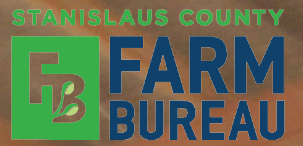
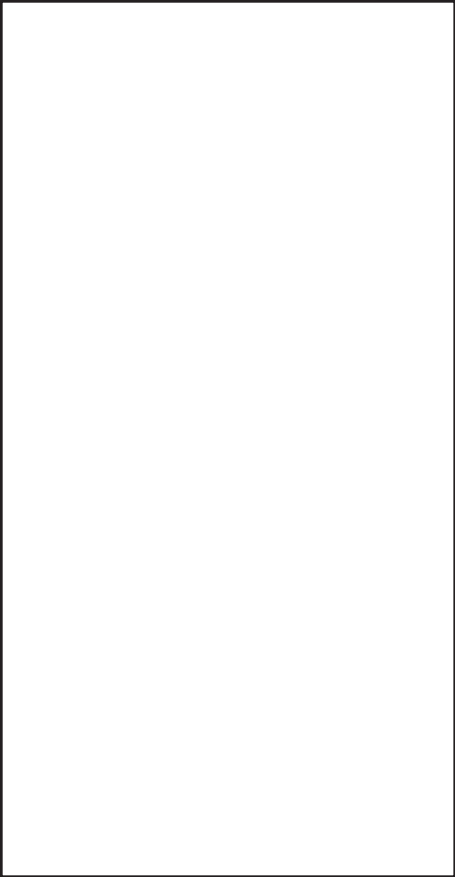


The Stanislaus Farm News

The *voice* of Stanislaus County Agriculture



For the **good** of your **food**.



Official Publication of Stanislaus
County Farm Bureau
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Dairy takes the #1 Spot, See Page 10 & 20

For the **good** of your **food**.

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FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Employment Policy

On September 1, Assembly and Senate Appropriations Committees moved several measures of concern to California agricultural employers from their respective suspense files to the Assembly and Senate floor:

SB-365 (Sen. Scott Weiner, D-San Francisco) will forbid a district court judge from staying a civil proceeding if either party appeals the finding as to whether the dispute is subject to arbitration. Staying the underlying litigation while the arbitration applicability decision is pending has been common practice, eliminating the need to litigate a dispute that will likely be found subject to arbitration. Several recent court decisions have upheld federal preemption under the Federal Arbitration Act of attempts by the Legislature to restrict arbitration. Farm Bureau opposes SB-365 because it undermines the use of arbitration, a useful tool to manage employment litigation liability in California's litigious environment. Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com

SB-616 Senator Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach) moved from the suspense file with an amendment to reduce the increased paid sick leave mandate from seven days to five days, increasing the three-day paid sick leave mandate first established by AB 1522 (L. Gonzalez) in 2013. No provision was made in SB 616 to allow employers to manage misuse of paid sick leave through requiring written verification that paid sick leave is being used for its intended purpose, limiting abusive use of leave. Farm Bureau remains opposed. Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com

AB-524 Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland) adds "family caregiver status" to the list of protected classes covered by the Fair Employment and Housing Act. Its use

is not limited to actual family members, but includes any person the employee considers to be like family, vastly broadening the circumstances under which an employee can invoke family leave rights under FEHA. This will expand the circumstances under which employers will experience FEHA-related litigation, which is already extensive. Farm Bureau opposes. Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com

AB-594 Assemblymember Brian Maienschein (D-San Diego) allows local prosecutors like district attorneys and city attorneys to enforce the Labor Code, leading to inconsistent interpretation and enforcement. AB-594 does not protect employers from double recovery under the Labor Code and the Private Attorneys General Act (PAGA). AB-594 passed the Assembly on a vote of 52-17 with eleven absences or abstentions. Farm Bureau opposes. Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com

AB-143 and SB-143 (Committee on the Budget), the 2023 budget trailer bill on various matters related to state government, includes language supported by the Newsom Administration allowing employers of goatherders (which are increasingly employed to control wildfire fuel) to pay employees a minimum monthly salary and calculate and pay overtime and double-time premiums on the same basis as employers of sheepherders. For employers of 25 or more employees, the minimum monthly salary is \$2577.48 plus \$1772.85 in required overtime pay, for total monthly compensation of \$4528.33 – or \$54,339 per year. Since nearly all (if not all) such goatherders are admitted to work in the U.S. under the H-2A temporary agricultural visa program, employers are also required to furnish housing, food, and cell phone service at no cost. A provision in a 2022 budget trailer bill established consistent treatment

of sheep- and goatherders through January 1, 2023; language in AB/SB 143 extends it to July 1, 2026 and directs the

Employment Development Department to consult with stakeholders including employers and employees on compliance with applicable wage and hour standards and provisions in the Labor Code particular to sheepherders and goatherders and report back to the Legislature. Floor action is expected in both houses before the end of the session on September 14; farmworker advocates remain opposed.

Failure to pass this language in AB/SB 143 will result in a default interpretation of the Labor Code to the effect that goatherders are subject to minimum hourly wage requirements. Grazers would be obliged to pay their goatherders straight time for the first eight hours of a workday, overtime for the next four hours, and double-time for the final six hours of the day. That will require goatherders' employers to pay them more than \$14,000 a month, hampering land owners and managers ability to afford such wildfire fuels control services, and grazers' ability to plan for the future, grow their herds, or plan for employing herders. Staff: Bryan Little; blittle@cfbf.com

SB-799, Unemployment Benefits for Strikers (Senator Anthony Portantino, D-Burbank), a late-session gut-and-amend to recycle a 2019 bill permitting employees participating in a "trade dispute" (i.e. a strike) to collect unemployment insurance benefits, passed the Assembly Insurance Committee on August 30 and was referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. SB 799 is a retread of AB 1066 (Gonzalez, 2019), which failed in the Senate. The federal law creating the federal-state

From Review on page 3

partnership funding and administering UI benefits and providing for the operations of state job service agencies like California's Employment Development Department (EDD) specifies that individuals may not collect unemployment insurance benefits if they are not available for work and ready and willing to accept offered work, which is clearly not the case with strikers who have elected to withhold their labor to gain economic leverage over their employer during a strike. This proposal raises several risks, including exacerbating the already huge \$18 billion deficit in California's state unemployment trust fund account, along with the risk that the federal government could decertify California's unemployment insurance program, meaning California would be forced to pay unemployment insurance benefits from the state's General Fund. Staff: Bryan Little, blittle@cfbf.com.

Agricultural Technology

AB-1016 , authored by Assembly member Reginald Jones Sawyer (D-Los Angeles) and sponsored by the California Farm Bureau passed from the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File unanimously with bipartisan support. The bill now proceeds to the Senate Floor, where Senator Anna Caballero (D Merced) will be the bill's floor manager. Staff: Peter Ansel pansel@cfbf.com

Air Quality

AB-985 by Assemblymember Arambula (D – Fresno) passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Farm Bureau, alongside a large coalition of agricultural stakeholders, oppose this bill. The bill was previously amended to narrow the language which would require the CARB to conduct an analysis of each emission reduction credit (ERC) identified in the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District's ledger of available emission reduction credits to determine if any credits were issued in violation of state, local, or district laws, rules, regulations, or procedures in place at the time of original issuance. The analysis must be completed by 2027 and the results will be reported to the Legislature. CAFB still has concerns with this bill and remains opposed. Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com

California Farm Bureau has joined an agricultural coalition to oppose AB-849 by

Assemblyman Garcia (D – Coachella). Current law requires the State Air Resources Board to update, at least once every 5 years, a statewide strategy to reduce emissions of toxic air contaminants and criteria air pollutants in communities affected by a high cumulative exposure burden. Current law also requires the air district and the state board to implement and enforce the measures in the community emissions reduction program consistent with their respective authority. This bill would authorize a non-elected body of community members assembled to address localized air quality issues to dictate actions of all state agencies and departments, even when the issue or remedy are unrelated to air quality. Currently, regulatory actions by agencies are publicly noticed and available for public comment. AB-617 communities, as described this bill, are able to engage with other agencies and their participation is not dependent upon the passage of AB 849. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com

CESA and Wildlife

AB 606 by Assemblymember Mathis (R – Porterville) is a California Farm Bureau sponsored bill which was placed on the Senate Appropriation's suspense file earlier this year. This bill originally aimed to remove the sunset provision on current accidental take statute. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) prohibits the taking of an endangered or candidate species. Under CESA, the Department of Fish and Wildlife may authorize the take of listed species pursuant to an incidental take permit if the take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity. The act also provides, until January 1, 2024, that the accidental take of a candidate, threatened, or endangered species resulting from an act that occurs on a farm or a ranch in the course of otherwise lawful routine and ongoing agricultural activities is not prohibited by the act, and would require a person, when an accidental take is known to occur under these circumstances, to report the take to the department within 10 days. Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee staff expressed concerns with the lack of reporting since the provision took effect in 2020. The committee proposed two amendments to address these concerns:

1. Require the Department of Fish and Wildlife to conduct outreach to commu-

nicate the reporting requirements to stakeholders;

2. Update the sunset, and extend it to January 2029.

With these amendments, the Senate Appropriations Committee had concerns with the costs to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Department has relayed that they do not foresee any additional costs in communication with stakeholders moving forward, and will use existing channels of communication. The bill passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee and moves to the Senate Floor. Staff: Katie Little, klittle@cfbf.com

Forestry and Wildfire

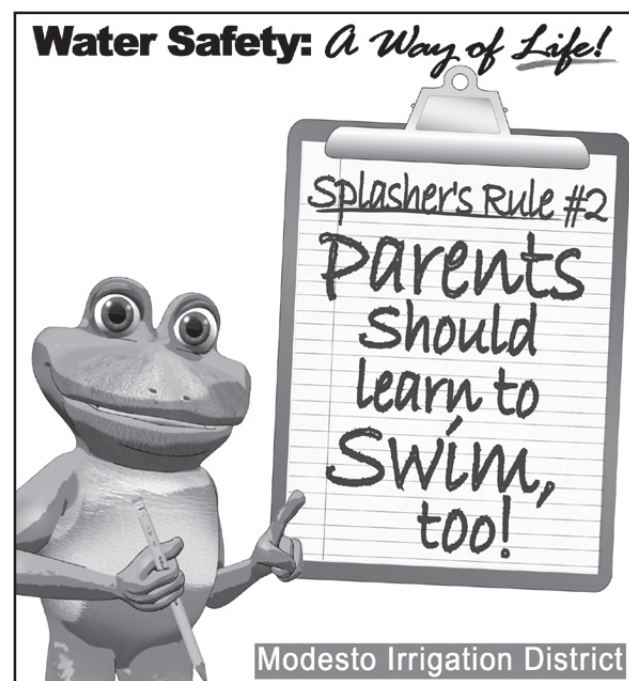
AB-297 , authored by Assemblymember Vince Fong (R-Bakersfield), passed from the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense file and heads to the Senate Floor. As previously reported the bill authorizes advanced grant payments for wildfire fuel reduction projects. Farm Bureau supports AB 297. Staff: Peter Ansel pansel@cfbf.com

Insurance

SB-505 , authored by Senator Susan Rubio (D Baldwin Park) and sponsored by the California Farm Bureau and the California Department of Insurance has been presented to the Governor for signature. Staff: Peter Ansel pansel@cfbf.com

Land Use

PPIC RELEASES ANALYSIS OF FARM SIZE IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY
On August 30, the Public Policy Institute of California released an analysis and ac-



companying dataset of farm sizes and their distributions throughout the San Joaquin Valley. It draws on 2021–22 county assessor records and 2018 land use data from the California Department of Water Resources. The dataset provides an overview of farm sizes for the entire valley and for 14 of its groundwater subbasins and compares the results on a county level with the USDA's last Agricultural Census (2017). A few key findings:

- The valley has 34,500 distinct farms, but only 600 are "large farms" (covering more than 500 acres).
- More than three-quarters (77%) of the valley's farms are small, with less than 100 acres of irrigable land. But most cropped acreage (58%) is held by large farms.
- Smaller farms are more specialized in their production and on average grow about one crop per farm, while the largest farms average around three crops.

PPIC's next blog post in this series will include an analysis of water supply pressures faced by farms of various sizes under the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cfbf.com

The Senate Agriculture Committee held a hearing named "Navigating Threats to California Agriculture." California Farm Bureau's Legal Services Division provided Senators with a briefing regarding land purchase occurring in Solano County by a business group of Silicon Valley investors (Flannery Associates). Also, Farm Bureau provided public comments at the hearing regarding members' concerns regarding the secrecy and aggressive litigation tactics deployed by Flannery Associates in their bid to acquire land in Solano County. Farm Bureau commented that while there is some relief that the purchasers are not an adversarial foreign government, the reality is a script played out again and again – NIMBY wealthy Bay Area billionaires trying to avoid housing construction where they live

in the Silicon Valley.

Through witness presentations that included US Congressman John Garamendi, there is a clear consensus that buying agriculture lands to establish a new city without talking to local government, local residents, and doing so in a cloud of secrecy has been a failed strategy for an idea that would seem to be dead before it starts. As the state invests in the Central Valley, connecting it to the Silicon Valley with high speed rail, Bay Area elites want a new city in the greater Bay Area, regardless of the sprawl that it will generate. Bulldozing over local control, and local farmers is a bad way for Flannery to launch this bad idea. You can watch the entire hearing here. Staff: Peter Ansel pansel@cfbf.com

Pesticides

CAFB's Chris Reardon and Steven Fenaroli recently participated in a two-day event (August 30-31) with our partners at the San Diego Farm Bureau with the Department of Pesticide Regulation's (DPR) Director Julie Henderson and California Food And Agricultural Undersecretary Christie Birdsong. The day and half event included tours of three farm bureau members in northern San Diego County with a reception to close the evening. The following morning a roundtable discussion took place at the San Diego Farm Bureau office to discuss the recent proposal to enact DPR's Sustainable Pest Management program. It was a productive meeting with excellent presentations about potential impacts to agriculture and we appreciate the Director and Undersecretary spending time with us to better understand our concerns. Many thanks also to Carlsbad Strawberry Company, Mellano & Company, Straub Citrus Farm and Carlsbad Flower Fields for their time as well!

AB-652 authored by Assemblymember Lee (D-San Jose) creating an Environmental Justice Committee for the Department of Pesticide Regulation passed out of the senate

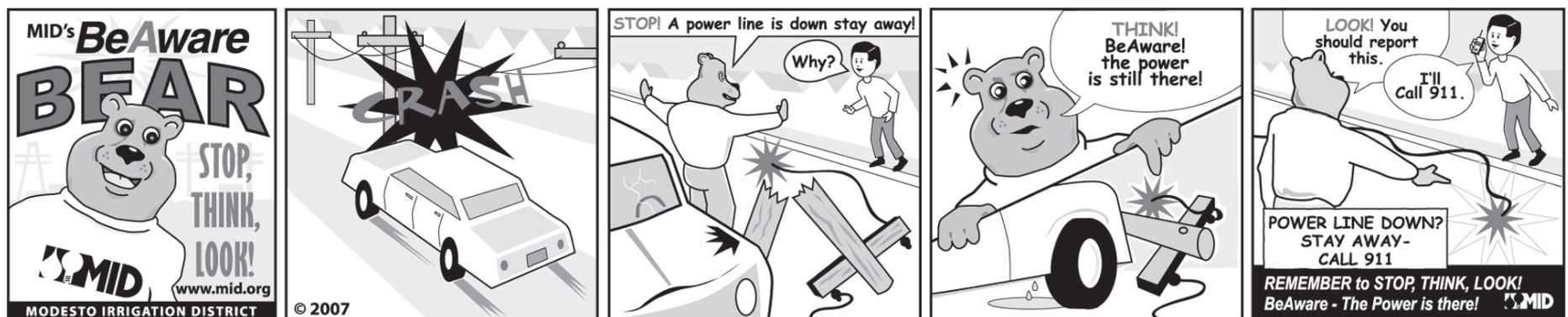
appropriations committee on a partisan 5-2 vote. It next goes to the Senate Floor where it will be voted on by the full Senate. Farm Bureau will continue to work with our agricultural coalition to oppose this legislation. Staff: Chris Reardon, creardon@cfbf.com
AB-99 authored by Assemblymember Connolly (D-San-Rafael) having to do roadside pesticide applications by Caltrans, was designated as a two-year bill. Farm Bill opposed this along with numerous other organizations as well. Staff: Chris Reardon, creardon@cfbf.com

Taxation and Fees

SB-701, authored by Senator Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger) passed from the Assembly Floor and will soon be presented to the Governor for signature. As previously reported, the bill allows counties to create a maximum registration fee of \$500 for fresh fruit and vegetable wholesalers. The bill is sponsored by the California Agriculture Commissioners and Sealers Association. Staff: Peter Ansel, pansel@cfbf.com

Water

SWRCB TO VOTE ON SALMON GOALS FOR THE LOWER SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
On Wednesday, September 6, the State Water Resources Control Board will consider whether to adopt a set of biological goals for supporting salmon in tributaries to the lower San Joaquin River (Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and Merced rivers). These include goals for salmon abundance, productivity, diversity, and population spatial extent, distribution, and structure. The goals are not regulatory, but metrics for monitoring and assessment. Once the goals are established, the board will use them to measure the effectiveness of the flow objectives and other aspects of the 2018 Bay-Delta WQCP update. Comments may be made virtually or in person, with links for submitting comment cards on the meeting agenda. Staff: Alex Biering, abiering@cfbf.com



FREE ADS FOR FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

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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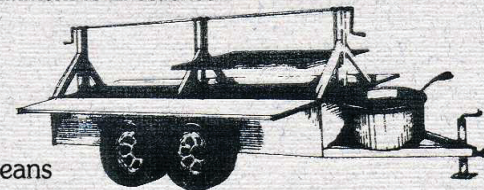
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Feed/Farm Supplies

- **A.L. Gilbert**
Keys 632-2333
- **Blue Mtn. Minerals**
Columbia, 533-0127
- **Conlin Supply**
Oakdale 847-8977
- **NuWest Milling LLC**
Hughson 883-1163

Equipment & Repair

- **Acosta & Daughters LLC**
Waterford 872-4815
- **Belkorp Ag LLC, John Deere Dealer**
Modesto 538-3831
- **Coit & Hewes LLC**
Modesto 985-0559
- **Garton Tractor Inc.**
Turlock 632-3931

- **G&F Ag Services**
Escalon 599-8911
- **Hotsy**
Modesto 578-3925
- **Pacific Distributing Inc.**
Hughson 883-4032
- **RAYCO**
Modesto 529-8984

- **Turlock Auto Parts**
Turlock 634-4968
- **Turlock Dairy & Refrigeration**
Turlock 667-6455

Farms/Dairies

- **Ahlem Foothill Farm**
Turlock 874-2477
- **Bobby Yamamoto Farms**
Westley 835-1750
- **Braden Farms**
Hughson 883-4061
- **Carol Morrett**
Hughson 537-6658
- **Catherine Phipps Walden**
Ballico 667-2409

- **D & M Ag.,**
Denair 667-7783
- **David Lemos**
Modesto 541-3131
- **Donlon Farms Inc.**
Patterson 892-8543
- **E Roen Ranches**
Winnemucca 614-5944
- **Fire Lake Jersey**
Hilmar 632-2924
- **Frank Dutra**
Oakdale (209) 402-0796

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Waterford 522-4302
- **G3 Enterprises**
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- **Hilltop Ranch, Inc.**
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- **Kline Ranch**
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Modesto 581-2571

- **Melvin Wheeler**
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- **Marchy Dairy**
Ceres 537-0630
- **McManis Farms Inc**
Modesto 541-9345
- **Melo Farms LLC**
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- **Michael Van Andel**
Modesto 531-4667

- **Nick Blom**
Modesto 522-6140
- **Redwood Ranches LLC**
Hughson 883-2603
- **Robert Gioletti**
Turlock 667-6024
- **Ron Martella Farms**
Hughson 883-4819
- **Schut Ranches**
Patterson 892-6226

- **Starkey & Lucas Farming & Cattle**
Ceres 484-0671
- **Stewart Johnson**
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- **Victor M Lopes**
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- **Weaver Bros**
Crows Landing 854-6716
- **Wyeth Dairy Inc.,**
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Farm Management

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- **Grover Farm Management**
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- **Andreini & Company**
Modesto 512-3698
- **Arrowhead Insurance Agency**
Modesto 524-6157
- **Crivelli Ins & Fin Sv Inc**
Turlock, 668-3319
- **DiBuduo & DeFendis**
Fresno 557-2759

- **GDI Insurance Agency**
Turlock 991-2929
- **Giddings Corby Hynes Inc**
Modesto 526-3110
- **Hoobler Insurance Services**
Patterson 601-0418
- **LG Crop Ins.,**
Turlock 262-8140

- **Nicholson Insurance Inc**
Modesto 526-2697
- **Rico Pfitzer Pires Insurance Agency**
Gustine 854-2000
- **Schut Insurance Services Inc**
Patterson 892-6226
- **Stewart Kriese Ins Agency**
Oakdale, 847-8025

- **Toste Insurance Services Inc**
Modesto 338-3585
- **Western Valley Insurance Associates**
Turlock 634-9031
- **Winton Ireland Strom & Green**
Turlock, Modesto, Livingston and Hilmar 667-0995

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

- **Alexandria Perrin LLC**
Modesto 216-7027
- **Casey Moving System**
Ceres 531-9010
- **Clark Pest Control**
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- **Cover Specialty Services**
Modesto 988-3864
- **Prone for Hire**
Modesto 818-4109

- **Modesto Nuts Baseball Club**
Modesto 572-4487
- **R & J Avila**
Hilmar 678-1723
- **Rocha's Valley Enterprises**
Oakdale 581-1473
- **Quality Rodent Control, Inc.**
Modesto 225-4124

Non-Profit

- **Almond Alliance**
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- **Almond Board of California**
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- **Central Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**
Modesto 789-5123
- **Modesto Chamber of Commerce**
Modesto 577-5757
- **Oakdale Chamber of Commerce**
Oakdale 847-2244

Nurseries/Horticulture

- **Blumen Flower Farm**
Modesto 648-8995
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Oakdale 845-8733
- **California Transplants**
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Oakdale 351-7092

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- **Adian Equine**
Oakdale 847-8258
- **Dairy Veterinary Services**
Escalon 551-3949

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Jamie Johansson, President of California Farm Bureau


Most of us are no stranger to the cost of insurance. In my house, we'll soon be adding a new driver to our vehicle policies and the upcoming increase in premium cost is never far from our minds as my oldest quickly approaches his 16th birthday. The average person insures their house, vehicles, recreational vehicles, medical health and in many cases, even their untimely death. We assume the cost to insure our buildings and property, our crops and the products we produce, ourselves and the men and women who work with us. We pay to insure against weather, crime, injury, disaster, flood and any number of additional eventualities that could take place in the calculated risk market.

As farmers and ranchers, we know and understand that insurance is a cost of doing business. As consumers and citizens of the state of California, we also acknowledge and appreciate the protections under the state constitution and Prop 103 that require transparency in rate modeling and fairness in determining what those costs are.


Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a business climate right now where insurance providers are choosing to simply leave the California market instead of doing business in a space where they claim out of date and inadequate rate modeling and slow decisions from the California Department of Insurance on rate adjustments. All of this is made worse due to high building costs (something we all know) and unusually high jury verdicts. The California Department of Insurance has little incentive to approve higher rates so they are currently in a good old fashioned game of chicken and we farmers are right in the middle.

As many of you know firsthand, this development leaves many farmers and ranchers with an insurance crisis. How do you do business in a state where you can't obtain insurance? The FAIR Plan was established as the insurer of last resort to provide some risk management in that situation. The FAIR Plan offers some amount of coverage for those deemed most at risk. The FAIR Plan is not intended to be and cannot be considered a long-term solution to the lack of competitive market options;

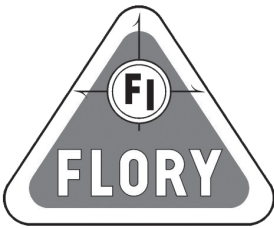
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however, for many it's the only option unless something changes.

I'm proud to say Farm Bureau has been working on those changes for some time. As one of the only representatives from agriculture of a coalition of business groups, Peter Ansel in our Governmental Affairs Division seeks out solutions that will help farmers and ranchers have access to insurance through a healthy business model, that respects and adheres to the consumer protections and transparency in rate modeling.

The media has reported that legislative leaders, the Governor's office, insurers, and the Department of Insurance are meeting and actively looking to find agreement with all stakeholders to return competition to the California insurance market. We cannot know how the structure of that agreement will ultimately affect policyholders, except to know that rates are not going down. Farm Bureau will continue advocating for a healthy business climate with healthy competition and appropriate consumer protections, because we know this is the only way our farmers and ranchers can continue leading the nation in the production of the highest quality food and fiber from the Golden State.

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2022 Stanislaus County Crop Report

By: Amy Lomeli, Stanislaus County Agricultural Inspector, Crop Report Team

Similar to previous years, 10 commodities are responsible for 83% of the gross agricultural value in the county. However, we did have a few shake ups this year. Most notably in the number 1 and 2 positions.

Crossing the billion-dollar mark, milk climbed 329 million from 2021-surpassing Almonds to reclaim the number one position for the first time in a decade- and representing 30% of the county's agricultural value last year. California joined the industry-initiated Federal Milk Marketing Order in 2018, which stabilizes and develops minimum prices for producers based on supply, demand, and other market conditions. California is the largest milk producing state nationwide, with Stanislaus County third in milk production statewide. As part of the heart of dairy country, Stanislaus is home to well over a dozen milk processors-including a large one for goat milk. Unfortunately, the looming dark cloud was the cost of production-especially feed.

Resigned to the #2 position is Almonds at 753 million, a 31% decrease, primarily due to tough market conditions and less export demand. Carryover from the record-breaking 2020 crop had a domino effect on the last two years' prices. Growers-especially in colder regions of our county-suffered losses from a freeze disaster during bloom. Bearing acreage contracted as old orchards were pulled due to lower production and especially water cost and availability. Younger, denser-plantings of water-thrifty orchards are still coming into production, and we expect to see acreage rebound in the next few years. Stanislaus County ranks 2nd in almond production statewide. Despite last year's decrease in almond value, Milk and Almonds make up 50% of the agricultural value in Stanislaus County.

In #3 is Poultry, up 15% to 383 million dollars. This condensed category includes most notably broiler chickens & turkeys but also lesser-known squab. Poultry remains a strong category of production in our county. Early in the year, pandemic-related labor and supply chain issues affected the industry, but the biggest story was widespread Hi-Pathogen Avian Influenza that

decreased flocks nationwide.

At #4, Cattle & Calves increased 19% in value to 193 million dollars. Fewer dairy cows moved into the terminal market due to better milk pricing and drove up the price of replacement heifers. Drought throughout cattle country in the west made it necessary to sell off animals earlier, and lighter, or slim down herds due to lack of adequate rangeland feed and as supplemental feed costs soared.

#5 Fruit & Nut Nursery Products. These increased 20% in value from 2021 to 175 million. Orders continued to go out for fruit and nut nursery stock, hinting at grower optimism for the end of the drought and better market conditions for permanent crops like almonds, grapes and peaches. Stanislaus County is home to several distinguished nurseries that send product throughout the state, country and even internationally.

At #6 Silage crops were not far behind. Increasing 35% to 173 million. An extension of the dairy story, silage was especially pricy last year. Along with water scarcity, growers saw increases in fuel and fertilizer costs due to the war in Ukraine, which were reflected in the increased value of this commodity.

In tandem with almond production, Almond Pollination moved to 7th place, despite dropping in value 4% to 87 million. Hive prices were up slightly last year and growers were feeling the pressure to cut inputs due to market conditions and increased costs. Many growers placed fewer hives in self pollinating varieties, or in the case of young or non-bearing orchards, few or none at all.

Eggs increased in value a whopping 111% from the previous year due to scarcity. As with the #3 commodity, poultry, Avian Influenza created less supply. Further pressuring the supply and demand equation is that California is an egg-deficit state, consuming more eggs than are produced here. Cage-free requirements due to Proposition 12 led to fewer eggs produced in other states meeting California's requirements, and making eggs here more expensive.

Like Silage, the #9 commodity, Hay, increased dramatically in value - up over 50% from last year to 68 million. As mentioned earlier, anything used to feed livestock in-

creased in value due to drought and water and fuel costs.

As predicted by Supervisor Chiesa last year, Tomatoes round out the top 10. Up 57% in value thanks to early and record high contracts, growers planted nearly 2,000 more acres in 2022. The majority of tomatoes grown in Stanislaus County are mechanically-harvested processing tomatoes. Compared to some other row crops, processing tomatoes require less labor, fertilizer, and other petroleum inputs, making them a lucrative choice last year.

As a final note on this year's top 10, although nearly 40 categories are reported in the annual report, 10 commodities are responsible for over 80% of the county's value. Milk, Almonds and Poultry garner 60% of the value. Many of these commodities are intertwined-whether feed crops for livestock, or nursery products for permanent plantings like almonds which then tie back to almond pollination. Although values were up overall this year, a long-standing commodity is missing from the top 10.

Walnuts have been one of Stanislaus County's Top 10 commodities for over 2 decades. Last year, a sharp decline in value was due to trade challenges and worldwide oversupply. To add insult to injury, unseasonably late, prolonged hot temperatures affected quality. Walnut values diminished by 61% and knocked them to number 13 in 2022.

Stanislaus County Farm Highlights



We have **6,374** producers operating **3,621** farms covering **722,546** acres.

There are **510** producers under the age of **35** operating **111,160** acres.



410 of our farms have a producer under the age of **35**.

There are **1,439** new or beginning farmers operating **124,447** acres.



We have **998** farms operated by a new or beginning farmer.

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

Note: The Agriculture Census is conducted every five years.



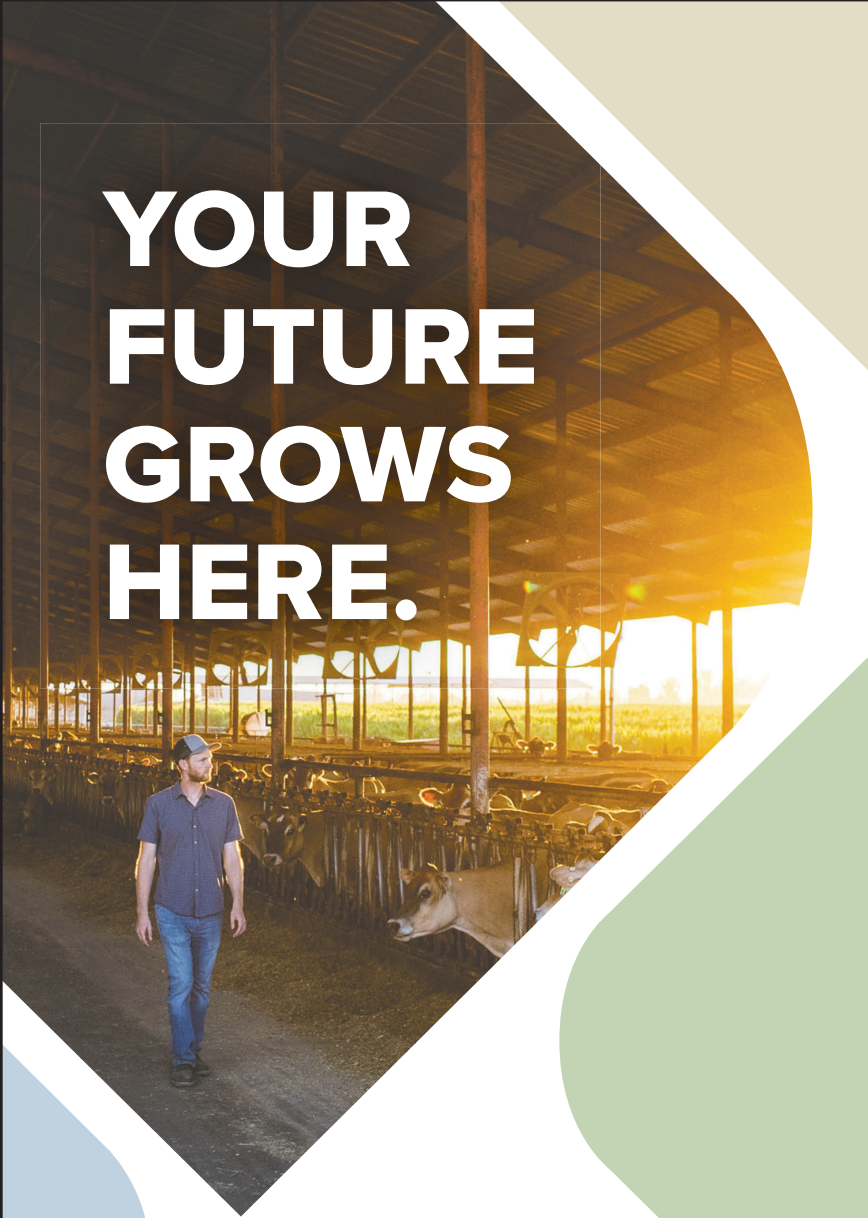
TOP TEN

	COMMODITY	% OF 2022 TOTAL VALUE	2022 VALUE	2021 VALUE
#1	MILK	30%	\$1,130,572,000	\$801,492,000
#2	ALMONDS	20%	\$752,971,000	\$1,084,744,000
#3	POULTRY	10%	\$383,168,000	\$334,002,000
#4	CATTLE & CALVES	5%	\$192,802,000	\$161,971,000
#5	FRUIT & NUT NURSERY STOCK	5%	\$175,035,000	\$145,577,000
#6	SILAGE	5%	\$173,025,000	\$128,631,000
#7	ALMOND POLLINATION	2%	\$87,401,000	\$91,483,000
#8	EGGS	2%	\$84,198,000	\$39,840,000
#9	HAY	2%	\$68,109,000	\$45,376,000
#10	TOMATOES	1%	\$53,478,000	\$34,061,000
	TOTAL TOP 10	83%	\$3,100,759,000	\$2,867,177,000
	ALL OTHER COMMODITIES	17%	\$625,723,000	\$678,495,000
	TOTAL ALL COMMODITIES	100%	\$3,726,482,000	\$3,545,672,000



TOP TEN

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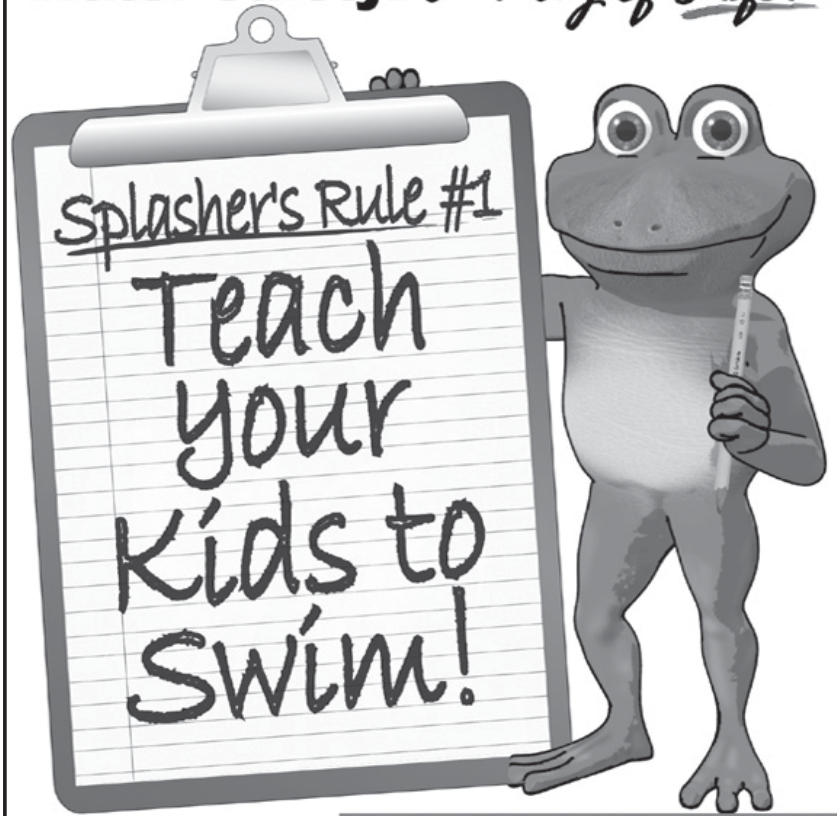
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Increased Contracted Production Forecasted for Processing Tomato Industry

Source: Brian German, AgNet West

California's processing tomato industry is gearing up for a strong season, with contracted production forecasted to reach 12.9 million tons, averaging 50.8 tons per acre. This projection represents a substantial 23 percent increase over last year's contracted production of 10.5 million tons. The figure released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service also represents a two percent uptick from the May forecast.

One notable factor contributing to this positive outlook is the projected harvested acreage of tomatoes grown under contract, which stands at 254,000 acres. This figure reflects a significant 13 percent jump from the previous year, driven in part by unseasonably wet weather dur-

ing the winter and spring. These conditions initially delayed planting by several weeks, but with favorable factors such as record-high tomato prices and ample water availability, contracted acreage experienced substantial growth.

Harvest activities got off to a slower start than usual, commencing in mid-July, approximately two weeks behind the average schedule. However, if dry weather persists, the harvest is expected to continue well into October. As the industry enters its peak harvest period, canneries are diligently managing logistics to ensure the consistent delivery of ripe tomatoes to processing plants. Notably, the Processing Tomato Advisory Board's data reveals a 16 percent decrease in shipments through August 26, 2023, compared to the same period in the previous year. This decline can be attributed to the late crop start. However, expectations are for shipments to

from the past five years.

California's processing tomato sector is experiencing a positive upswing in contracted production and harvested acreage. While weather-related challenges initially hindered the planting season, favorable market conditions and water availability have fueled growth in the industry. As the harvest progresses, stakeholders are optimistic about surpassing shipment numbers from recent years, highlighting the resilience and adaptability of California's tomato producers.

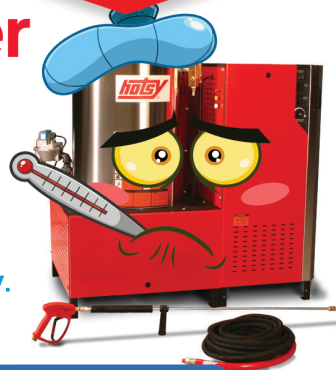


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YF&R Group Gather in August

On Thursday, August 10th our YF&R members had the fortunate opportunity to hear from two experts in vastly different occupations within the industry.

Michael Marsh, VP-Senior Loan Officer at Yosemite Farm Credit, spoke to our members about several ways aspiring young farmers and ranchers can enter the industry. He provided education in the areas of obtaining first-time farmer loans as well as understanding the credit approval process and exactly what takes place behind the scenes relating to loan underwriting and credit analysis.

Shortly after, Bill Power, Vice President of Power Services, Inc., gave a thorough presentation regarding pump and well efficiencies and how those effect irrigation practices for farming operations. He further educated our members on best practices regarding pumps and wells while diving into the looming effects SGMA will have on farming operations located in white areas.

Continued education for our YF&R members plays a large role of importance in order to provide members with up-to-date information and best practices ultimately providing aspiring young farmers and ranchers with the knowledge they need to start their own operation while establishing an understanding for all sectors that fall in the agriculture industry.

We're thankful industry members like Michael Marsh and Bill Power dedicate their time to educating the future of the industry simultaneously creating synergies between multiple generations of farmers and ranchers.

~ Jace Neugebauer, YF&R Chair



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Zippy Duvall, AFBF President

The American Farm Bureau is the Voice of Agriculture thanks to our active grassroots members speaking up on the issues affecting their farms. The landscape of agriculture is always changing but what doesn't change is our ability to make a difference on our farms and in our rural communities by stepping up and speaking up. Our nation's leaders and lawmakers know that when Farm Bureau speaks, we are speaking directly on behalf of farm-

ers and ranchers. Every policy that we advocate for can be traced back to farmers and ranchers raising that issue at the local, state, and then national level. All over this country, in 2,800 counties, the Farm Bureau policy development process has begun. Our county Farm Bureaus are grassroots in action, and I am thankful for the hard work and dedication you put into shaping our great organization.

From farm bill to trade, from regulatory reform to food safety, your American Farm Bureau team is working on your behalf on a wide range of issues, and we count on you to provide the policy direction because we believe you know best what works and what doesn't on your farm.


Our policy book is a living document that our grassroots members regularly update to address the latest issues we face on our farms and ranches. In January at the annual AFBF Convention, delegates from across the country, from all types of agriculture and all sizes of farms and ranches, will gather to update that

book and set the policies for the new year. There are times when our team in Washington will see an issue arise, and we will ask for direction from our grassroots members to ensure we can continue to lead the way in advocating for you. An issue we're hearing a lot of buzz around right now is artificial intelligence (AI). Almost overnight it seems, AI is affecting every aspect of life, from our professions to our daily tasks, and it has the potential to transform every industry.

In fact, we are already seeing the significant potential for agriculture. AI can transform the way farmers and ranchers approach crop management and sustainability practices. For example, AI can quickly project levels of pesticides to apply, monitor the health of crops and even run automated machinery. Its level of efficiency and utility could take agriculture into a new frontier.


But we must be sure to look before we leap with this technology. There is currently very little guidance governing AI and lawmakers have not established ground rules, so companies and individuals are navigating on their own.

A looming question that must be addressed around AI is, "What will this tool mean for data privacy?" For many of us, the way we record information has long changed from a small notebook in our pocket to spreadsheets, data apps and software. We use farm data not only to manage our business, but also to make planting decisions, care for crops and livestock, and achieve sustainability goals. And while AI could simplify much of that and save hours along the way, many current AI systems collect data without a guarantee of privacy. No tool should place the sensitive information collected from farms and ranches at risk. At Farm Bureau, privacy is one of our top concerns and that is why we brought AI forward, asking for direction from our grassroots members via the policymaking process. We want to hear from farmers and ranchers across the country about how this and many other topics affect their livelihoods so we can fulfill our mission to be the voice of agriculture.



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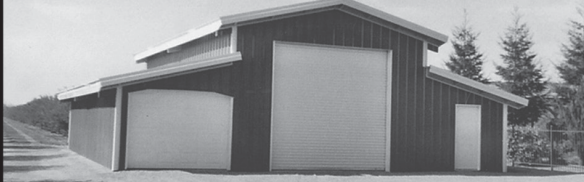
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California Walnut Production Expectations Up From 2022

Source: Brian German, AgNet West

California's 2023 walnut production is expected to reach 790,000 tons, marking a five percent increase compared to 2022. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), walnut production was measured at only 752,000 tons last year. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service reports that the forecast is based on 385,000 bearing acres, which is four percent less than the estimated 400,000 acres in 2022.

The data comes from the 2023 Walnut Objective Measurement Survey, which analyzed 675 blocks with two sample trees each. The survey results show an average nut set per tree of 1,004, indicating a two percent rise from last year's average of 981. Additionally, the survey found that 99.2 percent of the nuts had sound kernels in-shell.

The positive outlook can be attributed to favorable weather conditions. A cold winter ensured sufficient chill hours for the walnut trees, while a wet winter and spring helped restore soil moisture in walnut orchards throughout the state. The result has been an expected improvement in nut quality compared to the previous year. Preliminary figures also indicate that last year's crop has effectively been sold out.

"Last year, we were facing a completely different scenario with 130,000 tons in inventory brought on by the lingering effects of the COVID-impacted global marketplace and a record heat wave last September that negatively impacted the entire crop, which led to lethargic sales and record-low grower returns," said Robert Verloop, CEO and Executive Director for the California Walnut Commission.

The 2023 Walnut Objective Measurement Survey was carried out officially from July 22 to August 25. A total of 1,350 trees from 675 orchards were sampled, with enumerators randomly selecting two trees in each block. The survey, funded by the California Walnut Board, estimates a confidence interval of 715,000 to 865,000 tons for the 2023 walnut production, bringing some optimism to the state's walnut industry.



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Plan ahead to help keep your crop on schedule

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Ensuring you have the right products and tools to raise a bountiful crop is a year-round effort. Success takes attention to what you need at the farm gate all the way to the world marketplace for things like herbicide and fertilizer.

There are always risks in raising a crop, and some of them are out of our control. But you can take steps to mitigate the risk of your crops falling short of peak yield by having the right crop protection products when and where you need them.

Get organized and create your plan That effort starts with being organized and creating a plan for what your crops will need, even if it's months in advance. And with lingering product supply availability issues, it's a good idea to develop a Plan A,

Plan B and so forth.

"Mistakes we make with crop inputs from planting on can negatively impact yield. Get organized, double-check your inventory, read all product labels and make sure you received what you ordered for the whole crop year," said Nationwide Agronomy Specialist, CCA and farmer Derek Hommer. "If you have any gaps in things like seed, fuel, chemical or fertilizer, be ready to adjust your plan to make sure you're not losing yield potential."

Don't get lax after planting Getting your crop in the ground in the spring is the top priority. But don't let it take your full attention. Though that's easier said than done, this is another area where good planning helps. Other early-season fieldwork can sometimes take a backseat to planting, especially when weather tightens its timeframe. As you develop your crop year plan, make sure you account for every job.

"With so many important tasks requiring attention to detail, it can be easy to get wrapped up in planting and fall behind in other areas. This is where

strong preparation comes in," Hommer said. "When you have the inputs for that next step lined up and equipment ready to go, you can more seamlessly move from task to task."

Time is always tight in the busy planting and early fieldwork timeframe. The same is true both your own farm's workforce and any custom operators you hire. "Stay in good communication with those doing work for or in your operation. If you are hiring custom work, those doing the work will be busy as well," Hommer added. "Give them some lead time to help them manage their workloads."

Stay on top of potential field issues Once your crop is in the ground and your attention focuses on early-season field operations like fertilizer and herbicide applications, make sure you're staying on top of any potential issues in the field so you can act quickly when specific agronomic needs arise. Being proactive with crop scouting helps identify problems early and enables you to quickly secure the products you need to solve them.

"Once your crops are planted, you need to be thinking about how to keep that yield potential as high as possible. The best way to do that is by diligently crop scouting. Keep an eye out for nutrient deficiencies, weed competition, insect damage and disease pathogens," Hommer said. "When you identify a problem, lean on your trusted advisors to help you tackle it. Keep in mind this sort of team approach requires good communication, from planning to execution."

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Food and Farm News

Despite delayed harvest, California pear growers are optimistic

California Bartlett pear growers say they are seeing a good crop of high-quality fruit, even though a cold spring and late bloom delayed harvest by about two weeks. Lake County pear grower Pat Scully, general manager and owner of Finley-based Scully Packing Co., which packs and ships 35% to 40% of the state's Bartlett crop, said he is pleased by the results he is seeing. He said the fruit is "sized nicely" and harvest looks promising. Harvest is ongoing in the state's two main growing regions, the Sacramento River Delta and Lake and Mendocino counties.

Canning, fresh peaches see production increases

Harvest continues for the state's cling peaches for canning and freestone peaches for the fresh market, with estimates of good crops that will exceed last year's production. Rich Hudgins, chief executive officer of the Sacramento-based California Canning Peach Association, said this year's harvest will likely exceed the preseason estimate of 212,000 tons. That's up from 204,440 tons in 2022. In fresh-market peaches, the state's estimated freestone peach production is forecast to be 260,000 tons, up from 240,000 tons in 2022, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Vast rural land purchases in Solano County stir concerns at hearing

Farmers and their advocates say the state should seek to protect agricultural resources and open space amid concerns raised over a company buying large swaths of farmland in Solano County. At the state Capitol last week, the state Senate Agriculture Committee held a panel discussion on "navigating threats to California agriculture." The discussion was inspired by a venture known as Flannery Associates LLC. Since 2018, the group backed by Silicon Valley billionaires has amassed 400 parcels spanning nearly 55,000 acres of agricultural-zoned land near Travis Air Force Base.

California Senator introduces legislation to expand disaster relief access

U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla has announced legislation to improve disaster relief to help specialty crop farmers recover from catastrophic events. Along with the bill's co-author Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., Padilla introduced the Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act. The legislation waives adjusted gross income restrictions that prevent some farmers from receiving disaster relief under U.S. Department of Agriculture programs. Padilla said the measure could help California growers who produce high-value specialty crops but are saddled with high land costs and escalating expenses.

A new California avocado, Luna UCR, readies for its market debut

A new avocado, developed by the University of California Avocado Breeding Program, is about to hit the world market.

The Luna UCR avocado will complement the widely known Hass avocado. According to UC researchers, the Luna variety grows on a tree of about half the size while producing approximately the same yield per tree as the Hass variety. The original Lunas were planted in Camarillo and advanced trials were conducted in Tulare, Orange, San Diego and Ventura counties.

Researchers: Chemical that can harm crops increasing in forests

University of California researchers say satellite data is revealing increasing levels of nitrogen dioxide in remote forest areas of the state. The chemical can harm plants and crop yields. While short-lived in the atmosphere, it contributes to ozone and particulate pollutants, which can cause respiratory issues and asthma. Researchers say wildfire and soil emissions are contributing reasons for the increase in nitrogen dioxide levels. Their findings



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from satellite data were published in the journal Environmental Research Letters.

Grant awards to support climate-smart demonstration projects

University of California Cooperative Extension scientists will be partnering with regional farms to demonstrate climate-smart agricultural practices. The project, to be led by the UC Agricultural and Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program, recently received a nearly \$2 million funding award from the UC office of the President. The effort will strengthen the California Farm Demonstration Network and support regional farms in practices such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, composting, hedgerow planting and optimized irrigation.

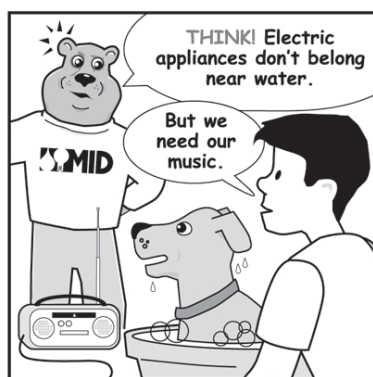
USDA announces \$800 million investment in rural infrastructure

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced an \$800 million investment to help rural cooperatives and utilities improve infrastructure and increase electric grid reliability. The funding will also provide clean water and sanitary wastewater systems in rural areas. The USDA said the program will benefit communities in California, 35 other states and two U.S. territories. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said, "Powering people with modern infrastructure creates good-paying jobs and supports opportunities for people to build brighter futures."



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AG FACTS

Stanislaus County Rank in State Ag Production

- 1st** In Squab
- 2nd** In Almonds, Apiary, Apricots, Cherries, Other Eggs, & Sweet Potatoes
- 3rd** In Corn & Cow Milk
- 4th** In Horticulture, Chicken Eggs, Peaches, Pasture, & Misc. Silage

U.S. STATE Ag Values Compared to Stanislaus COUNTY Ag Values

Stanislaus County Ranks Higher Than 18 US States

1	California	51,290,214,000
2	Iowa	34,917,530,000
3	Nebraska	26,529,508,000
4	Texas	24,785,523,000
5	Minnesota	21,822,631,000
6	Illinois	21,700,564,000
7	Kansas	21,300,135,000
8	Indiana	14,213,689,000
9	North Carolina	13,389,587,000
10	Wisconsin	12,824,537,000
11	Missouri	12,251,892,000
12	South Dakota	11,886,704,000
13	Ohio	10,985,796,000
14	Arkansas	10,396,021,000
15	Washington	10,137,150,000
16	Georgia	9,553,253,000
17	Michigan	9,548,797,000

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