

The Stanislaus Farm News

STANISLAUS COUNTY



The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture

For the good of your food.



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County Farm Bureau
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Ripe apricots hang on a tree on Dave Santos' orchard in Patterson, Page 9
Photo: © 2025 Steve German

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2025 TRAININGS



Register here:

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

February 25, 2025 Food Safety - FSMA

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

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

Pricing: Member \$50/Nonmember \$60

June 5, 2025 CPR & First Aid

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

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

Pricing: Member \$100/Nonmember \$125

March 6, 2025 Pesticide Handler & Fit Testing

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

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

Pricing: Member \$60/Nonmember \$75

July 31, 2025 Tractor Safety

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

CalOSHA requires that employees who
operate equipment be trained annually.

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

May 1, 2025 Indoor&Outdoor Heat Illness Prevention

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

CalOSHA requires this training annually for
employees.

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

October 23, 2025 Hazardous Ag Materials (HAM)

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

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

Pricing: Member \$40/Nonmember \$50

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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.

Federal Affairs

House Ag Advances Markup Reconciliation Piece

Last Wednesday, the House Agriculture Committee voted through their portion of the GOP's major reconciliation bill. Passing 29-25 along party lines, the legislation effectively includes \$60 billion in Farm Bill-related funding, much of which is aimed at certain commodity reference prices. However, it also includes provisions relating to specialty crops, research, and other areas. It falls short of a traditional 'full' Farm Bill though, despite many ag groups' insistence that a piecemeal approach be avoided. Democrats argued this as well, but also fo-

cused in on the revisions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Changes to SNAP included capping potential increases, doing more to root out fraud, and shifting some of the costs to states. It could lead to an estimated \$300 billion in cuts overall. The legislation now heads to the House Budget Committee before it is packaged together with other GOP priorities. Their hope is to pass a wide-ranging reconciliation package that would also include extending several sunset tax cuts from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2018. Reconciliation essentially means that it can pass with a simple majority in the Senate, once finalized. There are restrictions on what can be included though, so there

is no guarantee that all of the Republican priorities will be included, subject to interpretation by the Senate Parliamentarian. The Senate hopes to get the bill by later this week, but several hurdles still remain. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cfbf.com

Membership Opportunity: USDA to Boost Timber Production

Last week, USDA announced \$23 million in grant funding to support the processing of timber and hazardous fuels from national forests and grasslands. The Hazardous Fuels Transportation Assistance Grant Program will remain open to applicants through June 20th. Potential projects must remove hazardous materials either from National Forest System Lands—or demonstrate a direct benefit to them. Additional details can be found here. Staff Contact: Erin Huston, ehuston@cfbf.com

Member Opportunity: CRP Enrollments Open

The USDA opened up applications for the General and Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) through June 6th, with the Grassland CRP signup approaching in the future. Administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), CRP is a voluntary program that encourages farmers and landowners to convert highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover. Participants receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish these long-term vegetative covers. Members are encouraged to click here for more information. Staff Contact: Erin Huston, ehuston@cfbf.com

Bipartisan Ag Workforce Bill Reintroduced

Two weeks ago, Reps. Zoe Lofgren (CA-18) and Dan Newhouse (WA-04) reintro-



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From Updates on page 3

duced the Farm Workforce Modernization Act (FWMA), along with support from Reps. Jim Costa (CA- 21), David Valadao (CA-22), and Adam Gray (CA-13). The legislation offers a comprehensive solution to addressing many of the workforce challenges being faced in the agricultural industry. While bipartisan and typically bicameral, the bill has struggled to find enough Republican support in the Senate (it would need 60 votes for passage). The legislation is unchanged from previous iterations, which likely dampens its odds of success given the GOP's control in the House, Senate, and White House. Nevertheless, labor continues to be a major issue facing farmers and ranchers across the US, particularly in our labor-intensive state. Whether FWMA or another bill, the industry is in much need of a win on this issue, and CAFB continues to work with lawmakers and other partners on finding a path forward.

Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cbf.com

Threats from New World Screwworm Renewed

The last several weeks, lawmakers and ag groups have been working to draw attention to the threats posed by the New World Screwworm (NWS), a parasitic fly that can infect living animals. Imports of live cattle, horses, and bison at the southern border were halted last weekend due to reports of an outbreak in Mexico and elsewhere in Central America. The species has been considered eradicated in the US dating back to the 60s, but has remained under close watch by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Legislation is being drafted to help establish a new sterile fly facility at the southern border to assist in mitigation efforts. State Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl, mviohl@cbf.com

Disaster Program Timeline Released

Two weeks ago, USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins held a 'Farmers First Roundtable' in Nebraska to examine some of the issues faced by smaller-scale family-owned farming operations. USDA also used this as an opportunity to share the expected timeline of dates for several disaster programs

funded through the agency. This includes the timeline of payments for the Emergency Livestock Relief Program and Supplemental Disaster Relief Program, staggered depending on the types of losses. The earliest of those are drought and wildfire payments under ELRP, starting May 23rd. The full timeline can be found here.

Staff Contact: Erin Huston, ehuston@cbf.com

State Affairs**Cal/OSHA Proposes Revisions to Heat and Smoke Rules Under AB 2243**

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) released proposed revisions to its outdoor and indoor heat illness regulations and wildfire smoke protection regulations on May 11. The division acted to comply with AB 2243 (Garcia, 2022) which mandated the agency and the Cal/OSHA Standards Board consider revisions to those regulations to tighten acclimatization requirements and require more frequent provision of copies of an employer's written heat illness program. AB 2243 also requires the agency and Board to

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consider changes to require mandatory wildfire respirator use when the Air Quality Index (AQI) exceeds 300 – for agricultural employees only. Non-ag employers will be required to mandate respirator use only when the AQI exceeds 500. Mandatory respirator use obliges an employer to implement a respiratory protection program triggering extensive fit-testing and medical testing to ensure use of a respirator does not trigger undue cardiovascular stress with respect to individual employees – something that will be difficult to impossible to implement with hundreds or thousands of employees when a wildfire smoke event arises. Very few ag employees are typically subject to respirator fit testing and medical review, other than pesticide appli-

cators. In its release, the agency indicated it will convene an advisory committee to discuss the proposals. AB 2243 requires the agency and Board to consider these proposals by December 31, 2025.

SB 353

Senate Bill 353, authored by Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil (R Jackson) passed from the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee with bipartisan support. The bill would remove a sunset provision from existing law that would otherwise end a tax credit program for donations of fresh fruits, dairy products, and vegetables to California food banks. SB 353 would make that tax credit permanent. California Farm Bureau supports SB 353. The bill moves onto the Senate Appropriations Committee. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

SB 5

Senate Bill 5, authored by Senator Christopher Cabaldon (D Napa) passed is on the Senate Floor awaiting a vote to move onto the As-

sembly. The bill was recently amended to protect Williamson Act lands by prohibiting the transfer of property taxes from those lands to an Enhanced Infrastructure Finance District or Community Revitalization Investment Authority. The author's intent is to protect these lands from developers that leverage community development financing tools to acquire agricultural lands, specifically in response to activities in Solano County. Farm Bureau supports SB 5. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

AB 735

Assembly Bill 735, authored by Assemblymember Juan Carillo (D Palmdale) and its Senate companion bill Senate Bill 415, authored by Senator Eloise Gomez Reyes (D San Bernadino) have been amended to provide an exclusion from the definition of "logistics use" when a facility "serves a primary agricultural use that is actively operated for a single period of 90 consecutive days or less each year." Both bills are heading to floor votes.

California Farm Bureau is neutral on both bills but met with both authors extensively in support of the amendments. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cfbf.com

AB 518

AB-518 by Assemblymember Chris Ward

which allows for low impact camping on private land passed on the Assembly Floor 55-0, with bipartisan support. Farm Bureau supports the bill because it would give landowners the opportunity to pursue additional income from these short term stays.

Staff: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cfbf.com

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American Farms of All Sizes Begin with Family

By: Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau President

These days, it seems we're hearing more and more talk about "big ag." While the words are tossed out freely, it's not clear whether the idea is to paint farming as a "big" industry or to slap a corporate label on family farms. In my travels as American Farm Bureau president, I get to meet a lot of farmers and ranchers across this country. I haven't found "big ag" yet, but what I have found are hardworking men and women who are committed to doing right by their families and yours.

American agriculture is largely driven by families—some who have been farming for generations. According to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture, 95% of farms in the U.S. are family owned. I'm not sure what other field or industry can claim that, but it's not surprising to anyone close to agriculture that our businesses are family businesses. And what about those remaining 5%? Most of those are also owned by families—sometimes multiple families—but the tax structure might look different depending on what makes the most sense for the farm business. Some farm families will establish a C-corporation to give them more flexibility

as they plan to ensure the farm stays a family business for the next generation. Less than one-tenth of one percent of farms are owned by corporations not held solely by families.

"But what about land ownership?" some might ask. Well, I am glad because that is an important topic for farmers and ranchers with all sizes of businesses. With rising property costs, it can be a challenge for farmers, especially those just starting out, to purchase their own land. Half of agricultural land is farmed by farmers who both own and rent land. There can be a variety of investors who purchase and rent out farmland, but a significant percentage are those who know farming firsthand. According to USDA ERS data, 38% of non-farming landlords are retired farmers themselves.

Farms of all sizes are vitally important to our country. But the fact is, it is getting harder for farms, especially small and mid-sized, to stay in business as pressures beyond the farm gate mount. Our economists at American Farm Bureau have found that farms of all sizes are relying on off-farm income to stay afloat, with only 23% sustained solely by farm income. Not only is it hard to stay

See Family on page 24

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From Updates on page 5

SB 279

SB-279 by Senator Jerry McNerney is supported by CAFB. It increases the amount of compostable material able to be sent to composting. As burning is no longer allowed in the San Joaquin Air District, agriculture needs alternatives to send their organic waste. SB-279 will give farmers and ranchers more alternatives when it comes to their ag waste. Staff: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

AB 525

AB-525 by Assemblymember Tom Lackey is supported by California Farm Bureau. AB-525 extends the date that agricultural vehicles are exempt from the Basic Inspection of Terminals. Basic Inspection of Terminals (BIT) program makes it illegal for motor carriers to operate certain large vehicles without informing the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) about inspection locations and record maintenance sites. Currently, agricultural vehicles are exempt from this requirement until January 1, 2026. The new bill would extend that date until 2031. Staff: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

AB 411

Farm Bureau sponsored AB-411 by Assemblymember Diane Papan, which allows for the on-farm composting of livestock carcass has advanced from the policy committee and is currently in Assembly Appropriations Suspense File. Staff: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

Fish and Wildlife Releases Wolf Mapping Tool

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced today the release of a brand-new mapping tool designed to provide regular location information on GPS-collared gray wolves in California to help prevent wolf-livestock conflict.

The Wolf Location Automated Mapping System, available to the public on CDFW's website, shows the approximate location of GPS collared wolves across the state. The goal of the map is to better enable livestock producers to understand the movement of collared wolves near their properties and to assist them in mitigating wolf-livestock conflicts.

Staff: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

Fish and Game Commission Continues to Discuss Coyotes

On May 15, Fish and Game Commission Members at the Wildlife Resource Committee discussed removing coyotes from code that currently allows their take prior to depredation or crop damage. FarmTeam members submitted over 1,300 letters to commissioners on the topic asking them to not remove valuable tools. Because of the overwhelming opposition to the plan, Commission Members pulled the proposal back and heard from farmers and ranchers about the need to protect livestock and crops. California Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau members asked for no changes to the current code. The commission heard public comment for five hours and narrowed the scope of their considerations to exclude agriculture from any future discussions around coyotes.

Staff: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

Clean Truck Check Webinar

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff invite you to participate in a public online webinar covering vehicle testing requirements for the Clean Truck Check program that began in October 2024. This is the third in a series of trainings that are focused on the requirements for owners of trucks registered in California.

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2025
Time: 9:00 a.m. - Noon Location:

Zoom Meeting Register

The upcoming webinar will be held via Zoom. You must register to participate. Please register for the meeting if you wish to attend. You will have the option to participate via Zoom or access the meeting by telephone with a dial-in number. CARB staff highly recommend using the Zoom Desktop or Mobile App to participate.

There will be an opportunity to ask live questions related to topic(s) during the webinar. Please see below for the question submission deadlines for each webinar. If you are unable to attend after registering, please email hdim@arb.ca.gov and request to be removed from registration to allow others to register, as we are typically at capacity for these events. CARB staff will hold additional webinars as needed.

Staff: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cbbf.com

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Elevating apricots

Fresh and preserved, the stone fruit delivers sweet flavor year-round

Source: California Bountiful

Story by Ching Lee & Photos by Steve German

Biting into an apricot can be a sensory powerhouse. Velvety soft to the touch, the golf ball-sized fruit is sweet and tangy with notes of honey, and when picked at peak ripeness, its fruity yet slightly floral scent can be intoxicating.

Having grown his share of apricots since the early 1970s, Dave Santos acknowledges not all apricot varieties have been winners, and some of the ones grown back in the day simply tasted bland.

“There was a joke that you could eat the apricot and chew on the box, and they would have about the same flavor,” he

recalls.

Much has changed, says the co-owner of Lucich Santos Farms and Blossom Hill Packing in Patterson, a region known as the “apricot capital of the world.” His farm has worked with nurseries and plant breeders for years to test new varieties of the stone fruit, and he says some of the current ones on the market are much improved.

“Today, we’re working on fruit that tastes good,” he says, including varieties that mature well, have high sugar levels and are “something that the consumer will want to buy and come back and buy again.”

A delicate challenge

As a fresh fruit, the apricot’s fragile nature and short shelf life have long been its Achilles’ heel. That’s why most of the state’s crop has traditionally been used for processing, because when apricots are canned, dried or frozen, they can be picked ripe with their

high sugar and flavor preserved.

“It’s very difficult to get a ripe apricot to the store that’s got good flavor and still have it look visually appealing,” says Stanislaus County grower Daniel Bays, who serves as president of Apricot Producers of California and whose family has been farming apricots since the 1960s.

Because apricots are so delicate, they must be picked by hand—which is costly and labor-intensive—though some processors allow machine-harvested fruit if it’s used to make juice, for example. Longtime grower Stan Lester of Yolo County says even if harvest can be done by machine, which he says “doesn’t do a super great job,” the trees still must be pruned by hand every year.

See Apricots on page 10

Below: Stanislaus County apricot farmer Dave Santos examines the fruit during harvest.



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



From Apricots on page 9

Changing markets

Even with challenges of the crop, major inroads have been made elevating apricots as a fresh fruit. Whereas only 8% to 16% of the state's crop went to the fresh market in the 1980s, the share of fruit going to the fresh market versus processing is more evenly split today.

Santos' business has been part of this shift. His farm used to send 90% to 98% of its apricots to processing. But as people's diets and preferences changed and canneries disappeared, "we were some of the people that got left out, not having a home for our apricots," he says. He and his business partner, Pete Lucich, decided to start packing their own fruit, eventually building a small packing shed in 1978.

That business continues to grow, Santos says, these days packing 250,000 to 300,000 boxes of conventional apricots and some 100,000 boxes of organic apricots annually. The farm grows 14 varieties of apricots, including apriums—apricot-plum hybrids—with 70% of the fruit destined for fresh eating. The rest is shipped to Del Monte,

Pacific Coast Producers and Del Mar Food Products for canning and freezing.

As one of the first stone fruits to hit the market each spring, fresh apricots have a fleeting season: They're available for about six weeks, most of it ripening in late June to July, though harvest can begin as early as late May. Some varieties allow farmers to pick as early as late April to the first week of May.

The Patterson variety—named for the town at the heart of apricot production—continues to be the most widely grown, as it can be sold fresh but is ideal for canning, freezing, juicing and drying.

He removed his apricot orchard about two years ago after he sold his bakery, which served as a key outlet for his apricots. "We used to cut and dry a lot of them and sell them at our bakery," Lester says. "That used to be a big market of ours. We'd have people coming from all over trying our apricot pies."

Fresh or canned

Despite growing demand for fresh apricots and rising consumer interest in locally

grown produce, the state's apricot acreage has diminished through the years. California growers harvested 5,300 acres of apricots in 2023 compared to more than 15,000 acres in 2003. Even so, the Golden State remains the largest apricot producer in the nation.

Much of the downward trend in production has to do with the waning popularity of canned fruit. Domestic dry yards also took less fruit beginning in the late 1980s and 1990s, as they were squeezed by the influx of less expensive imports, particularly from Turkey, the world's top apricot producer. "By the time you get to the grocery store, the California dried apricot is almost twice the price what a Turkish or Mediterranean apricot would cost," Bays says.

There has been some resurgence, he says, as people realize the quality of California apricots and seek out the domestic product. The boost in demand for canned fruit during the COVID pandemic also helped, Santos says, with shoppers rediscovering the product. Bays says the industry is trying to do a better job of reminding consumers that they can enjoy the flavors and nutritional benefits of apricots year-round in the canned, frozen or dried form.



Able Rojas picks apricots for Lucich Santos Farms in Patterson.



After sorting the apricots, a crew bags them for shipping.

To that end, producers have started a social media campaign with recipes and videos on how to use canned apricots. The collection features baked goods such as apricot pie pockets, upside-down cake and cobbler, and main dishes such as apricot glazed chicken.

Want to make a refreshing smoothie with three ingredients? Chill a can of apricots in juice and then blend with one frozen banana and a cup of Greek yogurt. Only one ingredient is needed to make apricot sorbet: Freeze a can of apricots, run the can under hot water to loosen, cut the contents into chunks and puree in a food processor. Farm stand appeal

This time of year, when apricots are in season, it would be worth it to seek out the fresh version of the fruit.

Jason Bremmer, who grows five different varieties of apricots in Colusa County, sells his fruit only when it's ripe—the way it's meant to be eaten, he says. That requires his employees to pick a tree five to seven times, as not all the fruit ripens at once.

Bremmer markets most of his crop directly from his farm stand, which opens for about 25 days during harvest season. He estimates he sells about 1,500 boxes of fresh apricots this way, with some of it going to a local school district and two stores. The farm stand also sells apricot pies, jams and dried apricots produced by the farm.

People know about his farm through word of mouth, with farm stand customers coming from as far away as Los Angeles, Oregon and Washington state. They load up on fresh apricots to make their own jams and preserves or to eat them fresh. One local customer buys boxes of them for drying and then gives them away as Christmas presents, Bremmer says.

"We have people drive in and out of our place even when apricots aren't ready because they want apricots," he says, "and they continue to come every year."

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UTV and ATV safety with Dale Earnhardt Jr.

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For Dale Earnhardt Jr., safety on the road, track or trail is a big deal. So he was eager to team up with the number-one farm insurer in the U.S.1 to help spread awareness of off-road vehicle safety.

"I consider myself a champion for ATV and UTV safety. That's why I'm excited to be part of Nationwide's Let's Champion Rider SafetySM campaign focused on connecting ATV and UTV users to safety resources and encouraging families to start a conversation about responsible riding," Earnhardt said. "As an experienced driver, I know the importance of being safe and responsible on the road or on the track. And it's the same thing with ATVs/UTVs. Through the years of

owning my own farm, I've seen the impact of ATVs and UTVs, good and bad."

Watch Dale Jr. share important tips to help keep yourself and others safe


- Ride only on designated trails
- Avoid riding on paved roads
- Always dress appropriately
- Make sure vehicle is right for the rider's age
- Always supervise riders under the age of 16
- Never have more riders than the vehicle is designed for
- Consider taking a hands-on safety course

Nationwide is also working with two groups — ATV Safety Institute and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association — to promote UTV/ATV safety training programs that can help improve operator safety and prevent costly accidents — both on the farm and off.

ATVs can be hazardous if not handled with care

ATVs/UTVs can do a lot of work on farms and ranches. And they're increasingly popular for recreation in rural areas. But they can be hazardous — especially for young ATV/UTV riders — without proper training and safe riding practices. The first half of 2023 alone saw more than 200 off-highway vehicle (OHV) fatalities around the country. Almost one quarter of those deaths (PDF) were operators under age 16.

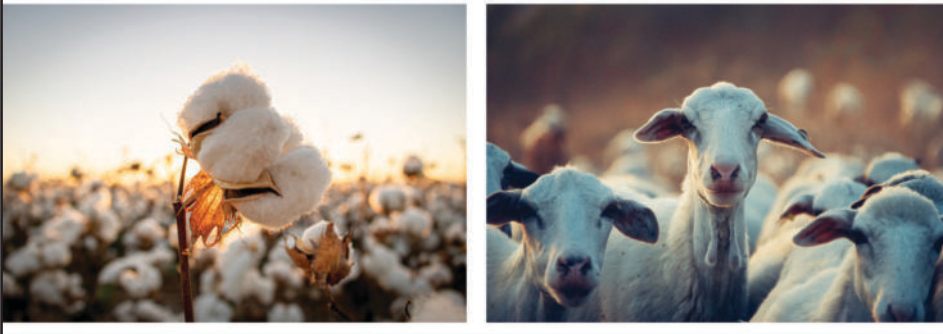
"ATVs and UTVs can be a source of joy and excitement for you, your families and friends. They're also great tools that can make farming easier and more efficient," said Earnhardt,



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who has ATVs/UTVs on his own farm operation. "But they can also be extremely dangerous if not handled with care."

The need for UTV/ATV safety champions Why is now the time to become a UTV/ATV safety champion? It's always a perfect time to be a better rider/driver.

- Ease of use may lead to inexperienced operators. Especially with newer models, many UTVs/ATVs are intuitive to operate, and that makes them attractive for farmers with limited mobility and younger or generally inexperienced operators. That's true even for young operators who may lack the experience and training necessary to ride safely. But because they lack the safety equipment required on cars and trucks, ease of use doesn't translate to safe operation, especially for inexperienced operators or those with whose mobility is limited.

- Newer UTVs/ATVs are more powerful. While early UTVs/ATVs were equipped with smaller powertrains, many of the machines on the market today offer much more power, as well as new ATV farm attachment. Some larger UTVs feature rugged construction,

including suspension systems that rival some highway vehicles. Combined with the speed capabilities — some UTVs can travel faster than 60 MPH — making it extremely important for every rider to get proper training and to wear appropriate gear every time someone rides or drives, even experienced operators.

- UTVs feature unique safety equipment. Though most UTVs do have safety components like seatbelts, harnesses and roll cages, they're not designed to provide the same protection as comparable features of motor vehicles intended for roadway use. In addition to providing different types of protection in case of an accident, these components can also cause operators to develop a false sense of security.

- Changing state laws and regulations. Lawmakers in many agricultural states have in recent years loosened laws around ATV/UTV operation, specifically on public roadways. As of July 2022, OHVs can by law be operated on paved or unpaved rural roads in some states under specific circumstances. But just because it's legal doesn't make it safe. ATVs and UTVs were built to ride and drive off-road, not on-road.

"Enjoy your ATVs and UTVs — but do it responsibly. We need to remember and understand why it's important to know how to ride, where to ride and who's riding on your land. It's all about finding the right balance and being mindful of the risks involved," Earnhardt said. "We need to respect the power of these machines and the potential risks they pose."

We want to keep you safe whenever you climb on an ATV/UTV

At Nationwide, we want to be your partner in championing UTV/ATV safety in rural America. First, always prioritize personal health and safety by following UTV/ATV safety rules every time you plan on riding an UTV/ATV. Then, think about whether you have the right insurance in place for personal, property and liability. Talk to your Nationwide Farm Certified agent to make sure you're covered if you're adding an ATV/UTV to your operation.

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Central Catholic FFA Celebrates 2024-2025 Officer Team's Legacy

The 2024-2025 Central Catholic FFA Officer Team set the tone for a memorable year, beginning with an energizing officer retreat at the beach. There, the team planned chapter events and socials, selected a chapter theme, and designed this year's chapter shirt. From that moment on, they were united not just by their responsibilities, but by a shared purpose and genuine camaraderie.

Throughout the year, the team led with heart bringing students together through lunchtime socials, friendly eating contests, and countless shared laughs. Together, they faced challenges and celebrated victories, always staying committed to their mission. Their dedication culminated in hosting an unforgettable FFA Banquet for over 270 guests, an event that truly showcased their passion, leadership, and hard work.

This exceptional team was made up of six seniors and one junior. They recently retired their jackets for the final time, leaving behind a lasting legacy:

- Reese Oliveira, Chapter President, is heading to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to study agriculture.

- Matthew Stewart, Chapter Vice President, is off to Texas Christian University (TCU).

- Rena Ralls, Chapter Secretary, will study animal science and agriculture education at Oklahoma State University.

- Landyn Wetzel, Chapter Treasurer, is attending Grand Canyon University (GCU) studying Elementary Education.

- Meilani Duran, Chapter Reporter, will return as a senior to serve as the 2025-2026 Chapter President.

- Joseph Stewart, Chapter Sentinel, is heading to Texas Christian University (TCU) to study Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

- Ava Corallo, Chapter Chaplain, will pursue agri-

culture business at Oklahoma State University.

We wish them all the best in their future endeavors. Their presence in the classroom and influence on the chapter will be deeply missed. The impact they've made is monumental, they leave behind a legacy of leadership, service, and inspiration that will guide future generations of Central Catholic FFA members.

We are incredibly proud of them and thankful for their years of hard work and dedication.

Submitted by: Jessica Brand, Agriculture Department Chairman



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Tackling California's affordability crisis: Senator Alvarado-Gil's Farm to Food Bank Tax Credit extension advances

SACRAMENTO – Today, Senator Marie Alvarado-Gil (R-Jackson) announced Senate Bill 353 (SB 353), which makes California's Farm to Food Bank Tax Credit permanent, passed out of the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee with unanimous bipartisan support.

"California's affordability crisis continues to strain families across the state, making it harder for many to access the basics they need," said Senator Alvarado-Gil, Vice Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee. "SB 353 helps ease that burden by ensuring farmers can keep donating fresh food to

food banks without uncertainty. By making this credit permanent, we're supporting both our hardworking farmers and the vulnerable Californians who rely on food banks to feed their families."

Currently set to expire in 2027, the Farm to Food Bank Tax Credit offers a 15% tax incentive to farmers who donate fresh produce and other agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and grains, to local food banks. This program has been instrumental in getting millions of pounds of fresh food to food banks statewide while reducing food waste from unsellable yet high-quality crops.

SB 353 provides long-term certainty for food banks and small to mid-sized farmers, helping them plan for the future with confidence. For food banks, it ensures a consis-

tent flow of nutritious donations to communities, particularly to seniors, veterans, and pregnant women, who are disproportionately affected by food insecurity. According to the California Association of Food Banks, 22% of California households, and 27% of households with children, struggle to put food on the table.

In 2023 alone, the Farm to Food Bank Tax Credit resulted in \$8.2 million in food donations, with over \$769,000 in tax credits awarded to farmers. Permanently extending the credit ensures that the cycle of giving continues without disruption, allowing farmers, especially those in rural areas, to continue their support of food banks. This helps reduce the strain on California's food safety net and provides families with reliable access to fresh, healthy food.

As a lead witness testifying in support of SB 353, Mike Sproull, Founder and Executive Director of the Food Bank of El Dorado County, underscored the importance of the bill and praised the Senator's leadership.

"Senator Alvarado-Gil genuinely cares about the less fortunate in rural California, and The Food Bank of El Dorado County shares the same compassion. We will continue to work together to ensure our most at-risk are cared for in communities throughout California."

SB 353 will now move on to the Senate Appropriations Committee for further consideration.

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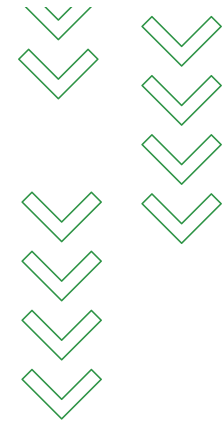


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SERIES OVERVIEW AND SCHEDULE

THURSDAY

June 5th 2025

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM
THE STATE THEATRE, MODESTO

*Private No-Host cocktail hour, held at
Intermission 4:30 PM -5:30 PM*

PANELIST

Dorene D'Adamo,

Vice Chair, California State Water
Resources Control Board

*A deep dive into California’s water challenges, sustainability solutions, and the
future of water access in the Central Valley.*

FRIDAY

July 25th 2025

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
**PETERSEN EVENT CENTER,
INCLUDES LUNCH**

PANELISTS

Nick Bavaro

Modesto City Councilmember

Mani Grewal

Stanislaus County Supervisor

Toby Wells

Engineering Services Department,
Director / City Engineer

*A discussion on economic development, job growth, and the evolving financial landscape
of our region.*

FRIDAY

August 15th, 2025

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
**MJC -MARY STUART ROGERS THEATER
INCLUDES LUNCH**

PANELISTS

Scott Kuykendall

Stanislaus County Office of Education - Superintendent

Dr. Britt Rios-Ellis

President, CSU Stanislaus

Brian Sanders

President, Modesto Junior College

A conversation about education, opportunity, and cultivating a thriving, content community.

FRIDAY

September 19th 2025

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM
**DOCTOR’S MEDICAL CENTER
CONFERENCE CENTER- INCLUDES LUNCH**

PANELISTS

Aphriekah

Duhaney-West

CEO, Kaiser Permanente Central Valley

Jay Krishnaswamy

CEO, Doctor’s Medical Center

Tracy Roman

CEO, Memorial Medical Center, Sutter Health

*Leaders in local healthcare will share insights on innovation, access, and the future
of health in Stanislaus County.*



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Farmers liquidate assets to pay for operating costs as lenders retreat

California farmers are selling land, water, equipment and other assets to raise the cash they need to grow their crops this year as a struggling farm economy affects lending activity by banks. Many farmers typically take out yearly operating loans to pay for labor, fertilizer, fuel and other costs, and then they pay back the loans after harvesting and selling their crops. But after consecutive years of rising production costs and low crop prices, “what’s happened is the working capital—those loans—just dried up,” said Bill Berryhill, a former state lawmaker who grows winegrapes, walnuts and almonds in Sacramento, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties.

Tariff uncertainty hurts agricultural exports and the economy

California agriculture advocates made the case in Sacramento this month that federal trade policies should prioritize certainty and predictability to benefit farmers and agricultural exporters. “Countries are looking at us as not as reliable a trade partner as we used to be,” Matthew Viohl, a California Farm Bureau policy advocacy director, said while testifying during an informational hearing hosted by California Treasurer Fiona Ma. The hearing focused on

See News on page 19



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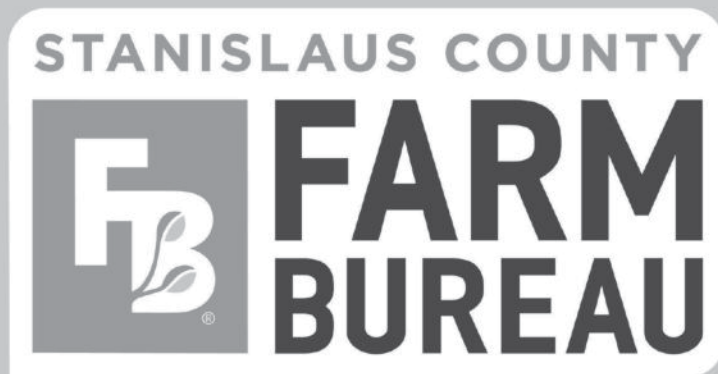
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A dark grey coupon with a decorative border. It contains a QR code, the text "May 2025 Coupon - B5 Laser Worx Custom Engraving", "10% Off" in a large script font, and a description of the offer: "10% off any custom order - items include cutting boards, porch signs, tumblers, holiday decor and more. Use the QR Code to check out other items." Below the QR code, it says "Valid: May 2025".

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From News on page 17

consequences of President Trump’s tariff policies on California industries, including agriculture, and came as the U.S. and China announced a 90-day scaling down of their triple-digit tariffs.

Fish and Game shelves proposal to restrict coyote control efforts

California farmers and ranchers expressed relief after the California Fish and Game Commission decided last week to hold off on making any changes to how coyotes are managed in the state. On the table was a proposal to consider restricting take—or killing—of coyotes and establishing a regulated hunting season and bag limits for the predator. The commission said it would not pursue any changes for now, though it may consider other, more narrow proposals in the future. “There is no empirical evidence coyote populations are threatened in any sense,” said Ned Coe, a cattle rancher and Modoc County supervisor, adding he has lost calves to coyotes. “That is my livelihood.”

Newsom budget proposes fast track for delta water conveyance tunnel

Gov. Gavin Newsom released his revised budget last week, saying the state faces a \$12 billion budget deficit. The governor’s \$322 billion spending plan for 2025-26 includes a proposal to fast-track the construction of the Delta Conveyance Project, a \$20-billion tunnel beneath the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The tunnel would create a second route to move water to State Water Project pumps that transport water to urban and agricultural users south of the delta. The project supplies water to 27 million people and 750,000 acres of farmland. “While the project has received some necessary permits, its path forward is burdened by complicated regulatory frameworks and bureaucratic delays,” the governor’s office said in a statement.



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Stanislaus County Farm Bureau
2025 Continuing Education (CE) Schedule



Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is happy to announce our continued partnership with the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau for the 2025 Continuing Education Series. With this partnership will come the ability for us to host a wide variety of other topics and increase your access to continuing education credits. **All in-person classes will be held in Harvest Hall at 3800 Cornucopia Way Suite E, Modesto, CA 95358.**

In-Person Class Schedule

Date	Time	Topics	CE Credits
April 8, 2025	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Notice of Intent and Pesticide Use Reports	1 Hr.- Laws & Regs
	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	GUSS Autonomous Sprayer Demonstration and New Technology	1 Hr.- Other
June 24, 2025	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	High VOC Regulations, Label Review and Common Label Violations	1 Hr.- Laws & Regs
	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Weather Considerations and Inversion Layers	1 Hr.- Other
July 22, 2025	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Nematode Life Cycle and Impact on Tree Crops	1 Hr. - Laws & Regs
	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Alternatives to Fumigants	1 Hr.- Other
October 14, 2025	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Worker Health and Safety Regulations	1 Hr.- Laws & Regs
	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Drones for Pesticide Application Presentation	1 Hr.- Other
December 11, 2025	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	Private Applicator Certificate Regulatory Requirements	1 Hr.- Other
	11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	OP ID and Restricted Material Permit Requirements and Review	1 Hr.- Laws & Regs

Online Webinar Schedule

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

Date	Time	Topics	CE Credits
March 13, 2025	4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Bee Notifications, Registrations, and Use of Pesticides Toxic to Bees (Approved)	1 Hr.- Laws & Regs
August 7, 2025	4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Common Violations	1 Hr.- Laws & Regs
September 16, 2025	4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	What to Expect During a Headquarters Inspection	1 Hr. - Laws & Regs
November 13, 2025	4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Commodity Fumigation Regulations	1 Hr.- Laws & Regs

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

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Cal Poly professors examine ethics of robots and AI in the kitchen

Professors at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, are conducting a multiyear research project to study the ethical implications of robotic and artificial intelligence applications in the kitchen. As part of the project, the philosophy, psychology and religious studies professors will travel to Rome this month to participate in a workshop hosted by the Vatican, meeting with scientists, industry experts, religious leaders and philosophers from around the world to discuss automation and food. "This is our most interdisciplinary project, which isn't a surprise because the subject, food itself, touches on just about every single discipline at Cal Poly," philosophy professor Patrick Lin said.

Study finds sinking land could limit water deliveries to farms and cities

A new technical report released by the California Natural Resources Agency found that subsidence, or the sinking of land, in the Central Valley caused by the over-pumping of groundwater has restricted the amount of water the State Water Project can deliver each year by 3%. The SWP supplies water to 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland. Without decisive action, the current trajectory of subsidence, combined with climate change, could reduce water deliveries to farms and cities by 87% by 2043, the California Department of Water Resources reported.

The University of California launches policy institute

Already a major source of consequential agricultural research, the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources plans to play a more direct role in inform-

ing policymakers in the Golden State. Last month, the agriculture-focused UC branch launched the UC ANR Policy Institute, "envisioned as a 'one-stop shop' for policymakers to find and easily access scientists and research on a host of critical issues in California," UC ANR said in a blog post. The institute will build on the work of the former UC ANR Agricultural Issues Center.

Video series aims to help young farmers grow vegetables

A new video series by the University of California aims to provide free virtual training in how to grow vegetables. The training was designed to reach younger farmers and those entering the field for the first time. "The average age of agricultural producers in California is currently about 59.2 years," said Jeff Mitchell, UC Cooperative Extension specialist in the Department of Plant Sciences in Davis. "Therefore, there is an urgent need to encourage and recruit young people into agriculture to sustain current and future production."

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in the farm business, it is also difficult for those looking to get into farming. That's why Farm Bureau advocates for programs and resources to help young and beginning farmers get a successful start in farming. Many of these farmers need to start small given the challenges they face.

With rising supply costs, outdated risk management tools, and an ongoing labor crisis, some farms cannot hang on for a better season. Last year alone, the U.S. lost 15,000 farms—that's equal to 40 farms a day going out of business. That's why Farm Bureau is encouraged by this week's announcement from Secretary Rollins to prioritize efforts that support small farms across the country. We look forward to working with the secretary and her team at USDA to ensure farms of all sizes are economically sustainable.

The American Farm Bureau is proud to represent farms of all sizes, nearly all commodities, and in every region of our great country. We are the largest general farm organization, and that matters

deeply for every small family farm in our organization. Every year at the American Farm Bureau Convention, we poll our voting delegates who set our organization's policies. These men and women come from all corners of agriculture. An overwhelming majority (97%) come from family farms, and nearly two-thirds represent small- to mid-size farms as defined by USDA. Farm Bureau is truly built from the grassroots up, and our large, united voice raises up the voices of farm families who might not be heard on their own.

Our nation's food security depends on all American farms—large, small, and in between. As our population grows and farmland shrinks, farmers are responsible for feeding more people than ever before. When I step out on my farm in Georgia, I take this responsibility seriously. I think of my family—my children and grandchildren—and I think of families across this country who are counting on family farms like mine. I don't see "big ag" when I visit farms across this country. What I do see is a big job, a big mission and big hearts in every farm family like mine who works every day to grow the safe and nutritious food all our families rely on.

Almond Board of California Board of Director Elections

Are you an almond grower and have not received a ballot?

Ask your handler to contact the elections team at ABCBODElections@almondboard.com to have a ballot mailed to you before May 16.

You can also pick up a ballot from the ABC offices.

**BALLOTS DUE
May 22, 2025**

For additional information, go to Almonds.com/Elections, or email your questions to ABCBODElections@almondboard.com.

