

# The Stanislaus Farm News

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Retired Dairy Professor Hal Carlton, current Professor Nicole Morris and retired Professor Mark Anglin catch up on the MJC Dairy Science Program. See page 27

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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.



Thank you to the YF&R Members who participated in the Cherry Gleaning activity this past month. The crew, pictured left, picked cherries from a local orchard and donated 189 pounds of cherries to a local food bank. Want to get involved, YF&R has a scheduled meet-up at the Stanislaus County Fair!

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## Hullsplit and Navel Orangeworm: What Almond Growers Need to Know

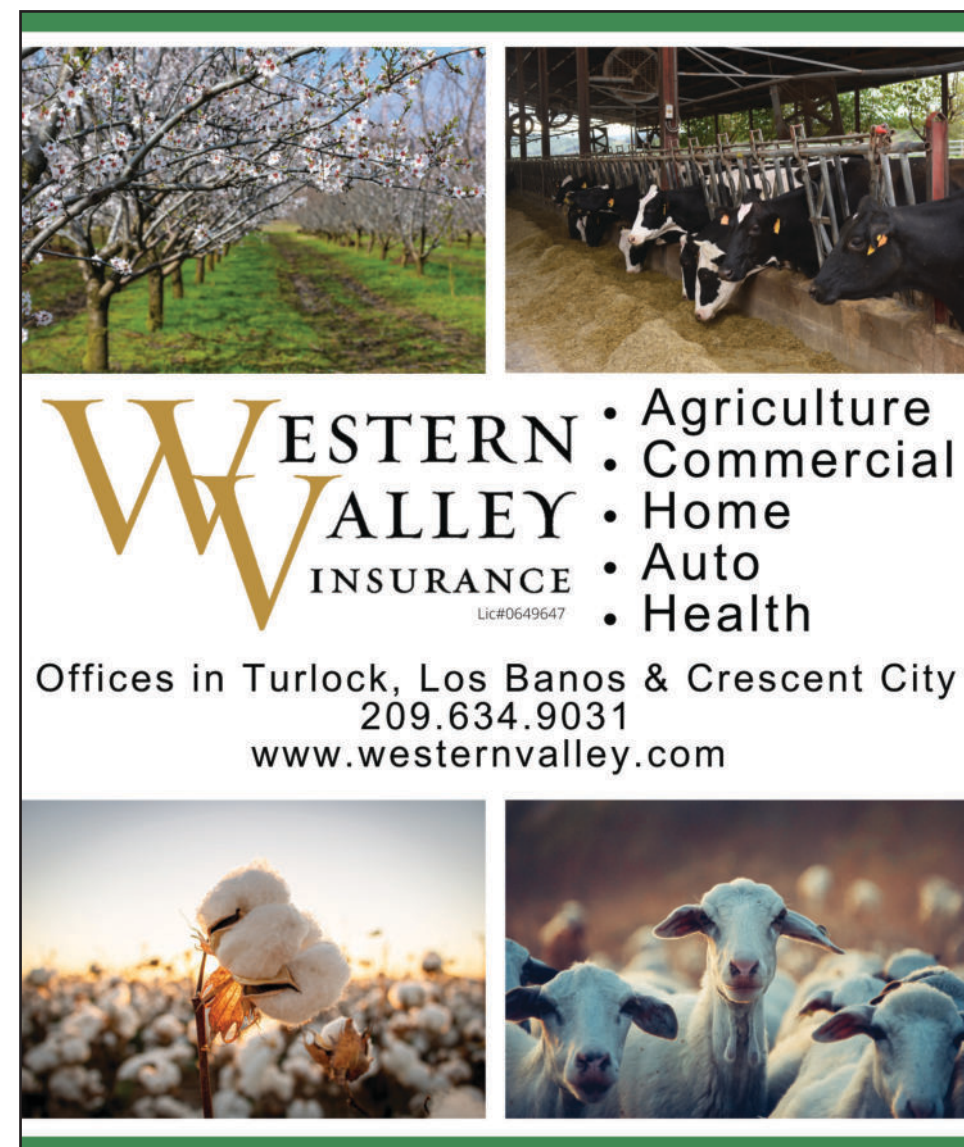
*Submitted by: Jhalendra Rijal, Ph.D.  
Area Integrated Pest Management (IPM)  
Advisor/Entomologist, UCCE*

In almonds, hullsplit is the most critical stage of crop maturity and riskiest, as the navel orangeworm and new carpophilus beetle await this stage to attack the nuts. During this time, the navel orangeworm pest population intensifies with the arrival of the second flight, resulting in severe nut damage if not managed adequately. Navel orangeworm is a highly mobile, multihost-dependent, and opportunistic pest. Crop damage by this pest is often unpredictable and has increased in recent years. The average statewide damage by navel orangeworm was estimated to be over 3.5% in 2023 and 2024, higher than the previous high in recent history, which occurred in 2017.

There are four major practices that should be used in conjunction to manage navel orangeworm more effectively. These include conducting orchard sanitation during winter to reduce the overwintering population, applying mating disruption in spring to reduce seasonal pest pressure, performing timely harvests to avoid later-generation infestations, and applying insecticides at hull split to protect the crop from direct damage. This article focuses on the nitty-gritty of hullsplit insecticide spray decisions, which revolves around hullsplit detection, navel orangeworm population activity, and effective spray strategy.

Hullsplit is the term used in the context of navel orangeworm management to describe the natural almond split, characterized by an opening of approximately 3/8 inch. This can occur at any time during the first three weeks of

July, depending on the year and region. The hullsplit first appears on the southwest side, outer, and top of the tree canopy. Therefore, it's essential to inspect the nuts from these areas first to detect the initiation of the hull split. Using a pole pruner, this can be done by taking nut samples from at least 5 to 6 trees in the orchard. Be aware that up to 5% of the crop may consist of blank nuts, which tend to split one to two weeks earlier than sound nuts and should not be mistaken for hullsplit. Since timing can vary by variety, region, and weather conditions, using the UC Almond Hullsplit Prediction Model in conjunction with the field sampling is crucial. For example, in 2023, Nonpareil almonds at the UC varietal trial site in Salida, CA, had a full bloom on March 1. Using local temperature data from CIMIS Weather Station #206 in Denair, CA, the predicted



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hullsplit date was July 21, eight days later than the previous year (2022).

Tracking NOW activity is equally important. The pest typically has 3–4 generations per season. The first generation, which emerges from overwintering nuts, requires approximately 1,050 degree-days to develop. In contrast, later generations, which feed on in-season nuts, grow faster, at around 700 degree-days, due to better nutrition. Three types of traps are commonly used to monitor NOW: egg traps (for biofix and early-season prediction), female traps such as Peterson traps (to assess egg-laying potential), and male traps with pheromone as an attractant (particularly effective for tracking flights in low-infestation or without mating disruption orchards). While none of these traps alone can dictate spray timing, collectively they provide critical insight into the occurrence of second-generation navel orangeworm, which relies on freshly hull-split nuts for survival. In the Modesto area, biofix occurred this season on April 8, as indicated by the consistent presence of eggs in egg traps. If we calculate the 1,050 degree days, the predicted beginning of the second flight would be July 4 (CIMIS Weather Station #206, Denair, CA). This prediction can be complemented by using actual trap data during the season.

Strategizing spray timing around hullsplit is essential. Research shows that navel or-

angeworm females are drawn to the volatile compounds released by splitting nuts. Although multiple generations can infest nuts, the second generation poses the most significant risk, as it often coincides with the Nonpareil hullsplit. However, most years the hullsplit occurs later than the navel orangeworm flight. If the hullsplit occurs later than the insect flight, the proper spray timing should be at the hullsplit, not at pest emergence timing. However, if hullsplit occurs before the flight, which is not common, early application is warranted; without it, split nuts are vulnerable to the upcoming navel orangeworm flight. Most of the year, growers tend to apply hullsplit sprays based solely on experience (i.e., July 4); they risk spraying too early on nuts that have not split yet, essentially wasting the product's residue when it's needed in 7 or 10 days. Given that both NOW flight and hullsplit timing can vary with orchard and weather conditions, in-field sampling and trap count trends are crucial for accurate decisions.

Unless isolated or historically low in NOW pressure, most almond orchards in the Central Valley require one to two insecticide applications during hullsplit. Growers have limited insecticide options. Reduced-risk insecticides such as Altacor and Intrepid are most effective against eggs and larvae. These products generally offer 3–4 weeks of field residual activity. A second application may be necessary after 10–14 days if traps continue to show high egg or female moth counts as hullsplit progresses, and the orchard has a history of damage. Broad-spectrum materials, such as pyrethroids

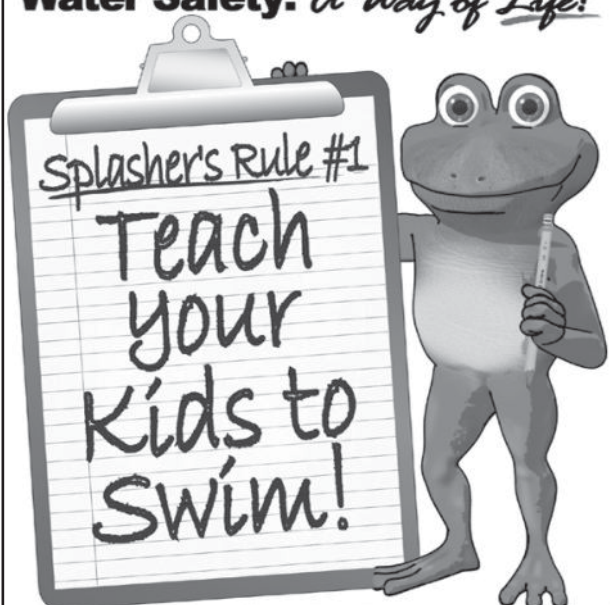
(Bifenthrin, Warrior II), offer some adult knockdown but are weaker against eggs and larvae, and most importantly, can also disrupt mite predators such as the six-spotted thrips. Additionally, note that resistance to pyrethroids has been reported in some regions of the San Joaquin Valley; therefore, use these materials with caution and rotate among different modes of action. Reduced-risk insecticides, such as Altacor and Intrepid, are more selective and less harmful to natural enemies. It is best practice to use the same insecticide for a single generation, but a different one for the next generation to reduce the chances of pesticide resistance. For softer or organic programs, products such as SpearLep, DiPel, BT NOW, Venerate, and Neemix offer some options.

Beyond the choice of insecticides, effective IPM includes optimizing spray coverage and timing the harvest. Studies have shown that the best spray coverage is achieved with a ground speed of 2 MPH and spray volumes of 100–200 gallons per acre, depending on tree size. Spraying during cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or nighttime, improves deposition and effectiveness. Finally, timely harvest remains one of the best tools for reducing NOW damage. For early varieties, shaking by the third week of August (in the Modesto area) can help avoid the third NOW flight. Late varieties, such as Monterey, should be harvested before the fourth flight begins in early September, if possible. The general recommendation is to harvest almonds when 95–100% of the hulls have split. Remember that an overly early harvest can also create issues during the hulling process.

By integrating real-time monitoring data with orchard sanitation, mating disruption, hullsplit insecticide sprays, and timely nut harvesting, growers can significantly reduce navel orangeworm pressure and minimize crop loss.

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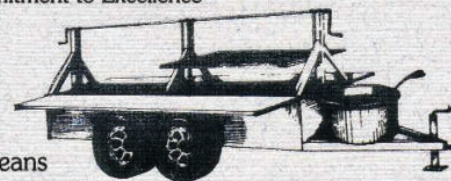
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California weighs Hollywood tax credit boost after denying one to farms

California lawmakers are weighing a proposal from Gov. Gavin Newsom to more than double the state's \$330 million film and television tax credit to protect jobs in Hollywood. The move comes just weeks after a state Senate committee rejected a bill that would have created a more modest tax credit to support struggling farms and farmworkers by reimbursing the cost of overtime wages. "The Legislature elected to ignore our arguments about putting more money in the pockets of farmworkers," said Bryan Little, chief operating officer of Farm Employers Labor Service and senior director of policy advocacy at the California Farm Bureau.

Farmers suspect heat waves is to blame for light cherry crop

California cherry growers are harvesting a lighter crop this year, with farmers in parts of the state blaming the reduced yield on the heat wave last summer and poor pollination this spring. San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner Kamal Bagri requested a disaster declaration after estimating the county's crop was about 43% less than the five-year average, amounting to roughly a \$100 million loss. Donald Drake, who grows cherries near Linden, said the quality of his fruit was excellent, but yields were down 50%. "The fruit I had, I wished I had more of," Drake said.

Farm Bureau program pairs new farmers with seasoned mentors

Beginning farmers and their more experienced peers are forging fulfilling partnerships through a year-old mentorship program run by the California Farm Bureau's California Bountiful Foundation and supported by state and federal funding. Launched in spring 2024, the Expanding Our Roots program aims to help newcomers navigate the complexities of farming and ranching by giving them access to seasoned pros who can share the knowledge they've gained through years of trial and error, said Tyler Rood, senior project specialist at the foundation and the program's coordinator.

California farmers voice concerns in advocacy effort at state Capitol

California Farm Bureau members from across the state traveled to the state Capitol last month to advocate on issues such as the conservation of farmland and clean water laws, as well as regulatory burdens farmers face. "This is one of the most important things we do," Chris Reardon, vice president of policy advocacy at the California Farm Bureau, said of the annual advocacy effort. "While we have a policy team up here on a regular basis, in all honesty, the most effective communicators of our issues are the members themselves."

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## Decent almond crop projected despite early alarm about bee losses

Despite concerns earlier this year that there would not be enough bees to pollinate the 2025 almond crop, the shortage does not appear to have affected production, according to a forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The department projected California farmers will harvest 2.8 billion pounds of almonds, which is less than average but slightly more than last year. “That’s not an excellent crop, but it’s a nice crop,” Mel Machado, chief agricultural officer of Blue Diamond Growers, a cooperative of almond growers, told host Gary Sack on a recent episode of the Voice of California Agriculture podcast, which is produced by the California Farm Bureau. Growers are “cautiously optimistic,” Machado said.

## Lemon growers struggle with supply and market challenges

With peak lemon season winding down in Ventura County—the state’s top producer of the citrus fruit—growers say ongoing challenges with low prices make it hard to earn a profit. While Central Valley growers have been able to produce quality lemons, those in coastal areas have struggled with unfavorable weather. “We haven’t been making anything on lemons since the pandemic,” said Craig Colton, a Ventura County grower. “Because of the age of our trees, wind damage and size issues, we can’t get the fruit quality the packinghouse is asking for.”

## California agriculture official highlights priorities

In an exclusive interview with Ag Alert®, California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross spoke about challenges farmers face and her priorities for agriculture in the Golden State. “It is crucial that we understand where we can help provide relief or more efficient, effective ways of doing things,” Ross said. “It’s hugely important for our landscape and our climate goals to keep people on the land and for families in rural communities to have a thriving agricultural sector.”

## Legislation allowing schools to serve whole milk advances

A bill being considered by U.S. lawmakers would give schools the option of serving whole and 2% milk. Dairy groups applauded passage last week of the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act out of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. The bipartisan legislation was already approved by a House committee. Since 2012, federal school meal rules have allowed only 1% and fat-free milk to be served in schools, despite those varieties being less popular in people’s homes. The bill “is about making informed, science-backed decisions that prioritize the health and future of our children,” National Milk Producers Federation President and CEO Gregg Doud said.



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## Strengthening Ties with Farmers in the U.K.

By: Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

It's no secret that I love visiting farms across our great country, and last week, I had a unique opportunity, to get a look at agriculture in the English countryside. I was reminded of how much farmers everywhere have in common, and every conversation highlighted how important trade is to farmers on both sides of "the pond."

Before heading out to farmland, I had several meetings in London with U.K. government officials and farm leaders, as well as with our U.S. ambassador to the U.K., Warren Stephens. With the U.K. trade deal nearly final, Ambassador Stephens has hit the ground running in the short time he's been in his post. His first visit, in fact, was from our Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins. We have already seen what a strong advocate she is for farmers at home, and it's no surprise that she is just as committed in her work for farmers and ranchers abroad as well.

During my visit, I met with U.K. trade negotiators and U.K. farming minister, Daniel

Zeichner. I also met with leaders of farm organizations, including the leader of the U.K. National Farmers Union, Tom Bradshaw; Dr. Phil Hadley, secretary general of the International Meat Secretariat; and Phil Stocker, CEO of the National Sheep Association. In all these meetings, I shared how eager farmers in the U.S. are to open trade with the U.K. and reach customers there. As I told U.K. officials, we see this as a natural trading relationship and an opportunity to set "the gold standard" for trade agreements. Each visit was warmly received, and I consistently heard how eager U.K. farmers are for the reciprocal arrangement for beef, now finalized in the trade deal. I have no doubt that U.S. beef will be popular over there as soon as British consumers get a chance to sink their teeth into American steaks and other products.

I also pressed in on questions that U.S. farmers still have regarding sanitary standards as the U.K. is working out a deal with the E.U. to set a "dynamic alignment" on their standards. These standards, which are often non-science based, have proven to be a barrier in the past, and I emphasized the importance of staying grounded in science. We understand the U.K. needs open trading relations with

their nearest neighbors, just as we do with ours. But we urged them to hold firmly to science as they finalize those details.

And because crops everywhere need protection, we also talked pesticides. I asked them about the most popular chemical in this discussion right now, glyphosate, which has been reauthorized for use in the EU for the next 10 years. Despite what some discussions around this topic lately have implied, farmers in the U.K. and the EU rely on many of the same tools that we do to keep their crops healthy. In fact, overall, Europe uses more pesticides than we do in the U.S. according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), an international tracking and reporting body. It often surprises people to learn this when much of the current rhetoric implies otherwise.

After meetings in London, we headed out to the countryside to visit a couple beef and sheep farms in the Cotswolds. As soon as the rolling green hills began to pop up outside the city, I felt at home. The landscape reminded me of my own farm, and I found the

See AFBF on page 15



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## MJC Pullin' Pirates Keep Tradition Alive While Looking Toward the Future

Since 2008, the Modesto Junior College Pullin' Pirates have provided students with a hands-on opportunity unlike any other. As the only junior college in the nation to own and operate a competitive pull truck, the Pirates offer a unique blend of mechanical skill-building, team camaraderie, and leadership development.

The team consists of 20 active members, all of whom participate in every aspect of the program. Students are responsible for

building, maintaining, and fabricating parts for the truck, in addition to driving it at competitions. The team also handles fundraising, marketing, and logistical planning, giving members well-rounded, real-world experience.

The Pullin' Pirates dedicate themselves year-round, with weekly Tuesday night meetings and 15 to 25 pulling competitions each season across the Central Valley. Their dedication has paid off—they are proud two-time class champions in the MLM Motorsports Power Pulling Series.

The team runs a Ford 472 engine, and takes great pride in maintaining high-

performance standards while learning by doing. But beyond the engine work and competitions, what really drives the Pullin' Pirates is the sense of community and teamwork.

"The hands-on experience we are allowed to gain while working

on the pull truck and the connections we make," said team member Serenity Faith Lopez.

"The community—we have all become a really tight group and have fun at school and outside of school," added Madison Van Laar.

"Spending quality time with the students," noted Todd Conrado, the club's advisor.

"I love how we are unified and it feels like a family," said Larry Azevedo.

"Having a good laugh and turning wrenches," shared Jackson Brooks.

"If you do it yourself, you know it's done right," said Lucas Cardinale, Club President.

"Traveling up and down the Central Valley," is a favorite aspect for Caden Peterson.

"You are constantly learning new things, and our supportive team will never leave you behind," added Natalia Pereira.

As a nonprofit organization, the Pullin' Pirates rely entirely on the generosity of sponsors and community donors. Every dollar goes toward operating costs like fuel, repairs, parts, and travel—all essential to keeping the team on the road and in the competition.

The team is currently seeking sponsors to support their efforts for the upcoming season. Supporting the Pullin' Pirates means investing in the future of agricultural mechanics, welding, and leadership.

To learn more about becoming a sponsor or to donate, visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/MJCPullinPiratesSponsor>

With the help of community support, the Pullin' Pirates are not only keeping a tradition alive—they're also preparing the next generation of skilled, passionate, and hard-working professionals.

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# California Byproduct Usage in Dairy Rations: A Survey of Dairy Cattle Nutritionists

*Rubia Branco-Lopes and Jennifer Heguy, University of California Cooperative Extension*

## Introduction

California is a leading agricultural state, producing over 400 commodities, many of which generate byproducts that can be used as feed for dairy cattle. Stanislaus County, with strong almond and dairy industries, is an example of this integration: almond hulls, a byproduct of almond processing, are routinely fed to dairy cows. Byproducts have become an essential part of dairy rations, offering cost-effective feed solutions while enhancing the State’s sustainability practices. However, little research has been done to quantify the extent of byproduct use in California dairy farms. Given the increasing regulations on water usage, byproducts may play an even more critical role in feeding dairy cattle in the coming years. This survey aimed to identify commonly used byproducts, estimate the proportion of dairy rations made up of byproducts, and assess trends in their usage.

## Survey Respondents

In March 2022, an electronic survey was sent to 61 nutritionists across the state. We received 26 returned surveys (46% response rate). Respondents provided services to 498 dairy farms, representing approximately 936,700 milking cows. These farms accounted for 44.5% of all California dairies, providing a comprehensive assessment of byproduct usage in dairy rations. Most herds were in the San Joaquin Valley (87.6%), with smaller numbers in Northern California (5.5%) and

Southern California (6.9%).

## Commonly Used Byproducts

A total of 58 byproducts were reported as being used in dairy rations; the most commonly utilized are described in Table 1.

See below.

Almond hulls were the most frequently cited byproduct used as a forage replacement in lactating cow rations, reported by 88.5% of responding nutritionists. When used as concentrate replacements, citrus byproducts (30.8%) were the most frequently mentioned. A 2012 survey of California dairy farms found that almond hulls were included in lactating cow diets at an average of three pounds per cow per day. A more recent survey (conducted in 2022) reported increased almond hull utilization, averaging five pounds per cow per day. As California produces nearly 80% of the world’s almonds, an abundant supply of almond hulls is available for dairy rations. Their moderate neutral detergent fiber (NDF) content and highly fermentable carbohydrates make them suitable as replacements for both forages and concentrates. Similarly,

| Byproduct              | Number of Nutritionists Utilizing (n = 26) |
|------------------------|--|
| Almond Hulls           | 25   |
| Whole Cottonseed       | 25   |
| Canola Pellets         | 24   |
| Soybean Meal           | 24   |
| Dry Distiller’s Grains | 23   |
| Wheat Straw            | 22   |
| Wheat Midds/Millrun    | 21   |
| Corn Gluten Feed       | 20   |
| Molasses               | 20   |

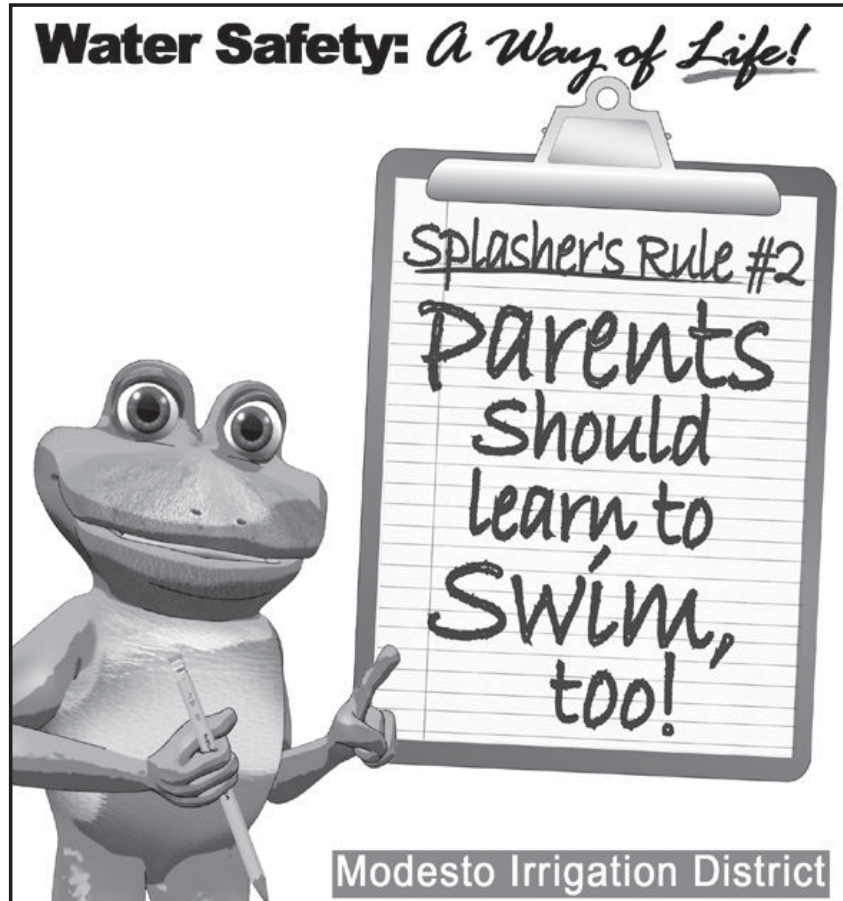
California accounts for 79% of total U.S. citrus production, ensuring a steady supply of citrus byproducts. Rich in pectin and sugars, citrus byproducts serve as substitute for traditional high-energy concentrates.

## Byproduct Inclusion Rates in Dairy Rations

In this study, the weighted, average byproduct inclusion rate in California lactating cow rations was estimated at 40.9% on a dry matter (DM) basis. This estimate was calculated by weighting nutritionists’ reported average DM byproduct inclusion rates with the number of lactating cows they served. For comparison, 2021 work estimated a national average of 32% inclusion for lactating dairy diets. The higher byproduct inclusion rates observed in California likely reflect the state’s abundant supply of agricultural byproducts. The inclusion rate of byproducts in dairy rations varied widely as follows:

- Lactating cows: 10-80% (average: 39.8%, not weighted by cow numbers)
- Dry cows: 5-80% (average: 35.4%)

*See Dairy on page 14*



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From AFBF on page 10

hospitality of the farmers I met just as warm as back home too. The farmers I met shared some familiar concerns with me. I heard about how hard it is for farmers in the U.K. to get the next generation on the farm, and even more so now with recent changes to their inheritance tax, like the estate tax in the U.S. Just as we are seeing in the U.S., most farmers are nearing retirement age in the U.K., and it's getting harder to convince the next generation to come back to the farm, especially as sons and daughters see the challenges their parents face working to get by on the farm. Farmers also spoke of challenges finding enough labor, and we discussed the uncertainty of weather as they have been facing an especially dry few weeks, leaving less grass than usual for their grazing livestock. As I was leaving to return home, the rain began falling, hopefully bringing relief.

Another area of common ground that we discussed is the importance of sustainability on the farm and the role that livestock play in restoring the soil. David Barton showed me where his cattle graze and how they have been critical in bringing back native grasses and beautiful wildflowers, including a rare orchid, on his farmland. At the Miserden Estate, Nicholas Wills showed me his sheep and cattle, and the new facility they have on the farm to dry wood chips to provide clean energy for the village. What a great example of innovation and bringing agricultural solutions to serve local communities! Both farms are outstanding examples of caring for their land and animals, and reminded me so much of the same care and commitment of farmers across the U.S.

Farmers truly share a bond, no matter where we live or what we grow and raise. I look forward to strengthening that bond with farmers across the pond, with our new trade deal.

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## See you at the Stanislaus County Fair!

Our UC Master Gardener volunteers will be at the fair this year from July 11-20, 2026. Stop by our table inside the Floriculture Building located just inside the fairgrounds near the Arch gate off 900 North Broadway in Turlock.

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Talk to one of our friendly volunteers to learn about how to apply for the 2026 UC Master Gardener Program. Applications are available June 1- August 31 on our website. <https://ucanr.edu/site/ucce->

[master-gardeners-stanislaus-county/become-uc-master-gardener-stanislaus-county](#)

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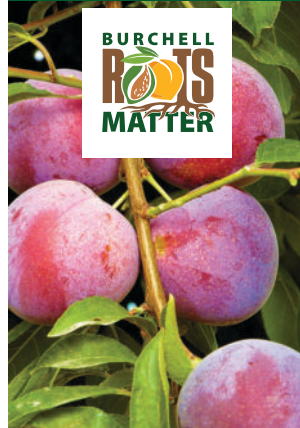


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## California Farm Bureau underscores need for stable agricultural workforce

Source: California Farm Bureau

In response to recent immigration enforcement activity, the California Farm Bureau reaffirms its support for the employees who are essential to the success and sustainability of farming and ranching in California.

"California agriculture depends on and values its workforce.



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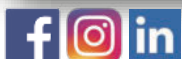
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Farm employees are not just workers—they are partners in this industry,” said Bryan Little, senior director of policy advocacy at the California Farm Bureau. “The current approach to federal immigration enforcement is having a disruptive effect on California’s rural communities and the farmers, ranchers, workers and families who live and work there.”

Without these employees, he said, crops would go unharvested, rural businesses would suffer and food prices could rise for

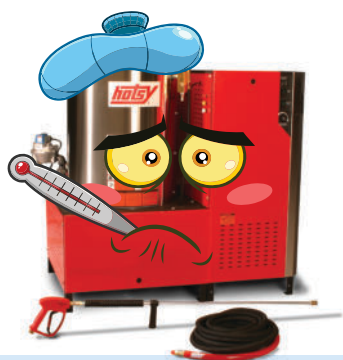
families across the country.

“If federal immigration enforcement activities continue in this direction, it will become increasingly difficult to produce food, process it and get it onto grocery store shelves,” Little said. “A stable and reliable workforce is crucial to maintaining the nation’s food security.”

He added that California Farm Bureau is encouraged that the president has signaled the need for more discrete and circumspect

action to reduce disruption of farming operations.

With one-third of the nation’s agricultural workforce located in California, farm employees play an indispensable role in food production. These skilled workers plant, cultivate, harvest and process the crops that make California the leading producer of fruits, vegetables and nuts in the United States. California’s agricultural operations are not only critical to the state’s economy, they are essential to feeding the nation.



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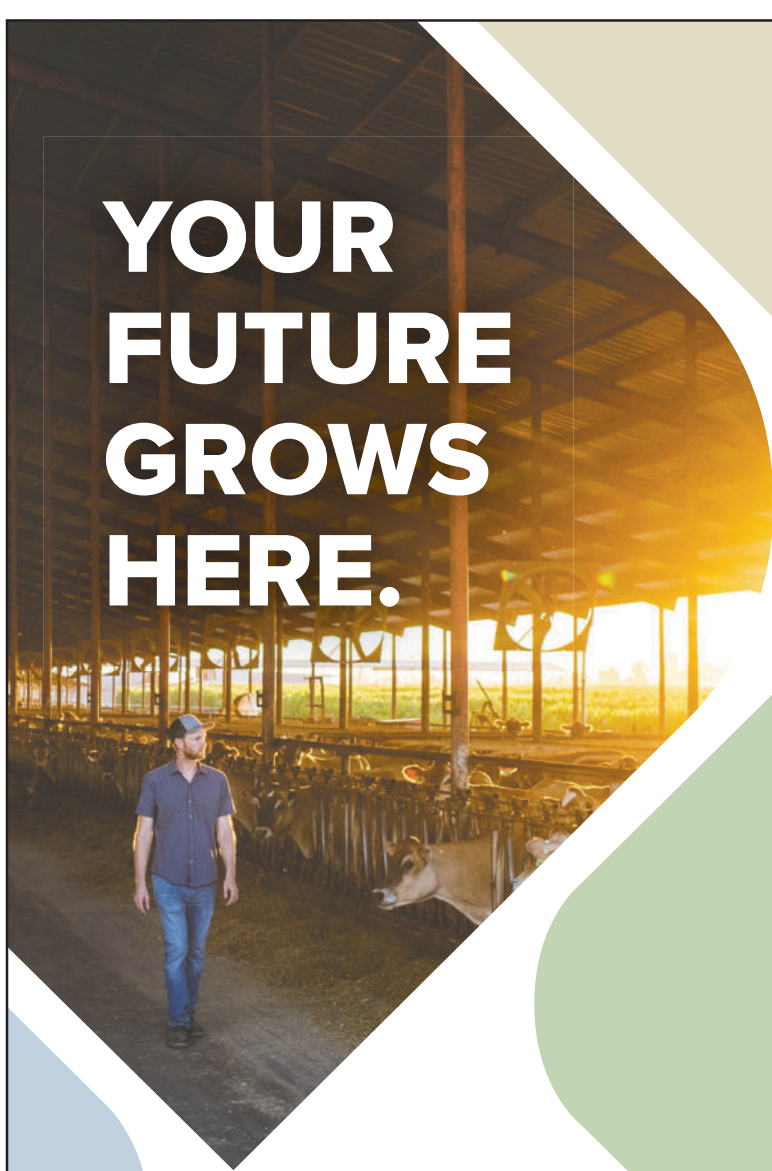
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**State Affairs -**

**NRCS Extends Livestock Wolf Deterrence and Management Assistance Funding**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California announced today an extension to sign up for the California Livestock-Predator Interaction Management Initiative.

Applications are currently being accepted through Friday, June 13, 2025. The extended ranking deadline is now Friday, June 27, 2025. California has 16 counties eligible for the sign up, including Butte, Del Norte, Fresno, Humboldt, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, and Tulare. More information and to apply, visit the NRCS website or visit your local service center.

The California Livestock-Predator Interaction Management Initiative supports California's forest and rangeland producers in managing predator interactions, especially with wolves using non-lethal strategies. It aims to reduce

conflict, maintain habitat connectivity, and sustain agricultural productivity across 16 Northern and Central California counties. The goals of the initiative are to assist affected landowners to implement practices available to NRCS in California, to reduce financial and social burdens caused by wolf-livestock interactions. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

**Fair Plan Update**

The Assembly Committee on Insurance held an oversight hearing regarding the Fair Plan. As you may recall, Farm Bureau sponsored legislation regarding the Fair Plan two years ago SB 505, authored by Senator Susan Rubio-which created a commercial policy clearinghouse to help depopulate Fair Plan policies. The focus of the hearing was testimony from the Fair Plan's President Victoria Roach and the challenges faced by the Fair Plan due to unprecedented policy growth. Ms. Roach shared that the Fair Plan has grown to over 450,000 policies with more than \$600 billion in liability exposure. Over the past year, most of that growth has occurred

outside of high wildfire risk ar-

reas. Suburban community non-renewals are growing at the fastest rate, making up 40% of new Fair Plan policies.

Assemblymembers asked how the Fair Plan expects to be able to depopulate the number of policies. Ms. Roach would not comment on the actions that admitted market insurers will take in response to the Department of Insurance's strategy to restore market competition. However, she noted that sometimes, the Fair Plan combined with a difference-in-conditions policy can cost less than an admitted market policy. This suggests consumers are choosing the Fair Plan based on cost and likely, the Fair Plan costs in those areas need to be increased to disincentivize that. Overall, the growth in suburban Fair Plan policies may indicate a slow path for policies in more rural areas to return to the admitted market through depopulation mechanisms-unless insurers can bring lower-risk suburban policies into the admitted market and have those count towards Fair Plan depopulation goals. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cbbf.com

**SB 444 Moves Forward**

SB 444, authored by Senator Melissa Hurtado (D Bakersfield) and sponsored by the California Farm Bureau, passed from the Senate Appropriations Suspense file and is now on the Senate Floor Consent Calendar. This means the bill enjoys bipartisan and unanimous support. SB 444 draws a clear connection between locally grown and raised healthy foods and their important role in nutrition and public health. Staff:

*See Affairs on page 22*

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**From Affairs on page 21**

Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

**AB 1156 Advances Without Fiscal Accountability or Key Amendments**

AB 1156, authored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (D Oakland) passed from the Assembly Committee on Appropriations Suspense File - despite a similar bill by Assemblymember Arambula (AB 2528), having previously been held under submission. AB 1156 allows for the cancellation of a Williamson Act contract in favor of a solar use easement without requiring the landowner meeting their contractual obligation to make an early contract cancellation payment. The bill benefited from a favorable Appropriations Committee analysis that did not specify a cost to implement the bill, despite an analysis last year projecting a multi-million-dollar impact to the General Fund. During a budget crisis year, bills that carry unappropriated, unbudgeted costs typically held in Appropriations Committee. Unfortunately, that did not occur in this case, and so AB 1156 moves to the Assembly floor. Farm Bureau offered amendments to improve the bill by clearly defining "insufficient water supply" and avoiding the negative fiscal impact to the General Fund. However, Assemblymember Wicks rejected those amendments and Farm Bureau remains opposed unless amended. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

Advanced Clean Fleet/ Zero Emission Forklift

Advanced Clean Fleet/ Zero Emission Forklift

CARB has acknowledged that because they never received authorization for the zero-emission forklift rule, which was passed in Fall 2024, that they will not be enforcing the regulation on any privately-owned or

operated fleets nor against any manufacturers or dealerships. It is worth noting that they followed the notice by saying "Because CARB is committed to reducing air pollution to protect public health, we encourage affected industries to continue reducing their emissions and we look forward to continued partnership in these efforts. CARB staff encourages all manufacturers and fleets to voluntarily report in the meantime. Zero-Emission Forklifts (ZEFs) are already widely used and often provide fuel and maintenance cost savings compared to tradition spark-ignition forklifts." Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cfbf.com

**\$21 Million Boost to Screwworm Eradication Effort**


In an ongoing partnership with Mexico to combat the New World Screwworm (NWS), Secretary Rollins an-

nounced the USDA is investing \$21 million to renovate an existing fruit fly production facility in Metapa, Mexico to further the long-term goal of eradicating this insect. When operational, this facility will produce 60-100 million additional sterile NWS flies weekly to push the population further south in Mexico. Given the geographic spread of NWS, this additional production capacity will be critical to our response. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cfbf.com


AB 491 - California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: climate goals: natural and working lands

*See Affairs on page 24*


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## Milk, Cheese, Yogurt: The Road to Health

Honoring Education, Innovation, and Community During National Dairy Month

*By Destiny Reyes, SCFB Intern*

Every June, National Dairy Month gives us the opportunity to celebrate one of agriculture's most essential industries. It's a time to reflect not only on the nutritious dairy products we enjoy every day—but also on the people, innovations, and education that keep the dairy industry strong and sustainable.

As we honor this month, it's important to

recognize that the impact of dairy goes far beyond the table. From the farm to the classroom to the processing plant, dairy continues to shape lives and support communities across the country.

According to Denise Skidmore, Director of Education and Public Relations at Hilmar Cheese Company, dairy education has played a vital role in connecting people—especially youth—to agriculture. In a recent interview, she shared how hands-on learning and transparent food production have become key tools in educating the public and sparking curiosity.

At Hilmar Cheese's Visitor Center, guests can engage with interactive exhibits that demonstrate what modern dairy farming looks like, how cows are milked, and the importance of sustainability practices like water

recycling. The center offers a window into the real-world process of cheese-making, giving visitors a unique and personal view of the hard work behind each product.

Another creative addition is their "AgX-cape" game, an escape room-style activity where participants solve dairy-related challenges. Held every Saturday at 12:30 p.m., the game is designed for team-building and family fun—combining education with entertainment in an unforgettable way.

National Dairy Month also serves as a reminder of the essential role dairy plays in our daily health and nutrition. Milk, cheese, and yogurt provide important nutrients like calcium, protein, and vitamin D, which contribute to strong bones, healthy growth, and overall wellness.

Beyond its nutritional value, dairy supports local economies, employs thousands of workers, and fosters a connection between communities and the land. This is especially evident at places like Hilmar Cheese, which has recently expanded into Dodge City, Kansas, helping supply high-quality products across the nation while maintaining a deep commitment to education and sustainability.

So, whether you enjoy dairy for its health benefits, culinary versatility, or connection to rural America, this June is the perfect time to celebrate it all. Visit your local dairy producers, stop by the Hilmar Cheese Visitor Center for a tour or lunch, and take a moment to appreciate the journey of dairy—from the farm to your fridge.

After all, milk, cheese and yogurt aren't just staples—they're symbols of a healthier, more informed future.



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**From Affairs on page 22**

AB 491, authored by Assemblymember Connolly, was held on the Assembly Appropriations Suspense File last Friday and became a two-year bill. This bill aimed to codify the nature-based solutions (NBS) climate targets established in April 2024 by the California Natural Resources Agency pursuant to AB 1757 (2022, C. Garcia). While Farm Bureau is supportive of many of the targets in the NBS document, including targets to conserve a specified number of acres of annual and perennial croplands per year by 2045, and to implement specified acreage amounts of beneficial fire and fuel reduction activities per year by 2045, other targets are disconcerting, specifically one to convert 20 percent of the state's conventional farming systems to organic systems by 2045. Farm Bureau staff conveyed multiple concerns to the author's office and to various members of the Legislature, highlighting that many factors control the scale and pace at which climate smart practices are adopted on-farm or ranch, complicating the ability to achieve climate targets established at a single point in time. Furthermore, staff communicated that increased organic acreage should be market driven, as opposed to statutorily requiring a percentage of farms to transition to organic. Staff Contact: Richard Filgas; rfilgas@cbbf.com

**Federal Affairs –****House Passes Reconciliation Package**

On May 22nd, the House passed what is now known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (H.R. 1)— a large reconciliation package that would extend tax cuts from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, make significant reforms to the SNAP program, and pass several provisions that would otherwise be included in a traditional Farm Bill (among many other pieces as well). In the Senate, lawmakers are looking to remove significant pieces of the legislation, many of whom believe will include those farm-related programmatic changes. To pass through what is known as the "Byrd Bath," lawmakers will need to be particular on what pieces remain in the bill or not, many of which have been argued to exceed the authority of what reconciliation bills typically allow. This method of legislation requires only a simple majority in the Senate to pass, meaning Republicans can effectively work on

the bill by themselves due to their majority. We will continue to update members as their version takes shape. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cbbf.com  
MAHA Commission Releases Initial Report

The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission, spearheaded by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., released a wide-ranging report two weeks ago on their initial assessment of what they consider a childhood chronic disease crisis. The long-awaited report covered a number of items, but largely focused on several areas of concern, including: the prevalence of "ultra-processed foods," overmedication, lifestyle changes, and potential exposure to dangerous chemicals. While often citing healthy fruits and vegetables from the agricultural industry as a method for combating some of these challenges, the report also listed pesticides as a major area of concern that needs farther assessment on the overall health impacts to children.

Several organizations in the agricultural community pushed back on this messaging, arguing that many of the most commonly used pesticides have been studied, tested, and approved as safe for decades. Calling into question some of the report's validity are recent stories showing that several of the sources were either improperly cited or do not actually exist, suggesting that perhaps artificial intelligence was used in the gathering of data. The White House said a corrected version is being updated to account for minor oversights. In addition, the Commission is supposed to issue a more formal set of recommendations in the next 100 days, but it is largely encouraging new studies to determine the accuracy of

some of these claims. Central to many of their arguments are what they see as corporate and industry influence of previous studies, suggesting that their influence has clouded the validity of long-held industry standards. While the Commission did say it will be working closely with public and private partners, no agricultural organizations were consulted in its preparation of the report. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cbbf.com

**USDA to Spend \$200 Million in Support of Timber Production**

Last week, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it would allocate \$200 million to boost domestic timber production. This funding follows a March Executive Order from the White House directing USDA to implement a streamlined plan aimed at increasing timber supply for both energy use and forest health. As a result, timber harvesting on federal lands is expected to rise by approximately 25% by 2028. For years, regulatory hurdles have hampered the timber industry and delayed wildfire mitigation efforts on or near federal lands. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cbbf.com



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## CAFB Joins in Support of Dairy Workforce Letter

Earlier this month, several Farm Bureaus—including the California Farm Bureau—joined others from the nation's largest dairy states in submitting a letter to the Chairmen of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. The letter urged Congressional action to expand the H-2A visa program to allow year-round employment eligibility.

This change would open the program to the dairy industry, which is currently excluded due to the non-seasonal nature of dairy work. (H-2A visas are currently limited to temporary, seasonal jobs.) The lack of access for dairy employers—despite ongoing labor shortages—has been a major barrier to previous attempts at comprehensive agricultural labor reform in Congress. The H-2A program is in serious need of reform, including—but not limited to—allowing year-round positions. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; mviohl@cfbf.com

Member Grant Opportunity: LAMP & SCBGP Funding

USDA has opened up \$100 million in grant opportunities for a series of programs that members are encouraged to consider. This includes the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP)—which has three separate components: the Local Food Promotion Program, the Regional Food System Partnerships, and the Farmers Market Promotion Program. More on each can be found here, but please keep in mind most applications are due by June 27th. In addition, roughly \$73 million of those funds will go towards the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), although those funds are diverted through state agencies, with more information expected to come through CDFA later this summer. Staff Contact: Erin Huston, ehuston@cfbf.com

## Legal Battle Over Tariffs Takes Shape

While the trade front has been relatively quiet in recent weeks—following a reduction in retaliatory tariffs between the U.S. and China—it has returned to the spotlight amid legal challenges questioning the President's authority to impose the original tariffs. At the center of these cases is the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), which grants the President expanded eco-

nomics authority during declared national emergencies. The White House has argued that the U.S. trade deficit constitutes such an emergency, justifying the imposition of tariffs. Although the Constitution grants Congress the power over trade policy, that authority has gradually shifted toward the Executive Branch. Opponents argue that the White House exceeded its authority under IEEPA, and have brought forward multiple lawsuits challenging the tariffs.

Last week, a panel from the U.S. Court of International Trade ruled the President overstepped his legal authority and ordered the tariffs to end within 10 days. Meanwhile, a federal court in D.C. issued a narrower preliminary injunction to halt the tariffs within two weeks. However, by the end of the week, an appeals court reversed the first ruling and granted two weeks for both sides to present further arguments. It remains unclear whether these legal challenges will ultimately curb or reinforce the administration's trade powers, but many expect the issue to be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; mviohl@cfbf.com

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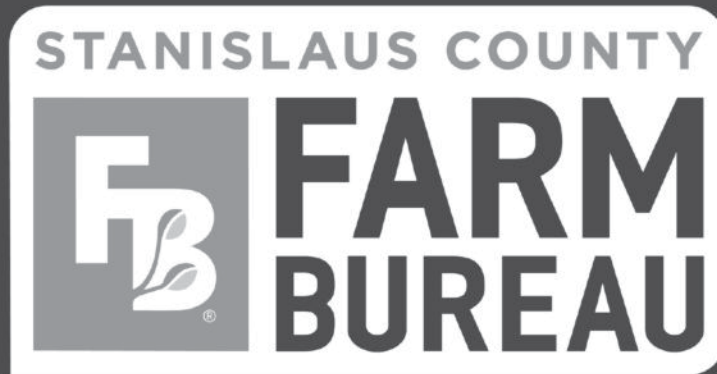


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## Celebrating 40 Years of Cows, Community and Commitment at MJC's Dairy Heifer Sale

By Vicky Boyd, SCFB

Whether in marriage, business or farming, 40 years of success is a long time and something to celebrate. Modesto Junior College's dairy heifer replacement sale is doing just that at its Oct. 18 biennial auction as it recognizes four decades of achievements.

"This is 40 years, which is huge," said MJC Dairy Science Professor Nicole Morris. "This isn't just my sale, this is all of our sale. I don't want it to be my anniversary, I want it to be all of our anniversary."

"There's 40 years of alumni, there's 40 years of the (dairy science) professors, there's 40 years of the program. What I'm envisioning is an informal reunion of the MJC Dairy Science Program."

She and the three previous dairy science professors who have been involved in the heifer replacement sale were quick to credit the generosity of local dairy producers for the program's continued success.

"This program thrives on community support and tradition," Morris said. "I think the community support and the tradition

built through this program are what keep people coming back."

Hal Carlton, a retired MJC dairy science professor who started the heifer replacement sale, agreed.

"If you don't involve the community, you're sitting here by yourself," he said. "If we didn't have that support, this program wouldn't be here; it would probably be dead."

### COMMUNITY STEPS UP

It was that same community involvement that drove development of the inaugural dairy heifer replacement sale nearly 40 years ago. Carlton and his Dairy Advisory Committee wanted to provide students with more hands-on experience. Back then, the Dairy Science Program was a fraction of the size it is today.

They contacted Stanislaus, Merced and San Joaquin county dairy producers about donating yearlings that students could halter break, care for, groom and show. The animals also could be used in 4-H and FFA dairy judging contests as well as in dairy classes.

Once the heifers were bred, they'd be sold at the dairy heifer replacement sale, with proceeds going toward the MJC Dairy Sci-

ence Program, dairy judging team travel expenses and annual student scholarships. When Carlton retired in 1997, Mark Anglin — whom Carlton had met through FFA dairy judging contests and recruited — took over the MJC program. But Anglin said the dairy community's support didn't wane.

"That was all because Hal had laid the foundation," he said.

Bill Hobby, who was hired as a dairy science professor after Anglin became ag department dean in 2002, said keeping the program going wasn't as easy as it looked. "There's a lot of work behind the scenes," he said. "You have to maintain the contacts that were there and involve new ones. You work with the Dairy Advisory Committee, follow up and make sure everything represents the dairymen."

During the sale's 40-year history, the number of animals sold each time has ranged from about 35 to as high as 50. The event also typically included a bull or two. If they didn't meet their target of 40 head overall, event organizers would secure a few springers, or young heifers, that kids could raise as replacements.

### THE MOVE TO BIENNIAL

See MJC 40 on page 28



Photo courtesy Bill Hobby  
Retired MJC Dairy Science Professor Bill Hobby (left) and his students at a dairy show. Hobby retired in 2020 and moved to Iowa to help manage the family farm.

*From MJC 40 on page 27*

Initially, Carlton said, they conducted the sale annually. But trying to get the animals halter ready and also bred in about nine months was too much to handle, so the event quickly pivoted to every other year.

A fourth-generation dairy producer, Morris said she remembered attending the MJC sale as a youngster with her father, who owns Manuel and Jeannette Borges Dairy near Stockton. Even before she and her siblings attended college, Morris said her father donated heifers to the program. In fact, she, Carlton and Anglin figured that many of the heifers that will be sold in October are from dairies that donated to the inaugural sale in 1985. And many have continued to do so throughout the ups and downs of the dairy industry.

"It doesn't matter — they'll come support the sales. That's what's so amazing," Anglin said. As he, Carlton and Morris chatted at the MJC West dairy facility recently, they recognized the names of long-time supporting dairies on the ear tags of donated heifers.

Hobby also noted that the donated heifers typically were top quality. "They gave us the very best animals," he said. "That's what made the program solid."

In addition, he said producers frequently would donate an animal and then either buy the same one back at the sale or buy a different one. In essence, the producer was doubling his or her contribution to the program.

Over the years, the heifer replacement sale has evolved to where heifer donors can desig-



nate whether they want a portion of their animal's sale proceeds to go to support the dairy judging team or to the Hal Carlton Scholarship fund. The bulk of the funds generated go toward the general Dairy Science Program.

The scholarship fund currently has more than \$115,000 in it, and Morris said she typically awards five to seven scholarships annually for a total of \$3,500 to \$4,000. This keeps the principle intact and just disperses the interest.

### MJC DAIRY PROGRAM FLOURISHES

The MJC program also has grown and offers the only junior college dairy science major in the state and likely one of only a few, if that, nationally. That's not to say that some junior colleges don't offer a dairy class, because they do. But Anglin said it's typically just an introductory one.

Having animals available for MJC students to gain hands-on experience has taken on even more importance with changing demographics and the addition of new programs, Morris said. She took over the MJC Dairy Science Program in 2020 when Hobby retired.

"It gives hands-on experience to kids that have zero dairy background," Morris said, adding that

only five of the 25 students in her recent dairy industry/dairy science class had dairy experience.

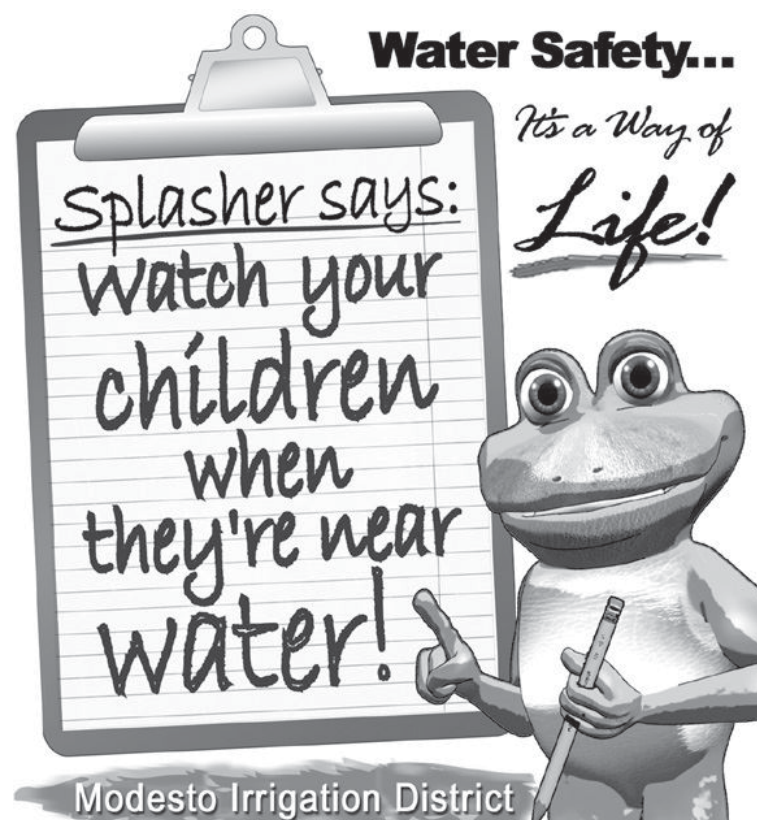
The college also added the popular artificial insemination technician certificate program under Carlton's tenure, and the heifers are part of that.

In addition, the college more recently adopted sex-sorted semen, with all of the heifers for the upcoming sale being bred using that technology, she said.

### OCT. 18 ANNIVERSARY SALE SCHEDULE

A heifer preview will be held at 11 a.m., followed by a sponsored lunch at noon. At 1 p.m., event organizers will hold a short program recognizing teachers, alumni and 40 years' of achievements before moving into the sale. Already, more than 50 alumni have responded to a request for information about their "MJC dairy journey."

"We want this to be more than just a sale," Morris said. All of this will occur at the College Ag Pavilion on the MJC West campus in Modesto.



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