in agrivoltaic systems, conduct an evaluation of the grant program, and publish the evaluation on the CEC website. Agrivoltaic systems, sometimes referred to as dual-use solar, refers to the co-location of solar energy on working agricultural lands to utilize the land simultaneously for both energy generation and agricultural production. Farm Bureau has remained neutral on the bill but provided feedback and worked with the author's office regarding tax treatment for participants, without changing the Williamson Act, and the scope of the research project to truly evaluate viability. Staff: Kevin Johnston, kjohnston@cbbf.com

Farm Bureau filed a letter of support for AB 50 authored by Assemblymember Jim Wood (D-Healdsburg). The bill would establish interim timelines for large electrical corporations to provide customer energization following a written commitment to serve by the utility. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) would by January 1, 2025, determine criteria for timely service for electric customers that may replace or revise the interim timelines. Farm Bureau members, like other customers throughout the state, have faced tremendous delays in interconnection requests and as the state's priorities to electrify continue, the legislation will hopefully increase transparency and accountability. The bill will be heard on July 3 in Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications at 3:00 p.m. or upon adjournment of the Senate where Farm Bureau will also provide comments in support. Staff: Kevin Johnston, kjohnston@cbbf.com

Insurance

SB-505, authored by Senator Susan Rubio (D-Baldwin Park) and sponsored by the California Farm Bureau, passed from the Assembly Committee on Insurance as a Consent Calendar item earning automatic unanimous and bipartisan support without any opposition. As discussed previously, the bill expands an existing clearinghouse program in the FAIR Plan to include commercial property insurance policies that admitted market insurers may pursue back in the competitive market. The clearinghouse serves as a relief valve for the FAIR Plan to move appropriate policies back to the admitted market. Until SB 505,

the clearinghouse has been limited to residential policies. The bill moves next to the Assembly Committee on Appropriations. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

Pesticides

Numerous pesticide bills were moving through the state senate this week. AB-99 (Asm. Damon Connolly, D-San Rafael) was heard in Senate Transportation Committee and made it out on partisan vote. The legislation would limit roadside pesticide applications by Caltrans and require significant reporting requirements as well. AB-1042 (Asm. Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, D-Orinda) was also heard in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee it would fundamentally change the way we manage treated seed in California. While it made it out of committee, we have just recently learned that the author is moving it to a two year bill which would allow more time to discuss this complex regulatory structure. AB-652

(Asm. Alex Lee, D-San Jose) is legislation that would create an environmental justice advisory committee for the Department of Pesticide Regulation and it will heard next week in the Senate Environmental Quality Committee. We expect both AB 99 and AB 652 to make it out of policy committee's and preparing to work with the appropriations committee after summer recess. Staff: Chris Reardon,

creardon@cfbf.com

Transportation

Beginning August 30, 2023, eligible small fleets can access flexible financing options for zero-emission trucks through the (HVIP) Innovative Small e-Fleet Pilot (ISEF). Eligible fleets include California-based, privately owned trucking companies, independent owner-operators, and non-profits with fewer than 20 trucks and an annual revenue of less than \$15 million. Non-profits are not disqualified by revenue. This funding allows small fleets to request enhanced vouchers for standard financing, lease, rental, and truck-as-a-service options, and fueling support. Guidelines to participate in ISEF are now available through Appendix F of HVIP's Fiscal Year 2022-23 Implementation Manual.

Staff invite small fleets interested in accessing funding for class 2b-8 zero-emission vehicles to participate in an informational session on ISEF hosted by the project administrator CALSTART. The program will open for voucher requests on August 30, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on the ISEF Purchaser Webpage. Eligible small fleets may request either a Standard Purchase Voucher, or an Innovative Solution Provider Voucher. Fleets must work with an approved ISEF Provider to apply for an Innovative Solution Provider Voucher to access zero-emission vehicles through

a rental, lease, truck-as-a-service, or other agreement. Approved providers will work with eligible dealers to request the voucher on the participating fleet's behalf. ISEF aims to provide small businesses with flexibility, and thus fleets should

explore the different options that will be offered by Providers upon approval. Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com
 CARB is also offering guidance to vehicle owners on upcoming requirements and compliance deadlines in Clean Truck Check, formerly known as the Heavy-Duty Inspection and Maintenance (HD I/M) regulation. This guidance provides further information about the timing of these upcoming Reporting Requirements and Compliance Fee Payments in 2023 and Periodic Testing Requirements in 2024 to assist vehicle owners in their planning efforts. As the year moves forward, CARB will release additional information and conduct training sessions to support vehicle owners and other regulated entities in meeting their upcoming compliance requirements. Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com

Water

Asm. Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-Orinda) withdrew her bill AB-460, which would expand the State Water Board's power to issue "interim orders" to halt water diversions, from a hearing in Senate Natural Resources and Water committee on June 27 after she failed to secure enough support from committee members to successfully move the bill forward. This followed several days of calls and emails from Farm Bureau members and other bill opponents to the committee members (including via a Farm Team alert). The bill's sponsors have told Farm Bureau that Asm. Bauer-Kahan intends to make AB 460 a two-year bill, which means there is a possibility that it could return in 2024 if one of the other water rights "reform" bills doesn't move forward. However, that seems unlikely as the opposition coalition has been working hard and the bill is probably dead. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cfbf.com.

Federal Land Conversion Bill Announced

On June 28, U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla announced the Voluntary Agricultural Land Repurposing Act, "legislation that would

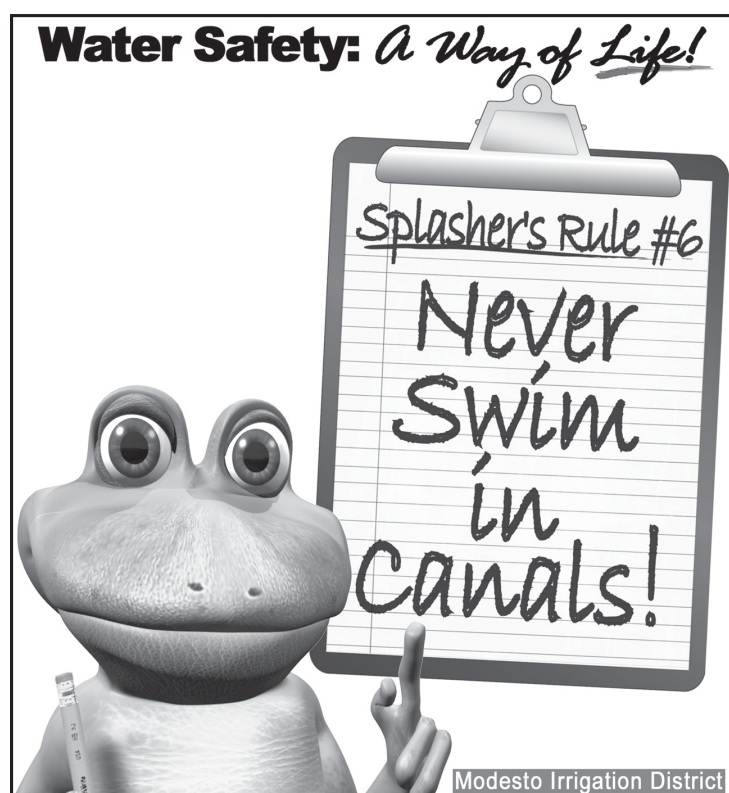
build drought resiliency and reduce water use by providing federal funding to states and tribes that work to voluntarily repurpose certain agricultural lands" and which is partially modeled on California's Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program. The bill would:

- Modernize the Bureau of Reclamation's emergency drought authority to authorize funding for states and tribes to run voluntary and multibenefit land repurposing programs. States would match the federal grant at a 50% cost-share. Eligible state-run programs must be basin-scale, reduce consumptive water use, repurpose irrigated agricultural land for at least 10 years, and provide one or more other measurable benefits to the environment or community, including restoring habitat or flood plains connection to streams or rivers, creating dedicated recharge areas, creating parks or recreation areas, facilitating renewable energy projects, and other listed uses.
- Amend the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program to authorize funding for the multibenefit land repurposing activities described above. This would allow additional water users and partners to engage in multibenefit land repurposing programs while states work to stand up state-run programs.
- Prioritize programs that provide direct benefits to disadvantaged communities or were developed through a multi-stakeholder planning process. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cfbf.com.

Water Commission Drought Survey

The California Water Commission is conducting an online survey to gather opinions on the commission's drought strategies. Action 26.3 in California's 2020 Water Resilience Portfolio calls for the development of strategies to protect communities and fish and wildlife in the event of drought lasting at least six years. The survey will be open through Wednesday, July 12. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@

See Review on page 10



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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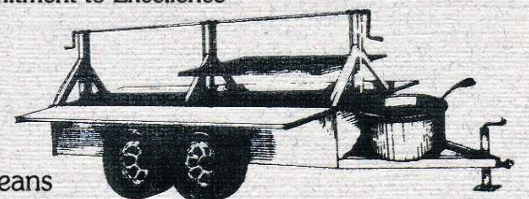
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Commentary: Water rights bills would jeopardize water reliability

Bills in the state Legislature would give increased authority to the California State Water Resources Control Board and could impact historic water rights and threaten water supplies for farming.

Source: California Farm Bureau

By: Pat Wirz, Farmer

Dangerous water rights reform bills that put the interests of the few over the interests of the many are moving through the California Legislature. Family farmers like me depend on our

long-held water rights to feed Californians. But three bills seek to upend our state's fundamental economic foundation.

I farm in the Cienega Valley near Hollister, which has been a wine-growing region since the 1850s. My family has deep roots in the area. We bought our first piece of ground in the 1940s and the land for our Wirz Vineyards in 1983. We sell grapes to small wineries across the state.

While our vines are typically dry farmed, meaning we rely on the soil's residual moisture from rain rather than irrigation, water management and supply reliability have been critical to how I operate my business, particularly during dry years. Three bills just a few stops from Gov. Gavin Newsom's desk would put that reliability at stake and upend California's century-old water rights system.

The measures—Assembly Bill 460 by Assembly Member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, D-Orinda, AB 1337 by Assembly Member Buffy Wicks, D-Oakland, and Senate Bill 389 by state Sen. Ben Allen, D-Redondo Beach—would give unprecedented authority to the California State Water Resources Control Board.

Together, the bills would consolidate nearly unchecked power over California water under the board, giving it authority that most certainly will be used to harm existing water rights holders.

Those impacted would be farmers and water providers using water allocations to grow food, supply new neighborhoods with drinking water and facilitate power production. When their water rights are put in jeopardy, the costs of food, water and power will inevitably rise for all Californians.

I understand the value of water rights. In the 1980s, my family joined a group of farmers from the Cienega Valley of San Benito County in working to ensure that our water rights were protected and

Commodity Fact Sheet

Fresh Carrots

Information compiled by the California Fresh Carrot Advisory Board

How Produced – Carrots, an annual root crop, must be planted in soil that is free of disease and organisms that might affect their color, shape, or texture. This sometimes requires fumigation of the soil. The tiny carrot seeds, 2-3 millimeters in length, are planted in raised beds so the carrots are in position for mechanized harvesting. The growing season ranges from 110 to 180 days, depending upon the time of year, growing conditions, and desired size.

After loosening the earth under the mature carrots, large, self-propelled harvesters lift the carrots by their tops, remove the tops, and load the carrots into a truck and trailer which travel alongside the harvester. The carrots are rushed to packing plants, cooled to 34°F, sorted, cleaned, and packaged within 24 hours of harvest.

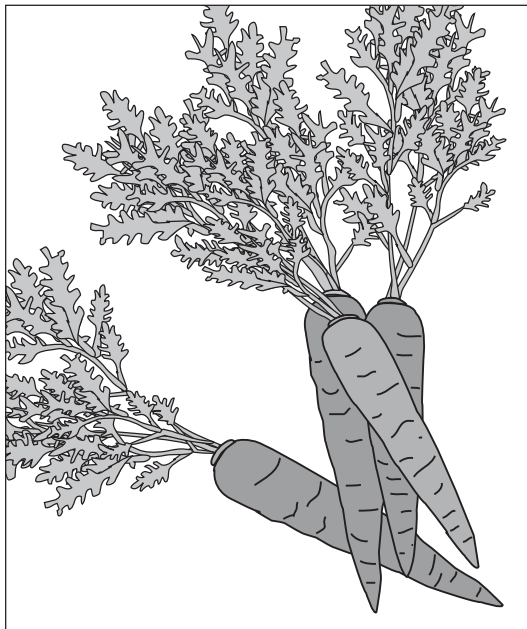
History – Carrots, originally cultivated in Central Asia and the Near East, were introduced to the American colonies in the seventeenth century.

They were not originally yellow-orange, but a range of purple colors. It is thought that the yellow root evolved from a mutant variety which lacked the purple pigment. Ancient Greeks and Romans used both the purple and yellow varieties for medicinal purposes.

Carrots were first used for food by Europeans during the Middle Ages. In the nineteenth century, carrots were identified as a rich source of beta-carotene. During World War II, British aviators were fed a specially developed English carrot, high in beta-carotene, to overcome night blindness. Plant geneticists continue to develop carrots with higher beta-carotene content, as well as strains that are sweeter and more tender.

Varieties – While there are many varieties of carrots, most consumers are unable to tell one from another since there are only slight differences in taste, shape, or size. Varieties are bred for particular growing regions or specific uses. Normally, carrots grown for the supermarket produce shelf are found in cello bags and are purposely cultivated to be larger than carrots for the baby-cut market. Baby-cut carrots are not necessarily small carrots, but are made from full-grown, small diameter carrots by peeling and cutting them to the desired length. Farmers plant carrots intended for the baby-cut market closer together so the roots stay slim and there is less waste

when the carrots are cut to size. Conveniently packaged to be ready-to-eat, baby-cut carrots keep in the refrigerator in their original bag for up to three weeks.



Commodity Value – Production increased by approximately 30% during the late 1990s because of the rather sudden popularity of baby-cut carrots. The market for fresh carrots has leveled off since the turn of the century. California leads the nation in carrot production, accounting for 92% of the nation's total. In 2020, California's carrot growers grew approximately 60,000 acres, producing 1.2 million tons of carrots valued at more than \$657 million. Canada is the top export market, valued at \$78.6 million. Besides fresh carrots still being available in the familiar cello package as well as the very popular baby-cut carrots, consumers are now also able to find fresh carrots in other convenient shapes such as sticks, coins, and chips, as well as shredded carrots

for salads.

Top Producing Counties – Approximately 80% of the nation's fresh carrots are grown year-round in California. Most are grown in and shipped from Kern County. Other growing regions include Imperial County, Riverside County, Monterey County, and Madera County.

Nutritional Value – Carrots are an excellent source of beta-carotene and a good source of fiber. Beta-carotene, the plant pigment that gives carrots their vivid orange color, is converted by the human body to vitamin A. Surplus amounts of beta-carotene are stored in the body's fat cells. One medium carrot provides four times the daily value of vitamin A which helps maintain the health of eyes and skin and reduces the risk of certain cancers. Carrots are fat-free and contain other essential elements in low amounts including vitamin C, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium.

For additional information:
California Fresh Carrot Advisory Board
(559) 591-5675

Grassroots Advocacy & Education

By: Caitie Diemel

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau was able to partner with the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner and host staff members from the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), including DPR Director, Julie Henderson on June 27th, 2023.

The tour and roundtable focused on the newly proposed Sustainable Pest Management Roadmap (SPM). The goal of the proposed roadmap is to eliminate the use of “priority pesticides” and adopt the use of sustainable pest management by 2050. SPM was initially introduced in January of 2023.

We were first contacted by our Ag Commissioner, Linda Pinfold, pitching us the idea of hosting a round table discussion and farm tours in Stanislaus County for the DPR Director and selected staff. The

thought was to get the regulators out of the office, to hear from farmers who have already implemented Integrated Pest Management Practices where they can and who have changed their practices dramatically over the generations. Our team put together a great list of people from Stanislaus County who cover many sectors of this industry and county as well as four representatives of DPR and one from CDFA.

The day began with coffee, donuts and a presentation from Director Henderson explaining the process and ultimately the details of the SPM Roadmap. From here, we opened the roundtable and heard from all facets of our ag industry highlighting their concerns with the plan and their many challenges they have faced as important and effective pesticides have come off the market.

After our morning session, we visited The Burchell Nursery and looked at fields being prepared for fumigation, as well as almonds and peaches that are growing in fumigated fields.

Richard Roberts from the nursery talked about Nursery Cleanliness Standards and how important it is that trees leaving the nursery are completely free of any pests or disease. He talked extensively about how critical fumigation is for his ground at the nursery and for growers who will be planting. From there, we went to Ron Martella Farms and talked about their walnut orchards and conversion to organic. He highlighted some things that really need improvement as they convert to organic.

If I were to summarize the main concerns of the group in relation to SPM:


- DPR has been less accessible and responsive than ever before. Only particular stakeholders are being listened to, and frankly agriculture has been cast aside and not heard. Furthermore, ag has not even been given the space or time to even speak.
- Growers have already implemented many IPM practices and continue to do so as

more become available. More resources are always needed to bring these new practices to light and we would love to see more information and resources with our local UC Cooperative Extension offices.


- Often organic pesticides require several more applications than conventional pesticides. With the softer chemicals, applicators are often applying multiple sprays and not able to get the same end results.
- Hearing from an organic walnut grower on our tour, he said he starts all his trees as conventional in order to build a good tree and then converts to organic after the orchard is established and in full production. The organic inputs are just not there to grow a healthy tree right from the start. Upon being asked what his biggest hurdle is in organic production, he said the lack of herbicides.
- Consumer Education. A huge topic that was covered again and again is the need to

FLORY

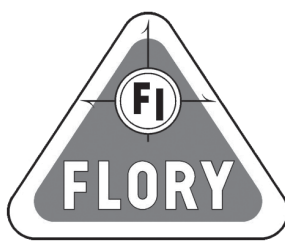
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do consumer education. There is almost no communication to the general public on the use of, importance of, and safety around the use of pesticides. DPR released a study that showed 99% of California grown produce had no pesticide residue. Consumers should feel very safe knowing that their food was grown in California.

- Lastly, this is not what consumers want. People shop

prices and by requiring outlandish things, the prices will simply have to go up. Which means people would be consuming produce not grown here in California, meaning that once again, everyone loses. The consumers who are not getting the best and safest produce and growers who will not be able to grow a competitive product and absorb the costs of the new imposed roadmap.

All in all, I felt like we may

have opened some eyes to the many innovative things already happening within the industry as growers adapt and utilize new technologies and strategies. Interacting with growers and people from our ag community opened eyes to the many struggles that are faced daily. We are hopeful that the conversation was started and that there will be more dialogue as we move forward.

What can you do? Well the

short answer is tell your story. Talk about your farm or ranch and the things you do to grow or raise what you do! Talk about it with people at the grocery store, on social media, at the farmers market or with your local news station. Respond when you get your Farm Team alerts from California Farm Bureau. The only way we can highlight the incredible things happening on farms and ranches in California is by hearing your voice.



Free Cover Crop Seed!

Project Apis m.'s Seeds for Bees program - supported by the Almond Board of California - opens in June. Growers can receive \$2,500 in free seed for first-year participants and \$1,500 in free seed for second-year participants. Cover crops and resident vegetation can provide enhanced agronomic and ecosystem benefits to California almond orchards.

Potential Cover Crop Benefits:

- Improved soil quality
- Enhanced natural pest management
- Increased pollinator forage
- Improved water holding capacity



Open enrollment for the Seeds for Bees program runs through August 31 or until funding is exhausted. Scan the QR code and apply today to see the potential benefits of cover crops.



From Review on page 5

cfbf.com.

Wildfire

SB-310, authored by Senator Bill Dodd (D-Napa) passed from the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources with minor amendments, enjoying bipartisan support. As previously discussed, the bill aims to increase cultural burning so that it rural landscapes benefit from active fuel management. The bill moves onto the Assembly Committee on Judiciary. Farm Bureau supports the bill. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com
 AB-297, authored by Assembly member Vince Fong (R-Bakersfield) passed from the Senate Natural Resources Committee with bipartisan support and moves to Senate Appropriations. As previously discussed, the bill supports advanced grant payments related to fire prevention and home hardening projects. Farm Bureau supports the bill. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS CDFA ANNOUNCES GRANT FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR HEALTHY SOILS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is pleased to announce availability of approximately \$4 million dollars of grant funding for its Healthy Soils Demonstration Program. The program funds projects that showcase California farmers and ranchers implementing established and emerging soil health practices. These projects create an opportunity for local communities to visit and observe soil health practices in action and understand how those practices can translate to their own operations. The program also funds data collection on soil health and/or greenhouse gas emissions to inform future state investments in climate smart agriculture. Nonprofit entities, university cooperative extensions, federal and university experiment stations, city and community colleges, resource conservation districts (RCDs), California Native American Tribes, and

farmers and ranchers in partnership with one of the entities are eligible to apply. CDFA will hold two free web-based workshops to provide information on Program requirements and the application process. Participants can attend remotely by registering for webinar access: • July 11, 2023 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. PST Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_B_U2prf6RfCrYLS7_joclA • July 12, 2023 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. PST Registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NpINDZW8RQeihz29YvrZMg The solicitation will close on August 28, 2023, at 5 p.m. PST. CDFA will not accept late submissions.

APPOINTMENTS

On June 23rd Governor Gavin Newsom announced the following appointments:
 Andreas "AJ" Johansson, of Murrieta, has been appointed to the Wildfire Technology Research and Development Review Advisory Board. Johansson has served as a Fire Captain at the City of Corona Fire Department since 2001. Johansson has been an Adjunct Faculty Member at Mt. San Antonio College since 2007. He was a Fire Apparatus Engineer-Paramedic for CAL FIRE from 2001 to 2005. Johansson was an EMT-1 and EMT Paramedic for American Medical Response from 1998 to 2001. He was a Seasonal Firefighter for the United States Forest Service from 1994 to 1998. Johansson was a Volunteer Firefighter for the Riverside County Fire Department from 1993 to 2005. He earned a Master of Science degree in Geospatial Information Technologies from Delta State University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Fire Service Administration from Eastern Oregon University. This position does not require Senate confirmation and there is no compensation. Johansson is registered without party preference.
 Ashish Kakkad, of San Diego, has been appointed to the Wildfire Technology Research and Development Review Advisory Board. Kakkad has served as a Technology Manager for

the County of San Diego since 2022. Kakkad earned a Master of Business Administration degree in Technology Management from Western Governors University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from the University of California, Riverside. This position does not require Senate confirmation and there is no compensation. Kakkad is registered without party preference.

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS CDFA NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

The California Department of Food and Agriculture's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation (OEFI) is now accepting applications for its Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance grants. Assembly Bill 2377 (Irwin) formalized the grant program in 2018 to support OEFI's climate-smart agriculture (CSA) incentive grant programs: the Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), Healthy Soils Program (HSP), and State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP).

The application period will last four weeks, beginning June 29, 2023, and closing July 27, 2023, at 5 PM PT. Non-profits, Resource Conservation Districts, and the University of California Cooperative Extension are eligible organizations. New this year, CDFA is offering a higher maximum award to organizations that will serve farmers and ranchers to provide services in languages other than English: up to \$150,000 per program, or \$450,000 if the grant is awarded to support all three programs. Grant terms may not exceed three years. The maximum award for English-only grants is \$90,000 per CSA program that would be supported, or \$270,000 if the grant is awarded to support all three programs. "Since the passing of AB 1348 and AB 2377, the OEFI program has been steadily working to modify their programs to better serve socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, through

robust technical assistance and stakeholder engagement," said CDFA Farmer Equity Advisor Thea Rittenhouse. "This new round of funding with a higher allocation for technical assistance organizations serving farmers and ranchers who speak languages other than English represents a positive step toward continuing to address the tenets of AB 1348 (the Farmer Equity Act of 2017) and the recommendations contained within the Farmer Equity Report, and an important step CDFA is taking to address language access and direct support for farmers and ranchers who speak languages other than English."

Awardees must use 25 percent of the award to provide technical assistance to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFRs) as defined by the Farmer Equity Act of 2017. Awardees must also provide both application and award implementation assistance to farmers and ranchers who participate in the CSA programs.

Additionally, awardees may also participate in several optional objectives, including: • Supporting CDFA in verifying practices or projects are completed • Documenting project outcomes in case studies • Providing training to agricultural operations • Consulting with unsuccessful applications of the CSA programs in preparation for future solicitations • Obtaining training to increase relevant technical expertise

METHANE REDUCTION -- CDFA NOW ACCEPTING GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR DAIRY AND LIVESTOCK METHANE REDUCTION PROGRAMS The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is now accepting grant applications from commercial dairies and livestock operations for the installation of equipment and implementation of practices that result in long-term methane emissions reductions and maximize environmental co-benefits. Since 2015, CDFA's dairy and

See Review on page 13

FARM BUREAU SUPPORTING BUSINESS MEMBERS



- **Aemetis Biogas LLC**
Keyes 497-4034
- **American AgCredit**
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- **Bays Ranch**
Westley 894-3472
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Modesto 576-0322
- **Beard Land Improvement Co**
Modesto 524-4631
- **Burchell Nursery**
Oakdale 845-8733
- **Cortez Growers Association**
Turlock 632-3118
- **Dave Wilson Nursery**
Hickman 874-1821
- **Flory Industries**
Salida 545-1167
- **Frank Borba Custom Chopping**
Modesto 652-8201
- **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
- **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

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- **All West Select Sires**
Turlock 667-8378
- **Exact**
Modesto 544-8600
- **FISHBIO**
Oakdale 847-6300

- **Green Rubber**
Modesto (888)273-2464
Salinas (831)752-6100
- **Rumble Ag Service**
Modesto 545-1848
- **West Valley Agricultural Service**
Westley 894-3121

Attorney

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

Banking/Financial

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

Sales

- **American Chevrolet**
Modesto 575-1606
- **Honda Kawasaki of Modesto**
Modesto 529-5424
- **Intero Stanislaus**
Sacramento (916) 671-2358
- **Smith Chevrolet Co Inc.**
Turlock 632-3946

Construction/Engineering

- **Stump Construction**
Modesto 505-9730
- **Branelle Properties LLC**
Oakdale 595-0256
- **MHK Construction Inc.**
Hughson 648-2107
- **Hawkins & Associates Engineering**
Modesto 575-4295

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

Equipment & Repair

- **Acosta & Daughters LLC**
Waterford 872-4815
- **Belcorp Ag LLC, John Deere Dealer**
Modesto 538-3831
- **Coit & Hewes LLC**
Modesto 985-0559
- **Garton Tractor Inc.**
Turlock 632-3931
- **G&F Ag Services**
Escalon 599-8911
- **Hotsy**
Modesto 578-3925
- **Pacific Distributing Inc.**
Hughson 883-4032
- **RAYCO**
Modesto 529-8984

- **Turlock Auto Parts**
Turlock 634-4968
- **Turlock Dairy & Refrigeration**
Turlock 667-6455

Farms/Dairies

- **Ahlem Foothill Farm**
Turlock 874-2477
- **Bobby Yamamoto Farms**
Westley 835-1750
- **Braden Farms**
Hughson 883-4061
- **Carol Morrett**
Hughson 537-6658
- **Catherine Phipps Walden**
Ballico 667-2409

- **D & M Ag.,**
Denair 667-7783
- **David Lemos**
Modesto 541-3131
- **Donlon Farms Inc.**
Patterson 892-8543
- **E Roen Ranches**
Winnemucca 614-5944
- **Fire Lake Jersey**
Hilmar 632-2924
- **Frank Dutra**
Oakdale (209) 402-0796

- **Fowler Brother Farming**
Waterford 409-4951
- **Glory Farms**
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- **G3 Enterprises**
Modesto 1-800-321-8748
- **Hilltop Ranch, Inc.**
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- **Kline Ranch**
Waterford 605-7741
- **Knott Farms**
Modesto 581-2571

- **Melvin Wheeler**
Modesto 526-9770
- **Marchy Dairy**
Ceres 537-0630
- **McManis Farms Inc**
Modesto 541-9345
- **Melo Farms LLC**
Turlock 585-7852
- **Michael Van Anel**
Modesto 531-4667

- **Nick Blom**
Modesto 522-6140
- **Redwood Ranches LLC**
Hughson 883-2603
- **Robert Gioletti**
Turlock 667-6024
- **Ron Martella Farms**
Hughson 883-4819
- **Schut Ranches**
Patterson 892-6226

- **Starkey & Lucas Farming & Cattle**
Ceres 484-0671
- **Stewart Johnson**
Ceres 602-8899
- **Victor M Lopes**
Turlock 587-5026
- **Weaver Bros**
Crows Landing 854-6716
- **Wyeth Dairy Inc.,**
Modesto 545-2101

Farm Management

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Riverbank 869-4290
- **Grover Farm Management**
Modesto 602-3031
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Pomona (909) 623-1392
- **Fisher Capitol Investments**
Modesto

Insurance

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

- **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

- **Nicholson Insurance Inc**
Modesto 526-2697
- **Rico Pfitzer Pires Insurance Agency**
Gustine 854-2000
- **Schut Insurance Services Inc**
Patterson 892-6226
- **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

Irrigation/Utilities

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

- **Turlock Irrigation District**
Turlock 883-8374
- **Waterford Irrigation Supply**
Waterford 847-1387

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- **Casey Moving System**
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- **Clark Pest Control**
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- **Cover Specialty Services**
Modesto 988-3864
- **Drone for Hire**
Modesto 818-4109

- **Modesto Nuts Baseball Club**
Modesto 572-4487
- **R & J Avila**
Hilmar 678-1723
- **Rocha's Valley Enterprises**
Oakdale 581-1473
- **Quality Rodent Control, Inc.**
Modesto 225-4124

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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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- **Blumen Flower Farm**
Modesto 648-8995
- **Burchell Nursery**
Oakdale 845-8733
- **California Transplants**
Newman 862-9420
- **Dutch Hollow Farms**
Modesto 287-6010

- **Park Greenhouse**
Ripon 599-7545
- **Roos Tree Nursery**
Empire 847-2520
- **Morris Nursery**
Riverbank 527-5553

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

Processors

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Waterford 874-5223
- **Turlock Walnut Co.**
Turlock 668-0955
- **Travaille & Phippen**
Manteca 599-6111

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

Safety

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

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

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**Working with
Companies to
Deliver Right to
Repair Solutions**

By: Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau President

Farmers are resourceful—sometimes by nature, but more often, by necessity. I was reminded of that one day when I decided to “clean up” my dad’s scrap pile on the farm. You see, my dad, like most farmers, was saving those spare parts to save time and money—both of which are in short supply on the farm. Sure enough, I threw out a part he needed. Dad wasn’t happy, and I learned a valuable lesson. Sometimes you need to fix things yourself or rely on a handy neighbor to help. That’s why when Farm Bureau members called on American Farm Bureau to work with ag equipment companies on right to repair, we made it a top priority to find a path forward.

Advocacy is at the heart of our work at Farm Bureau. From town hall meetings to hearings on Capitol Hill, advocacy at every level, from local to federal government, is critical to strengthening agriculture and protecting our safe, sustainable food supply. But collaboration across the food and agriculture supply chain can be just as important. In fact, sometimes opting for a private sector solution over a legislative fix is preferred. That was the exact sentiment expressed by our members when they charged us with outreach to equipment manufacturers. Market-based solutions are effective and much less likely to get bogged down in politics and red tape. It’s about sitting down at the table and sorting things out.

Not long after our grassroots members called on American Farm Bureau to work with ag equipment companies to find a solution on right to repair, we secured our first memorandum of understanding. We kicked off the year signing that MOU with John Deere at our annual convention in San Juan. And we didn’t stop there. I said back in January that I hoped the MOU with John Deere would be the first of many—and sure enough, more have followed. Thanks to the hard work of your team at American Farm Bureau, in the subsequent five months we also signed right to repair MOUs with Case IH and New Holland, Kubota, and AGCO.

Last week we were pleased to announce yet another MOU – with CLAAS. A year ago, I never would have imagined that by midyear we would have signed MOUs covering approximately three quarters of the ag machinery sold in the U.S.

Thanks to these agreements, farmers across the country now have the freedom and flexibility to repair their own equipment or work with a local mechanic. In rural communities, it can be challenging and costly to travel for hours to the nearest approved mechanic or dealer when expensive farm machinery breaks down. When your family, your neighbors and your country are counting on you to keep the farm running and the food supply coming, you don’t always have extra hours to spare.

At Farm Bureau, we are proud of the agreements we have achieved with these ag equipment companies, and we will continue working with other manufacturers as well to ensure all farmers have access to the tools necessary to keep their equipment running, and to keep food on the table for families across America.



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From Review on page 10

livestock methane programs have funded 271 incentive projects that will result in the reduction of more than 24.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO_{2e}) once completed through their expected minimum lifetime. This is equivalent to removing a total of 5.4 million gasoline-powered cars from the road. "Dairy families in California continue to step up to ensure the agriculture sector contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation," said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. "The partnership between the state and dairy families has resulted in significant methane emission reductions, making California

a national and international leader in supporting on-farm livestock methane reductions using climate-smart agricultural management approaches and other environmental benefits, including improved water quality from dairy farms." This year, CDFA will offer both of its flagship dairy and livestock methane reduction grants: the Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) and the Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP). AMMP and DDRDP are supported by funding from the Budget Act of 2022, with \$48 million appropriated for livestock methane reduction and an additional \$20 million specifically for AMMP through

the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. AMMP will make approximately \$20.9 million available, and DDRDP approximately \$11.4 million available for 2023 awards. CDFA will make the remaining funds from the appropriations available in a subsequent solicitation expected in 2024. New this year, the Dairy Plus Program offers the opportunity to amplify the reach and scope of traditional AMMP and DDRDP projects with approximately \$75 million from the USDA Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities program. CDFA and the California Dairy Research Foundation joined forces to secure funding from this USDA program, which will reduce greenhouse

being awarded additional funds in support of our state's dairy producers through the USDA's Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities Grant Program," said Denise Mullinax, executive director of the California Dairy Research Foundation.

"The additional funds, administered through CDFA as the Dairy Plus Program, will further incentivize producers to adopt advanced manure management practices and technologies in California. The Dairy Plus Program funds are the first to actively target both GHG reduction and nitrogen management and we enthusiastically await the innovative, environment-benefitting projects that will result from these additional awards." Prospective applicants can find individual program details below:

gas emissions while expanding markets for America's climate-smart commodities. Dairy Plus will fund advanced manure management practices that reduce GHG emissions and address nutrient surplus. Both new AMMP and DDRDP applicants, as well as previous AMMP and DDRDP recipients with completed projects, are eligible to apply to the Dairy Plus Program. "We are honored to have partnered with CDFA, the University of California, and the California dairy industry in

• Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP)

Applications are due Monday, August 28, 2023, by 5:00 PM PT. Detailed information including application process and requirements, application assistance workshops conducted by CDFA, and availability of no-cost technical assistance for prospective applicants provided by CDFA-funded Technical Assistance Providers and UC ANR Climate Smart Agriculture Community Education Specialists is available at www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/AMMP.

• Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP)

Applications are due Monday, August 28, 2023, by 5:00 PM PT. Detailed information including application process and requirements, application assistance workshops conducted by CDFA, and community outreach resources is available at www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/ddrdp.

• Dairy Plus Program

Applications are due Monday, August 28, 2023, by 5:00 PM PT. Detailed information including the application process and requirements, and application assistance workshops conducted by CDFA is available at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/dairyplus/>.

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Morning Star Tomatoes & Innovation

By: Anna Genasci

Each time I set out to do an interview for an article for the paper I find I end up feeling more enthusiastic about our industry each time! My recent interview with Aaron Giampietro at Morning Star did not disappoint.

First let me tell you a little bit about Aaron. My interviews usually begin with asking for their name and title for accuracy in the article. Right out of the gate, this interview was a little different. Aaron has worked for Morning Star since 2007, but has no title. Aaron explained that no one at Morning Star has a title and that it speaks to their “self-managed, dynamic mission. The leader on a given project is the person who has the most insight on that particular issue,” shared Aaron.

Aaron began working at Morning Star right out of high school. As a seasonal research and development employee in the cannery, he soon fell in love. While attending college he would come home to Los Banos

each summer to work. Following graduation, he returned to Morning Star where he has worked ever since, initially starting in quality assurance.

Morning Star’s “self-managed,” motto allowed for Aaron to evolve and grow, chasing his interests; he now wears multiple hats.

But where did the self-managed leadership model come from? Morning Star founder, Chris Rufer.

In 1970, Chris Rufer began Morning Star as a one-truck owner-operator company in California’s Central Valley, hauling tomatoes from fields to canneries. As a truck driver Chris noticed that he was able to manage his day without a boss sitting in the passenger seat. He balanced things like the number of loads in a day, relationships with schedulers and quickly learned which canneries were more efficient than others. Chris began to study the market and noticed a need for bulk products. He turned his vision into reality in the early 1980s when a few growers bought into his vision.

In 1990, wanting to expand, Chris set out on his own to what we know today as Morning Star.

The past 30 years Morning Star has seen tremendous vertical integration. The company now includes three factories, in-house trucking, greenhouses, transplanting, harvesting and farming. And don't forget the growers on contract who ship their tomatoes to Morning Star as well.

Now you might be wondering where all of these tomatoes, that ultimately turn into processed tomatoes, go. Well one customer for example, is Domino's Pizza. If you are enjoying a Domino's Pizza you have had Morning Star tomato products.

Today Morning Star spans from Glenn to Kern County and harvests from mid-July to mid-October.

I asked Aaron what have been some recent obstacles facing the Tomato industry.

“Growing in California is getting harder; access to acres, water and the economy of

competing crops. Contract growers have to ask themselves ‘am I growing cotton, forage, or tomatoes this year,’ obviously pricing plays a role. Additionally, we compete with a global market. We have really invested in studying the market.”

Aaron also mentioned regulation, the growing cost of compliance and navigating changes specifically to air quality and labor.

Innovation seems to be the key to Morning Star’s success, plus the economy of scale by vertically integrating.

“We have invested in precision irrigation and studied crop stress to apply the right amount of water at the right time. Morning Star is utilizing autonomous vehicles for transplants and laser weeding to help manage labor costs,” shared Aaron. “Working with Yara, a fertilizer company, we're honing in on applying the exact amount of fertilizer at the exact right time.”

The fields are not the only place where Morning Star has seen innovation. “In the factories we have invested in automation. Two of the three processing plants can run completely off the grid utilizing their own natural gas.”

Anything revolutionary coming soon, I asked.

Aaron shared that while they haven't had any big gains quite yet, they are working with seed breeders. In layman's terms, trying to get all the goodness in the seed rather than grafting to different types of rootstocks.

Seed technology isn't the only place they're seeing growth. With the expansion of food service pouches rather than cans, Morning Star has had to adapt their processing facilities. Aaron explained how the team has really come together on this project and likened the plant to a picture out of a magazine.

So why a pouch versus a can?



Morning Star Tomato Harvest

Morning Star Tomato Transplanting



First the savings, the cost of a pouch is significantly lower than a steel can. It's a more sustainable way of shipping products to the customers; the pouches are durable, easier to store and easier to dispose of.

So, speaking of sustainability, I asked Aaron what strides they're making in this arena.

Aaron shared that on the grower side, agriculture is almost by

default sustainable because of California regulations. Additionally, Morning Star contract growers have access to their agronomist to help with farming decisions.

Morning Star utilizes fuel efficient trucks, the latest technology in their plants and even have processes that recapture steam, so that it can be used multiple times.

So, with all this conversation,

it begs the question, any new products coming from Morning Star?

Aaron shared they're doing more with green tomatoes, have a dedicated organic line, especially for the growing interest in organic ketchup and they're doing more and more with peppers and products like enchilada sauce. Yum.

Morning Star's customers are 50% food service and 50% private label.

Recently they have been doing business development work in Mexico, Central America, Japan and the Middle East. In particular in Japan, consumers are interested in the health benefits of Lycopene, an antioxidant found in tomatoes.

For fun I asked Aaron do you like tomatoes? He answered with a smile, "processed tomatoes are just tomatoes. They're picked red and processed within 8 hours, and they hold their quality for at least 2 years."

It was obvious that Aaron is passionate about the products produced at Morning Star.

As we wrapped up our conversation, I asked Aaron if there was anything in particular that he wished California consumers knew about Morning Stars products.

Aaron said that, "California is special; our climate, our soil, our water and the impact that farming gets to have in feeding the world. We are literally growing the food you put in your body, it's rewarding! We do it efficiently with a competitive product."

Morning Star and Aaron are just two more reasons that set California Agriculture apart. Whether you're a 40 acre farmer who gets some tractor time in on the weekends, or a vertically integrated powerhouse, it all boils down to the same passion, putting food on the table.

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A year in the vegetable garden

Source: July/August 2023 California Bountiful magazine

By Pat Rubin

If I could walk along the paths in your garden with you or lend a hand when you're getting the vegetables in, we could talk about our favorite varieties of winter squash or debate the merits of the many types of tomato cages. We could sit and have a snack and something to drink, watch the hummingbirds fight over the feeders or marvel at how well the peppers are doing this year. So, think of this online "year in the vegetable garden" as my way of inviting you into my garden. You'll see what I see, know what I'm thinking and see how my garden grows throughout the months.

January

Let's start the year right: with the soil. Every crop you plant takes something out of the soil. Crops like tomatoes and corn take more out of the soil than others. If you take care of your soil, it will take care of your garden. Plants will be healthier, resist diseases and harmful insects, and produce bigger crops.

While your beds are fallow, add planting mix and plenty of compost to them. I add tea and coffee grounds to my garden beds all during the year and add compost every time I take out a crop. If you're buying bags of planting mix, make sure the mix has plenty of ingredients. Don't buy a sterile potting mix.

February

I've always thought of February, at least here in California, as a bit

of a cruel, taunting month. We get just enough days of mild, sunny weather to lure us out into the garden and we start to dream of summer bounty. And then it turns frigid and frosty and wet, and our hopes are dashed.

But February is the perfect month for planning, for browsing through online or hardcopy catalogs and committing to some new crops and varieties. I find it very reassuring to receive packages of seeds in the mail, because to me they represent hope and success in the garden. Go ahead and start a few seeds in pots in the house. For me, it makes me feel connected to the garden when I can't be outside. I can almost taste the tomatoes and summer squash already.

March


March is when most people get started with the summer season. Clean away any weeds that may have popped up in the garden and get planting. Start scattering seeds, such as beet, lettuce, radish and celery this month.

March is also time to plant potatoes, one of my favorite crops. Potatoes need a loose, rich soil, so a raised bed is ideal. Other critters, such as gophers, love potatoes, too, so my raised beds have hardware cloth attached to the bottoms so no unwanted guests can get in. Growing potatoes in large pots works, too.

I also like to make sure my tomato cages have stakes to support them and keep them upright when the plants are 8 feet tall, and that I have plenty of small cages for eggplant and peppers.

April

Finally, it's time to get the bulk of the summer vegetable garden into the ground. The garden centers have been fully stocked for



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weeks. It's hard to resist buying those beautiful tomato plants on the shelves—but resist you must until the chances of frost have passed. A friend said he tells everyone to plant their garden on April 28. He swears that's the best day to plant. When asked why, he replies that April 28 is his birthday. Living in USDA Zone 9, I can be sure the chances of a late frost killing my newly planted garden are well past by then, so I plant my vegetable garden on April 28.

You can plant starter plants or seeds. Bean seeds are the most susceptible to rotting when the soil temperatures are too cold, but by late April, it's safe to plant them.

So go for it: tomatoes, beans, squash, peppers, eggplant, tomatillos, pumpkins, winter squash and more.

May

If you didn't get the garden fully planted in April, there's still plenty of time. May is generally a kind month as far as weather. Heat-loving herbs like basil, oregano and tarragon can go in now. There is probably time for one more crop of radishes before the weather gets too hot. Radishes are really easy to plant from seed. Just sprinkle them onto the soil, toss a little soil over them and water daily.

Now is also the time to make sure your watering system is in place and working. I use emitters that spray water against and around the plants, so it also gets the foliage wet. Our well water includes a bit of dirt occasionally, so between that and the bugs that get into the lines, I have to check all the emitters every few days. My point: Make sure your plants have a dependable source of water. Watch for aphids. You can hose them off or use insecticidal soap to kill them.

June

June means the start of the harvest season in my garden. Early squash varieties are ready to be picked, the basil produces enough leaves for salads and radishes are growing fat. No matter how

small the harvest, it's always exciting.

June also is time to harvest garlic. The plants have been growing since last October or so, and likely some of the leaves are starting to yellow a little. But the bulbs won't be ready until we've had a few weeks of hot weather. Pick too early in June, and you'll be disappointed. Wait until after we've had about three weeks of hot weather, and you'll be both surprised and pleased with the crop. Let the bulbs dry out someplace dark. Don't wash off the dirt. Wait until the bulbs are dry, and then wipe it off. Store them someplace dark and dry, and your garlic will last until time to plant again.

July

July is synonymous with heat—and here in California the heat can be brutal. Check plants for sunburn. I prop up a piece of cardboard, newspaper, shade cloth or whatever I can find on the sunniest side of susceptible plants so they get a little respite from the hot sun. Make sure plants are getting enough water.

Now is the time to increase the amount of water the garden is getting. I often start my garden out at six or eight minutes a day, and by July I'm up to 15 minutes. Mulch wherever you can to protect the soil from baking. When adding new plants to the garden, plant them closely together so they help shade the soil for each other.

August

The garden is getting a little tired by now, although tomatoes are still going strong. Keep picking them and they'll keep producing until the first frosts turn the vines black. Ditto for the basil. But with basil, don't let it bloom. Keep trimming off the flowers and the plant will keep producing leaves.

Basil is an annual crop, meaning it sprouts, grows and dies in a single year. Its goal, programmed by Mother Nature, is to produce flowers and seed so it lives to produce another year. Our idea with this plant, however, is for more and more leaves. So, by trimming away the flowers and picking plenty of leaves, we trick the plant into producing more green growth. Of course, at some point it will all come crashing down and winter weather will destroy the plant.

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Summer farm safety tips for kids and teens

The following information is provided by Nationwide®, the #1 farm and ranch insurer in the U.S.1

The end of the school year and beginning of summer break is an exciting time for farm kids. It's also the start of what should be a time of heightened safety awareness among parents and other adults on the farm as young people help out around the farm.

That's especially important today — as a challenging farm labor situation may have many farmers enlisting teenagers and even younger family members to work on the farm. Given the increased likelihood of injury or fatality from common farm work among young people, safety should be the top priority whenever youth put on their work gloves.

Farm safety starts with a simple conversation Preventing conditions that favor injury or worse when youth are working on the farm starts with a simple conversation. When it becomes a regular topic of conversation, safety becomes part of the culture of your farm.

“My son is right there with his dad every step of the way when it comes to taking care of the pigs,” said farmer and Nationwide Risk Management Manager Emily Atwood. “When he sees his dad do something, he thinks that's something he can do too – but that's not always the case.”

Atwood knows there are countless farm hazards and considers frequent safety conversations the foundation of smart, attentive behavior in her son, especially when she's unable to directly supervise him.

“We talk to him regularly about being safe and making good decisions and making sure either mom and dad knows where he's at and what he's doing at all times,” Atwood said. “We just want to build that awareness in him, so he thinks twice before he makes a dangerous decision, especially when we're not there with him.”

Steps to promote a safe working environment

There are steps Atwood and other farmers can take to promote a safe working environment, both before and while youth are helping out on the farm.

- Designate areas where they can and can't go. Safe areas should be separated from potential hazards like machinery and confined spaces like manure pits. Consider fencing off or locking particularly hazardous areas, like chemical or fuel storage.
- Inspect your farm regularly. Things change on a daily basis on the farm, especially during the busy summer months. Take time to check for any changes in potential hazards as frequently as possible.
- Assign young workers appropriate jobs. Make sure young workers can do their work safely. Train them on any work they're doing, reminding them often of the necessary safety precautions.
- Store equipment and machinery safely. Remove keys from machinery like tractors, and make sure all hydraulic components are lowered.
- Demonstrate safe habits. Don't introduce youth to potential hazards like riding along unsecured in machinery, using farm shop tools alone and entering confined spaces.

Visit AgInsightCenter.com for resources and expert tips on trending topics to help you run a successful business and maintain the safety of your operation.

[1] *A.M. Best Market Share Report 2022. Nationwide, the Nationwide N and Eagle, and Nationwide is on your side are service marks of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. © 2023 Nationwide



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A Brief History of Melons in Stanislaus County

By: Richard Homer
Ag Inspector III, Stanislaus County

The history of melons in the world is known as the stuff of antiquity. Thought to be domesticated in southwest Asia, melons made their first documented citation in the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh around 2,500 BC. Romans would eat melons raw or, from a published recipe, simmer them in a fish sauce with vinegar, honey, pepper, and parsley. In fact, the cantaloupe is named for a town near Rome Italy called Cantalupo. The great explorer Marco Polo wrote about his time in Afghanistan and claimed to have experienced melons that were the "best in the world." Melons were later brought to the new world by the Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus. By 1500 AD, melons had been cultivated for over half a decade in Haiti. During the next hundred years, cultivation of melons expanded throughout North and South Americas. With the establishment of the San Diego mission in July 1769, the Spanish friars grew melons in the gardens, spreading north to many, if not all, of the 21 missions from San Diego to Sonoma.

In the start of the 1900's large commercial melon fields were being planted in many locations in central California and the Imperial Valley. Turlock in 1909 had the honorable designation

of growing the most water-melons in California. In 1911, Turlock celebrated being known as the "Watermelon Capital of the World" with the first Melon Carnival. The Carnival continued for several years until World War I put the celebration on hold. American Legion Rex Ish Post 88 in 1925 used the name "Turlock Melon Carnival" to rename its 4th of July celebration. This celebration of melons in Turlock eventually became known by another name as 4-H and FFA livestock shows were added to the celebration in the 1930's. Today the Turlock Melon Carnival is known as The Stanislaus County Fair. In an early published Stanislaus County Annual Report from the Department of Agriculture in 1940, Fruit and Vegetable Standardization listed 52,293 crates of Cantaloupes, 17,727 crates of honeydews, 1,719 crates of Persian Melons, 3,081 crates of Casabas and 1,005 crates of Miscellaneous Melons being inspected, and clearances were issued. In the same report of bulk lot inspections for which clearance were issued, included watermelons 2,833 tons, Honeydews 180.75 tons, Persian melons 79.75 tons, cantaloupe 50.75 tons and miscellaneous melons 1.75 tons. Miscellaneous melons were listed as Santa Claus, crenshaw, and hybrids. The 1941 Stanislaus County Annual Report from the Department of Agriculture broke down melons production as Cantaloupe 210 crates per acre at .60 cents per crate on 803 acres for a total value of

\$101,178. Honeydew, Casabas, etc. production was 12 tons per acre at \$7 per ton on 1,227 acres for a total value of \$103,068. Watermelon production was 12 tons per acre at \$7 per ton on 781 acres for a total value of \$65,604.

According to the agricultural marketing resource center, the world's leading consumers of melons is the United States. The average American consumer eats about 24 pounds of melons each year. Melon consumption has remained high for a variety of reasons, including health consciousness of consumers, creative marketing, and improved varieties. Melons are often consumed as breakfast foods, desserts, snacks, and picnic foods. Seedless varieties have also helped spur consumption. In addition, industry improvements in harvesting and handling techniques as well as the introduction of sweeter hybrid varieties have improved quality and reduced the number of poor eating experiences. This goes along with the old saying "If a consumer gets a bad melon, it might be their last."

Watermelons in the northern central valley, which includes Stanislaus County, come in seeded and seedless varieties. Watermelons are not just red on the inside anymore with pink, orange and yellow fleshed watermelons gaining popularity. According to the UC Vegetable Research and Information Center, commonly used seed-

less varieties include Fandango, Super Cool, nova laurel, Wonderland, Fire Cracker, Quality, Ultra Cool, Millionaire, AC532, AC 5032 and AC 5244. Popular Miniature or personal sized watermelon varieties include precious petite, Petite Perfection, Solitaire and Extasy. Up to 30% of the seedless watermelon field is dedicated to seeded pollinator varieties such as Royal Sweet, Calsweet, Fandango and Sangria. Other seeded varieties include Sugar Baby, Baby Doll, and Tiger Baby.

Much has changed in the cantaloupe industry in the last few years. Fewer growers are producing the old "Western Shipper" varieties of cantaloupe. Plant breeders have created varieties that reduce the amount of ethylene that is produced by the fruit, so this extends the shelf life of the cantaloupe. These new varieties come in two types known as long shelf life (LSL) and extended shelf life (ESL). These new varieties were created by cross pollination and were not genetically modified, so no GMO. Their hard shell and firm flesh are part of the reason that they last much longer and reduce food waste. California continues to play a major role in the production of melons in the United States. According to the California Agriculture Statistics Review 2020-2021, California ranked as the number one state for both cantaloupe (58.7% of US production) and honeydew (100% of US production) and number three for watermelon production (13.1% of US production). Published in the 2021 agricultural report for Stanislaus County, 3,458 acres of melons were grown for a total value of \$28,733,000. These melons included cantaloupe, hami, honeyew, Santa Claus melon (known as Piel de Sapo) and watermelon.

Melons have played a significant role in the world's and California's history and will continue to do so as long as land and labor is economically viable and water flows for the future generations of melon farmers.



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Agriculture and business coalition opposes water-rights bills

Critics of California's water-rights system are seeking to overhaul rules that date back to California's founding in 1850. Three water-rights bills are pending in the California Legislature that would expand the authority of the California State Water Resources Control Board. The bills are opposed by a large coalition that includes dozens of farm groups, water agencies and business groups. Kristopher Anderson of the Association of California Water Agencies said the bills "present a foundational change" for California's water rights system.

Phase out of diesel trucks worries compost dealers

New trucking rules may make deliveries of compost harder in the future, with major impacts for agriculture, particularly small organic farms. Compost is essential to organic farming. As California moves towards emission-free trucking, with bans on sales of new diesel trucks by 2036 and requirements for mostly zero-emission fleets by 2042, that will drive up costs of heavy cargos such as compost, operators say. Truck batteries, weighing up to 16,000 pounds, will significantly reduce shipping capacity. That will add to the primary cost of compost—transportation.

Wheat farmers reduce acreage, but expect to send more grain to mills

Ample rain this year has allowed some California farmers to produce more wheat, even though statewide acreage dropped, with some fields lost to flooding amid the deluge last fall and winter. Farmers say prospects for the crop still appear positive even as prices have moderated from their all-time high in the spring of 2022 when the Russia-Ukraine war disrupted grain exports. Hard hit by drought in recent years, growers planted less wheat this year than in 2022. Yet they are now predicting that they will supply more of the crop to mills this year than last.

Researchers get funding to breed tasty triticale for baking bread

Researchers at University of California, Davis, are working on creating new varieties of triticale that are good for bread-baking at commercial scale and offer more value for growers. Craft bakers love adding a little triticale to breads for its subtle blend of nutty and earthy flavors and its moist, slightly chewy texture. The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative has funded the research with a grant of \$800,000 over the next four years with the aim of developing new cultivars of bread-quality triticale as a higher-yield, lower-cost addition to wheat for baking.

California avocado growers grapple with increasing competition

A cold spring coupled with increased imports and a persistent labor shortage has challenged California avocado growers, as many have kept fruit hanging on trees for months in search of a market opportunity. Terry Splane, vice president of marketing for the California Avocado Commission, said an oversupply drove down the prices offered by retailers and packinghouses. As a result, he said, "growers have been hanging on, trying to keep the fruit on the trees until prices rebound." Pricing has dipped as a result of increased global production.

Wet winter leads to decline in alfalfa hay prices

Thanks to more rain this year, supplies of alfalfa hay and other forages in the state have rebounded, with prices falling after climbing to record-high levels last year. Hay growers say dairy and livestock producers are in no rush to buy much hay right now, as pastures are still flushed with grass for grazing and the price of other feeds has also dropped. Over the past two years, lack of rain, poor crop yields and less hay being grown diminished availability of forage. The hay shortage forced dairy farmers and livestock ranchers to look for supplies far away, driving up hauling costs.



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From WATER on page 7

distributed equitably amongst us and with the city of Hollister.

These agreements we achieved enable us to water our crops, grow our businesses and sell our products to Californians—and make sure that Hollister residents have access to clean, affordable water. Everyone gets their fair share. Bills proposed by legislators this session undermine our water rights.

The measures would not only hurt the businesses that employ our local workforce but would also prevent us from continuing to provide Californians with our farm products at affordable prices. In San Benito County, 95% of farms are family farms like mine. We simply cannot afford to take on the costs associated with the drastic changes to water rights law proposed in these bills. While the intent behind these measures may be to curtail illegal water diversions, they go far beyond punishing bad actors.

One of the bills, AB 460, gives the state water board unprecedented authority to suspend the exercise of water rights and increase penalties without due process or judicial review. There's no need for this. The water board already has the authority and resources to hold illegal diverters accountable.

Another measure, AB 1337, would allow bureaucrats on the board to order water-rights holders to use less water than they have the legal right to use, even in wetter years like this one. That's like giving the government the ability to force you out of the house you own for parts of the year.

AB 1337 would allow the water board to effectively direct how water is managed in watersheds, stripping local jurisdictions of their role. It would render irrelevant collaborative agreements like the one we have in the Cienega Valley that has sustained our farms and cities for a generation.

All of these proposals would impose new burdens on legal water diverters to submit data and records to the water board and, in some cases, to pay for studies by board staff to investigate the diverter's very own water right.

Water rights holders already comply with both longstanding and new water use measurement and reporting requirements, including those the water board just implemented during the recent drought. These data collection efforts should be allowed to play out before the board is directed to again ask diverters for additional records of water use going back to the state's earliest years. Farmers like me are proud of the work our communities do to feed the people of our state and country, but these bills treat us as if we are an enemy.

For the sake of farmers and ranchers across California, and hard-working families in urban and rural communities, I hope legislators in Sacramento vote "no" on these bills to protect our agricultural production and stave off unnecessary price increases for our food, housing and energy.

(Pat Wirz is a winegrape grower in San Benito County. He may be contacted at wirzvineyards@gmail.com)

History of the tomato.

Source: Morning Star Tomatoes

500 BC

It is widely believed that the tomato, *Lycopersicon esculentum*, was first domesticated by the Aztecs in Mexico, where a variant of the wild cherry tomato was brought into cultivation by 500 BC.

1550-1600

Europeans were introduced to the tomato in the late 15th century to early to mid-16th century, and generally reacted with fear and scorn, due largely to the tomato's membership in the family Solanacea, which includes many poisonous species such as the deadly nightshade.

The Italians, however, soon embraced the tomato, dubbing it *pomi d'oro* (golden apple) and adopting it into their cuisine. The French gave this new fruit an even more romantic name: *pomme d'amour* (love apple).

1830

Still, it was not until the 1830s that the tomato was much more than a curiosity in England or America. Although chefs in New Orleans were commonly using the tomato by 1800, it took until the 1830s for it to catch on in New England.

1840

Within a decade the tomato became widely recognized for its nutritional value, and even attributed medicinal qualities which it probably did not deserve.

1847

Tomato processing began in 1847, when Harrison Woodhull Crosby, the chief gardener at Lafayette College developed a crude method of canning tomatoes. Prior to 1890 all tomato canning was done by hand.

1900

In the 19th century, with southern Italy, especially Naples, again leading the way, comes *pasta al pomodoro*, along with the pizza Margherita.

1920

Industry techniques im-

proved with canning technology, and tomato juice came on the market with the development of the juice extractor in the 1920s.

1960

In the late 1960s, mechanical harvesting became a reality, which drove the industry to develop better techniques of bulk handling and processing.

Present Day

Today, the tomato is known as the *pomodoro* in Italy, as the *tomate* in France, Germany, and Spain, and the *tomaat* in Holland. The United States produces between 10 – 12 million tons of processing tomatoes every year, with California processing over 96% of the total.

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America has long been viewed as a land of opportunity. This popular phrase has been commemorated in history books over the years and used to describe the allure of our great country for those choosing to make America their home. As far back as the first Spanish settlers in the late 1500s, America has proven to be a place where hard work and perseverance pave a path for a better future for you and your family. As we enter this 4th of July weekend and celebrate the Independence and birth of our country, I offer you that America remains today the land of opportunity.

Yes, the political, business and social climates have changed, the population has increased, and technology and globalization drive our economy and way of doing business. However, at the end of the day, the opportunity still exists to build relationships, work hard and succeed in America. Here in California, we certainly see these changes firsthand. We may work the same land as those generations who preceded us, but we do so within a very different – and very challenging – political and business climate.

No longer is agriculture the primary economic livelihood for much of our population, and no longer does the value of the farming and ranching industry stand first and foremost in the minds of every elected official, government employee, voter, and taxpayer.

We've adapted to address these changes over the years. As an industry, we've formed trade and advocacy organizations like California Farm Bureau which bring together farmers and ranchers under one umbrella and speak for the collective, not just the individual. The strength and voices of 22,000 farmers and ranchers now walk the Capitol building, meet with legislators and forge relationships on behalf of the collective where the individual farmer and rancher wouldn't have the time or resources to make an impact. Collectively, we create an opportunity for the future of agriculture in California where as individuals, our voices are drowned out in the sea of other needs and competing interests.

It comes as no surprise to hear me say that California has a very polarized political climate. 47% of voters in California are registered Democrats and 78% of the Assembly and Senate affiliate with the Democrat party, giving Democrats a supermajority in our state. As individuals, we may have personal opinions and take a hardline stance on issues or an elected official's voting record, but to create opportunity for solutions as a collective and ultimately to keep farming in California, we must be willing to work with all elected officials regardless of what side of the aisle they sit on. Sometimes, that's a hard pill to swallow if your personal perspective doesn't align with an elected official's views on other issues outside of agriculture. We must know, we won't agree with everyone about everything. Sometimes, we rarely or never agree with an elected official and their voting record, but when we can find common ground to work together, we must. Until someone tells me they don't want agriculture to exist in California, our perspective must be that there remains an opportunity to collaborate.

With new leadership comes new opportunity as well. As we continue to forge relationships and work with friends, both Democrat and Republican, Today, on the day of his inauguration, we congratulate Speaker-Designate Robert Rivas on his recent election as Speaker of the Assembly. Speaker-Designate Rivas is a native of San Benito County and understands the rich contribution made

by the agriculture industry to the economy and success of California. We are committed to working with the Speaker and continuing to create opportunities for the collective voice of our farmers and ranchers to be heard here in Sacramento.

Jamie Johansson
President, California Farm Bureau

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