

# The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture

STANISLAUS COUNTY



For the *good* of your *food*.



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County Farm Bureau  
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*"Youth are important to future of agriculture," page 22  
Pictured above, Jace Neugebauer*



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WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND  
THANK FARMWORKERS IN  
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This program will honor farmworker nominees  
during a luncheon on  
March 19, 2024. Nominees will be interviewed for  
the Farm Bureau News and winners will receive  
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Questions or additional information?  
Call Farm Bureau  
at 209-522-7278

Scan to nominate!

<https://bit.ly/FarmworkerAward2024>

**SCFB MISSION STATEMENT**

To serve as the voice of Stanislaus County agriculture at all levels of government, while providing programs to assist its farms and family members and educate the general public of needs and importance to agriculture.



# FRIDAY REVIEW

## LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

### Insurance

The Senate Select Committee on Wine held a hearing that focused on two primary concerns impacting the wine industry – the lack of comprehensive insurance and the implementation of the bottle recycling program, led by Cal Recycle. You can watch the hearing [here](#).

The hearing was split into two panels to address those two issues. The first panel included speakers from the California Department of Insurance, an independent insurance agent, and wine grape grower. Senators McGuire (D Santa Rosa), Dodd (D Napa) and Alvarado-Gil (D Modesto) attended the hearing and focused on the cost implications of insurance on small, family-owned farm and wineries, where insurance rates have risen up to ten times in just a few years. With insurance not providing com-

prehensive protection against commodity losses from wildfire and becoming a top five expense for business owners, the industry participants on the panel presented a crisis still impacting rural communities across the state. CDI presented its plan to restore competition to the admitted market, which we have discussed at length previously. It includes the adoption of catastrophe modeling, reinsurance costs and more changes to how insurers and CDI work to approve rate increases in exchange for a commitment by insurers to write new policies in impacted areas. The second panel featured testimony from CalRecycle and from E.J. Gallo Company, describing the implementation of wine bottles with the state's bottle recycling efforts. Gallo discussed its investment in the Halo recycling facility, which uses one hundred percent of all inputs to the plant to produce either new

landowners, the state and federal governments make in reducing wildfire risks. Staff: Peter Ansel; [pansel@cfbf.com](mailto:pansel@cfbf.com)

### Rural Broadband


The California Department of Technology and the California Public Utilities Commission held a hearing to capture public comments on the implementation of the state's broadband for all strategy. The public comments will inform rules that the CPUC is developing to implement California's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD). California has been allocated approximately \$1.86 billion under BEAD based on the federal government's calculation of California's share of unserved locations nationally.

California Farm Bureau submitted written public comments to the CPUC that state: "CAFB members must have access to reliable and affordable true broadband to adopt technology, empower farm related data, and integrate new precision agriculture hardware, like automated tractors and drones to augment an aging, shrinking labor pool, and increase on farm efficiency. CAFB requests that agriculture operators, food processing facilities, and other agriculture properties be considered anchor institutions for BEAD program network connectivity, such that the fields across California can be covered in broadband, leveraging the locations where agriculture needs those services to be available for the deployment of AI, cloud computing, and data centric services that will drive agriculture's operational efficiencies."

clean glass or glass supported by-products for the construction industry.

California Farm Bureau was the only organization to provide public comment at the hearing, noting the importance of retuning competition to the admitted market that reflects investments that private


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*From "REVIEW" on page 3*

The Governor designated the CPUC to serve as the recipient of and administering agent for the BEAD program for California. Staff: Peter Ansel; pansel@cbbf.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS  
CDFA HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM  
AWARDS PROMOTE ADOPTION OF  
CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT  
PRACTICES

CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation is pleased to announce the award of more than \$1.142 million in grants for demonstration projects in its Healthy Soils Program. The demonstration grants fund on-farm demonstration projects that collect data, showcase conservation management practices and create a platform promoting the widespread adoption of healthy-soils practices throughout the state. Each of the grant awardees will reach out to a minimum of 80 individual California farmers or ranchers through outreach events during the grant term. Attendees at events may include farm and ranch owners; and their employees, including certified crop advisors (CCAs); pest control advisors (PCAs); and other key farm advisors. The awardees will share tips on how to implement the demonstrated practices successfully as well as discuss the benefits and effectiveness of the practices. The complete list of grant awardees, project description, and counties where projects are to be located can be found here by following the link to the HSP

Demonstration Grant website.  
THE CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND FOREST RESILIENCE TASKFORCE HOSTS A  
TREATMENT DASHBOARD  
VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 – 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Following the beta release of the CA Wild-fire & Landscape Resilience Interagency Treatment Dashboard, the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force will be hosting a virtual public workshop from 2:00 to 3:30

p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. The goal of the workshop is to gather input from those using the Treatment Tracking System and Dashboard to improve how data is accessed and displayed, and to ensure we are providing transparency and effective planning information on statewide wildfire resilience treatments.

Workshop Agenda:

- 2:00 to 2:30 p.m. – Treatment Dashboard Overview and Demo
  - 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. – Online Break-Out Rooms Based on User Groups
  - Post-Workshop – Online Recording and Exit Survey
- Please come prepared to discuss.
- How the data be more useful for you.

- How the can data be better summarized and displayed.
- Additional Dashboard features that would be helpful for you.
- Different ways to explain the tracking system and dashboard.
- Potential new or different resources and documentation.
- Potential additional data sources to consider.

If you utilize the dashboard, plan to in the future, or are looking for more information about this important tool, register for the workshop here: <https://wildfiretaskforce.org/treatment-dashboard/>



The Central Valley feeds the world and is the lifeblood of California's economy. As a Representative of Stanislaus County and a farmer, I want to thank all the hard-working and dedicated Farmers, farm workers, and their families. My family and I are so proud to be a part of a farming community that gives so much of itself day in and day out, through drought and flood, a community that embodies the American dream. Thank you from my family to yours. Please reach out to me or my office at (209) 525 - 4445 with any issues. It is an honor to represent you.

**Stanislaus County Supervisor Mani Grewal District #4**



## New Paid Sick Leave Requirements to Become Effective January 1, 2024

*Source: Brian German  
Ag News Director / AgNet West*

Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed Senate Bill 616 into law, ushering in significant changes to paid sick leave (PSL) requirements. Effective January 1, 2024, this legislation, put forth by state Senator Lena Gonzalez, necessitates that employers elevate the annual PSL quota from three days to five. Companies with a staff of 26 or more will be required to provide up to 80 hours of supplementary paid sick leave, similar to the COVID sick day mandates, which Senator Gonzalez referenced in statements about the legislation. This encompasses situations where employees take leave to attend to family members.

"Too many folks are still having to choose between skipping a day's pay and taking care of themselves or their family members when they get sick," said Newsom. "We're making it known that the health and well-being of workers and their families is of the utmost importance for California's future."

While the primary objective of the legislation is to provide support to workers, certain employers have voiced apprehensions about the amplified financial strain. Numerous agricultural associations, including the California Farm Bureau Federation and Western Growers, opposed the legislation citing concerns about potential misuse. Under the new regulations, employees are now required to accumulate a minimum of 40 hours, equivalent to five days, of PSL by the 200th calendar day of the leave period. The overall accumulation limit is fixed at

80 hours, equivalent to 10 days, with a usage constraint of 40 hours during each PSL period.

Anti-retaliation provisions have also been bolstered under the new law. Employers are barred from imposing conditions or meddling with requests to use paid sick leave. Employers are strongly encouraged to review and update their policies to conform with the new requirements before January 1, 2024.



# FLORY

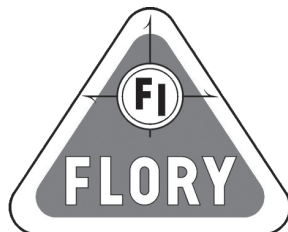
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As another membership service, Farm Bureau members are offered FREE classified advertising in the Stanislaus Farm News. Ads must be 18 words or less and only one ad per month per membership (membership number required.) Ads may be MAILED to the Stanislaus Farm News, or BROUGHT to the SCFB office, 1201 L Street, Downtown Modesto. NO PHONE-IN OR FAX free ads will be accepted. Free ads are restricted to farm machinery or equipment or unprocessed farm products. Farm jobs wanted or offered will also be accepted. No real estate ads and no commercial items or services will be accepted. 209-522-7278

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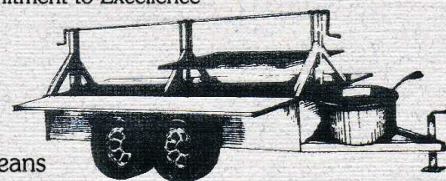
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## Giving campaign to support agriculture, food-security research

The California Bountiful Foundation, the nonprofit science and research affiliate of the California Farm Bureau, is beginning its annual fundraising campaign with a goal of supporting scientific and economic research on agricultural production to ensure food security for all Californians.

The Bountiful Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, conducts research and compiles scientific and economic data on agriculture, food prices, water and the environment. The foundation is led by Dr. Amrith Gunasekara, former manager of the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation for the California Department of Food and Agriculture and science advisor to the state agriculture secretary.

The Bountiful Foundation, reorganized by the Farm Bureau in April 2022, solicits grants and provides funding to support

studies on issues affecting farmers, ranchers, timber producers and consumers. Research interests focus on climate-smart agriculture, water use, regulations, food prices and sustaining California’s agricultural heritage into the future.

"California farmers and ranchers produce a diverse bounty of high-quality foods in America’s most productive agricultural state," said California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson. "The California Bountiful Foundation conducts and enables important research to inform policymakers on supporting our critical agricultural production and safeguarding our California landscape while providing Americans with ample supplies of safe, nutritious and affordable foods."


Currently, one in five California residents—about 8.4 million people—faces food insecurity. This year’s fundraising campaign, including Giving Tuesday on Nov. 28, is focusing on Bountiful Foundation efforts to lead and support agricultural research on

California agricultural contributions to addressing food insecurity.

"The California Bountiful Foundation is dedicated to research on sustaining agriculture into the future while conserving our water resources, protecting the environment and curbing food insecurity by producing more healthful and affordable foods to meet the needs of all Californians," said Dr. Gunasekara.

To learn more about the California Bountiful Foundation and how to donate, visit <https://www.cbf.com/california-bountiful-foundation>

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 29,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.3 million Farm Bureau members.



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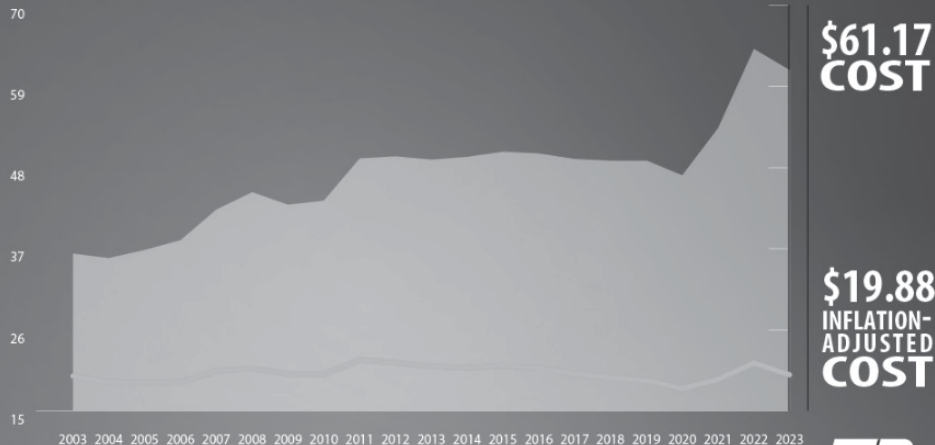
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# Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Report

By: Agricultural/Weights & Measures Deputy, Wendy Hahn

## Farm Families and Family Farms

Stanislaus County stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of family farming. The family farms that dot the landscape not only contribute to the local economy but also play a vital role in preserving the region's agricultural heritage. As a department, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office enforces laws and regulations that support and protect the well-being of agriculture, the environment, business, and the community. Our office bears witness to the resilience and persistence of family farming and family-owned agricultural businesses. Whether it is the transitioning of a pesticide permit from parents to children, registering multiple generations of Pest Control Advisors, Farm Labor Contractors, or commercial pesticide applicators, or certifying livestock scales over the course of several decades, we see all types of agricultural businesses passed through generations.

It's no surprise to most familiar with agriculture in Stanislaus County that 94% of farms here are operated by families, even as more and more of the area is urbanized. Even the loosely used term "corporate farm" is frequently a misnomer, as most incorporated farms are still family run, generally with family as shareholders. As with many family-run businesses in and outside of agriculture, incorporation is simply a way to structure a business for legal and economic reasons.

Regardless of the business structure, Stanislaus County's family farmers are finding ways to keep their businesses lucrative while also advocating for the industry through active participation with the greater community. With fewer people coming from a farming background, many are finding ways to continue their family's legacy of cultivating community by participating in or even hosting events for the public. From the Hughson Fruit & Nut Festival, the Patterson Apricot Fiesta, Denair's Farm & Family Festival, Riverbank Wine & Cheese Festival, the La Grange and Oakdale Rodeos, to the Stanislaus County Fair and its predecessor, the Turlock Melon Carnival. Although not solely centered around a particular commodity, these community celebrations are often supported by participating farming families dedicated to serving on committees and providing sponsorship throughout the years. These community events are cherished traditions for families and provide an opportunity for urban and rural communities to connect.

Certified Farmer's Markets provide the community with a way to interact with farmers and support local agriculture. Markets certified by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office ensure agricultural products being presented to consumers are, in fact, grown by the producer offering them for

sale at the market, not a reseller. The high-quality fresh produce brought to the CFM by its' producers creates a diverse market and provides the consumer with an opportunity to both meet the farmer and access fresh food. Stanislaus County is currently home to three Certified Farmer's Markets- Modesto, Patterson, and Turlock. At present, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has verified the growing grounds of forty-seven active certified producers within its jurisdiction. Over a dozen county-certified vendors attend one of the county's three certified markets, offering everything from apples to eggs to zucchini.

Some farming families engage the community by inviting them to their properties for special events. Several of our local flower farmers host classes at their growing grounds for farmer-led flower arranging classes, or to photographers for photo-shoots. Some growers invite the community to participate in seasonal "U-pick" events, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, petting zoos, and other family fun activities. Still others offer school and group field trips for children to learn about how fruit and vegetables are grown. Interacting with customers and community one-on-one puts a face to the name or brand, and visits to the ranch help promote not only their product, but agriculture in general.







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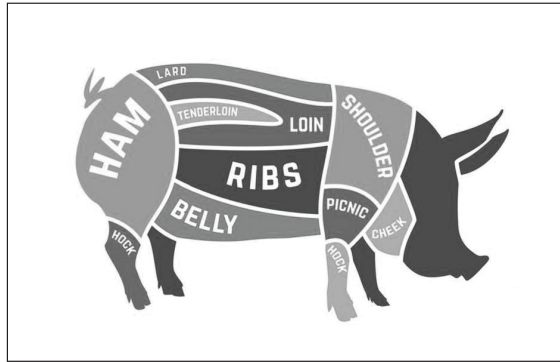


## Commodity Fact Sheet

# Pork

Information compiled by California Pork Producers Association

**How Produced** – While a majority of California farms use modern farming practices, some farms are specific niche markets. Today's farming combines the best of traditional farming practices with the benefits of modern technology. Many California farmers believe that raising pigs in barns helps them to better care for their animals by controlling their environment. Many California pigs are raised in barns that use technology like fans and heaters to keep them comfortable all year long. Pigs are kept in clean living conditions and provided fresh feed and water. Most pigs eat a diet that consists of corn and soybeans and is called a ration. Nutritionists carefully develop pig rations based on the age, size, and nutrient requirements that changes throughout their lifetime. Pigs have stages of growth from birth to market: farrowing, weaning, growing, and finishing. Baby pigs are raised by their mother or sows, for the first month, then they are weaned. Weighing between 12-15 pounds, they go to a nursery where they are fed solid food, provided fresh water, and kept warm. They stay there for four to six weeks and are fed a grower ration. They will complete their growth cycle at an average market weight of 270 pounds around six months of age.



pigs were bred for superior meat quality and adaptability. In European pigs, fatness was selected for. The genetic crossbreeding of these two varieties in the 18th and 19th

centuries formed a broad genetic basis for today's domestic pig. There are over 180 species found in every continent of the world except Antarctica. The top eight breeds are Yorkshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, Landrace, Duroc, Chester White, Poland China and Spot. In California, crossbreeds are the most desirable animal in weight, conditioning, and carcass quality.

**Commodity Value** – In 2021, California ranked 28th in the United States in pork production with an inventory of 82,000 pigs valued at over \$13 million dollars annually. Although California makes up less than one percent of the total U.S. pork production, it accounts for 13% of the national pork consumption. The U.S. is the third largest producer and consumer of pork and pork products globally, exporting over five billion pounds of pork annually. Pork production and pig prices vary in a predictable manner during the calendar year. Such variation is called seasonality or seasonal variation.

**History** – There are fossils indicating wild pig-like animals roamed the earth 40 million years ago. Pigs were domesticated in China around 4900 BC and were raised in Europe by 1500 BC. Columbus took pigs on his trip to Cuba in 1493. Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto, the “father of the American pork industry” was the first person to bring pigs to America in 1539. With just 13 pigs he settled in Florida. Once in America, de Soto's pig herd grew to 700. Explorers used the pigs not only for eating as fresh meat but for salt pork and preserved pork. When de Soto died, some pigs ran off and became ancestors to today's feral or razorback pigs and some were given to Native Americans as gifts. The pork industry in America had begun. Pig production spread quickly through the colonies. Hernán Cortés brought hogs to New Mexico in 1600 and Sir Walter Raleigh brought sows to Jamestown Colony in 1607. As pioneers moved west, they took their pigs with them in crates that hung from covered wagons. Pork processing facilities started popping up in major cities. Pigs were first processed in Cincinnati, which became known as “Porkopolis.”

**Varieties** – There are two major forms of domestic pigs, European (*Sus scrofa*) and Asian (*Sus indicus*). Chinese

**Top Producing Counties** – There are four top processing plants that are located in the counties of Los Angeles, San Joaquin, Glenn, and Merced providing more than 11,000 animals per day. Many swine operations provide breeding pigs, project pigs, roaster pigs, and/or products and services for sale. Pigs are raised in every county in the state. Many agriculture colleges like CSU Fresno, CSU Chico, Cal Poly SLO, UC Davis, Modesto Junior College, and Reedley College breed, raise, and sell pigs.

**Nutritional Value** – A 3-ounce portion is an excellent source of protein, thiamin, B6, phosphorus, and niacin, and a good source of potassium, riboflavin, and zinc. It contributes six percent of the calories in a 2,000 calorie diet. Pork is 16% leaner and has 27% less saturated fat than 20 years ago due to improved breeding and feeding methods, as well as advancements in processing.

**For additional information:**  
California Pork Producers  
(916) 441-2249  
Website: [www.calpork.com](http://www.calpork.com)





**Floodwaters on farms help boost aquifers**

The historically wet winter early this year motivated greater adoption of a water management strategy known as flood-managed aquifer recharge, or flood-MAR, in which excess flood flows are diverted onto farmland to boost depleted groundwater aquifers. “We knew from the previous year, even in intense drought years, we have opportunities with these big storm events and need to do everything we can,” said California Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth, addressing water managers, farmers, government officials and others, as part of the Flood-MAR Forum in Sacramento last week. “Our ability to respond to those kinds of intense rain events is becoming increasingly important.”

**Sites Reservoir on fast track for final legal green light**

After decades of discussions and delays, a major new reservoir in Northern California is close to becoming reality. Last week, Gov. Gavin Newsom certified the Sites Reservoir project to be fast-tracked for construction, exercising for the first time his power under a new state law to streamline the process to break ground on infrastructure projects. The reservoir, estimated to cost \$4.5 billion and hold 1.5 million acre-feet of water, would be the first major reservoir built in California in almost half a century. It would be located about 80 miles northwest of Sacramento on ranchlands in Colusa and Glenn counties.

**Vineyard boxes help lure owls that manage rodents**

Scattered across Napa Valley’s winegrape acreage, posts holding wooden boxes rise above vineyards. The boxes provide cozy homes that attract barn owls to establish residency and raise families. The owls then become voracious predators that rid vineyards of gophers, mice and other rodents. “We know barn owls eat rodents,” said Matt Johnson, a professor at California Polytechnic State University, Humboldt, who heads the Johnson Lab of Wildlife Habitat Ecology. A research project he conducted by monitoring video feeds from owl nest boxes in Napa Valley vineyards

revealed that a single barn owl family could remove 3,466 rodents in a year.

**Hartwig named president of leading fruit industry group**

Fresno County farmer Daniel Hartwig has been selected to serve as the new president of the California Fresh Fruit Association. Hartwig will succeed Ian LeMay, who has served as the association’s president since 2019. “I could not be more thrilled to join the great team at CFFA,” Hartwig said. “I have always had a deep admiration for the work done by the association’s staff and the leadership of the board. I also look forward to working with our partners in the industry to continue to protect agriculture from the many threats before us.”

**Delay in passing farm bill could cut off federal support for dairy farmers**

Dairy farmers are bracing for the “dairy cliff.” That is the term for what happens if the federal Dairy Margin Coverage Program is allowed to expire. The program offers monthly price support payments to dairy farmers. If Congress fails to pass a new, five-year farm bill or approve an extension of current legislation by the end of this year, those payments will cease. That would harm dairies, increase milk prices and cause supply-chain disruptions. “It would be disastrous for the dairy industry,” said Matthew Viohl, California Farm Bureau director of federal policy.


**Pistachio production surge stirs worries of oversupply, price drops**

After harvesting a record crop this year, California pistachio growers say they’re looking to processors to expand use of the nut and drive up sales as more trees go in the

ground and come into production. Already, some growers voice concern the sector may be growing too fast, with projections that California pistachio acreage will near 811,300 and production will reach 2.08 billion pounds by 2031. “I’m afraid of oversupply and under demand,” said Fresno County grower Greg Meyers. American Pistachio Growers estimates state bearing acreage will rise by more than 5% a year.

**Agricultural leaders urge action on improving ports for farm exports**

Officials for Bay Area ports and leaders of California agricultural associations met last week to brainstorm on solutions to better facilitate farm exports from state ports, which a 2021 study called “the least efficient in the world.” At a San Francisco hearing held by the California Assembly Committee on Ports and Goods Movement, farming leaders and port directors discussed port shortcomings during the pandemic that stranded farm goods, including tree nuts, rice and wine, and continue to challenge the movement of freight within California.




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# DPR Seeks Comment on Statewide Pesticide Notification System

Source: Brian German  
Ag News Director / AgNet West

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is seeking comment on a proposal for a statewide system to inform the public about planned applications of restricted material pesticides. The regulation builds on existing processes, requiring licensed applicators to submit electronic information about intended pesticide use 24 hours in advance, or 48 hours for soil fumigants. DPR said the aim is to enhance transparency and public access to information, aligning with California's stringent pesticide regulations. DPR Director Julie Henderson emphasizes

the importance of the proposed system in promoting transparency and equitable access to information. Three public hearings are scheduled, and written comments are being accepted through January 12. In-person events are scheduled for December 13 at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District in Fresno County and December 14 at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. A virtual public hearing is also scheduled for December 19 via Zoom.

The draft proposal follows a two-year outreach period, involving focus groups, public meetings, and pilot projects in four counties. DPR is currently beta testing the technology to support the statewide system, initiated with a \$10 million allocation in the 2021-2022 budget.

Meetings:

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.  
Clovis Veterans Memorial District  
Memorial Auditorium  
808 4th Street  
Clovis, California 93612

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.  
Ventura County Fairgrounds  
Santa Rosa Hall  
10 West Harbor Boulevard  
Ventura, California 93001

VIRTUAL Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023,  
at 4:30 p.m. Held on Zoom  
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# TUOLUMNE COUNTY FARM NEWS



Tuolumne County Farm Bureau hosted their Annual Dinner on Saturday, October 21st at the Tuolumne county Sheriff's Posse Grounds.

It was a great evening of fellowship with members, an amazing prime rib dinner and we heard the incredible story of Chateau Montelena Winery in Napa and the evolution of the wine industry in California.

We wanted to thank our many members for attending! We also need to thank Mike Quinones and team for another amazing dinner. Mike and his team come in for each of our events and their catering is second to none. The prime rib was absolutely perfect and all of the sides were perfect for a lovely fall evening. This team does so much work to make the evening so smooth and we are so appreciative of this great catering team. We always so enjoy our time at the Posse Grounds and wanted to thank the Sheriff's Posse for the use of their wonderful venue. They host us each year and it is a great spot for our event! We appreciate their team coming in early for our set up, running the bar and of course, helping us get broken down and cleaned up! We owe Bo Barret from Chateau Montelena, a huge shout out for his fantastic history of California wines and all he and his family contributed to the evolution of wine that really put California wines on the map. He was hilarious and provided so much great information for the group, we really enjoyed his speech.

## TUOLUMNE COUNTY BUSINESS MEMBERS

### THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS!

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## New Rules and Standards to Impact Ag Businesses

Source: Brian German

Ag News Director / AgNet West

Agricultural businesses are looking at a variety of new rules and requirements that are going to require time and resources. President and CEO of the Western Agricultural Processors Association, Roger Isom said the paid sick leave expansion is certainly going to have an impact. The amount

of mandated paid sick leave is increasing from three days to five days. A new workplace violence standard is also going to impact ag businesses.

"We knew Cal/OSHA was working on one, but now the Legislature has passed a bill mandating it and the governor signed it," Isom noted.

"There will be a new workplace violence standard that we're all going to have to

write plans for and do training. Whether you've had issues there or not."

Other new rules are also on the horizon. The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) is on the verge of adopting a new indoor heat illness standard. "That's going to be something

else that growers and hullers and anybody with any kind of farm shop or gin or huller are going to have to address. So, there's a lot coming," said Isom.



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# Jeana Hultquist awarded National FFA Honorary American Degree

Source: American AgCredit

Four years ago, American AgCredit Vice President of Legislative Affairs Jeana Hultquist was first honored as a California FFA Honorary American Degree recipient. Last week at the FFA National Convention on Friday, Nov. 3, she was awarded the same honor at the national level.

This award is given to those who advance agricultural education and FFA through outstanding personal commitment. The Honorary American FFA Degree is an opportunity to recognize those who have gone beyond valuable daily contributions to

make an extraordinary long-term difference in the lives of students, inspiring confidence in a new generation of agriculturists.

After over 40 years of advocating for producers on behalf of American AgCredit and the Farm Credit System, Jeana’s influence is nothing short of that description. She is a graduate of the California Agricultural Leadership Program (Class 38) and 2015 recipient of the Common Threads North Award. She currently serves on the board of directors and served as past chair for the Center for Land-Based Learning and the Amador County Historical Society and is an advisory board member for Innovate to Motivate®. She recently served on the board of directors for the Agricultural Council of California, and the California State FFA Foundation. For many years, Jeana served as a grant reviewer for the CDFA CalAg-

Plate program, and she participated in several projects and focus groups, including the California Farm Water Coalition.

“Agriculture chose me.”

It all started in a small town east of Sacramento, where her family had a small ranch.

“You can’t live in a small town without people talking and living ag,” reflected Jeana. “At that time, women weren’t as prevalent working on the ranch—it was predominantly my great uncles who ran the ranch.”

Nonetheless, it was agriculture that chose her, according to Jeana. After finishing her general education at Chico State University, Jeana began working as a credit clerk for the Sacramento Bank for Cooperatives, now known as CoBank today, and continued

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on to study at American River College to become a paralegal. She was finishing her education when an opportunity came up to transfer over to the bank's legal department.

It was the 1980s, a season of economic crisis in agriculture: sky high interest rates, dropping land values, foreclosures, and bankruptcy for many operations. And the Sacramento Bank for Cooperatives was in the middle of a merger with other System banks for cooperatives, too. Jeana took this opportunity to transfer to the newly formed Western Farm Credit Bank (successor to the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank and Federal Land Bank of Sacramento). As a paralegal at the time, she not only monitored state legislation, but also the frenzy of foreclosures and litigation taking place.

"Our job in the legal department was to keep all the chaos organized," reflected Jeana.

It was in this early-on season of her career at the height of agriculture's economic downturn, around 1986, that Jeana took a trip with her girlfriends to New York and Washington, D.C. Freshly graduated as a paralegal, pregnant with her second child, and in the throes of the ag crisis, she found

herself standing in front of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"One of these days, someone else is going to be paying for my trips back to D.C.," Jeana told her friends. Sure enough, Farm Credit has paid for her trips to D.C. many times since then.

From paralegal to advocate for producers

Jeana's path to becoming a legislative advocate for America's farmers and ranchers has its roots in 1988, when she was appointed to represent Western Farm Credit Bank on a committee of outside lawyers. Western Farm Credit Bank was under litigation for a decision made in the 1970s, and the committee was directed to explore the thought process behind the decision at the time.

So, Jeana passed hours and hours of combing through meeting minutes of banks' individual committees, Farm Credit System committees, boards, presidents' committees, and so on. The committee conducted numerous interviews with prior board members and management. She also traveled to New York to interview past representatives of the Federal Farm Credit Funding Corporation. She went on to D.C. to visit with the Farm Credit Council, lobbying firms and members of Congress who were familiar with the issue. So, Farm Credit's history and direction—and its implications for supporting America's producers—came to life before her through the lens of legal documents and legislation.

But the experience didn't only give Jeana an in-depth understanding of the history of the Farm Credit System—she had discovered her niche, where her paralegal skillset combined with her passion for history: a career in legislative affairs with the Farm Credit System.

A woman on a mission

Indeed, Jeana went on to demonstrate a record of steadily increasing responsibility, challenge, and positive influence in the ag industry. She was afforded several opportunities to serve on industry workgroups

that were at the forefront of the local foods movement. In an effort to bring Farm Credit along, she contributed to a white paper, "Financing Agriculture as We Find It: Farm Credit and the Changing Marketplace in US AgBank Associations." If she could relive a time during her career, however, it would be the inception of American AgCredit's local community impact and young, beginning, and small farmer (YBS) AgConnect programs.

"Some of my most rewarding work has been seeing American AgCredit take the lead in acknowledging the importance of partnering with local nonprofits—such as FFA, Kitchen Table Advisors, and the Center for Land-Based Learning—to fight food insecurity and support the next generation of ag producers," said Jeana.

Jeana played an integral role in standing up American AgCredit's YBS AgConnect and local community impact programs. She collaborated with American AgCredit's go-to-market teams to nail down a definition to help identify farmers with a direct-to-market business model, as well as small, boutique wineries, to qualify for financing under the Farm Credit Administration's eligibility rules—all of which are critical to serving all segments of agriculture.

"As I near retirement, my one wish is that American AgCredit continue to expand upon its mission work to serve our communities and the future of agriculture," said Jeana.

Her parting words of wisdom? Choose to build relationships with others and focus on influencing for the betterment of all of agriculture.

"Valuing relationships with others is paramount to working in a collaborative, effective manner," reflected Jeana, who's seen no shortage of division after a career in legislative affairs. "It's important to honor and respect views on all sides. At the end of the day, our role is to focus on influencing for the betterment of all of agriculture."





# Youth are important to future of agriculture

*By: Sonya Severo with Special Thanks to Anna Genasci, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, Photos provide by Sonya Severo*

*Originally printed in Stanislaus Magazine, Nov/Dec 2023 Issue*

In August of 2023, the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner, Linda Pinfold, introduced the 2022 Annual Agricultural Report to the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors. Along with a summary of changes in agricultural production in our County, the report focused on youth in agriculture.

“We have chosen to highlight the 4H, Future Farmers of America, and Farm Bureau’s Young Farmers & Ranchers programs,” said Pinfold. “We can only hope their experience in these programs creates connection and a foundation for understanding the agricultural industry in the future.”

Pinfold expressed that as we are all aware, agriculture is a primary industry in Stanislaus County where agriculture is known for its fertile soils, canals running full of water, and crops such as almonds, walnuts, and Holstein cows. In fact, Stanislaus County ranked higher than 18 other states, this is impressive!

The United States Department of Agriculture National Statistics Services (NASS) actually reports that family-owned farms account for 97% of the 2.1 million farms in the U.S., they also explain that 69% of the family farms surveyed, expected ownership to continue into the next generation. This is great news for the youth programs Pinfold described above and honestly this makes one of the most valuable commodities in

agriculture, our youth!

“My parents met at the Stanislaus County Fair,” says Jace Neugebauer, Principal Sales Associate for the Terra West Group (TWG). Jace’s story begins in the farrowing barn playing with tiny piglets. The youngest of three siblings, he was exposed to agriculture at a very young age. His mom’s parents owned a dairy while his dad and his grandpa were both very active High School Agriculture teachers.

“I see it now with my nephews too, all boys,” said Jace, “but when we were kids, my favorite thing to wear was a pair of muck boots.”

Jace was always trying to be just like his older siblings who were very involved in Future Farmers of America (FFA). By the third grade, he mastered the FFA Creed after hearing his siblings studying it and attended his first State FFA Conference with his family when he was only eight years old. As he grew older and attended high school, his dad was actually his agriculture teacher. Growing up in a small town in Northern California, it wasn’t unusual to have a cattle drive shut down the main street or to hunt for ducks during his lunch break. Jace’s involvement in agriculture continued with his involvement in FFA throughout all of his years in high school.

“The FFA gave my siblings and I kind of the gateway to becoming leaders and developing as individuals and it does that for so many kids across this state and across

this nation,” said Jace. “It was the largest component in terms of leadership and career development is FFA.”

Jace raised livestock, played football and went on to become a State FFA Officer in high school. The State FFA Officer team’s purpose is to inspire and lead their peers, shepherding the FFA component of the program and delaying the start of college a year to make this commitment. Jace attended William Penn University in Iowa. Unfortunately, there was not an opportunity to be involved in agriculture there, but he played football, studied in Business, and got involved in Student Government Association. He was a Student Government Officer for all four years and served as the President during his sophomore and junior year.

While he was in college, Jace interned with a football stadium lighting company that he ended up working full time for after his graduation. It was not long before he heard of an opportunity with an Ag Tech firm in Fresno, which gave him the opportunity to find something a little closer to home. “Ag Tech is very competitive, but I learned how to start a conversation with anyone, about anything,” a skill that is transferable





to almost any job.

Jace was glad to be back, working in agriculture and after a couple of years he got a pretty cool opportunity to work in Stanislaus County working for TWG, a company that provides agricultural real estate services, financial consulting, and land evaluation. Jace said he enjoys opportunities to help growers.

“There is an aspect of building relationships, it is what agriculture real estate is all about. I like to meet new people, hear their story and learn their background,” says Jace. “Relationships turn into friendships,

business opportunities, and transactions at the same time. In a lot of cases, based on economic instability I have the opportunity to help people.”

Jace believes there is a lot of (farm) consolidation right now, which can be challenging. According to the NASS, only 30% of farms survive into the second generation of families and only 12% of farms are still being operated by a third generation.

“Sometimes selling is the only solution, but we can help reassure the farmer, by selling the land to another farmer,” said Jace.

As an inspiring young leader in agriculture, Jace says ‘yes’ to invitations to give back

to the community he works and lives in. He currently lives in Oakdale, California, he enjoys working in Stanislaus County within the Agricultural

industry, and he is currently serving in a leadership role in the Farm Bureau’s Young Farmers and Ranchers. However, his roots are important to him, he recently traveled home to work in the swine ring at his county fair, hauled a pig for a young showman, and spoke to a group of young agriculturists at a Hanford FFA meeting.

Jace serves as a great example of agriculture growing leaders. The values in agriculture; family, work ethic, responsibility and accountability, are just some of the few reasons that agriculture grows more than just our food.

“I think I was so fortunate and blessed to be the son of my parents and the youngest sibling to my siblings because it gave me an opportunity to be immersed in everything agriculture, sports, and good times,” said Jace.



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# Thanksgiving Dinner Cost Relief, But Still High Relative to Recent Years

As Americans prepare for Thanksgiving, they'll see some relief in food prices for their Thanksgiving dinner. In the American Farm Bureau Federation's 38th annual Thanksgiving dinner survey, we find that this year's classic Thanksgiving feast for 10 will be \$61.17, or approximately \$6.12 per guest. This represents a 4.5% decline from historically high prices last year, driven by a decline in the price of the Thanksgiving dinner centerpiece – the turkey. Despite the year-over-year relief, the cost is still 25% higher compared to 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The Survey**  
The AFBF marketbasket survey includes responses from all 50 states and Puerto Rico collected between Nov. 1-6, mostly consisting of "volunteer shoppers" (members checking prices) visiting their local grocery stores to survey prices of the various items used to prepare a classic Thanksgiving feast. As part of the survey tradition dating back to 1986, volunteers collect price data on turkey, cubed stuffing, sweet potatoes, dinner rolls, frozen peas, fresh cranberries, celery, carrots, pumpkin pie mix, pie shells, whipping cream and whole milk. To reflect an expanded Thanksgiving table, data on boneless ham, Russet potatoes and frozen green beans is also collected. When including the additional items, the cost of a Thanksgiving meal rose to \$84.75 or \$8.48 per person. In the classic basket, seven of the eleven surveyed items saw a price decrease since last year, including turkey, cubed stuffing, frozen peas, cranberries, pie shells, whipping cream and whole milk. The price of four

items rose in price year-over-year – the relish tray (a mix of fresh celery and carrots), sweet potatoes, dinner rolls and pumpkin pie mix.

**Thanksgiving's Centerpiece – The Turkey**  
Over the past two decades, the turkey has accounted for an average of 43% of the price of the Thanksgiving dinner according to the AFBF survey, with a slight increase over time. In 2023, a 16-pound frozen whole turkey accounts for 45% of the classic Thanksgiving basket at \$27.35, a 5.6% decrease from 2022.

Given its prominence, the turkey is the true driver of Thanksgiving dinner prices. This year's drop in turkey prices is attributable to a decrease in avian influenza cases and the resulting recovery in the turkey flock, as explored in a recent Market Intel.

Items with the Largest Price Changes  
When considering further processed food items it is essential to remember the small role that

direct agricultural market conditions have on final retail prices. Additional rounds of value added through further processing, the use of additional ingredients and promotional efforts by retailers lower the impact of farm economics on what consumers pay at the register. According to USDA estimates, the farm share, the portion of the food dollar that goes to farm establishments for the sales of raw food commodities, of a typical \$1 food purchase, is only 14.5%. The remain-

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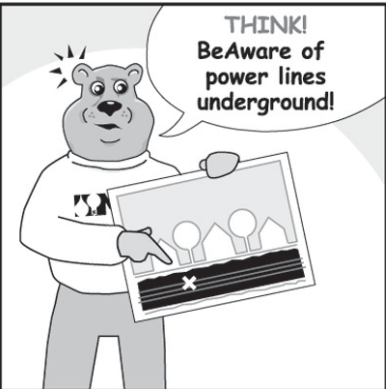
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ing 85.5% is the marketing share, the portion of the food dollar that goes to food supply chain establishments for post-farm activities that transform raw food into finished food products. It's important to keep in mind that these percentages are averages across all food. Certainly, the farm share of a more processed product, like dinner rolls, is much smaller than for food raw products like carrots and celery.

Of all items surveyed this year, pumpkin pie mix (\$4.44 per 30 oz. can) and dinner rolls (\$3.84 per dozen) had the largest percent increase at 3.8% and 3.0% respectively. Interestingly, the AFBF July 4th Cookout

survey similarly had hamburger buns with its largest annual price increase. Of products surveyed, dinner rolls are the most likely to be prepared in-store, and thus could be impacted by sustained increases in wages due to a tight labor market.

Products with the largest percentage drop in prices included whipping cream (\$1.73 per half pint) and fresh cranberries (\$2.10 per 12 oz.) at a decrease of 22.8% and 18.3% respectively. For cranberries, the price drop is indicative of expanded supply, as confirmed by production estimates from the Cranberry Marketing Committee (CMC) in August which indicate a 3.6% increase from the previous year to 8,165,000 100-lb barrel equivalents. Additionally, fresh

cranberry import volumes are up 33% this year-to-date (January – September), almost exclusively from Canada. Of note, approximately 95% of U.S.-utilized cranberry production is processed.

The decrease in price for whipping cream may be related to the nature of year-over-year estimates, as last year saw a 26% increase. Prices are now back in line with the status quo of previous years. Additionally, in reflection of how difficult it had become to find a ½ pint of whipping cream in stores for many of our volunteers, we changed that survey question, requesting the price for a full pint – and then recalculated it to be representative of a half-pint to maintain the status quo in our classic basket. As such, this

*See "DINNER" on page 26*



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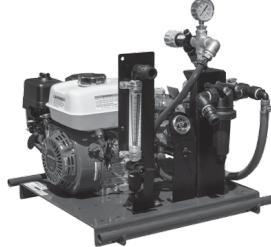
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From "DINNER" on page 25

drop may also be indicative of the discount per ounce received when buying in larger quantities. Furthermore, in fall 2022, warehouse stores of higher-fat dairy products, like butter, were down significantly from fall 2021, which helped put upward pressure on prices of those products. This year, warehouse stores of higher-fat dairy products are back in line with historical levels.

Let's Get Regional

The survey results revealed regional differences in retail food prices, with a \$5.72 spread between the least and most expensive regions. This Thanksgiving, the least expensive food region for Thanksgiving dinner is the Midwest at \$58.66, followed by the South at \$59.10, the West at \$63.89, and the Northeast as the most expensive at \$64.38.

Give Thanks for Affordable Food

From a global viewpoint, despite food inflation and supply chain problems, food is more affordable in the U.S. than in other countries. In fact, the average U.S. consumer spends only 6.7% of their disposable income on food – the lowest of 104 countries measured by the USDA in 2022 and 20% lower than the next nearest country, Singapore at 8.4%. Five countries have food expenditures that exceed 50% of disposable income, with the highest being Nigeria at 59%. The U.S. is lower than many peer nations as well, with Canadians and Australians all paying 10% of their disposable income on food. Part of the reason food prices in the United States remain comparatively low is the presence of effective risk management and safety net programs that help stabilize agriculture markets and revenues farmers receive in an inherently uncertain and volatile industry. Many of these programs are defined and

authorized by the farm bill, which expired on Sept. 30, 2023. The farm bill provides an important consistent opportunity for policymakers to address agricultural and food issues comprehensively. It has grown over the decades to serve both food and agriculture, but its roots are in farm commodity program support. The farm bill has expanded and broadened to include nutrition assistance, conservation, research, a broader swath of crops and bioenergy programs. Because of this, the farm bill brings together a diverse coalition to advocate for a legislative package composed of provisions that would likely not survive the legislative bureaucracy as stand-alone measures.

On the farm side, those utilizing farm bill programs value risk management tools that offer certainty and predictability. Tools like crop insurance products, marketing loans and commodity programs help producers manage through tough times. Voluntary, market-based incentives in conservation programs help provide producers with the tools and assistance needed to implement soil and water improvements. Rural communities have access to tools like broadband grants and new business loans authorized by the farm bill to help enhance economic development and attract growth.

On the nutrition assistance side, many families are able to put dinner on the table thanks to farm bill programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In 2022, there was an average of 41.2 million Americans receiving SNAP benefits at any given time, a full 12.6% of the U.S. population.

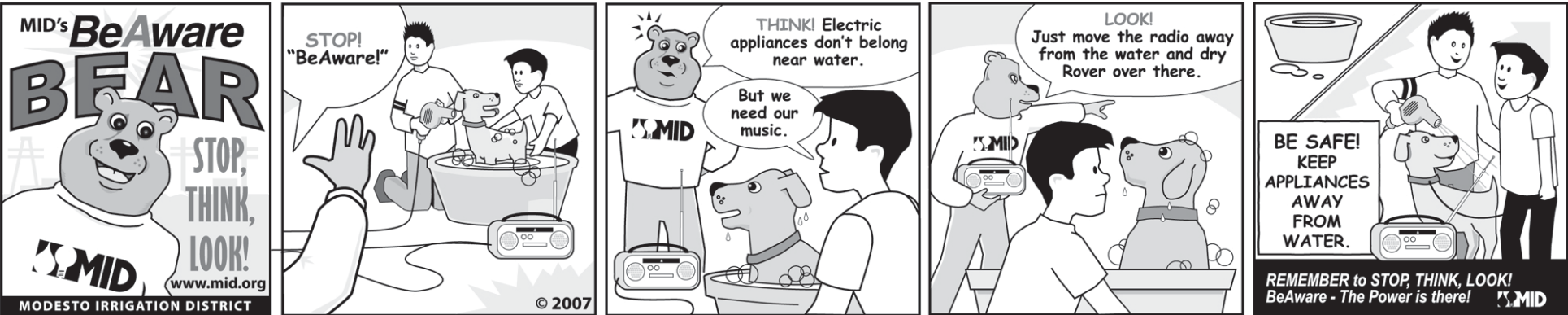
Just as agriculture changes and adapts to meet the needs of the time, the farm bill must do the same to serve the needs of its

constituents. Every five years or so, Congress prioritizes the passage of a new farm bill to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world and ensure that critical programs continue to work for farmers and ranchers, families on a budget, and rural communities working to stay competitive.

This year, the same factors that have led to inflated prices for food and for all the things that farmers have to buy to produce that food have raised new challenges for the farm bill. Unfortunately, several programs do not automatically adjust for inflation – including spending on agricultural research and Title I commodity programs. Thus, they currently have less impact than intended when the farm bill was last passed in 2018.

Conclusion

According to AFBF's national Thanksgiving survey, 2023 will have the second most expensive Thanksgiving meal in the survey's 38-year history. A reduction in 4.5% of the Thanksgiving meal was predominantly driven by a reduced cost of turkey, but also by reductions in seven of eleven surveyed dinner items. Although survey prices have begun to come down, food price inflation remains a real issue and serves as a constraint on the budget of all U.S. consumers. Despite challenges with inflation and the rising cost of food, farmers and ranchers are working hard each day to provide America with a safe and affordable food supply. Food security plays a significant role in national security, and an abundant and reliable food supply is essential for any free nation. So, this Thanksgiving, as you gather around the table with friends and family, let's also give thanks to the hard work of farmers and ranchers in providing our food and the national security and well-being that go with it.





## From our Farm Bureau family to yours

*By: Jamie Johansson,  
President, California Farm Bureau*

Wildfire mitigation is a common topic in California. In recent months, we've discussed this topic as it relates to policies and practices undertaken by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other agencies; and we've weighed in on how lack of wildfire mitigation and adequate forest management affect insurance rates and the willingness of carriers to write policies in California. Effective forest management, coupled with improved safety measures on the part of utility companies form the best solution for California in a variety of ways. When we look at utility infrastructure, we can all agree that diminishing fire risk must be more thoughtful than simply turning off the grid when the wind blows.

As farmers and ranchers, we certainly understand that changes and improvements come with a price and in the background of utility safety conversations has been the big question; how much will our bill increase to pay for a hardening of the electric grid? That number should only be determined by answering, what is the most cost-effective solution for these significant infrastructure improvement projects that must take place?

The state's largest utility company, PG&E, has petitioned the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for a massive rate increase to initiate a \$15.4 billion capital investment project. This is a 30% increase over and above increases that have already taken place in recent years.

On September 13, 2023, the CPUC released two proposed decisions in response to PG&E's rate increase request and both options reduced the PG&E proposed amount substantially, by \$1.6 billion and \$2.1 billion, respectively. Neither of the proposals

were received well by PG&E.

I believe the CPUC's proposed decisions strike a balance between strengthening the electric grid for the future, and affordability, which was the message CAFB Associate Counsel Kevin Johnston shared when he presented our position in oral argument before the full Commission on October 18th. Both proposed decisions approve funds to harden 2,000 miles of the electric grid and lower the risk of wildfire ignition within PG&E's system.

I'm proud to say that California Farm Bureau addressed the entire Commission at the proceeding, and in fact, was the only agricultural group present and participating at the hearing. In his comments, Kevin noted: "The current bundled average agricultural rate is 2 cents per kWh higher than the initial applications 2026 projections and the current bundled average agricultural rate is 32.6% higher than when this case started. That is without any of the cost from this GRC being factored in. It should not be lost that even if [only] one of the Proposed Decisions is adopted verbatim, we are still looking at a 9 to 13% increase."

There is certainly a need to do what it takes to adequately, rapidly, and effectively address very valid, and very real, safety and reliability concerns. However, we must do so in a way that recognizes the very real, and very valid burden to ratepayers as a result of these long deferred, and now urgently needed, improvements.

As is often the case, the solution is a balance and Farm Bureau will be there every step along the way to ensure the interests of farmers and ranchers are heard, recognized and accounted for.

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Over 200 members of the poultry industry and its supporters convened at the Double Tree Hotel in Modesto on October 26, 2023, for the annual Good Egg Breakfast, facilitated by the Pacific Egg & Poultry Association and Good Egg Breakfast Committee. Attendees gathered in support of the industry, to hear from this year's speaker, Brianna Jokosa, and her discussion on "Engaging the Workforce Across Generation," applaud the MJC Good Egg Scholarship

recipients, and discover who would be recognized as this year's "Good Egg." Retired Modesto Junior College Agriculture/Poultry Science Instructor, Richard Nimphius, was recognized as this year's recipient. Nimphius's long-standing contribution to the poultry industry and dedicated instructional efforts during his tenure at MJC were just a few of the accolades announced by award presenter, John Schuber. Eight agriculture students from MJC were also recognized as recipients of the Good Egg Scholarship. Left to right: Alyssa Partner (Agriculture Science), Isabel Thompson (Animal Science), Olivia Collins (Agriculture Science), Rebecca Mendonza (Animal Science), Aubrey Swift (Animal Science), Molly Terpstra (Agriculture Business), Marki Owen (Agriculture Business), Anthony Deniz (Dairy Science/ Agriculture Business).



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