

# TUOLUMNE COUNTY FARM NEWS

## TUOLUMNE COUNTY FARM BUREAU'S ANNUAL DINNER 2025

JOIN US SAT. OCTOBER 25TH, 2025  
AT THE POSSE GROUNDS, JAMESTOWN, STARTING AT 5:30

PRIME RIB DINNER, AG IN THE CLASSROOM SILENT AUCTION  
& THE CALIFORNIA WOLF 101 FORUM

### EVENT DETAILS

Sat. October 25, 2025

Tuolumne County Sherriff's  
Posse Grounds

5:30 Social Hour & Silent Auction  
6:30 Prime Rib Dinner  
7:00 Short Business Meeting  
7:15 George Croft - Singer

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  - Standard, (209) 532-3484
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New and exciting 2nd Annual MJC School of Agriculture Open House on Thursday, October 2, 2025, from 6–8 PM in the ACE Pavilion on West Campus.

This family-friendly event is open to all ages and provides a unique opportunity to experience everything our program has to offer. Attendees will have the chance to explore a student activity and club trade show, where you can learn about the wide range of programs, organizations, and activities available through the School of Agriculture. In addition, guests will enjoy guided bus tours of our modern farm and livestock units, showcasing the hands-on learning opportunities available right here on campus.

Throughout the evening, you'll also be able to connect directly with faculty, guidance counselors, and current students, gaining valuable insight into the resources, community, and opportunities that make MJC Agriculture one of the region's most dynamic programs.



October 2, 2025 | 6-8pm | A.C.E. Pavilion

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

Come visit with faculty and current students to learn about our clubs, activities and various agriculture degree/certificate areas that the School of Agriculture offers. There will be MJC West Campus Farm tours and refreshments provided! All ages are welcome!

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ranean climate, began experimenting with tree crops. Almonds quickly emerged as a favorite, thanks to their adaptability and market potential. By the mid-1900s, almonds were being planted across the Central Valley, particularly in Stanislaus, Merced, and San Joaquin counties.

Over time, the almond industry exploded. Today, California produces over 80% of the world's almonds, and Stanislaus County ranks as one of the top almond-producing regions in the state. Alongside almonds, walnuts and pistachios also became major crops. Walnut trees flourished in areas with deep, well-drained soils, and pistachios,

once considered a specialty crop, gained popularity for their unique flavor and growing international demand.

What makes nuts so appealing to Central Valley growers is their combination of high value and long-term investment. While nut trees take several years to mature, once they do, they yield crops for decades, making them a staple of long-term farm planning and profitability. Economic & Cultural Impact  
Nuts are more than

See "Nuts" on page 7B

### Consultant

When you think of California's Central Valley, a few crops may come to mind, almonds, walnuts, and pistachios are surely at the top of that list. But few realize just how deeply rooted the nut industry is in Stanislaus County, and how it has shaped not only the landscape but also the economy, culture, and identity of the region.

### A Nutty History

The story of nuts in Stanislaus County begins in the early 20th century. Farmers in the area, known for its fertile soil and Mediter-

## Rooted in Rich Soil ~The Legacy of Nuts in Stanislaus County and Northern California

Written by Kathryn Kim Ramos, Sisbro Innovation Website & Digital Marketing



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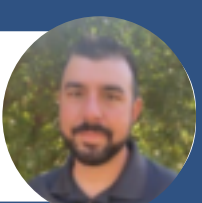
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See "Nuts" on page 3B

just a crop; they're a cornerstone of the local economy. Processing plants, shelling operations, and packaging facilities dot the region, employing thousands of workers and contributing millions to the county's GDP. Turlock, Modesto, and other surrounding cities have become hubs for nut-related businesses, from family-owned farms to global distributors.

Local farmers are proud stewards of this legacy. Many are second- and third-generation growers, passing down not only orchards but also the knowledge and passion for sustainable, high-quality farming practices. Annual harvests often bring together families, seasonal workers, and communities in a shared celebration of abundance and hard work.

### Digital Marketing ~ Cracking Open New Opportunities

As the industry continues to evolve, one thing has become clear: digital marketing is

essential for farmers and nut producers in Stanislaus County and throughout Northern California.

Today's consumers are curious. They want to know where their food comes from, how it's grown, and who's behind it. A strong online presence allows local farms and nut brands to share their story directly with buyers. Through social media, farms can post behind-the-scenes videos of the harvest, explain the benefits of their growing practices, or even sell gift boxes of roasted nuts through an e-commerce website. Tools like email newsletters, search engine optimization (SEO), and Google My Business listings also help growers stay connected with both local and international customers. Whether it's showcasing a new sustainable irrigation system or announcing a booth at the Stanislaus County Fair, digital platforms give farmers the power to market smarter, not harder.

A Lasting Legacy

In Stanislaus County, nuts are more than a crop, they're a way of life. From the trees rooted deep in the soil to the families who've built a living harvesting them, the nut industry remains one of the Central Valley's proudest achievements.

And now, thanks to the power of digital marketing, that legacy can be shared far and wide, connecting the fields of Modesto to homes around the globe, one post, one click, and one nut at a time.

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## MJC Harvest Party

The Modesto Junior College School of Agriculture is proud to host the 11th Annual Harvest Party on Saturday, November 8, 2025, in the ACE Pavilion on West Campus.

First held in 2013, the Harvest Party was established to reconnect students, alumni, and the community with the School of Agriculture. Over the years, it has grown into one of our most anticipated traditions—an evening dedicated to celebrating the legacy, growth, and bright future of agricultural education at MJC. Guests will enjoy an evening filled with live music, delicious food, and both live and silent auctions, all in the welcoming atmosphere of the ACE Pavilion, which has proudly served as the home of the

Harvest Party since its opening in 2012.

The event has seen tremendous community support in past years, with attendance reaching as many as 750 guests and sponsorship from dozens of local businesses and industry partners. In 2024, nearly 600 alumni, supporters, and friends of agriculture joined us to make the milestone 10th Annual Harvest Party a success, thanks to the generosity of 20 event sponsors and 62 table sponsors. We look forward to building on that momentum in 2025 as we gather once again to celebrate agriculture, community, and the people who make MJC's School of Agriculture thrive.



# 2026

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# Harvest Party

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Dinner

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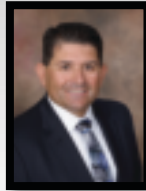
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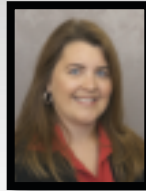
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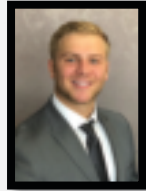
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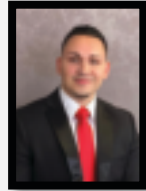
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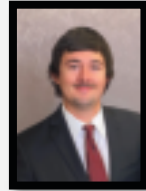
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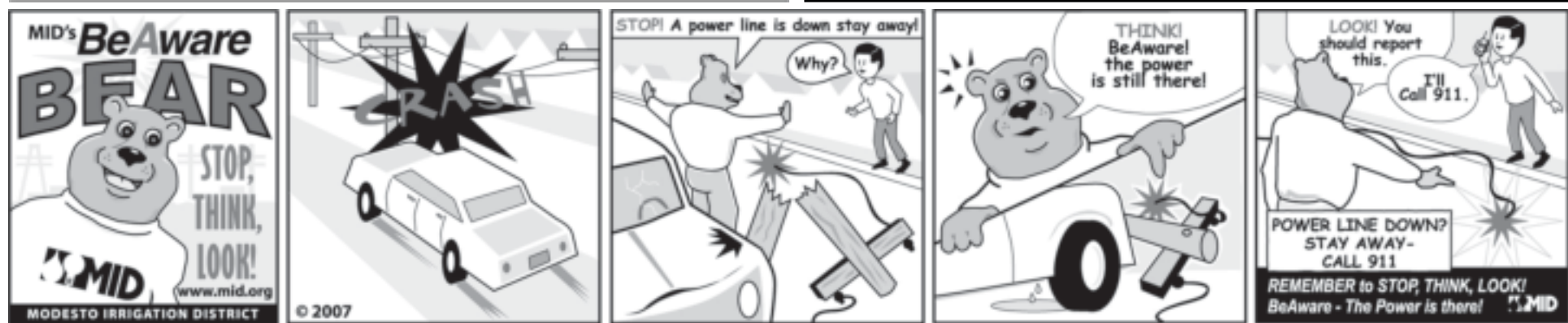
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## Are You Ready for a Cal/OSHA Inspection?

Practical Programs and Local Data for Stanislaus County Growers

*Theresa Kiehn, President and CEO, AgSafe*

For growers in Stanislaus County, Cal/OSHA compliance is more than just a legal requirement; it is an essential part of protecting your workforce and sustaining your business. Agriculture remains a priority industry for Cal/OSHA enforcement, and smaller employers are increasingly in the spotlight. Inspections are often triggered by accidents, worker complaints, or targeted enforcement efforts, and the numbers show that small operations are receiving a significant share of citations and penalties.

What the Data Shows  
Between October 2023 and September 2024, Cal/OSHA issued hundreds of citations to California crop production operations under NAICS Code 111. The statistics tell an important story:

These numbers make clear that smaller employers are not exempt from enforcement. In fact, employers with fewer than 20 workers paid \$270,215 in penalties, more than the \$237,865 paid by employers with

over 250 employees. With margins already tight, a Cal/OSHA citation can create significant financial hardship, not to mention the operational disruption. Citations are not your only risk, repeat violations can escalate into expensive penalties, concerted activity complaints, and PAGA claims.

For Stanislaus County, where many farms are small and family-run, this trend should serve as a wake-up call. Being proactive about compliance can protect not only

Employer Size	Citations	Inspections	Penalties
1-9 employees	73	26	\$156,755
1-19 employees	118	38	\$270,215
20-49 employees	79	31	\$138,290
70-99 employees	117	45	\$238,475
50-99 employees	38	14	\$100,185
100-249 employees	59	20	\$246,930
250+ employees	36	11	\$237,865



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your bottom line, but also the long-term sustainability of your operation.

Core Safety Programs Every Grower Needs Compliance comes down to a handful of key written programs. These must be up to date, accessible, and provided both in English and in the language your workforce understands. Failure to produce these programs during an inspection is one of the most common causes of citations.

#### Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)

The foundation of every safety system in California. A compliant IIPP identifies who manages the program, explains how safe practices are enforced, establishes two-way communication with employees, schedules regular inspections, documents investigations of accidents or exposures, requires timely hazard correction, and ensures consistent worker training.

#### Heat Illness Prevention Plan (HIPP)

For outdoor work, the law requires em-

ployers to provide cool drinking water, access to shade, rest breaks, and emergency response procedures. At 95°F and above, additional “high-heat” procedures apply, including closer supervision and more frequent breaks. Plans must also address acclimatization for new workers. Indoor Heat Illness Standards

Effective in 2024, these new rules apply to enclosed areas like packing sheds and kitchens. Employers must monitor the heat index, maintain cooldown areas at 82°F or below, and provide 10-minute cooldown breaks every two hours once the temperature reaches 95°F.

#### Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

As of July 1, 2024, all employers must maintain a written plan addressing workplace violence risks. The plan must include hazard assessments, employee reporting procedures, required training, and an incident log that must be kept for five years. This can be integrated into your IIPP or kept as a

standalone program.

#### Recommendations for Growers

Cal/OSHA provides template plans for IIPP, outdoor and indoor heat illness prevention, and workplace violence prevention directly on their website. These templates are a strong starting point and can save time and effort. However, it is critical to:

- Customize the templates with site-specific information that accurately reflects your operation.
- Ensure that activities listed in the plans are realistic and consistently implemented.

Having written programs is only one part of the puzzle. The true test of compliance occurs when Cal/OSHA arrives and begins an inspection. Inspectors will not only review your paperwork, but also observe worksites, speak with employees, and assess whether your daily practices align with your written plans. Understanding how

inspections happen is essential to ensure your programs withstand real-world scrutiny.

#### What to Expect in a Cal/OSHA Inspection

Even well-prepared operations can feel uneasy when an inspector shows up. Knowing the process in advance can help reduce stress and ensure the best possible outcome.

#### Visitor Arrival

Train supervisors, forepersons, and crew leaders to politely welcome visitors and verify official identification. Investigators should be directed to the designated company contact, who will manage the inspec-



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See "SAFE" on page 15B

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From "Dairy" on page 13B

tion process.

#### The Walk-Around

An inspector will want to observe worksites, equipment, and employee practices. Think carefully about the route you take. The company team should include a management representative, a safety or HR staff member, a photographer or note-taker, and, when relevant, a shop manager or mechanic to answer technical questions.

#### Employee Interviews

Inspectors will often speak directly with employees to get a sense of the company's safety culture. These conversations are typically private. It is important to remind employees they may be asked questions, and equally important for employers to avoid any form of retaliation.

#### Document Request

Cal/OSHA will ask for written programs,

training records, and documentation of hazard correction. Having paperwork organized and easily accessible sends a strong signal that your operation is committed to safety and compliance.

#### Departure and Next Steps

Once the inspector leaves, gather your team for a debrief. Document everything that occurred, consult with legal counsel, and prepare to respond promptly to any follow-up requests.

#### Practical Steps for Stanislaus County Growers

For many smaller farms, compliance may feel overwhelming. However, practical, consistent steps can make the process manageable:

- Review and update safety programs before each season begins.
- Keep signed training records on file along

with training materials.

- Walk your worksites regularly and document hazards and fix them as soon as they are identified.
- Train supervisors and crew leaders on how to handle an inspector's arrival and what to do.
- Stay ahead of new rules, particularly indoor heat illness and workplace violence prevention.
- Involve employees in identifying hazards and suggesting solutions—this builds trust and strengthens compliance.

By taking these steps, growers can turn compliance into a practical tool for protecting workers and strengthening their businesses. A written plan is only as strong as its implementation—make sure your programs reflect the reality of your farm and equip your team to respond with confidence when Cal/OSHA comes calling.

If you need assistance developing your health and safety programs, have questions about plans, or need guidance on safety or human resources issues, the AgSafe team is here to help. We also provide training tailored to your needs.

Don't hesitate to reach out, no question is too small. Contact us at 209-526-4400 or email us at [safeinfo@agsafe.org](mailto:safeinfo@agsafe.org).



5166 South Sperry Road, Denair, CA 95316

Office Number (209) 632-7511

George Tavernas - CEO/Partner

Cell: (209)606-7570

Email: [george@calnut.com](mailto:george@calnut.com)

Brian Tavernas - General Manager/CFO

Cell: (209)489-8884

Email: [brian@calnut.com](mailto:brian@calnut.com)

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2985 Renzo Ln., Suite D  
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