

The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture

STANISLAUS COUNTY



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See Bee Article on Page 3
See Mental Health Article on Pages 9 & 23

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2025 TRAININGS



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February 25, 2025 Food Safety - FSMA

9:00-10:30am - Spanish
10:30-12:00pm - English

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

Pricing: Member \$50/Nonmember \$60

June 5, 2025 CPR & First Aid

8:00-12:00pm - Spanish
1:00-5:00pm - English

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

Pricing: Member \$100/Nonmember \$125

March 6, 2025 Pesticide Handler & Fit Testing

9:00-12:00pm - Spanish
1:00-4:00pm - English

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

Pricing: Member \$60/Nonmember \$75

July 31, 2025 Tractor Safety

9:00-10:00am - Spanish
10:00-11:00am - English

CalOSHA requires that employees who
operate equipment be trained annually.

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

May 1, 2025 Indoor&Outdoor Heat Illness Prevention

9:00-10:00am - Spanish
10:00-11:00am - English

CalOSHA requires this training annually for
employees.

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

October 23, 2025 Hazardous Ag Materials (HAM)

9:00-10:30am - Spanish
10:30-12:00pm - English

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

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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.

From Hive to Harvest: Absher Brothers Bring Passion and Purpose to Pollination

By Vicky Boyd, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau

Growing up, Caleb Absher was always interested in honeybees as he watched them pollinate almonds. Truth be told, the equipment used by commercial beekeepers was what really caught his eye. Specifically, it was the Hummerbee rough-terrain articulated forklift with bee clamps.

Together with his 17-year-old brother, Cash, Caleb runs Absher Honebees, the

latest addition to Absher Land & Livestock Co. near Denair.

While Cash helps with the bees — which he said really are Caleb's specialty — he prefers the crop-production side of the family's farming operation. But like Caleb, Cash admitted he's enamored with farming machinery.

Fancy equipment aside, 15-year-old Caleb has a passion for beekeeping that quickly becomes apparent during conversations.

When he was thinking seriously about becoming commercial, his father, David Absher, told him, "We need bees for pol-

lination. I'd rather pay you for pollination than someone else."

Despite what some people think, Caleb and Cash said pollination services are typically beekeepers' bread and butter — honey sales provide minor income. That said, the

brothers sell their honey online at <https://absherll.com/shop-1/ols/categories/honey>, and they hope to have it on shelves of a local feed supply store shortly.

Over the past three years, Caleb has built up the business to about 200 hives, which he rents out during pollination of almonds and other crops. Eventually, Caleb said he'd like to have about 400 hives.

"In the next couple of years, I'd like to have a semi-load, and then decide if I want to keep growing," he said. "It all depends on what I can handle."

But Caleb's initial foray into bees didn't go as smoothly. When he was 9 years old, he said he had a few backyard hives that eventually died. About two years later, he reconsidered beekeeping but more on the commercial side. The difference, Cash and Caleb said, is commercial operators typically pay more attention to finances and operational efficiencies than hobbyists.

"I started when I was really young by watching videos and didn't know what I was doing," Caleb said. "Once I started to become serious, I reached out to people and just learned from them. It's a good thing to learn from people who have knowledge."

Among his mentors are Jose Uribe, a Northern California queen breeder who

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See BEES on page 8

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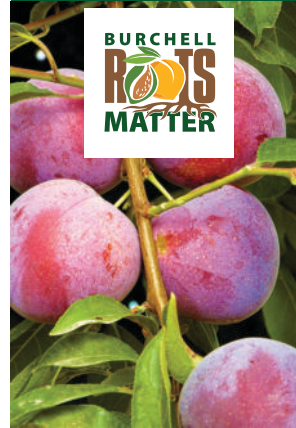


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State Affairs

Senate Labor Committee Rejects Ag Overtime Relief Bills Despite Broad Support

The Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee declined to advance SB 628 (Grove) on April 23, rejecting the bill on a vote of one “aye” and four “noes.” SB 628 would have allowed agricultural employers to apply for a tax credit to help offset the cost of overtime premiums paid to agricultural employees—specifically the “half” in “time-and-a-half.”

Farm Bureau organized a group of 35 farm employees, along with a Spanish-speaking farmworker witness, to testify before the committee about the unintended consequences of imposing an 8-hour workday and 40-hour workweek in agriculture. Their testimony highlighted fewer hours worked, lower take-home pay, and the growing need for second and third jobs among farmworkers and their families.

Despite a broad coalition in support—including the California Farmworker Foundation—the California Labor Federation was the sole opponent of SB 628. Their opposition was based on the unfounded claim that providing a tax credit for overtime pay would somehow incentivize non-compliance with labor laws. This, despite the bill clearly requiring employers to pay overtime before applying for the credit. Observers were left questioning how the Legislature could reject SB 628 while preparing to debate a \$750 million tax

credit for the Hollywood film and television industry.

On April 29, the same committee refused to take a vote on SB 801 (Hurtado), which would have restored the overtime exemption for goat and sheepherders—workers paid a minimum monthly wage to reflect the 24/7 nature of their job. Labor Fed again opposed the bill, disregarding the critical role these workers play in wildfire prevention by offering a more effective, environmentally friendly alternative to pesticides and machinery. The committee once again followed Labor Fed’s lead.

Although both SB 628 and SB 801 failed to advance, the hearings appear to have sparked new interest in developing a more flexible approach to overtime requirements in agriculture—a unique industry where a one-size-fits-all policy clearly does not work. Farm Bureau supported both bills. Staff Contact: Bryan Little, blittle@cfbf.com

Assembly Agriculture Committee Advances AB 1156 Despite Concerns Over Farmland Protections

AB 1156, authored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (D–Oakland), passed out of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture on a 6-1-1 vote. The bill repeals the Williamson Act cancellation payment requirement for solar use easements. Assemblymember Jeff Gonzalez (R–Coachella) voted No, while Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D–Winters) abstained. Committee Chair Esmeralda

Soria (D–Fresno) raised multiple concerns: the bill’s vague definitions could open the door to widespread contract cancellations without payment, it would expose prime farmland to solar development under the solar use easement, and it lacks a structured community benefit investment from solar developers. Chair Soria is requiring amendments to address these issues. The Large-scale Solar Association and Almond Alliance supported the bill, while California Farm Bureau led the opposition.

Assemblymembers Juan Alanis (R–Modesto) and Heather Hadwick (R–Jackson) spoke in favor of the bill, citing landowner rights—though this reflects a common misconception. Participation in the Williamson Act and its cancellation has always been voluntary. AB 1156 does not enhance landowner rights; it merely waives the contractual obligation to pay a cancellation fee.

Assemblymembers Damon Connolly (D–Marin) and Rhodesia Ransom (D–Stockton) also voted in favor but expressed concern that the bill is too broad. Ransom proposed an idea to redirect cancellation payments toward community benefits instead of the state’s general fund.

American Farmland Trust and similar organizations opposed the bill for its potential to allow cancellation of agricultural conservation easements in favor of solar easements—a likely target for future amendment. The Rural County Representatives of California shifted to a support position after negotiating

with the author. Farm Bureau remains opposed unless amended. Staff Contact: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

Agricultural Vehicle Basic Inspection of Terminals Extensions

California Farm Bureau supports AB 525 (Lackey, R–Palmdale), which would extend the current exemption for agricultural vehicles from the California Highway Patrol’s (CHP) Basic Inspection of Terminals (BIT)



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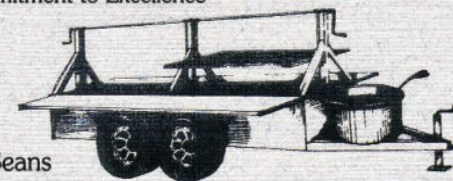
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MODESTO, Calif. – The 2025 California Almond Subjective Forecast, published Monday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA-NASS), estimates that the crop harvested in 2025 will come in at 2.8 billion pounds, 3 percent above last year’s 2.73 billion pounds.

Forecasted yield is 2,010 pounds per acre, up 30 pounds from the 2024 harvest.

“This larger crop estimate is what the industry expected after a solid water winter and generally good weather during bloom, but it’s also a testament to the hard work done by almond farmers throughout California,” said Clarice Turner, president and CEO of the Almond Board of California. “Demand for California almonds around the globe continues to grow and our almond farmers constantly deliver, producing high quality California almonds to meet that demand.”

The report shared that the 2025 almond bloom began the first week of February in the Sacra-

mento Valley and peaked during the middle of the month. The weather during bloom varied throughout the state, with storms bringing heavy rainfall, wind and hail. Crop development in the San Joaquin Valley was slower than normal due to cool temperatures and lower bee flight hours. However, conditions improved in early March with warm temperatures accelerating the crop’s progress through the end of bloom.

There were also reports of significantly lower yields in the Nonpareil variety due to an overall lighter flower set than their pollinators. The impact on orchards from the intense summer heat in 2024 continues to be assessed. Growers are actively irrigating, fertilizing and treating their orchards for pests and diseases. Water is not expected to be an issue this year.

This Subjective Forecast is the first of two production reports from USDA-NASS for the coming crop year. It is an estimate based on opinions from a survey conducted from April 21 to May 7 of 500 randomly selected California

almond growers. The sample of growers, which changes every year, is spread across regions and different sized operations, and they had the option to report their data by mail, online or phone.

On July 10, USDA-NASS will release its second production estimate, the 2025 California Almond Objective Report, which will be based on actual almond counts in approximately 1,000 orchards using a more statistically rigorous methodology to determine yield.


This Subjective Forecast comes two weeks after Land IQ’s 2025 Standing Acreage Initial Estimate found that bearing almond acreage in California has slightly increased about 6,000 acres from the previous year to 1.389 million bearing acres.

USDA-NASS conducts the annual Subjective Forecast and Objective Report to provide the California almond industry with the data needed to make informed business decisions. These reports are the official industry crop estimates.


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From BEES on page 3

hosts thecaliforniabeekeeper.com; Ryan Howard, owner of the beekeeping supply and service store Sunrise Feed and Supply in Oakdale; and Rowdy Freeman, a Butte County sheriff's deputy who's also a beekeeper.

BEES THRIVE ON NATURAL FORAGE

If everything goes right, beehives come out of the roughly six weeks of almond pollination growing and heavy with pollen, Caleb said. They typically leave the orchards stronger than when they arrived, prompting many beekeepers to split hives.

If a hive becomes overpopulated, the queen may take much of the colony with her and swarm to find a new living arrangement. Should that happen, he said the hive may never fully recover.

A warning sign is when bees begin to make queen cells. As a preemptive strike, beekeepers typically split hives once they become large enough, creating two colonies and keeping the queen with the original group. A few days later, they'll install a new queen to lead the new hive.

As he and Cash put supplemental pollen paddies in hives near Snelling recently, Caleb talked about how he felt fortunate to

have found a cattle ranch where the owner allowed him to park his hives after almond pollination. The flowers filling the pastures provide nectar bees use to make honey, which is their carbohydrate source. Pollen, on the other hand, is filled with protein and nutrients the insects use to make food for larvae and newly emerged bees.

This is the first year Caleb has had access to the Snelling-area ranch, and he marveled at how well the bees have done. He's already had to split hives multiple times since moving them from San Joaquin Valley almond orchards.

"It always amazes me how fast bees will repopulate (after a split) when they have good natural food sources," Caleb said.

Once the blooming vegetation near Snelling dries down, Caleb planned to move the beehives to the family's ranch near Alturas in Northern California. There the bees can feed on locally blooming plants and finish up in the fall with rabbit brush, a medium-sized shrub with yellow flowers. The native plant is one of the best pollen sources bees can get.

His goal is to grow the colonies as strong as possible and for them to have adequate food stores heading into winter. The flip side is having to feed sugar syrup, something Caleb wants to avoid because of the

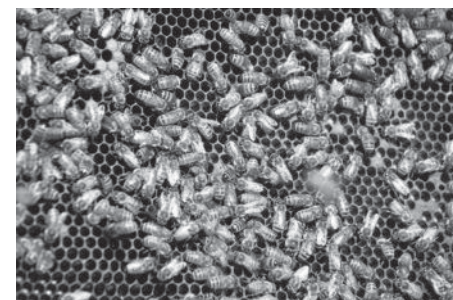
cost. Syrup also may create higher humidity in the colonies, promoting undesirable fungal growth.

UNUSUAL WINTER MORTALITY

Even with the best-laid plans, many beekeepers nationwide experienced severe colony losses during the 2024-25 winter. In fact, a survey of beekeepers conducted by the nonprofit Project Apis m. honeybee research organization found average winter bee colony losses of 62%. Beekeepers representing about 68% of the nation's hives participated, and the losses didn't include those experienced during other times of the year.

Although researchers continue to look for the cause or causes, many beekeepers theorize varroa mites play some role in colony losses. About the size of a pinhead, the parasitic mites feed on adult bees and their young, sucking bodily fluids. Not only do they weaken or kill the insects, but they also can spread a host of viruses that are lethal to bees but harmless to humans.

Caleb was among those who



experienced hive decline and described a bee population that “wasn't great,” with the queens just shutting down late last fall. Upon further investigation, he found extremely high mite populations.

“In late fall, it was pretty scary seeing those mite numbers,” Caleb said.

He took an integrated approach that involved treating with an approved miticide to knock down the mite populations. He also used oxalic acid, which can control mites on bees but can't get those in the wax-capped brood cells. Found naturally in many plants, including spinach and rhubarb leaves, the compound is deadly to mites but won't affect bees if applied correctly.

This program builds on rotating effective modes of action. If beekeepers use the same product treatment after treatment, varroa mites can build resistance to it, Caleb explained. By switching up the different miticides, one product theoretically may take out the pests the other one failed to control.

Taking a Step Forward with “Farm State of Mind”: Highlighting Mental Health in Agriculture

By: Destiny Reyes, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau Intern

May marks Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to breaking the stigma surrounding mental wellness and encouraging open conversations. While farmers and ranchers may not be the first group that comes to mind in these discussions, mental health is an increasingly urgent issue within the agricultural community. The American Farm Bureau Federation is leading the charge through its “Farm State of Mind” campaign, which is focused on raising awareness and supporting farmers in prioritizing their mental health.

Farming is more than just a career—it's a lifestyle, often passed down through generations. But behind the strength and resilience that characterize farmers, there are real and mounting pressures that many outside the industry don't see. Research shows that suicide rates among farmers are two to five times higher than the national average, a sobering statistic that highlights how critical mental health awareness is in rural America.

From the unpredictability of weather and natural disasters to market fluctuations, labor shortages, and trade challenges, farmers experience constant uncertainty. The COVID-19 pandemic only added to these pressures, and even as recovery continues, many farmers feel increasingly isolated and overwhelmed. For many, the emotional toll of managing a farm or ranch can become just as heavy as the physical labor.

That's why the “Farm State of Mind” campaign is so important. It provides resources, education, and support services specifically designed for farmers and rural communities. One of the standout resources is Togetherall, a free, anonymous

peer-to-peer online support platform available to individuals 16 and older. It offers a space where members of the agricultural community can find encouragement, share their struggles, and receive support in a confidential, judgment-free environment.

The campaign also helps people recognize the warning signs of someone who may be experiencing mental health challenges. These can include an increase in farm accidents, withdrawal from social or community events, sudden changes in routine, a decline in the appearance of the farm, or noticeable changes in mood or behavior.

Mental health is health—plain and simple. And just like physical health, it requires attention, care, and support. Opening the door to these conversations can be tough, but it can also be life-saving. When farmers know they are not alone and that resources exist to help them cope, it creates a ripple effect of strength and healing throughout the agricultural community.

Our farmers are the backbone of our economy and the heart of our rural communities. Supporting their mental well-being isn't just compassionate—it's necessary. By investing in mental health awareness and providing resources tailored to the unique needs of farmers, we are building a healthier, more connected, and more resilient agricultural industry.

Let's continue to raise awareness, support one another, and remind the hardworking people who feed the world that their well-being matters, too.

For more mental health resources and information, visit:

American Farm Bureau – Farm State of Mind

Farm Foundation Mental Health Resources

California Farmworker Health & Wellness Programs



INVESTING IN Reliability

To learn how TID is investing in reliability through the Don Pedro Life Extension Project, go to TID.org/InvestingIn.



From Affairs on page 5

Program.

The BIT Program requires CHP to conduct physical inspections of vehicles, maintenance records, and driver records for commercial fleets, based on a performance-based terminal inspection selection system established by the agency. As of January 1, 2016, the program was expanded to include a broader class of commercial vehicles, including those used in agriculture.

AB 525 seeks to continue the exemption for agricultural vehicles, recognizing the unique operational needs of the industry and the limited nature of many farm-related fleets. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cfbf.com

Energy Affordability
SB 254, Senator and Senate Utilities, Energy and Communications Chair Josh Becker's (D-Menlo Park) omnibus energy affordability bill was heard in Senate Utilities, Energy and Communications on Tuesday, April 29. Farm Bureau participated in a press conference on Thursday, April 24, focused on energy affordability and the impact on farmers and ranchers shortly after the bill was released last week. The bill contained positive measures that realigned wildfire mitigation plans with cost effectiveness, heightened the burden for utilities seeking rate increases above inflation in General Rate Cases, and provided caps on rate of return for a portion of wildfire and energization expenses.

Unfortunately, after reviewing the 102-page bill, there are concerns that outweigh Farm Bureau's initial position of support in concept. Primarily, the issues stem from the additional authority being granted to the Energy Commission for "opt-in" siting of renewable energy facilities, development of programmatic environmental impact reports for those projects, mandates for 90-day approvals, and the creation of the Clean Energy Infrastructure Authority which would sidestep the Public Utilities Commission and severely limit stakeholder intervention. Given the potential impacts on member properties, Farm Bureau will shift to an oppose unless amended position in order to ensure our concerns are heard and remedied. The bill passed out of committee 13-2 and is headed to Senate

Appropriations. Staff Contact: Kevin Johnston; kjohnston@cfbf.com


Net Energy Metering
AB 942, Assembly Member Lisa Calderon's (D-City of Industry) bill that would cut payback periods for Net Energy Metering (NEM) 1.0 and 2.0 customers from 20 years to 10 years as well as cease any NEM 1.0 or 2.0 contract whenever a property is sold was heard in Assembly Utilities and Energy on April 30.

Farm Bureau along with a host of other agricultural organizations, submitted an oppose unless amended letter urging the author to either remove the provision cutting the payback period or clarify that the bill only applies to residential customers. The bill analysis prepared prior to the hearing reemphasized the points the Farm Bureau and others had made that agriculture is not the problem and the author ultimately accepted amendments to remove the portion cutting the payback period and only retaining the piece about requiring a shift to NEM 3.0 upon sale of a property. Farm Bureau and the agricultural coalition will regroup and likely seek amendments to clarify the remaining provision only applies to residential customers. The bill passed out of

committee 10-4 and is headed to Assembly Appropriations. Staff Contact: Kevin Johnston; kjohnston@cfbf.com

Forest Biomass
AB 706, Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry's (D Winters), bill establishing the FOREST and Wildfire Prevention Fund in the treasury was heard in Assembly Utilities and Energy on April 29. The goal of this funding is to support biomass procurement, transport, and use that reduces fuel for wildfires by up to 15,000,000 bone-dry tons of forest biomass waste per year.

Generating a fund to support these biomass removal projects would alleviate heightened costs to ratepayers due to biomass energy procurement mandates. Farm Bureau supports the bill as a commonsense solution to wildfire safety, waste, and firm energy. The bill passed out of committee 13-0 and is headed to Assembly Appropriations. Staff Contact: Kevin Johnston; kjohnston@cfbf.com



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Air District Reporting Template
California Farm Bureau opposes AB 1305 (Arambula, D–Fresno), which would require all local air districts to use a standardized reporting template developed by the Office of Data and Innovation, in consultation with community groups, to publicly list business information on local permit holders. AB 1305 is based on two flawed assumptions outlined in the bill’s findings and declarations: That regulated California businesses are broadly out of compliance with air quality standards and that local air districts are failing in their enforcement responsibilities.

Neither of these claims reflect the reality of current compliance trends or enforcement efforts. The bill would add unnecessary administrative burdens on businesses and air districts without improving air quality outcomes. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

Mountain Lions

California Farm Bureau supports SB 818, a narrowly tailored bill designed to provide additional tools to individuals directly involved in wildlife management and conservation. The bill aims to help mitigate human-wildlife conflicts, particularly in areas where mountain lion populations are increasingly

interacting with people and livestock. SB 818 represents a pragmatic step toward improving public safety and protecting agricultural operations while maintaining responsible wildlife stewardship. The bill was heard in the Senate Natural Resources Committee on April 22 and passed out of committee. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

CDQAP April Newsletter

The April 2025 edition of our CDQAP newsletter is available for your use and distribution. An on-line version of the issue is available for download at their website. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

Biosecurity Webinar

On Thursday, May 15, The USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinarian Services (VS) and the USDA Office of Partnerships & Public Engagement (OPPE) are partnering to host a Biosecurity 101 Flock Defender Information Session for small farmers and ranchers.

The information session will provide small farmers and ranchers with information on how they can practice biosecurity every day and how this practice will help protect other flocks by preventing the spread of disease.

Register here.

Clean Air Act Waiver
The US House of Representatives have voted to overturn EPA’s rule relating to three electric vehicle mandates that were approved under the Biden Administration including Advanced Clean Cars II regulation, the Advanced Clean Trucks regulation, and the Om-

nibus Low-NOx Emissions rule. Advanced Clean Cars II would mandate that by 2035 all new passenger cars, trucks and SUVs sold in California will be zero emissions. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

CALIBRATE Coalition

California Farm Bureau has joined CALIBRATE, a coalition of consumer advocates, businesses, and everyday Californians who support clean transportation but believe that state mandates must align with market realities, infrastructure readiness, and consumer behavior—not unrealistic deadlines.

The coalition was formed in response to the Advanced Clean Cars II (ACC II) regulation adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in 2022. ACC II requires that 100% of new passenger vehicles sold in California be zero-emission by 2035, with an aggressive near-term mandate that 35% of new car sales be zero-emission by 2026. Manufacturers who fail to meet the targets face a \$20,000 penalty per noncompliant vehicle.

The Facts

Inadequate Charging Infrastructure
California currently has just 152,000 public chargers—far short of the 2.1 million needed by 2035. Without sufficient infrastructure, the transition will falter.

Higher Costs, Fewer Choices

The mandate is expected to raise vehicle prices and reduce availability, particularly for working families. Automakers unable to meet the targets may cut shipments to California, limiting consumer choice.

Billions Lost for Public Services

The state collects more than \$10 billion annually from new car sales tax revenue. The ZEV mandate puts at risk over \$3.5 billion annually, jeopardizing funding for public safety, fire protection, social programs, and essential infrastructure.

The Solution: Pause & CALIBRATE CALIBRATE is urging the state to:

- Pause enforcement of ACC II to allow infrastructure and market demand to catch up.
- Protect communities from unintended economic harm.
- Adopt a balanced, phased-in approach that supports a responsible and sustainable path toward clean transportation.



ATV/UTV & Tractor Train-the-Trainer Course

June 4, 2025
Harvest Hall | Modesto, CA

\$400 Member
\$500 Nonmember

In this course participants will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to instruct employees on the safe operation of ATVs, UTVs, and tractors in agricultural settings.

- Overview of ATV/UTV and tractor safety rules & regulations
- Key operating skills: starting, stopping, turning, terrain handling, and center of gravity
- Pre-use inspection checklist review and operator maintenance guidance
- Effective training techniques and operator evaluation tools
- Required documentation for compliance

English | 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Spanish | 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM



To register: Visit agsafe.org Training Calendar, scan QR Code, or call AgSafe at 209-526-4400



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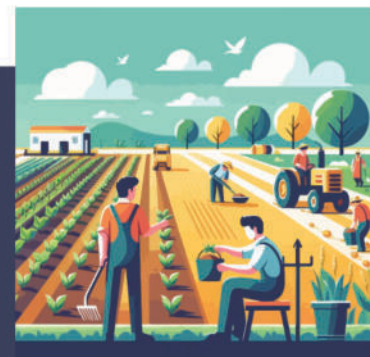
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WHEN & WHERE

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau Boardroom, 1201 L Street, Modesto

In person class time 1pm to 4pm, dates:

- **NEW DATES!**
- June: 9, 11, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30
- July: 2, 7, 9

TO REGISTER

Use the QR Code, Have Questions?
Call our office @ (209) 522-7278, or email Anna Genasci annag@stanfarmbureau.org



Full Enrollment is required, see below for details.

The English at Work Class is FREE this year because Stanislaus County Workforce Development (SCWD) secured grant funding. The funding requires full enrollment, that requires the following:

- Register in CalJobs
- Watch Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Orientation Video on SCWD website
- Review/complete the SCWD Eligibility Packet
- Gather income verification and required data from last 6 months.

What Happens During a WIOA Eligibility Appointment?

1. Workforce Specialist and client meet in-person or by telephone.
2. Workforce Specialist completes the step-by-step WIOA Title I Application wizard with the client to establish Adult or Dislocated Worker eligibility.
3. Client signs Application and signs and completes forms included in the Eligibility Packet (if not done previously)

What Happens AFTER Eligibility has been completed?

4. Meet with a Career Services Specialist
5. Provide Identity & Employment Authorization
6. Verification, if you are a veteran
7. Selective Service Status (males ages 18 up to 26)
8. Family income for the last 6 months example: paycheck stubs



Rooted in the Valley: A Day Immersed in Local Agriculture

By Anna Genasci, Leadership Modesto 2025

What does it take to grow the food we eat every day? For most people, agriculture is something they see out the car window—a blur of orchards, rows of vegetables, or herds of cows. But during our Leadership Modesto Agriculture Day, we stepped beyond the roadside view and into the fields, dairies, and lives of the farmers and fieldworkers who keep Stanislaus County growing.

We began the day at the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, where we heard from Ag Commissioner Linda Pinfold and Farm Bureau staff about the depth and diversity of local agriculture. Stanislaus County is one of the top-producing ag counties in the nation, growing everything from almonds and peaches to leafy greens and milk. But what became quickly apparent was that the people behind this abundance face mounting challenges—regulations that are as complex as they are costly.

From there, our day unfolded like a living documentary.

At Bays Ranch, a multigenerational operation farming everything from apricots to lima beans, we learned about the importance of flexibility in agriculture. Daniel

Bays and his team manage over 3,000 acres, some owned, some leased, and some share-cropped. With only 20-25 employees, the scale of their operation—and the labor it takes to sustain it—is staggering.

At Ratto Bros., a leafy greens farm with roots dating back to 1905, we toured one of the most sophisticated produce operations in the Valley. Ratto employs about 350 people and harvests 30 different crops on a tight schedule determined by demand. The family recently invested in a ready-to-eat line, showcasing innovation in a highly competitive market. Yet, the topic that came up again and again was regulation—especially food safety mandates that, while well-intentioned, often create administrative burdens and financial strain.

Fiscalini Dairy offered a taste of tradition and technology. With 1,500 cows and a robust cheese operation, the Fiscalini family has invested in robotic milkers and sustainable practices. They grow their own feed and return nutrients to the soil using manure from their cows—demonstrating the full-circle nature of thoughtful agriculture. And yet, even here, the strain of overregulation—particularly around labor laws and environmental compliance—was a common refrain.

We ended the day at Mapes Ranch, where Bill Lyons led us on a tour of their diversified farming and cattle operations. With deep roots in the region dating back to

1885, the Mapes/Lyons family embodies the enduring legacy of California agriculture. But even legacy farms must navigate modern obstacles—water policy, labor shortages, and the ever-expanding web of regulations.

Across every stop, one message resonated: locally grown food isn't guaranteed—it's a choice we have to protect. Regulation is necessary, but overregulation, particularly when driven by people disconnected from the realities of farming, threatens the viability of the very operations that feed us.

It was clear that farmers aren't asking for a free pass—they're asking for a seat at the table. They want to be part of the solution, working with regulators, not against them, to ensure food safety, environmental stewardship, and fair labor conditions without making the business of farming impossible.

Our Ag Day was more than a field trip—it was an education in resilience, innovation, and the unseen labor behind our meals. As our community continues to grow, we must remember where our food comes from—and what it takes to keep it local.

LEMO Class 2025 ~ Amy Lynn MacPhail, Anna Genasci, Brock Condit, Cathy Mendoza, Daniel Starr, Emil Mozaffari, Jeff Daniels, Jessica Chang Irish, Jewelee Lemus, Margaret West, Mason Paine, Michelle Jasper, Monica Brown, Nestor Lopez, Patricia Ortega-Ruiz, Preston Osbourn, Rachel Santos, Ruben Wegner, Sambath Chrun, Sarah Dentan, Sergio Espindola, Stephan Christensen, Vanessa Torquato



The importance of immediate workers' compensation reporting

The following information is provided by Nationwide®, your approved insurance and financial services company.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, agriculture ranks among the most hazardous industries with one of the highest work injury rates in 2022.1

When workplace injuries occur, workers' compensation coverage can play a critical role in providing the right financial and medical support to the injured worker if reported immediately. Understand how reporting workplace injuries can benefit the physical and financial health of your agricultural business and employees.

Five reasons to report workplace accidents immediately

- Lower claim costs. Delays can exacerbate injuries, leading to increased medical costs, longer time off work and higher legal fees.
- Better employee relationships. Quick reporting shows injured employees they are valued, aiding in their recovery and easing their return to work.
- Smoother claim investigations. Timely reporting helps preserve evidence and witness statements, crucial for accurate claim investigation.
- Lower litigation costs. Prompt action can prevent employee dissatisfaction, reducing the likelihood of a litigated claim.
- Compliance with state laws. Many states impose fines

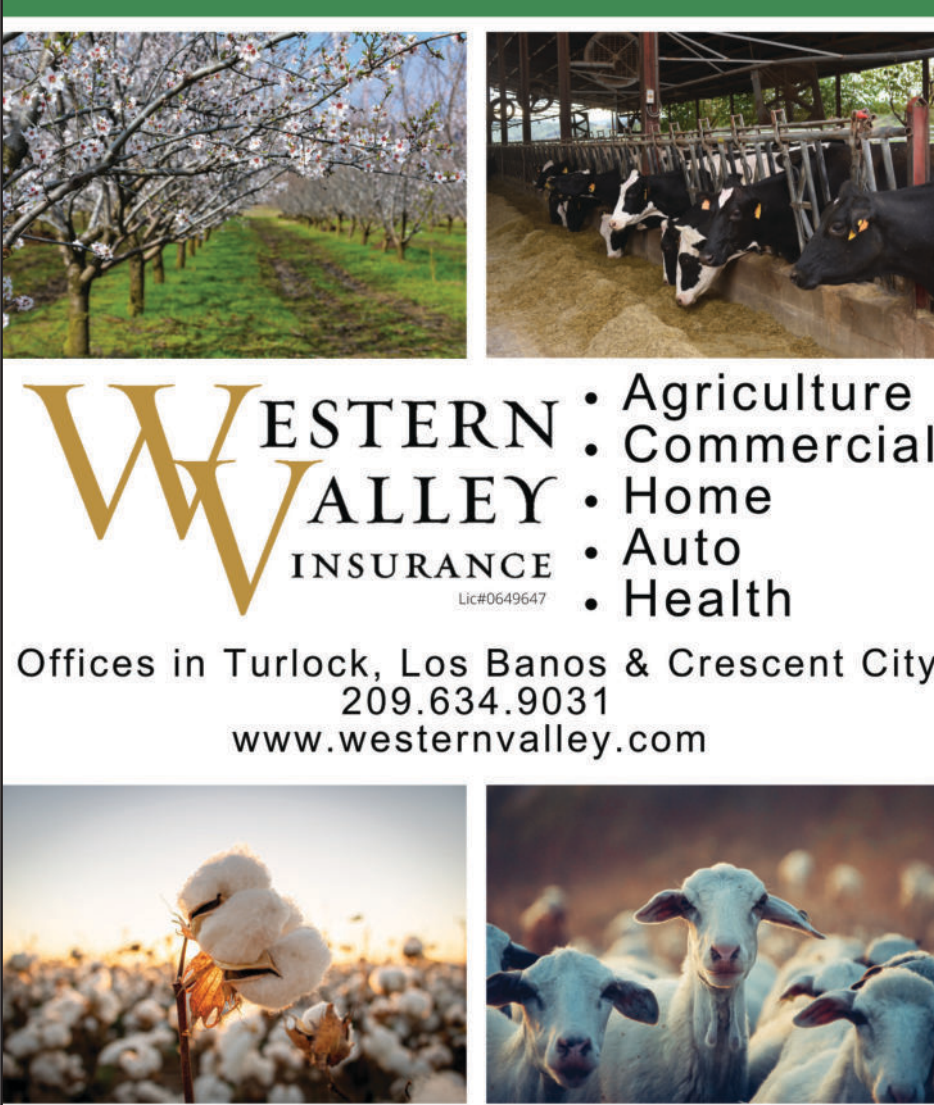
for late reporting of workplace injuries, making timely reporting not only ethical but also a legal requirement.

What to report and when

All workplace accidents and injuries for farm workers should be reported immediately regardless of severity. Report accidents the moment you become aware of them. There's no need to wait for complete information.

The initial report should include:

- Injured person's name and phone number
- Date of accident
- Location of accident



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1 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) Nationwide, the Nationwide N and Eagle, and Nationwide is on your side are service marks of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. © 2025 Nationwide

- Brief description of accident Nationwide offers several convenient options to help you file a claim. You can report a claim via phone, fax, online or through your agent.

Workplace injury services and resources You have complimentary access to risk management services (PDF) and safety resources to help prevent accidents before they happen. Proactive measures can significantly reduce the risk of workplace injuries, creating a safer environment for everyone.

For non-limb-threatening and non-life-threatening injuries, our Nurse Triage Hot-

line (PDF) provides workers' compensation customers with 24/7 access to registered nurses. This helps injured employees and their supervisors or farm owners or managers determine effective courses of action and assist in coordinating treatment with an appropriate authorized provider.

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From Affairs on page 11

Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli, sfenaroli@cfbf.com

Fraudulent CARB Testing

It has come to CARB's attention that fraudulent Clean Truck Check services are being offered. To avoid potential additional monetary and time expenditure (which may include a referral to the CARB Referee), please see below for suggested steps to take when you need assistance with fulfilling your Clean Truck Check requirements:

Reporting/Account Questions:

Refer to the reporting resources page: Reporting Resources (CTC-VIS) | California Air Resources Board

Contact the Clean Truck Check team via email (hdim@arb.ca.gov). Typical response time is within 1 business day

Call the hotline at 866-634-3735 for assistance Testing:

When searching for a tester, please use the for-hire credentialed tester list that CARB maintains: Available for Hire Credentialed Testers | California Air Resources Board Please note that if your tester is not on this list and you need to know whether your tester is a credentialed tester, please email hdim@arb.ca.gov and provide as much contact information as possible including their company name

Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cfbf.com

CDFA Awards \$24.82 Million From California Climate Investments For Methane Emission Reduction Projects On Dairy And Live-stock Farms

CDFA's has announced \$24.82 million in grant funding to 30 methane emission reduction projects across the state. These new projects, part of the Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP) and the Dairy Digester Research and Development Program (DDRDP), will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by an estimated 121,546 metric tons of CO2 equivalent annually, which is equivalent to removing over 28,350 cars from the road for a year. The programs are part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged com-

munities.

This grant round is funding 25 projects in the AMMP with \$17.42 million, with \$6.67 million proposed in matching funds. Five projects are receiving awards from the DDRDP, totaling \$7.40 million in grant funding, with \$37.28 million in matching funds. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cfbf.com

Federal Affairs

MASC Payments to Continue

Last week, the US Department of Agriculture announced the second tranche of funding going out for the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program. MASC was introduced late last year to help support specialty crop growers that have been dealing with challenging market factors for years now. Prior to last week, \$900 million in payments had gone out, but this second round will include up to \$1.3 billion. The funding is derived from the Credit Commodity Corporation (CCC), which is essentially a discretionary fund for USDA. Staff Contact: Erin Huston, ehuston@cfbf.com

President Marks First 100 Days

The new administration passed the 100-day marker last week, in what has been a busy start to President Trump's second term. USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins released a memo highlighting that their agency has cut \$5.5 billion in contracts and grant monies, referring to much of these as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) related. A list was provided earlier this year to note some of those examples, but it is still unclear where the majority of those dollars are coming from.

In their release, the Secretary also noted that they are currently reviewing research and education funds sent to California following concerns about violations to federal law and parental rights. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cfbf.com

AFBF Market Intel: Estate Tax

We wanted to highlight an AFBF Market Intel piece that was released last week concerning the estate tax. With the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act sunseting at the end of the year, many provisions that have benefitted farmers and ranchers will come to an end without any type of extension. Republicans are expected to pass this via the reconciliation process at some point, but the slim majorities in the House and Senate leave little room for error. California has a large share of households that are liable to benefit from the original estate tax provisions in TCJA. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cfbf.com



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Transportation · Warehousing

Disturbing Cost of Expanding Wolf Population to California Cattle Ranchers

Source: California Ag Network, April 2025

Motion-activated field cameras, GPS collars, wolf scat analysis and cattle tail hair samples are helping University of California, Davis, researchers shed new light on how an expanding and protected gray wolf population is affecting cattle operations, leading to millions of dollars in losses.

Long believed extinct in California, a lone gray wolf was seen entering the Golden State from Oregon in 2011 and a pack was spotted in Siskiyou County in 2015. By the end of 2024, seven wolf packs were documented with evidence of the animals in four other locations. As wolves proliferated, ranchers in those areas feared they would prey on cattle.

Tina Saitone, a University of California, Davis, professor and Cooperative Extension specialist in livestock and rangeland economics, sought to quantify the direct and indirect costs after the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or CDFW, launched a pilot program to compensate ranchers for wolf-related losses.

“There’s not really any research in the state on the economic consequences of an apex predator interacting with livestock,” she said.

An Interdisciplinary Team

Saitone proposed the research to her husband, Ken Tate, a UC Davis professor and Cooperative Extension specialist in rangeland sciences. Ben Sacks, director of the Mammalian Ecology and Conservation Unit in the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory, joined to analyze wolf scat. Brenda McCowan, a professor of population health and reproduction at UC Davis Veterinary Medicine, examined cortisol levels.

“There’s a lot of nervous ranchers,” Tate said, and “there’s a very limited amount of work on this topic.”

The interdisciplinary research centered on three wolf packs — Harvey, Lassen and Beyem Seyo — and their interactions with rangeland cattle in northeastern California from June to October of 2022, 2023 and 2024. Funding came from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Program and the Russell L. Rustici Rangeland and Cattle Research Endowment.

The team found that:

One wolf can cause between \$69,000 and \$162,000 in direct and indirect losses from lower pregnancy rates in cows and decreased weight gain in calves;

Total indirect losses are estimated to range from \$1.4 million to \$3.4 million depending on moderate or severe impacts from wolves across the three packs;

72% of wolf scat samples tested during the 2022 and 2023 summer seasons contained cattle DNA; and

Hair cortisol levels were elevated in cattle



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that ranged in areas with wolves, indicating an increase in stress.

"It is clear the scale of conflict between wolves and cattle is substantial, expanding and costly to ranchers in terms of animal welfare, animal performance and ranch profitability," Saitone said. "This is not surprising given that cattle appear to be a major component of wolf diet and the calories drive their conservation success."

Collaborating for Access, Information

Researchers trekked into remote rangelands to mount motion-activated game cameras, obtained access agreements from ranchers and permission to put GPS collars on cows. Neither Saitone or Tate had undertaken that kind of work, but years of collaborating on other research paid off, with land managers and ranchers providing information and support.

"This is such a sensitive issue for ranchers and landowners that it took pretty much every bit of my 30 years of network building to get us access to land and cattle for this study," Tate said.

Local cattle ranchers and others provided tips on locations to post cameras. "Folks on the ground were really helpful in facilitating our understanding of wolf dynamics in general," he said.

Scanning for Wolves

Saitone and Tate deployed a network of more than 120 trail cameras and put GPS collars on 140 cows in locations with and without wolves in their grazing areas.

Every two weeks they checked on the trail cameras, swapped out memory cards and cleared away brush or branches that could activate the cameras with just a simple breeze.

The two didn't know whether they would capture any wolf photos.

"You don't see these animals very often," Tate said. "They're nocturnal. You engage with them almost exclusively via the cameras."

But one evening reviewing trail camera data, Saitone noticed a herd of cows and calves walking fast and running by a camera for about 30 minutes, followed by two wolves in the middle of the night. "They'd been chasing those cattle and we just caught it on camera," Tate said. "That stress event just streamed by and, for me, was the first and most exciting finding of evidence wolves were negatively interacting with cattle."

That wasn't the end of the discoveries.

Sampling Scat

During camera checks, they found canine scat. "Wolves will use roads and trails primarily, just like humans and cattle will," Saitone said. "It's the easiest path for them to take so frequently their scat is deposited along the way."

They began collecting the scat, preserving it with desiccant and handing it over to Sacks for analysis. Of 377 samples they turned over, about 27% were from wolves, with the remainder coming from coyotes, bob-

cats and lions.

Of the summer 2022 samples, 86% the wolf scat contained cattle DNA and 13 different wolves were identified, all of which had eaten cattle. Over the two years, 72% of the samples had cattle DNA. Mule deer, rodents and occasional bear and bird DNA also showed up in the scat analysis, Sack said.

Sacks emphasized that the data didn't indicate what killed the cattle, "it just tells us what's for dinner," he said.

A New Phase of Management

Gray wolves are protected under the state and federal law as endangered species. CD-FW's depredation compensation program paid out \$3.1 million in initial funding and the agency said April 2 it was moving into a new phase of wolf management given increasing population numbers.

The next phase entails evaluating the status of gray wolves, evaluating potential permits to allow "less-than-lethal harassment" such as noise or use of motorized equipment to deter the predators, an online tool to provide location details of wolves with GPS collars, investigating livestock losses due to depredation and other actions. Saitone and Tate say the research could better inform the conversation.

"We do need to get toward some kind of co-existence," Tate said. "We don't know what that's going to look like but it doesn't look like what we're doing now, that's for sure. It's not sustainable. This research helps, I think, to advance that conversation."

— By Emily C. Dooley, UC Davis



Grape growers scrap more vineyards amid wine market slump

California winegrape growers continue to tear out vineyards in an effort to balance the state's grape supply with a historic drop in demand for wine. "In the Lodi area, there's been a large number of vineyards removed—more than I've ever seen in one year," said grower Joe Valente, adding that the downturn in the market has caused some growers to stop performing the necessary vineyard maintenance to produce a crop. "There's still a lot of vineyards that are unpruned, so the assumption is that they will probably get removed or not be farmed at all." The decline in wine sales during the past few years has been attributed to shifting consumer attitudes around the health benefits or risks of consuming low levels of alcohol, among other factors. "Hopefully, it's a cycle that's short-lived," Valente said.

Tariffs prompt farmers to shore up trade relationships

The imposition of tariffs by the United States on its closest trading partners—and retaliatory tariffs that have targeted some agricultural exports from the U.S.—have prompted California farmers to do what they can to preserve their relationships with foreign buyers. "Our sales team is planning to go to Canada next month to meet with some of our buyers," said Ryan Elliot, operational manager at Stillwater Orchards in Sacramento County, which sells about 10% of its fresh-market pears to Canada. "It might not seem huge, but it's been a favorable market for us for

years." Elliot added that should tariffs halt some of the canned fruit the U.S. imports from Europe and China, that could benefit his family's farm, "and we can focus more on our domestic canned fruit products."

Flower farm brings hope and beauty to community ravaged by fire

In 2021, the Dixie Fire burned 963,309 acres in five counties and destroyed about half the homes in the Indian Valley area of Plumas County. Kjessie and Andre Essue and their three young children of Taylorsville had to evacuate for 40 days, though they were among those fortunate to find their homes still standing when they returned. Wanting to do something for the suffering community, Kjessie launched Barn Swal-

low Gardens, a flower farm that grows about 130 varieties. "I love to grow a lot of different shapes, textures and colors. It might not be what's recommended from a business perspective, but it brings me a lot of joy," she says.

Experts cut through confusion about ultra-processed foods

With debate about ultraprocessed foods frequently making headlines, the University of California, Davis, Department of Food Science and Technology highlighted work its researchers have published to bring clarity to the subject. For researchers, part of the

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challenge is the speed at which processed foods and ingredients are now created. “We’re creating ingredients so rapidly, we don’t have time to study them,” said Alyson Mitchell, a professor and food chemist at UC Davis. “The food technology has moved faster than the health studies have.”

Bankruptcies show stress in farm economy

After a four-year downward trend, U.S. farm bankruptcies are on the rise again, with growing concern that the financial health of farms across the country will continue to falter. A total of 216 U.S. farms filed for Chapter 12 bankruptcy last year, up 55% from 2023. With 17 filings, California led the nation. “It’s just the tip of the iceberg,” said Shawn Gill, a Central Valley almond grower who has been trying to reorganize his debts under Chapter 12, noting he has friends who are in a similar situation. “You’re going to see a lot more bankruptcies or people going under.”

Committee rejects tax credit bill that aimed to offset farm overtime costs

Farm advocates and farmworkers left the state Capitol disappointed last month after a proposed tax credit aimed at boosting farm employment opportunities and assisting farms in California failed to advance out of the state Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee. Senate Bill 628, authored by state Sen. Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield, would have created a tax credit to offset the cost to farmers of paying overtime wages. The bill was designed to address unintended consequences of California’s 2016 agricultural overtime law, which proponents said would boost farmworker pay but ended up causing workers to lose hours and income, according to research from the University of California, Berkeley.

On the Record: American Psychological Association president discusses mental health in agriculture

Debra Kawahara, president of the American Psychological Association and associate dean of academic affairs at the California School of Professional Psychology, Alliant International University, spoke about mental health on farms and in rural communities for Ag Alert’s® Q&A series, On the Record. “I think there’s been an acknowledgment in society at large, and also on farms, that mental health issues are important,” said Kawahara, whose family grows strawberries, blueberries, cherimoyas and assorted vegetables in San Diego County. “But there is still much work to be done to overcome the stigma and encourage help-seeking behaviors.”

Researchers remove proteins in wheat harmful to people with celiac disease

Researchers at the University of California, Davis, have deleted a cluster of genes in wheat that generates gluten proteins that can trigger immune reactions without harming the bread-making quality of the globally produced grain. The findings were published this month in the journal

Theoretical and Applied Genetics. “The gluten proteins we eliminated are the ones that trigger the strongest response in people with celiac disease, and their elimination can reduce the risk of triggering the disease in people without celiac disease,” said wheat geneticist Jorge Dubcovsky, whose lab at UC Davis conducted the study.

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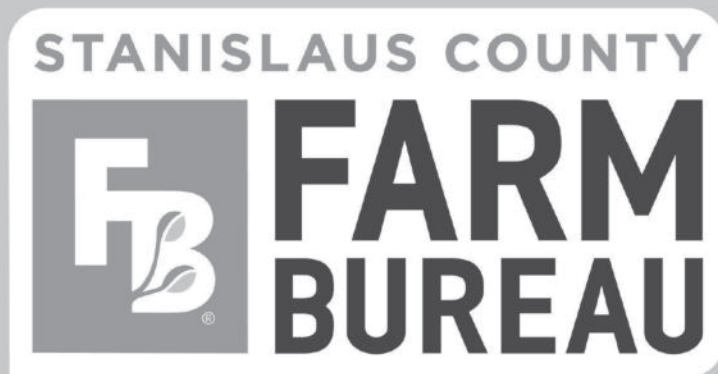
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Just One Step

Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau President

As farmers, we usually start the day with a full list of things to get done. No matter how hard we try to do it all ourselves, our work is always made better with more hands pitching in. The challenges we face mentally work in the same way, and the only way we can reach success, just like our endless to-do list on the farm, is one step at a time.

Unfortunately, there is still a stigma when it comes to rural mental health.

And when no one is talking about it, taking steps towards mental wellness can feel overwhelming – leaving us lost on how to start. That is why as we mark May as Mental Health Month, Farm Bureau is focusing on the theme: just one step. Even the biggest and hardest jobs have to begin with just one step. What a powerful reminder that we don't have to fix it all at once, and that sometimes the best action we can take for ourselves or someone else is to take that first step.

The First Step toward Mental Wellness

I have often talked about how stress can build up like a pressure cooker. If we don't find healthy ways to relieve that pressure, we are bound to hit a breaking point. The long hours on the farm, the

uncertainty of business and the isolation that comes with farming can pile on stress in our lives. While farmers are some of the strongest, most resilient people I know, that doesn't mean we're invincible. A healthy farm starts with a healthy farmer, and that includes our mental and emotional well-being. It's time for all of us to take just one step to help break the harmful stigma surrounding mental wellness in our rural communities.

The first step towards mental wellness doesn't have to be complicated – it's about progress not perfection. Just one step of the mental health journey may look like going for a walk, calling up a trusted friend, or just taking time to reflect at the end of the day. For me, one of those steps has been starting each

morning out with a devotional and prayer. This is a small but important habit for me, and it helps reset my mind and prepare me for what lies ahead. The first step may look different for everyone, but whatever it may be, it is worth taking.

As we take a step toward mental wellness, we also can encourage our family, friends and neighbors to do the same. Mental health challenges show up in small ways: changes in routines, missing events or even less interest in things we enjoy. We can't wait until someone raises their hand for help or until we have the perfect words to say. We need to make a habit of checking in on our loved ones and neighbors. You never know how much a text, a call or a visit can do for someone going

See AFBF on page 27



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Navigating SGMA: Kings County Farm Bureau Pushes Back on State Overreach

By Anna Genasci, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau

California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), enacted in 2014, was designed to bring critically over drafted groundwater basins into balance. But for Kings County farmers and their local agencies, SGMA has become more than just a regulatory hurdle—it's now the battleground for a legal fight over local control and state authority.

On a recent episode of the Farm Bureau Friday podcast, Dusty Ference, Executive Director of the Kings County Farm Bureau, provided an in-depth look at the situation unfolding in his region. With a background in citrus farming and years of service in agricultural advocacy, Ference brings a grounded and informed voice to the table.

At the heart of the issue is the Tulare Lake Subbasin, which was placed on probation by the State Water Resources Control Board in 2023. This action followed the Department of Water Resources' rejection of the subbasin's Groundwater Sustainability Plans—first deemed incomplete, and later inadequate. According to Ference, the state's decision triggered a cascade of burdensome requirements for local growers.

"Immediately, growers were told to put meters on all of their wells and register each well with the State Water Board—at \$300 per well," Ference explained. "This is happening while many are already



participating in local GSA programs and complying with their directives. It's confusing and duplicative."

In response, the Kings County Farm Bureau has joined a lawsuit challenging what they view as the State Water Board's overreach. Ference believes this legal battle is about more than SGMA compliance—it's about protecting the ability of local stakeholders to manage their own water resources.

"We're not saying we're perfect, but local agencies are better equipped to understand the real conditions on the ground," he said. "The one-size-fits-all approach coming from Sacramento doesn't reflect the diversity of water use, land conditions, and infrastructure across the state."

Ference emphasized that growers in the Tulare Lake Subbasin are already making tough decisions to comply with SGMA—fallowing land, investing in water-saving technology, and improving recharge practices. But under probation, the threat of state intervention adds a layer of uncertainty to already complex operations.

"What's frustrating is the narrative that farmers are doing nothing," he added. "In reality, they're making huge sacrifices. But SGMA was designed to be a 20-year plan. We're only halfway through it, and already we're being told we've failed."

Despite the challenges, Ference remains committed to finding a path forward that honors both the intent of SGMA and the practical realities of farming in California's Central Valley.

"Our hope is that through this legal process, we can reaffirm the role of local management and preserve a future for agriculture in our region," he said.

As groundwater regulations continue to evolve, the outcome of this legal challenge could have implications for farmers across the state—including those here in Stanislaus County. For now, Kings County stands at the forefront of a critical debate over who controls California's water—and how that control shapes the future of farming.



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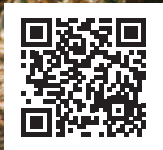
through a tough time.

Farm Bureau's Focus on Mental Wellness

At Farm Bureau, we have also been working to make it a little easier for folks to take the first step. Our Farm State of Mind page is full of tools, resources and support to help you navigate your mental health. You can find stress management tips, training to help support your circle and access to Togetherall, an anonymous, online community that offers peer-to-peer support 24/7, moderated by licensed mental health professionals. Togetherall also offers an agricultural-specific group to share similar stories, and free counseling through the partnership with Personal Assistance Services. Whether you're looking for how to get started or just need a reminder that you're not alone, Farm State of Mind is a safe place to start.

Mental Health Month is a great reminder for all of us to check in, but the practice of supporting one another and working on mental wellness is a continuous journey. Taking just one step can be the start to something bigger, and it could make all the difference for you or someone you care about. Let's all start today by taking just one step – and then keep it going.

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