Stanislaus County

FARM NEWS PAPER

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Feature Story

HEALTHY FORESTS, STRONGER AGRICULTURE

Shaun Crook highlights the importance of sustainable forest management and its impact on agriculture and water resources.

By Vicky Boyd



Before leaving the timber site, Sonora-area trucker Gary Stegall checks and tights his load of logs destined for a nearby mill.

The benefits of healthy forests extend far beyond the ground on which the trees grow. They also impact watersheds, downstream water quality, livestock grazing, wildlife, air quality and local economies, to name a few. "This is responsible for everything going into the Stanislaus River, all of the water for MID and TID is coming from here," said Shaun Crook, vice president of Crook Logging Inc., as he recently showed off a 1,000-acre timber tract he and his crew were harvesting near Long Barn.

"If you just manage the Sierra Nevada in a sustainable manner, just cutting what we're growing, we could get enough water just from the west side of the Sierra to fill Lake Oroville."

As a proponent of sustainable forestry practices, Crook — also California Farm Bureau Federation first vice president — said the recent rash of devastating wildfires has spotlighted the long-term neglect of the state's timberlands.

About one-third of the state's 100 million acres is classified as forestland, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees the U.S. Forest Service. While more than half the timberland in California is federally owned, about 29% is owned by private individuals, including Farm Bureau members.

'SOMETHING BIGGER THAN JUST YOURSELF'

Being a Farm Bureau member goes back to Crook's grandfather, William Crook, who ran cattle near Groveland. When the younger Crook returned from attending Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, his uncle and a Tuolumne County Farm Bureau board member, Stuart Crook, wanted to transition off the board. Between Stuart Crook and fellow TCFB Board Member Sasha Farkas, they encouraged Shaun Crook to seek a board seat in the early 2000s.

Shaun Crook served two consecutive terms as TCFB president in the early 2010s and also become involved in CFBF's Forestry and Public Lands Commodity Advisory Committee. About the same time, CFBF began adding forestry titles to its policy book so the organization could become more engaged in related issues.

> *"I really think what it comes down to is there's an innate feeling in a lot of us who are involved in ag that you need to be or want to be part of something bigger than just yourself."*
>
> *-Shaun Crook, California Farm Bureau First Vice President*

Crook pointed to CFBF Board Members Peter Bradford, a Mendocino timber and cattle producer, and Farkas, a timber and apple producer, for encouraging the policy expansion.

In 2017, Crook was elected CFBF second vice president, and in 2023 was elected first vice president. When asked about the importance of becoming involved in Farm Bureau, Crook said he views it as working for the greater good.

"I really think what it comes down to is there's an innate feeling in a lot of us who are involved in ag that you need to be or want to be part of something bigger than just yourself," he said.



A FORESTRY PRESCRIPTION

Shaun and his brother, Russell Crook, operate Crook Logging Inc. in Tuolumne County, having taken over from their father, Steven Crook, who passed away in 2022. Their mother, Janet Crook, remains active in the family business.

Although the company was officially formed in the 1980s, it has roots dating back to the mid- 1970s. The brothers operate as contract loggers, traveling around the state and going where timber work is needed. Currently, they're working near home in Tuolumne County, but in the past they've harvested timber as far away as Santa Cruz County, around Mammoth and near Truckee.

The Crooks are just finishing one large block of U.S. Forest Service timberland after two years and will move onto another one nearby about the same size.

They're operating under a Forest Service Integrated Resource Service Contract, which also requires them to provide services like building temporary roads for log transport, building temporary landings, and masticating — or grinding — the leftover slash after timber removal.

With each contract, the Crooks have to follow a silviculture prescription that has to first be reviewed and approved under the National Environmental Policy Act. The detailed plan is designed to balance timber management with wildfire mitigation and contains other requirements, such as maintaining setbacks to protect waterways and surveying for archeological sites and endangered species. Based on a preharvest assessment, the prescription spells out post-harvest forest density, species distribution, crown spacing and other treatments.

State forests and privately owned land in California, on the other hand, fall under the State Board of Forestry and Forest Practice Rules, considered the strictest in the U.S. Before a single tree is cut, landowners must have a registered professional forester prepare a timber harvest plan, which is similar to an environmental impact report.

The plan also must meet the California Environmental Quality Act — or CEQA — and undergo a public comment period before approval.

THE 30-INCH THRESHOLD

In Crooks' case, the Forest Service prescription limits harvest to trees of 30 inches diameter or less. It also precludes the harvest of healthy sugar pines and black oaks, since they're foundational species within a forest ecosystem.

The prescription's goal is to selective remove trees competing with other ones for sunlight and nutrients. This releases the others and allows them to grow. Some species, such as Ponderosa pine, are particularly sensitive to shading.

Thinning the trees, which reduces the fuel load, also opens up the canopies and is supposed to keep crowns from touching or overlapping. After the prescribed harvest, Crook pointed out how some crowns remained crowded.

"Myself as a logger, I don't think the prescription goes far enough," he said. "Ideally, the canopies that remain wouldn't be touching."

Even if the plan had called for a more aggressive harvest, Crook said the forest would still be sustainable because it was producing more biomass than was being removed.

Allowing harvest of trees greater than 30 inches diameter also would bring more value to the logger.

As it is, Crook said they sell the incense cedar to Sierra Pacific Industries in Chinese Camp for cedar fencing.

“We’re fortunate that our mills haven’t closed here in Tuolumne County,” he said. The remainder of their logs are turned into shavings for animal bedding and other uses. Dead and downed trees are chipped onsite and trucked to the Pacific Ultrapower Chinese Station co- generation plant for electricity production.

MODERN-DAY LOGGING

Long gone are the days of a two-person crew with a cross-cut saw felling a tree.

Today’s loggers use modern equipment that not only improves production efficiency but also worker safety.

With the feller-buncher, for example, an operator inside an enclosed cab guides a clamp that grabs a tree trunk. In a matter of seconds, an accompanying rotating saw blade cuts the tree below the grip and the operator moves the log to a pile. One machine can replace four or five timber fellers.

But the machines come at a cost, Crook said. Depending on the model and the tasks they perform, the machines start at $500,000 each and go up from there.

At the same time, the prices the Crooks receive per 1,000 board-feet, a standard timber measure, have plummeted from when they logged their grandparent’s property in 2000.

“Our cost of production is well above 2,000%, but we have to sell our product for less than one-third he value of what it was 25 years ago,” Crook said.



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Dear Abi,

Between new regulations, rising costs, and everything else that comes with farming these days, it seems like there's always another challenge around the corner. How can one farmer possibly make a difference when it comes to decisions being made in Sacramento?

-Frustrated Farmer

Dear Frustrated Farmer,
I understand your frustration! Between rising input costs, labor challenges, water regulations, and an ever-growing list of rules, it can feel like the people making decisions about agriculture have never stepped foot on a farm.

But here's the thing: Your voice matters more than you might think.

You don't have to spend your days walking the halls of the Capitol or become an expert in agricultural policy to make a difference. Sometimes, making your voice heard is as simple as picking up the phone, sending an email, attending a meeting, or sharing your story with someone who can help carry it further.

That's where Farm Bureau comes in. One farmer speaking up is important, but thousands of farmers standing together? That's a voice that's much harder to ignore.

Through Stanislaus County Farm Bureau and California Farm Bureau, farmers and ranchers have a collective voice when decisions are being made that impact their livelihoods. Whether it's advocating for sensible regulations, protecting water rights, or educating elected officials about the realities of agriculture, Farm Bureau works to make sure the people growing our food have a say in their future.

And here's something worth remembering: You don't have to attend every meeting, serve on a committee, or become heavily involved to make a difference. Simply being a member helps strengthen that collective voice.

Of course, we'd love to see you get involved, too! The next time an issue comes up that affects your operation, don't assume someone else will speak up. Reach out, share your concerns, and tell your story. After all, nobody understands the challenges of farming better than the people doing it every day.

So, can one farmer really make a difference in Sacramento? Absolutely. But when that farmer has an entire agricultural community standing behind them, imagine what we can accomplish.

-Abi

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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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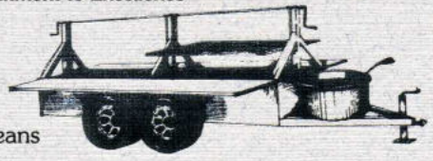
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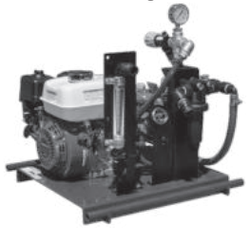
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- **Moss Adams** Stockton 955-6100
- **Oak Valley Community Bank** Oakdale 844-7500
- **Umpqua Bank** Modesto 494-7245

Construction\ Engineering

- **Branelle Properties LLC** Oakdale 595-0256
- **Hawkins & Associates Engineering** Modesto 575-4295

Feed\Farm Supplies

- **A.L. Gilbert** Keyes 632-2333
- **Conlin Supply** Oakdale 847-8977
- **NuWest Milling LLC** Hughson 883-1163

Equipment & Repair

- **Acosta & DaughtersLLC** Waterford 872-4815
- **Clear Innovation** Ceres 595-0338
- **Coit & Hewes LLC** Modesto 985-0559
- **Garton Tractor Inc.** Turlock 632-3931
- **G&F Ag Services** Escalon 599-8911
- **Golden State Dairy Service** Modesto 557-9484
- **Hotsy** Modesto 578-3925
- **RAYCO** Modesto 529-8984
- **Turlock Auto Parts** Turlock 634-4968
- **Turlock Dairy & Refrigeration** Turlock 667-6455
- **Oxbo** Madera 577-1800

Farms/Dairies

- **Ahlem Foothill Farm** Turlock 874-2477
- **Bobby Yamamoto Farms** Westley 835-1750
- **Braden Farms** Hughson 883-4061
- **Brian Stewart** Oakdale 847-8025
- **Catherine Phipps Walden** Ballico 667-2409
- **D & M Ag.,** Denair 667-7783
- **Donlon Farms Inc.** Patterson 892-8543
- **E Roen Ranches** Winnemucca 614-5944
- **Fowler Brother Farming** Waterford 409-4951
- **Hilltop Ranch, Inc.** Ballico 874-1875
- **Hoekstra Dairy** Oakdale 765-2926
- **John P Brichetto** Oakdale 404-6550
- **Melvin Wheeler** Modesto 526-9770
- **Marchy Dairy** Ceres 537-0630
- **McManis Farms Inc** Modesto 541-9345
- **Melo Farms LLC** Turlock 585-7852
- **Michael Van Andel** Modesto 531-4667
- **Ray Ruiz** Modesto 576-3280
- **Redwood Ranches LLC** Hughson 883-2603
- **Robert Gioletti** Turlock 667-6024
- **Ron Martella Farms** Hughson 883-4819
- **Piazza Ranch** Denair 678-0787
- **Schut Ranches** Patterson 892-6226
- **S & S Dairy Inc** Modesto
- **Starkey & Lucas Farming & Cattle** Ceres 484-0671
- **Stewart Johnson** Ceres 602-8899
- **Walter Nicolau** Denair 538-7600
- **Weaver Bros** Crows Landing 854-6716
- **Wyeth Dairy Inc.,** Modesto 545-2101

Non-Profit

- **Almond Alliance** Modesto 559-5800
- **Almond Board of California** Modesto 672-9743
- **CA Farmland Trust** Elk Grove 916-544-2712
- **Central Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce** Modesto 789-5123
- **Modesto Chamber of Commerce** Modesto 577-5757
- **Oakdale Chamber of Commerce** Oakdale 847-2244

Ag Services

- **Anteris** Turlock (559) 472-6415
- **Capacity Chemical** Westley 231-3297
- **East Valley Ag Corporation** Modesto 606-0549
- **Exact** Modesto 544-8600
- **FISHBIO** Oakdale 847-6300
- **Hughes Ag Service** Modesto 765-6075
- **Recology Inc** Westley 395-9506
- **Rumble Ag Service** Modesto 545-1848
- **Select Sires Member Co-op** Turlock 667-8378
- **UAV Ag Solutions** Oakdale 840-2964
- **West Valley Agricultural Service** Westley 894-3121

Irrigation\Utilities

- **Customized Water System** Turlock 988-4833
- **Don Pedro Pumps** Turlock 632-3161
- **IJ Larsen Pumps** Modesto 529-2020
- **Modesto Irrigation District** Modesto 526-7373
- **Oakdale Irrigation District** Oakdale 847-0341
- **Turlock Irrigation District** Turlock 883-8374
- **Waterford Irrigation Supply** Waterford 847-1387

Misc. Services

- **Clark Pest Control** Modesto 556-5200
- **Cover Specialty Services** Modesto 988-3864
- **Ex OpCo LLC** Modesto 544-8600
- **Randal Edwards** Hilmar 634-9484
- **R & J Avila** Hilmar 678-1723
- **Rocha's Valley Enterprises** Oakdale 581-1473
- **Smith Chevrolet Co Inc.** Turlock 632-3946
- **Terra West Group** Modesto 606-5767

Farm Management

- **Becerra Farm Services** Oakdale 380-0448
- **Benchmark Farm Management** Riverbank 869-4290
- **Grover Farm Management** Modesto 602-3031
- **Mike Gorrasi Consulting** Modesto 499-4898
- **TriNut Farm Management** Ceres 431-3425

Nurseries/Horticulture

- **Blumen Flower Farm** Modesto 648-8995
- **Duarte Nursery** Hughson 531-0351
- **Park Greenhouse** Ripon 599-7545
- **Roos Tree Nursery** Empire 847-2520
- **Morris Nursery** Riverbank 527-5553
- **Zaiger's Genetics** Modesto 522-1075

Petroleum

- **Boyette Petroleum** Modesto 281-7134
- **George W. Lowry** Salida 545-0791
- **Valley Pacific Petroleum** Stockton (209) 948-9412
- **Van de Pol Enterprises** Keyes 667-0236

Processors

- **Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc** Terra Bella 559-535-6050
- **Turlock Walnut Co.** Turlock 668-0955
- **Travaille & Phippen** Manteca 599-6111

Restaurant

- **The Fruit Yard** Modesto 577-3093
- **Rodin Ranch** Modesto 577-3224

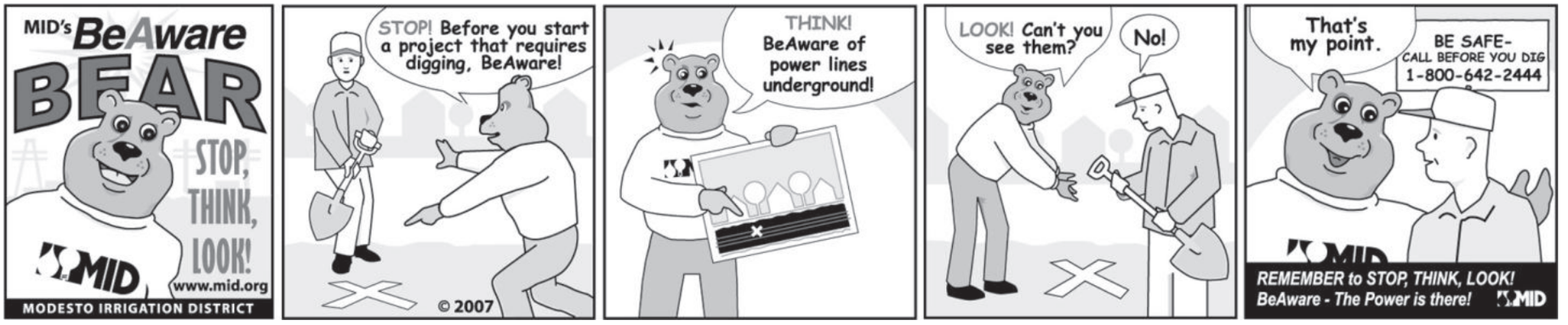
Safety

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

Veterinary

- **Adian Equine** Oakdale 847-8258
- **Dairy Veterinary Services** Escalon 551-3949
- **Zoetis** 1-888-963-8471

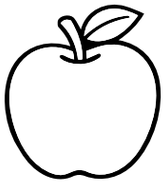
For the good of your food.



Recipe Card

SALTED CARAMEL APPLE PIE BARS

From the Kitchen of Sandi Dirkse



Save me for later!

Ingredients

Streusel

- 1/2 cup (43g) old-fashioned whole rolled oats
- 1/3 cup packed light or dark brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, cold and cubed

Shortbread Crust

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup + 1 Tablespoon all-purpose flour

Apple Filling

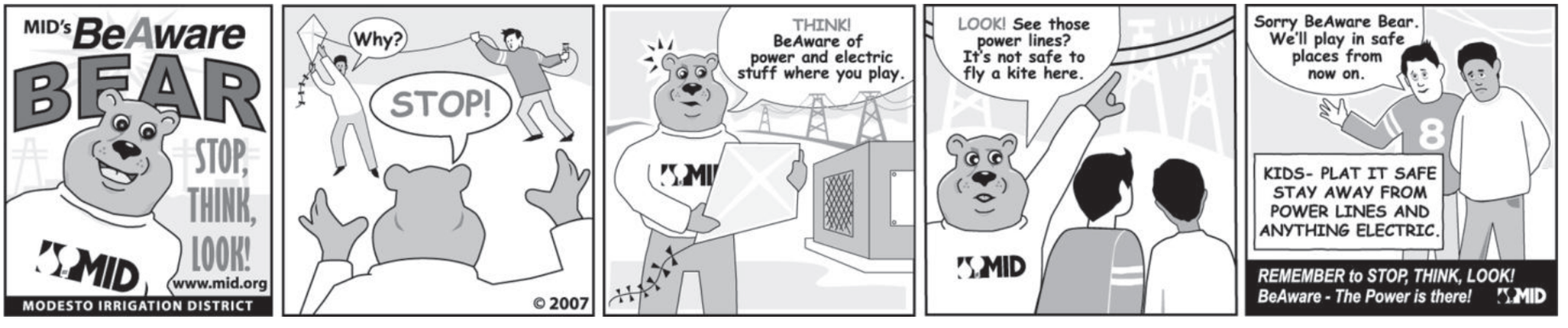
- 2 large apples, peeled and thinly sliced (about 2.5 cups; 1/4-inch-thick slices)
- 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 Tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Garnish

- homemade salted caramel or store-bought caramel sauce
- optional: flaky sea salt

Directions

- Preheat oven to 300°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with parchment paper, leaving overhang on the sides.
- Make the streusel: Mix oats, brown sugar, cinnamon and flour. Cut in chilled butter until coarse crumbs form. Refrigerate until needed.
- Make the crust: Combine melted butter, sugar, vanilla and salt. Stir in flour, then press evenly into the prepared pan. Bake for 20 minutes or until edges are lightly browned.
- Prepare the filling: Toss sliced apples with flour, sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg until evenly coated.
- Increase oven temperature to 350°F. Layer apples tightly over the warm crust, pressing down to fit. Sprinkle chilled streusel evenly on top.
- Bake for 30–35 minutes until golden brown. Cool at room temperature for 20 minutes, then refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
- Lift from the pan using parchment paper and cut into squares. Drizzle with caramel sauce and sprinkle with flaky sea salt, if desired.



RECIPE - ACRONYM SOUP

By Tom Orvis

From USDA to CDFA and everything in between, agriculture has an alphabet all its own. Here's a lighthearted look at the acronyms we use every day.

I was thinking about this article the other day on my way home from DEN to SMF after seeing my CPT son, DIL and GK's in COS. My son is an MI O3 in the USA. With me so far? Follow me … Where is he going with this?

I almost forgot - this story is about a small sampling of the alphabet soup of terms and agencies we deal with in agriculture. Let's have a little taste of the soup …

Let's start at the top of the foods chain.

Well, maybe not as high as POTUS, VEEP or FLOTUS.

We all know who USDA is and we probably have used FSA or NRCS before if we applied for an EQIP loan or just wanted to make some improvements with federal grant monies or loans.

Sometimes those projects are dependent on EPA and a study required by NEPA for the CWA or the ESA. That's where ACE and BOR can get involved. We've had some land use conversion cases and water cases that have triggered all of the above and even got the AG and DOJ involved.

They could eventually have ended up in the USSC!

Then a little closer to home is the GOV and the CALEG. No good deed goes unpunished by that group or their subordinate agencies! Now CARB wants to tell you what tires you can use or how much flatulence a cow may emit. There are only so many EV's and they are not ready for Ag.

We can use ATV's, SUV's, UAV's and UTV's to name a few but look how well those EV school buses are doing? NOT! Just imagine where we would be if not for the SWRCB rewrite of the BDCP and the attempt to influence UIF with more water down our rivers! We all tried to get VA's but that didn't work out so well so they reinvented them as the HRL to help the CWA and the salmon in the ESA - courtesy of DWR and CDFW! All of these things are still holding up MID & TID and their attempt for a new FERC license for NDP!

And let's not forget DPR! They seem to listen to EJ's more than industry - they helped create Spray Days! Gone are the days of common sense use of 1,3-D or 2,4-D while issuing an NOI!

This recipe leads to a bottomless bowl so let's close with everyone's favorite subject … SGMA!

There's GSA's and GSP's and today I was reminded of GWUMP's within the GSP's! We need to operate within the MZ's but not exceed the MT's. If we go below the MT's, the SWRCB can step in and override the GSA's and none of us want that!

So here's your first recipe … let me know if you have any other components of this soup you'd like to add. Plenty of opportunities out there to spice it up! The problem is most of the "spices" are usually not good for our bottom line!



ACRONYM DECODER

A handy guide to the alphabet soup of agriculture!



Federal Government & Agencies

POTUS	President of the US
VEEP	Vice President
FLOTUS	First Lady of the US
USDA	US Department of Ag
FSA	Farm Service Agency
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation District
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Prog
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
NEPA	Natural Environmental Policy Act
CWA	Clean Water Act
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ACE	Arm Corps of Engineers
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation
AG	Attorney General
DOJ	Department of Justice
USSC	US Supreme Court



Groundwater Management

SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
GSA	Groundwater Sustainability Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
GWUMP	Groundwater Use Monitoring Program
MZ	Management Zone
MT	Minimum Threshold



California Government & Agriculture

GOV	Governor
CALEG	California Legislature
CARB	California Air Resources Board
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
DWR	Department of Water Resources
CDFW	California Department of Fish & Wildlife
DPR	Department of Pesticide Regulation
EJ	Environmental Justice
NOI	Notice of Intent



Vehicles, Equipment & Travel

EV	Electric Vehicle
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
UTV	Utility Task Vehicle
SUV	Sport Utility Vehicle
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
DEN	Denver (airport code)
SMF	Sacramento (airport code)
COS	Colorado Springs (airport code)
CPT	Captain (military rank)
MI	Military Intelligence
03	Office Pay Grade 0-3
USA	United States of America

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Tuesday, November 17, 2026
MJC West Campus | ACE Pavilion
4 - 6 P.M.

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62nd Annual

GOOD EGG BREAKFAST

Look forward to made-to-order omelets
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Annual Good Egg Award!

OCTOBER 22, 2026 AT 7:00 A.M. EGGSACTLY

DoubleTree Hotel, Grand Ballroom
1150 9th Street
Downtown Modesto

$40 Pre-Sale Per Person | $45 at Door Per Person



SPEAKER "EGGSTORDINARE"

Tracy Schohr
UC Cooperative Extension

California Agriculture Conservation and Conflict

Presented By: Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, California Poultry Federation
Modesto Chamber of Commerce, Pacific Egg & Poultry Association

☐ I would like to buy # _____ tickets at $40 per person for the 62nd Good Egg Breakfast.
☐ I would like to **SPONSOR A TABLE OF TEN** for $500.00 (sponsors will be recognized at the event).
☐ I would like to be a MJC Scholarship Sponsor _____ (Amount).

Enclosed is my check for $ _____

Please send tickets to:
Name(s)_____ Company _____
Address _____ City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, 1201 L Street, Modesto, CA 95354 Phone: (209) 522-7278

No refunds
Tickets will be held at the door for orders received after: Wednesday, October 14, 2026

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STANISLAUS COUNTY FARM BUREAU

UPCOMING EVENTS
Calendar

Oct 22nd

AgEdventure Day

Stanislaus Fairgrounds

Welcoming 3rd graders in Stan County to learn about ag!

Oct 24th

Tuolumne Annual Dinner

Sheriff's Posse Grounds

Good food and even better company

Nov 19th

Northwest Regional Meeting

Hart Ransom

Join us for a Thanskgiving dinner and gift raffle

Nov 20th

Spray Safe

MJC West Campus

FREE continuing education hours for growers and employees

Kids Corner!

Tomato DETECTIVES

DRAW IT!

Draw your dream tomato.
Be creative!

FILL IN THE BLANK!

Use the words in the box to complete the sentences.

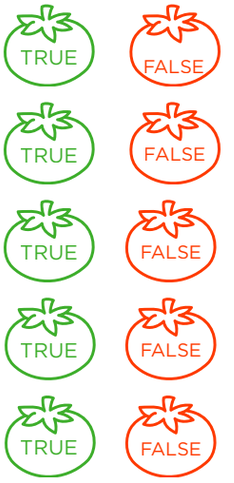
red	seeds	sunshine	fruit
healthy	plants	water	

1. **A tomato is a _____.**
2. **Tomatoes need _____ and _____ to grow.**
3. **Inside a tomato are tiny _____.**
4. **Tomatoes are _____ for you!**
5. **Most tomatoes are the color_____.**

TRUE OR FALSE?

Color True (green) or False (red)

1. **Tomatoes grow on a tree.**
2. **Tomatoes are a fruit.**
3. **Tomatoes can be yellow, red, or orange.**
4. **Tomatoes have no seeds.**
5. **You can eat tomatoes raw or cooked.**



Interested in

VOLUNTEERING FOR AGEDVENTURE DAY?

AgEdventure Day is a wonderful event where we teach students all about agriculture. If you are interested in presenting to students or volunteering to help, scan the QR Code below to sign up or call our office with any questions!



Oct. 22, 2026

Stanislaus Fairgrounds

8:30AM - 12:00PM

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- TriCal Inc.
- Flory
- Sharon Naraghi Farms
- Hoekstra Dairy
- Burchell Nursery Inc.
- insureCAL Insurance Agency
- Bays Ranch Inc.
- Heinrich Farms
- Cortez Growers Association est. 1924
- Stanislaus County Sheriff's Office
- Gonsalves Ranch
- Mape's Ranch Est. 1923
- Yosemite Farm Credit
- Wenger Ranch
- Nationwide is on your side
- WIS&G Winton-Ireland, Strom & Green
- Grower Direct Nut Co.
- Sierra Grain Terminal
- American AgCredit Your future grows here
- Mid Valley Agricultural Services, Inc.
- Beard

STANISLAUS COUNTY FARM BUREAU

SPRAY SAFE 2026

Save the Date!

Friday, November 20, 2026

FREE training & CE Hours



EMPLOYEE TRACK:

English & Spanish

- 2 Pesticide CE Hours
- Sexual Harassment &
- Heat Illness Prevention
- Pesticide Handler
- Tractor Safety
- **Including: Indoor Heat Prevention**

GROWER TRACK:

4 Pesticide CE Hours

- Laws & Regulation updates
- Pesticide Label Updates
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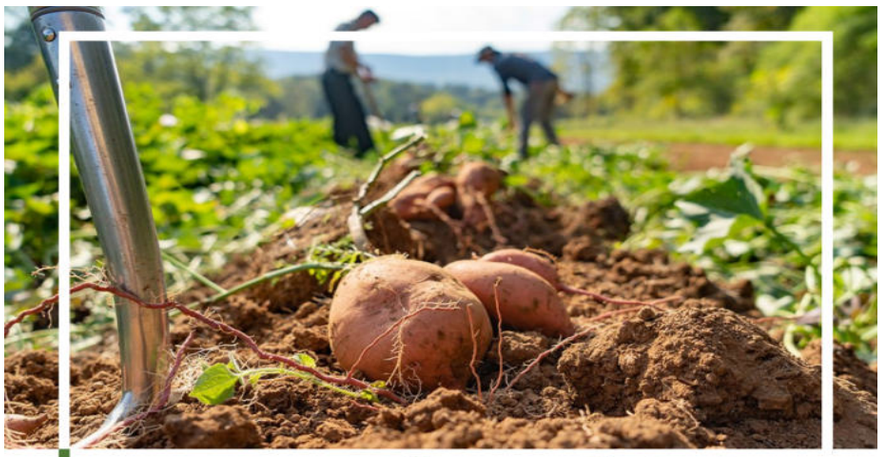
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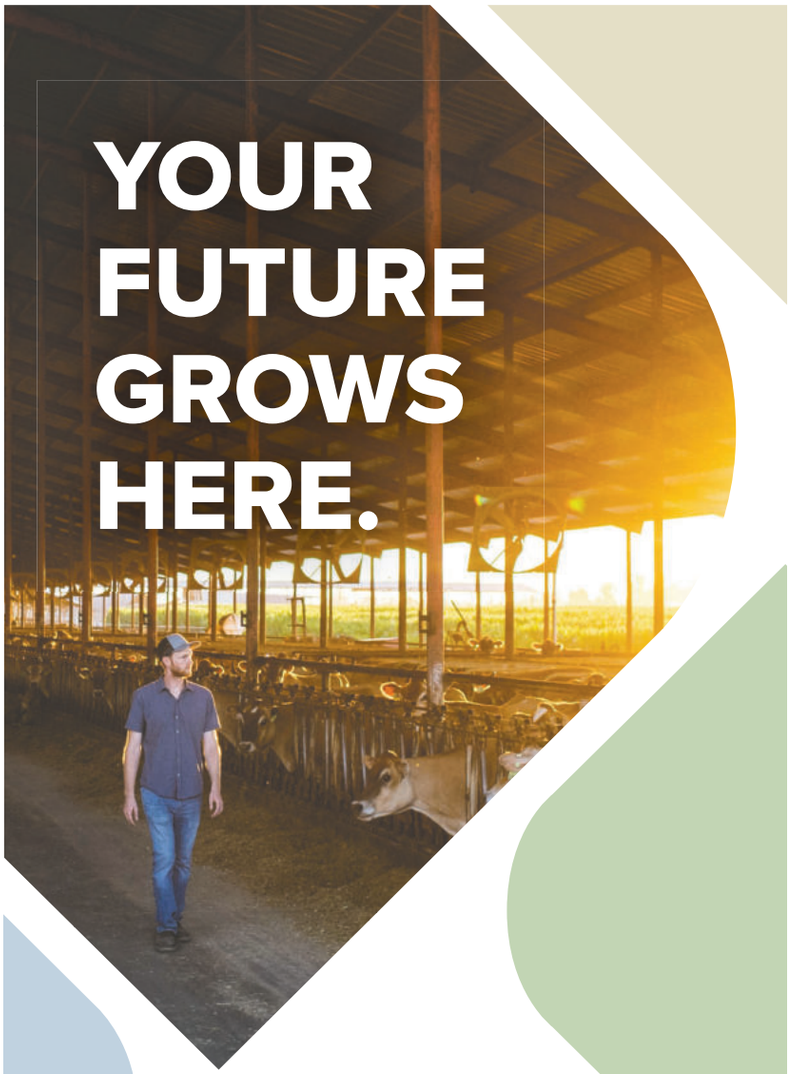
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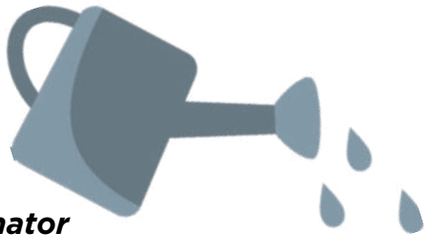
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IN THE GARDEN

Cool Season Gardening



By Anne Schellman, UC Master Gardener Coordinator

Data sourced from UC Master Gardeners of Sacramento County, Monthly Vegetable Gardening Tips.

The season for tomatoes, peppers, and corn is winding down, but the gardening season is far from over! Not sure what to plant for fall? Let's use botany and parts of the plant to guide us!

1 Roots



A root is the fleshy part of a plant that grows underground. Root vegetables include carrots, radishes, beets, parsnips, turnips, and daikon radishes.

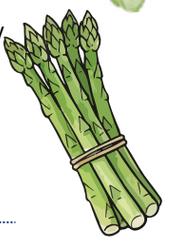
Radishes are easy to grow and are ready in as little as 30 days! Instead of planting an entire seed packet, plant a few rows now, and then repeat every few weeks. This is called "succession planting," and will give you fresh radishes throughout the winter and into spring. Don't forget to thin root crops so they have enough room to grow.

2 Stems



Asparagus is an edible stem crop. Plants can be purchased and planted in fall or winter. Celery is also a stem but can be tricky for new gardeners to grow.

Did you know that potatoes are actually modified stems? For a fun gardening project in January, cut a potato into sections, making sure each piece contains two “eyes.” Allow the pieces to dry for a few days before planting. Fill a 5-gallon bucket with potting mix and plant the potato pieces about 3 inches deep. Place the bucket in a sunny location and water when the soil feels dry. In May, dump out the bucket and enjoy harvesting your homegrown potatoes!



3 Leaves



Leafy greens like kale, spinach, lettuce, chard, and mustard greens thrive in cool weather. They continue to grow until the end of spring. Swiss chard can live for several years. Leafy greens don't need full sun and can thrive in just 4-6 hours of sunlight.

To harvest, pinch or cut off the outer stems near the base of the plant, leaving at least three young leaves behind so the plant can continue producing.

4 Flowers

Some vegetables are actually edible flowers, including broccoli, cauliflower, and artichokes.



Plant broccoli or cauliflower now, either from seed or transplants, for a spring harvest. Artichoke plants can be purchased and planted during the winter, and you may enjoy harvesting a few edible flower buds by summer.

5 Fruits



Although berries and grapes are technically fruits rather than vegetables, fall and winter are excellent times to plant them.

Many varieties of blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, and grapes grow well in our area. Depending on the crop, harvests typically occur in spring or summer.

6 Seeds



This category is easy! Snap peas and snow peas are delicious, productive, cool-season crops. Plant them in fall for a spring harvest or sow them in winter for a late spring crop.



Helpful Tips:

- After planting seeds, follow the package directions and thin seedlings 2 to 3 weeks after germination.
- An easy way to thin seedlings is to snip them at soil level with a small pair of scissors rather than pulling them out. Many thinned seedlings are edible and can be added to salads, sandwiches, or smoothies.

Upcoming Events

SPRAY SAFE RETURNS WITH MORE CE HOURS THAN EVER!

Join us for a morning of free education, hands-on resources and industry connections, featuring four hours of Laws & Regulations CE credit, bilingual employee safety training and plenty of opportunities to support safer agricultural operations.

Spray Safe is just around the corner, and we have some exciting news to share! This year, Stanislaus County Spray Safe will offer FOUR HOURS of Continuing Education (CE) credit in the Laws & Regulations category for pesticide applicators.

This is a big deal! Laws & Regulations is often one of the most challenging CE categories to fulfill, and this is the largest block of these hours we have offered at Spray Safe. For those working toward license or certificate renewal, four hours in one morning can make a significant dent in their requirements. And the best part? It's completely FREE!

But Spray Safe is about much more than earning CE hours. It's about bringing our agricultural community together, providing practical education, investing in employee safety and strengthening the operations that make our industry successful.

A Community Effort That Benefits Our Growers

Spray Safe is truly a collaborative effort. Our planning committee includes representatives from the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, AgSafe, Cal Ag Safety, Blue Diamond, Almond Board of California, UC Cooperative Extension, local growers, Valley Wide Cooperative and Stanislaus County Farm Bureau. Through grant funding, partnerships and generous sponsorships, we are able to offer this valuable event at no cost to attendees.

The morning begins with registration, coffee and donuts at 7 a.m., followed by educational sessions from 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Attendees can also visit our trade show, connect with industry partners and enjoy a delicious tri-tip lunch. And don't forget the raffle! We have some fantastic prizes up for grabs, with an extra raffle ticket for those who register early.

Don't Forget Your Employees!

While many growers attend Spray Safe for CE hours, one of our most valuable offerings is the Employee Training Track, and I really want to encourage employers to take advantage of it!

Running alongside the applicator program, this track offers four one-hour safety classes in both English and Spanish:

Sexual Harassment Prevention

Heat Illness Prevention — Indoor and Outdoor

Pesticide Handler Training

Tractor and Implement Safety

Employees who complete all four classes receive a certificate documenting their participation. Those who are also pesticide applicators have the opportunity to earn two hours of CE credit.

Here's something important to remember: Your employees do not have to be pesticide applicators to benefit from this training. Whether they're operating equipment, working in the field or handling crops, these topics are relevant to nearly every agricultural operation.

For employers, having employees attend four organized safety classes, in their preferred language, at no cost is an incredible opportunity. Their certificates can also help document participation as part of your employee safety training program. While employers should ensure training meets their operation's specific requirements, Spray Safe provides an excellent opportunity to address several important topics in one morning.

Investing in employee education is investing in your entire operation, and Spray Safe makes that investment easy and accessible!

Timely Topics and Practical Information

We're excited about this year's speaker lineup! The program will cover Laws & Regulations Updates and Bee Regulations & Requirements with staff from the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

Trent Voss, a licensed PCA and grower, will discuss pesticide use around bees and spraying techniques. Another presentation I'm particularly looking forward to is Temperature Inversions, presented by Dakari Anderson with NOAA. This topic came up at last year's Spray Safe, and I'm excited to learn more about its impact on spraying conditions and pesticide drift.

We'll wrap up with Pesticide Label Updates from representatives of Valent, Corteva, FMC, BASF and Bayer. These are practical topics growers and applicators can put to use in their operations.

Register Today — And Bring Your Employees!

We hope you'll join us for this year's Spray Safe! Postcards are in the mail, but there's no need to wait to register.

Register by scanning the QR code, visiting www.stanag.org or calling the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (209) 525-4730.

Early registration earns an additional raffle ticket. Whether you're coming for CE hours, industry connections or employee safety training, Spray Safe has something for your operation.

Four hours of Laws & Regulations CE credit, free employee training in English and Spanish, a great trade show, tri-tip lunch and raffle prizes. All at no cost!

We look forward to seeing you there, and please don't forget to register your employees, too!

Spray Safe Registration is *Live!*



This event is completely **FREE** and we would love to have you join us.

STANISLAUS COUNTY FARM BUREAU

2026 ELECTION VOTER GUIDE

The candidates stated have recieved the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau endorsements



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Oct. 19 – Voter Registration Deadline

Oct. 27 – Recommended ballot return date

Nov. 3 – Election Day

- **CA 5th Congressional District:** Tom McClintock
- **CA 13th Congressional District:** No Position
- **CA State Senate - 4th District:** Alexandra Duarte
- **Modesto Irrigation District - Division 2:** Mike Moradian
- **Modesto Irrigation District - Division 3:** Robert Frobose
- **Modesto Irrigation District - Division 4:** John Boer IV

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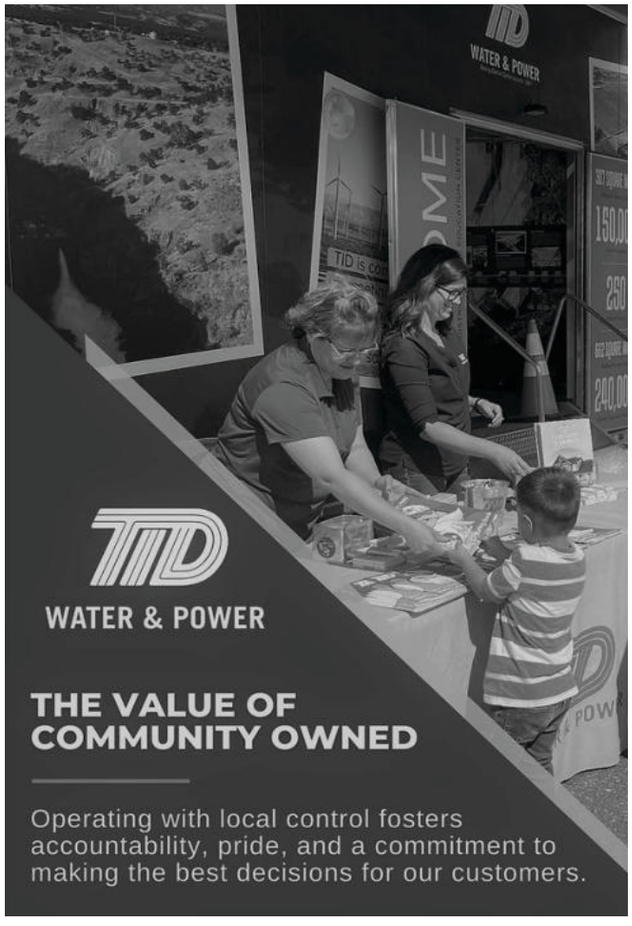


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*All data courtesy of Stanislaus County Ag Commisioner and team

Stanislaus County

2025 CROP REPORT

Celebrating Horticulture

Almonds lead the way as agricultural production increases 6%, highlighting the strength and diversity of local agriculture.

Stanislaus County agriculture continues to demonstrate its economic importance, with the recently released 2025 Agricultural Report showing a total gross production value of more than $3.3 billion, an increase of approximately $176 million, or 6%, over 2024.

The report was presented to the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors on September 29 by Agricultural Commissioner Linda Pinfold and her team. This year's report celebrates horticulture and the diverse agricultural operations that contribute to the county's economy.

Almonds Remain on Top

Almonds once again claimed the top spot among Stanislaus County's agricultural commodities, generating approximately $1.04 billion in gross value. With nearly 200,000 acres dedicated to almond production, the crop experienced increased yields and value in 2025, climbing approximately $215 million from the previous year.

Milk remained the county's second most valuable commodity at $676 million, despite a $78 million decline attributed to lower prices and oversupply. Poultry followed in third place at $272 million, down approximately $19 million as the industry continued recovering from avian influenza. Together, these three commodities accounted for nearly 60% of the county's total agricultural production value.

Several other commodities experienced notable changes. Cattle and calves increased $38 million to $246 million, while walnuts and silage each gained approximately $11–12 million. Melons returned to the top 10 for the first time since 2019, reaching $51 million in value.

Celebrating Horticulture

This year's report also highlights the importance of horticulture, an industry that contributes significantly to the county's agricultural diversity. Stanislaus County's nursery industry generated nearly $185 million in gross value across approximately 1,900 acres, including fruit and nut trees, ornamental plants, shrubs and vegetable transplants.

The report also addressed ongoing efforts to eradicate the glassy-winged sharpshooter in Turlock, a pest that threatens grapes and numerous other plant species, as well as recognized the 2026 Farmworker of the Year honorees, including overall winner Paty Lopez of Duarte Nursery in Hughson.

↗ 6%

$3.33 Billion

Total gross value of ag production in 2025

A Continued Economic Powerhouse

While the county's agricultural production value increased in 2025, officials emphasized that these figures represent gross farm-gate values, not profits, and do not account for production expenses or the additional economic activity generated by agriculture.

With more than $3.3 billion in production, Stanislaus County continues to demonstrate the strength, diversity and importance of its agricultural industry and the people who make it possible.

TOP 10 COMMODITIES

By Gross Value

The top 10 commodities represent **82%** of the county's ag production value.

1 

Almonds
$1,323,460,000

Stanislaus County is truly almond country, home to nearly 200,000 bearing acres.

2 

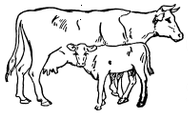
Milk
$560,744,000

Value decreased due to lower prices from oversupply, but dairy remains one of the county's most valuable commodities.

3 

Poultry
$256,161,000

Value decreased $19 million, still rebounding from Avian influenza. Chickens and turkeys remain a significant commodity.

4 

Cattle & Calves
$199,769,000

Number of head decreased but the prices remained high. Many dairies are utilizing selective beef-dairy crosses for the beef industry.

5 

Nursery Products
$184,955,000

Holds steady at he 5th in value. Stanislaus County is home to several large wholesale nurseries specializing in almonds and fruit trees.

6 

Silage
$123,419,000

Saw a small increase of $12 million. The vast majority of the acreage and value is silage corn for the dairy industry.

7 

Walnuts
$99,316,000

Gained $11 million in value. Acreage continues to decrease but prices are rebounding from exceptional lows.

8 

Polination
$78,958,000

Took a dip in value but remained at number 8. Self-pollinating almond varieties, decrease in acreage and liited beekeeper availability impacted value.

9 

Melons
$51,363,000

Juped back into the top 10, increasing $15 million from last year. Prices were up overall in 2025.

10 

Tomatoes
$25,535,000

Continued to have fewer acres and lower prices, but remained a top commodity in 2025.

***All data courtesy of Stanislaus County Ag Commisioner and team**


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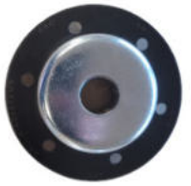
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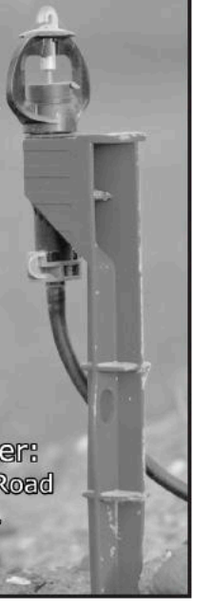
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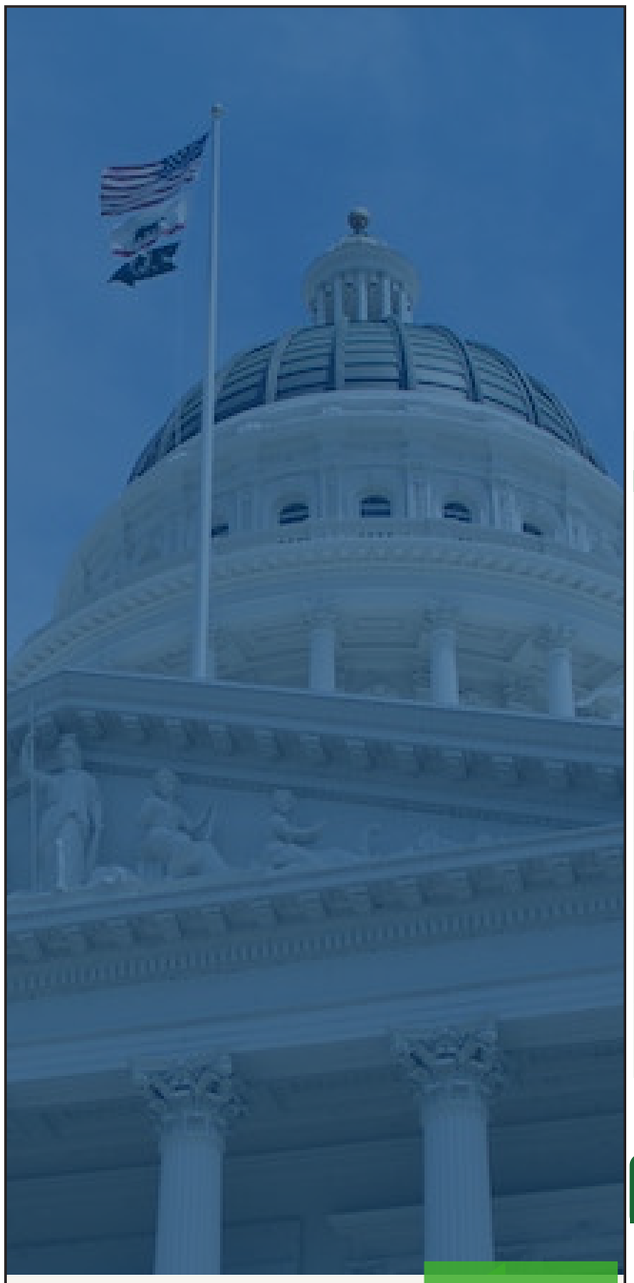
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2026 California *Voter Guide*

A Quick Guide to the Ballot Propositions

STANISLAUS COUNTY FARM BUREAU



California Farm Bureau

BALLOT RECOMMENDATIONS

2026 GENERAL ELECTION — Tuesday, November 3

PROP.	PROPOSITION NAME	YES	NO
1	Authorizes Bonds for Housing Affordability Programs. Legislative Statute.		X
2	Increases State's Rainy Day Fund. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.	NO POSITION	
3	Provides Permanent Funding for Schools and Health Care by Extending Existing Tax on High Incomes. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.		X
4	Repeals Prohibition Against Public Funding of Election Campaigns. Legislative Statute.		X
5	Changes Recall Election Process for Statewide Officers. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.	NO POSITION	
37	Creates Loan Program for Middle-Income Buyers of Qualified New Homes. Initiative Statute.	NO POSITION	
38	Authorizes Bonds for Immunology Medical Research. Initiative Statute.		X

PROP.	PROPOSITION NAME	YES	NO
39	Prohibits Citizens from Voting Unless They Present Government-Issued Identification. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.	X	
40	Imposes One-Time Tax on Certain Taxpayers. Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.		X
41	Prohibits New State Taxes That Exclude Revenues from State Spending Limit. Requires Audits for New State Special Taxes. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.	X	
42	Prohibits New State Personal Property Taxes and Certain Retroactive State Taxes. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.	X	
43	Limit's Voters' Ability to Raise Revenues for Local Government Services. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.	X	
44	Requires Community Health Clinics Spend 90% of Revenue on Program Services. Initiative Statute.	NO POSITION	
45	Modifies Environmental Review for Certain Projects. Initiative Statute.	X	

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Out in the Community

CONLIN SUPPLY HOSTS ANNUAL HEALTH & HANDLING SALE

From livestock equipment to industry connections, Conlin Supply brings the cattle community together.

On October 7, Tom and I (Abi) attended the annual Conlin Supply Health & Handling Sale, representing Farm Bureau in the event's trade show.

The event is always a great opportunity to connect with members, visit with familiar faces and catch up with others in the agricultural community. With a variety of supplies available at discounted prices, the sale provides farmers and ranchers with an opportunity to stock up on the products and equipment they need for the upcoming season. And, of course, the delicious lunch is always a highlight!

Stanislaus County Farm Bureau has participated in this event for many years, long before I joined the team nearly six years ago, and it continues to be something we look forward to each year.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Albert and the Conlin Supply team for hosting another wonderful event and providing our members with the opportunity to purchase essential supplies at discounted prices. We always enjoy spending time with our agricultural community and appreciate the opportunity to be part of this longstanding event!



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This year's theme, *Bold Horizons,* celebrates an industry charting new paths through innovation, stewardship, resilience, and global opportunity.

The Almond Conference brings together growers and other industry stakeholders for networking, education and research in the almond industry.

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