



THE LOCAL VOICE FOR OUR FARMERS, RANCHERS AND DAIRY PRODUCERS SINCE 2013

VALLEYAGVOICE.COM

VOLUME 12 • ISSUE 3 • MARCH 2022

# Is California's Water Strategy Wrong?

By Scott Hamilton  
President, Hamilton Resource Economics

Talk to folks in the biggest cities in California, and the answer to the California's water shortage problem is simple—remove 500,000 acres of almonds in the San Joaquin Valley. But how much sense does that make?

With a growing population, the world needs food—better quality food, high in protein. And people want that food produced locally, safely, and delivered fresh. That is what California agriculture does! When considering the variety of crop and livestock products and the efficiency of production, the agricultural industry in California has no equal in the world. The Central Valley of California is not just a national asset, it is one of the world's most unique resources.

The Valley is a food producing powerhouse, but it is more than that. It is a place where people live and work, and where people have come for generations to find a better life for themselves and their families. Of the more than 7,500 almond farms in California, more than 90% are owned and operated by family growers who live on their land and plan to pass it on to their children. Nearly 70% of California almond farms are 100 acres or less. The removal of 500,000 acres of almonds would result in the loss of many small family farms. Beyond the farm gate, the communities of the Valley depend on agriculture to sustain the local economy, to generate jobs, and to provide tax revenues. 110,000 people are employed directly and indirectly in the almond industry. A loss of 500,000 acres is a loss of 44,000 jobs.

Many Californians are concerned about climate change. The basics tell us that more photosynthesizing plants equals eliminating more CO<sub>2</sub>. The idea of eliminating 120 million almond trees would be counterintuitive. The fight against climate involves multiple strategies, and agriculture has a role in that fight.

There is a tendency to dismiss the importance of almond exports. The Central Valley has an incredibly unique combination of climate, soils, and water resources. Very few other places in the world are suitable for growing almonds, and as a result, California produces 80% of the world's supply. The thought that the United States has enough, and there is no need to supply others, depicts a very entitled perspective. Fortunately, the coffee producers of the world do

not have the same perspective. But of course, there is no ban on exports—if almond acreage is reduced, almond prices will increase, affecting all consumers.

The economic reality is that America has a balance of trade problem. Since the 1990s, the United States has been importing more than it has been exporting. Deficits in the balance of trade can lead to a fall in the value of the exchange rate; meaning that foreign goods become more expensive. It can also cause the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates leading to reduced investment, output and employment. America should be encouraging exports.

The free market is an extraordinarily efficient way of allocating resources to produce the goods that people want and need. However, poorly informed government regulations can get in the way. The problem is not that there are too many almonds in California, but that the water supplies are not being regulated appropriately. The Public Policy Institute of

See **WATER STRATEGY** on PAGE 19

# Fixing The Weakest Link in The Agriculture Supply Chain



Cargo and container ships waiting at the Port of Los Angeles during supply chain crisis. (Photo: MSPhotographic/Shutterstock.com)

S. Aaron Hegde, PhD, Chair and Professor,  
Department of Economics, CSUB

The pandemic has severely disrupted the world economy, especially the agriculture sector. It exacerbated an already tenuous situation within the supply-chain—the part of the distribution from farm to fork. A recent UC Davis study estimated that supply-chain logjams, especially at California ports, led to a loss of approximately \$2.1 in export sales just in the five months from May to September of 2021. The study also found that the three California ports—Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Oakland—are among the least efficient in the world. Finally, the study estimated that 8 out of 10 containers return empty to Asia, rather than carry agricultural exports.

How did we get here? To put it in simple terms, it is a matter of supply and demand—too much demand, not enough supply in the right location. The nation's crumbling infrastructure contributed to this imbalance, which was exacerbated by the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, the trucking industry, an integral part of the supply-chain, had increasingly aging drivers. As the pandemic spread, many drivers had to be out sick, reducing the number of trucks available to transfer commodities from ports to points within the country. Rather than wait for trucks to fill their empty containers with agricultural commodities, the shipping lines chose to return to Asia with empty containers. Given the shortage of shipping containers and the increased demand for them from Asia, due to the increased consumption by home-bound U.S. consumers, the ocean-liners found the

speed of returning to Asia more profitable. Average costs of shipping a twenty-foot equivalent container (TEU) from Asia to North America increased from approximately \$4,000 per TEU, to almost \$20,000 per TEU. So, every day a ship was delayed returning to Asia, would cost them a lot of money. It also did not help that for the first time in years, a ship had to wait to dock at California ports. At one point in October of 2021, there were 73 cargo ships waiting to dock at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Under normal operations container ships are docked within the hour of arrival, rather than staying adrift for days. Pre-pandemic, it took on average of 71 days for a container to leave a factory in China, arrive in the US, and return to China. However, since the pandemic, this now takes more than 149 days,

See **WEAKEST LINK** on PAGE 3

Valley Ag Voice LLC  
1412 17th Street, Suite 407  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

PRSR-STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit 88  
Buena Park, CA

## Western Growers Receives \$750,000 Grant for New AgTechX Ed Initiative

By Melissa A. Nagel  
Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) recently awarded Western Growers a \$750,000 grant to expand their Next-Gen Agriculture program here in California. The grant is part of HR133, also known as CDFA's 2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and will be used to improve agriculture curricula in California's two- and four-year colleges and universities over the next four years. The grant is projected to benefit approximately 2,800 students and over 300 professors during that time.



See **WESTERN GROWERS GRANT** on PAGE 7





# FARM BUREAU NEWS

The United Voice of Kern County's Farming Community



## President's Message

**By Patty Poire**  
**President, Kern**  
**County Farm Bureau**

Hopefully you read my last month's article about the receipt of the

Department of Water Resources (DWR) review letter. It was received January 28th with the expected determination of "incomplete," due to DWR requiring more information. Now comes the 180 days of working through the deficiencies indicated in the letter which means working with all the water districts' boards and managers as well as the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies' (GSA) boards and managers. At the Kern County Farm Bureau meetings, I have stated that my expectation was to obtain an incomplete and not an inadequate. This gives the Kern subbasin an opportunity to improve the Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) since those plans were developed two years ago under ridiculous time constraints and missing data. Of course, the 180 days is also a huge time constraint, but the knowledge of the basin from back then to today is tremendous. Not to say that there is more to learn, but the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) isn't new and unexplored either. For at least four years, SGMA has been in full implementation status. This started from the establishment of the GSAs and the submittals of the GSPs to where we are now, working towards providing additional information to overcome the deficiencies.

You may ask what that means for the agricultural industry, and I would say that it doesn't just impact the agricultural industry because, SGMA is about all water extractors (domestic, industry, government, water providers, agriculture). What it does mean is that agriculture is one of the largest users of water, with the environment close behind. Having a seat at the table to work through the deficiencies is vital. SGMA is about balancing the demand with the supply, and this basin is currently out of balance with approximately 324,326 acre-feet of water per year. Also, SGMA is about getting to balance in a 20-year horizon which I believe can be achieved, but to do that thinking outside of the box and looking at all the risks is where having a seat at the table matters.

The 180 days isn't much time and then you may ask what happens if the Kern subbasin isn't successful with providing or even agreeing on the remedies to comply? If that should occur, then it's called "State Intervention". State intervention is an unexplored area where I do not want the Kern subbasin to be the

first to explore or even get to that position, so I will not go any further into this discussion at this time.

In saying all of this about SGMA and the DWR determination letter, there is some good news, or at least better news, that I would like to share. From the previous month's article, I mentioned where the State came out early to announce their decision for a 0% allocation. Since then, the State came out due to the December and January storms and increased the allocation to 15%. Now I realize that is far from getting 100% allocation, which was actually very common to receive prior to 2000. But the State moved away from the 0% allocation and began storing water instead of sending all the flows out through the Delta. One might think that the overdraft of the Kern basin collates exactly to the shortage of water delivered by the State Water Project and the Federal Water Project, and you would be correct. If the Kern subbasin was to receive all the contracted water, the Kern subbasin would not be classified as critically over drafted under SGMA. To help understand this, please see the graph reflecting the amount of allocation since 1978.

Among water policies and rights, the Kern County Farm Bureau continues to monitor major factors that affect our farmers and agri-businesses. We recently held a successful meeting in January with Julie Henderson, the Director of the California Department of Pesticides. She spoke at the Spray Safe event and was so impressed by the amount of engagement, not just by attendees but also the vendors who participated. Within Kern County, our community is strong and determined to grow possibilities, and we appreciate everyone who gives of their time to engage and works for the success of the Kern subbasin.

## Executive Director's Report

### Malthusian Trap – Government Style?



**By Romeo Agbalog**  
**Executive Director,**  
**Kern County Farm**  
**Bureau**

In the 18th century, economist Thomas Robert Malthus proposed a theory that

suggested improvements in technology would inescapably lead to increased population growth, placing added strain on resources and ultimately a decrease in quality of life for society. Malthus argued that social improvements in the terms of increased income and standard of living was impossible since any steps taken in furtherance of this direction would simply add to the population and amplify social pressures.

Malthus' theory, the "Malthusian Trap" was introduced during a period of rapid change for society. In fact, the Industrial Revolution was right around the corner and was about to prove Malthus' theory wrong. See, Malthus believed that increased population would create an excess of labor driving wages down, and that an increase in the masses would create competition for food, supplies, and other resources driving costs up.

Also, Malthus lived and wrote during a time when production was accomplished by highly individualized manual labor, for example farming in Malthus' time was done by hand and with the use of animals. Later,

the introduction of mechanized equipment like tractors allowed for more abundant, cheaper, and faster food production that subsequently rose living standards for people around the world.

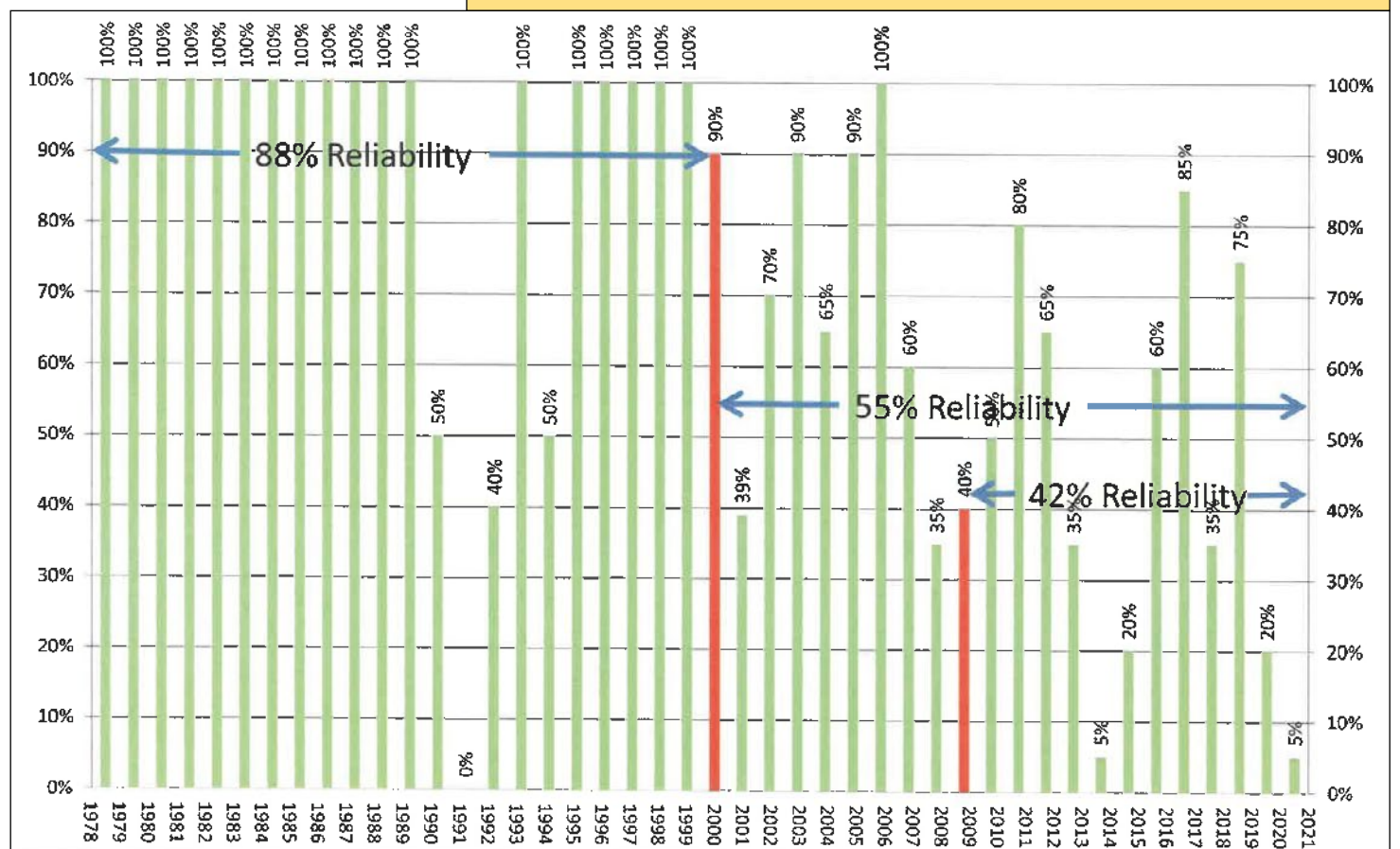
Fast forward to modern times. Mechanized farm equipment is used much more expansively and the equipment more sophisticated than the equipment and tools used in the 18th century, and manual labor, though scarce, is still used today. Automation is now here and being implemented in agriculture and other industries rapidly. Automation requires a higher skilled workforce yet requires a smaller number of workers at the same time. A loss of a job, I think Malthus would agree, is a social pressure and indeed a decrease in quality of life.

Like the Industrial Revolution, automation stands to revolutionize agriculture and other industries alike, though an unintended consequence could be the loss of an entry level ag job that represents the first rung on the ladder towards the climb towards economic prosperity.

Social pressures that I am not sure Malthus considered then, but certainly considerations now stem from government. Increases to minimum wage, ag overtime regulations, increases in workers compensation, disability, unemployment, health insurance, and other costly rules, laws, or regulations result in skyrocketing labor costs. Have we entered a Malthusian Trap where technology improved, but few people benefitted? Scholars can debate this question, though its clear we are in sort of a government style bureaucratic trap, whose theories I hope someday soon will be proven wrong.

SWP Allocations % Table A

Actual



## VALLEY AG VOICE

Published monthly by Valley Ag Voice LLC  
1412 17th Street, Suite 407, Bakersfield, CA 93301

**ADVERTISING** Dave Plivelich  
661-204-8160 • Ads@ValleyAgVoice.com

**DESIGN & PRODUCTION** The Marcom Group

**PRINTING** S&S Printing

**CONTENT SUBMISSION & OTHER INQUIRIES,**

**CONTACT US AT** Info@ValleyAgVoice.com

### KERN COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Romeo Agbalog, Executive Director  
661-397-9635 • RAgbalog@KernCFB.com

Articles or commentaries are not direct opinions of  
Kern County Farm Bureau



## Young Farmers & Ranchers



**By Timothy Collins**  
**Chair, KC Young**  
**Farmers & Ranchers**

The Young Farmers and Ranchers started off the year with the return of our annual Basque Crawl event. This event is one of

our most well attended and serves as a membership drive for the group. After being unable to hold the event last year we were excited to bring it back and had nearly 30 people attend this year. We met at Wool Growers and following our meeting we all enjoyed a fine Basque

farm was just enough for one family to run and stay self-sustaining.

It's hard to fault so many people when this is still the image of farming perpetuated in movies or advertising. However, this picture could hardly be farther from what modern farming in Kern County looks like, and it certainly doesn't encompass the entire agriculture industry. In YF&R today we have members that work in sales, banking, real estate, labor contracting, equipment service, safety, quality control, education, and more; not to mention, those that do directly work with livestock or crops. And yet, all of us are part of the Kern County agriculture industry.

The industry has indeed changed drastically in the last century. We may lament the loss of the small family farm in many ways, but we can be proud that because of the agriculture industry's ability to grow and innovate the old fears of overpopulation and resulting starvation



*Kern County Young Farmer's and Ranchers Annual Woolgrower's Basque Dinner.*

dinner. As I looked around at our group, I thought about what is meant by being a farmer or rancher and realized we represented quite a variety of different jobs; yet all of them are part of the agriculture industry. This next generation of farmers and ranchers reflects an industry that's grown more diverse than ever before.

When I'm around my friends who aren't part of the ag industry, it's not uncommon for them to say "but you're not a farmer" when I tell them I'm part of Young Farmers and Ranchers. It's true that for much of our community their view of the ag industry is different from reality. The image they have of farming is basically that of my grandparents when they farmed in Minnesota. My grandpa spent his life on a small midwestern family farm in the middle of the twentieth century. They farmed a couple hundred acres of corn, oats, beans, and alfalfa with three old Farmall tractors. Most of this was used to feed their pigs, chickens, and dairy cows, which of course were milked in a big gambrel roof barn. The

proved to be false. We produce more food with less land than ever before, and it takes a group of professionals as diverse as ours to make that happen. So, you don't have to be a "farmer" to be part of YF&R, but you do need an appreciation of the industry that for millennia has made life itself possible. As twenty-first century young farmers and ranchers, we work to keep Kern County's ag industry growing and innovating to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Please reach out to us if you would like to join our email list to receive information about upcoming events. We are also active on both Facebook and Instagram.

Please reach out to us if you would like to jump on our email list to receive information about upcoming events. We are also active on both Facebook and Instagram.

**Email:** [KernYFR@KernCFB.com](mailto:KernYFR@KernCFB.com)

**IG:** @Kern-YFR

**FB:** [KernYoungFarmersAndRanchers](https://www.facebook.com/KernYoungFarmersAndRanchers)

## Weakest Link

*Continued from PAGE 1*

according to an analysis by the New York Times. Having waited so many days, the container ships would probably rather not stay longer to load agricultural commodities. If they did, however, they would charge higher rates than normal.

With challenges exporting, California farmers would need to turn to domestic exports. From the demand perspective, over the last two decades, Americans have slightly decreased their per capita consumption of fruit. However, with more households being home-bound, food made and consumed at home increased, including fruit consumption. What about the supply side? The same issues with the trucking industry

kept much of the fruit from California ending up on shelves across the country.

So, what's the solution? The USDA is working on the challenge with California ports. It recently announced a partnership with the Port of Oakland to increase capacity for agricultural commodities. A proposed 25-acre 'pop-up' site will be devoted to filling empty shipping containers with agricultural commodities. This is being patterned after a similar effort at the Port of Savannah. If the commodities can get to port, they should have an easier time making their way to Asia and other markets, assuming the supply-chain disruptions do not get any worse.

## Orchard Recycling, Water Issues Among Topics Discussed at World Ag Expo Seminars

**By Brian Milne**  
**Vice President, Director of Marketing**  
**& Communications, The Holloway Group**

The World Ag Expo returned to Tulare, Calif., on Feb. 8-10, after going virtual in 2021 due to the pandemic, and the future of agriculture was a major theme of this year's event.

"Just the sheer size and amount of technology, automation, innovation, it's all on display here at the World Ag Expo," California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross said while walking the grounds. "Whether it's for livestock, or for crops, it's here, and it gets me excited thinking about the future of agriculture and the workforce and the jobs and careers of the future."

Along with the latest and greatest in ag technology, sustainable agriculture and water issues were two underlying themes discussed during the nearly 100 seminars that took place at the three-day event.

Kaylah Vasquez, a Graduate Student of Fresno State's Viticulture and Enology Program, discussed some of those water challenges and what that might mean for the future of California agriculture during her session exploring the use of remotely sensed images (from UAV and satellite imagery) to monitor water stress in California vineyards.

"We're going to go from abnormally dry to exceptionally dry," Vasquez said, showing the latest California Drought Monitor map from January. "We see that we're still having severe drought, and that's pretty alarming in this time of year."

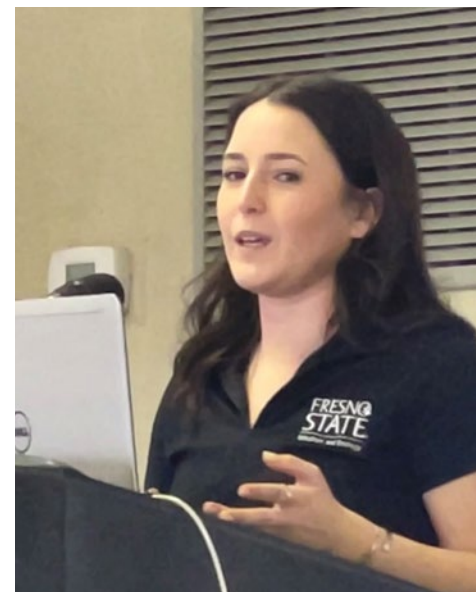
With most of California painted orange with "severe drought," Vasquez noted water issues aren't going away and more and more growers will be forced to plant drought-tolerant crops.

"What does that translate to for the grower, and what does that look like in agriculture?" she asked.

"Well, you're going to start to see early irrigations to penetrate dry soils, lower reservoirs, we're going to see policies change, which we have seen already, restrictions on supplemental groundwaters, mainly SGMA (Sustainable Groundwater Management Act), and agricultural unemployment. We're going to see a change in crops from less tolerant to more drought-tolerant crops such as grapevines, trees and so on."

During his seminar on "Best Practices for Orchard and Vineyard Removal and Redevelopment," Holloway Vice President of Ag Services Jordan

*See EXPO SEMINARS on PAGE 17*



*Kaylah Vasquez, a Graduate Student of Fresno State's Viticulture and Enology Program, discusses the use of remotely sensed images to monitor water stress in California vineyards as part of World Ag Expo's grower seminar series on Feb. 9 in Tulare, Calif.*

## DAILY AG NEWS

**Rewind 98.1 FM** is your source for Daily AG news!

From **4am-6am** you can listen to daily Market report updates from our **"Market Line"** and the award-winning **"Line on Agriculture report"**. Rick Worthington can catch you up on daily **Cattle and Dairy** info with the **"Farm & Ranch report"**.



**Join us Monday-Friday 4am-6am for the valley's largest AG radio programs only on Rewind 98.1 FM**



# 2022 Winegrape Crop Forecast as 'Stable'



**By Kevin Hecteman**  
Assistant Editor  
Ag Alert

*Reprinted with permission  
from the California Farm  
Bureau Federation*

For Jeff Bitter, 2022 will be a year of recovery for California winegrape farmers—but not for the reasons one might think.

"It's not so much a recovery from the pandemic as much as it is recovery from oversupply in the grape market," Bitter said last week during the State of the Industry event at the Unified Wine & Grape Symposium in Sacramento.

Bitter, president of Fresno-based Allied Grape Growers, noted that grape growers produced 4 million tons or more each year from 2016 to 2019, leading to a market glut. Short crops in 2020 and 2021 "brought us back into a balance situation," he said.

Bitter sees the present situation as "stable with a chance of oversupply," based on a short 2021 crop—with roughly 3.6 million tons of grapes crushed—and another year of modest plantings. Bitter forecast that 15,000 to 18,000 acres of vineyards would be planted in 2022—about the same amount as would be removed because of attrition. This is a good sign, he noted.

"That's a healthy rate of planting for our industry to replace aging vineyards," Bitter said of the acreage forecast. "I'm not worried about what we're seeing here, with our three-year cycle of planting."

The ideal total growing acreage, he added, would be



Attendees check out the trade show exhibits, including a grape harvester, at the Unified Wine & Grape Symposium in Sacramento. Event speakers predicted a stable winegrape crop after years of oversupply but noted market challenges from the pandemic and a shortage of younger wine drinkers. Photo by Kevin Hecteman

about 550,000—give or take 10,000 acres—with 3.85 million tons of production.

Among the unknowns, he said, are California's impending ban on agricultural burning, and the status of the drought.

As of Jan. 1, 2025, grape growers and others in the eight counties covered by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will no longer be allowed to put old vines and trees to the torch. Bitter said that could spur growers who are thinking of pulling older vineyards to expedite the process and beat the deadline.

"The alternative to burning a vineyard, when you remove it, is basically to dismantle the vineyard first," Bitter said. "You go back in and you unbuild everything you built 30 years ago, right? You take out all the metal; you cut everything down to small pieces so you can feed it through

a chipper. There's a way to even remove the wire from the wood and the chipping process, but all that's very expensive compared to just lighting a match."

Bitter added, "The bottom line is, growers will be incentivized, just because of ease and efficiency, to go ahead and perhaps get some vineyards out of the ground that are slated for removal anyway in the next few years."

As for water, Bitter said he didn't factor that into his projections because it's impossible to predict the situation. Bitter said the critical time to apply water is at the end of winter, and some growers may have been reluctant to do this if they know they'll be short of water later in the season.

"That's why we saw, in a lot of cases, that short shoot growth and stunted growth," Bitter said. "You didn't

See **WINEGRAPE FORECAST** on PAGE 18

## Expo Seminars

*Continued from PAGE 3* Burt said a recent survey conducted by the company showed that nearly half of their tree growers would be taking on an orchard removal project in the next two years.



Holloway Vice President of Ag Services Jordan Burt discusses best practices for orchard removal and redevelopment as part of World Ag Expo's grower seminar series on Feb. 9 in Tulare, Calif.

Burt noted there are incentives available to growers for Whole Orchard Recycling projects, including the San Joaquin Valley Alternative to Ag Open Burning Incentive Program. He also stressed that it was important for growers to keep soil health and water availability top of mind when developing a new orchard or vineyard.

"We take a soils-first approach to orchard redevelopment," Burt added. "We dig soil pits prior to a redevelopment, so we have a better idea of what you have to do to get your ground ready for the next crop."

"This is your one shot to get it right. So, think about what your soil needs. When can you ever put amendments under your tree? This is your one chance to get nutrients down there for another 20 years."

# It's Just Your Size.

Carry cargo, passengers, or somewhere in-between.

**SPRINTER**  
Reliable. Hard working. **Full-sized.**

**METRIS**  
Reliable. Hard working. **Mid-sized.**



Schedule a Test Drive  
**(661) 836-3737**

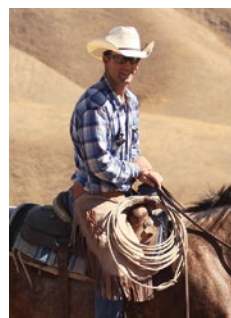
\* Excludes all options, taxes, title, registration, transportation charge and dealer prep fee. Options shown. Not all options are available in the U.S. For a full offering and pricing information, visit your local Mercedes-Benz Vans dealership. Starting at prices represent gas engine Sprinter models. Delayed availability

**Mercedes-Benz**  
of Bakersfield  
Bakersfield Automall (661) 836-3737





The  
Cattlemen's  
Corner



# Politics Aside, Is it Effective?

By Austin Snedden  
Ranching Contributor,  
Valley Ag Voice

OPINION: Judicious  
businesses are  
regularly evaluating

whether the things they are spending time and money on are providing the results they desire. Performance reviews are often an uncomfortable but necessary part of productivity. For performance reviews to be effective, they must be accompanied by the possibility that a project, position, or employee can be eliminated. Without the prospect of these outcomes, inefficiency can grow. Knowing only private business growing up on the ranch, I was always aware that weather conditions could mean a downsize or that market conditions could result in reduced revenue. It wasn't until I was older and began to analyze the bureaucracies that looked to regulate or tax our business that I realized that government was, for the most part, immune to the most natural economic principles that direct the rest of us to be effective.

This lack of governmental accountability became clear to me when a county administrator told me the County was adopting a trendy private sector efficiency tool called "Lean Six Sigma" (not to be confused with the burdensome SGMA all of us in California agriculture are familiar with). The general concept of this efficiency tool is to streamline processes, eliminate waste, and lower costs. Knowing that employee costs are by far the biggest cost of government, I asked the administrator if this policy would result in the elimination of positions or government employees. Paraphrasing his response, he explained that, no, we can't really eliminate positions or employees due to union rules. I realized that without the ability to address the costliest part of government, the adoption of a catchy phrase to portray efficiency was for the most part bull excrement, and this is coming from someone trained in the field of spotting bull excrement. It should draw to our attention that we need to be very aggressive fighting government growth because bureaucrats and officials lack the ability or will to rein it in.

What if we could set politics aside and just analyze burdensome government programs based on their effectiveness of executing their intended purpose? This is an article not a book so I will just use some examples, and I am sure any reader that has dipped their toe in agriculture or any private sector business could come up with a long list of government bureaucracies or regulations that, besides being burdensome and costly, have showed epic failure measured against their intended purpose.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) has to lead the charge based on lack of effectiveness coupled with the draconian burden and cost it has placed on society. Anything from government take of private property, to hobbling of almost

every industry, to outsourcing production, to increased costs to producers and consumers has been excused based on the ESA. Let's set aside politics, natural human desires for food, shelter, and travel, and just focus on the effectiveness of the ESA based on its intended purpose. The ESA was enacted in 1973, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the bureaucracy that administers the ESA, the purpose is "to protect and recover imperiled species." There have been 2,400 species listed under the act, 54 species have been removed based on "recovery," and 23 species have been removed due to extinction. "Recovery" being a critical part of the purpose of the act, lets subtract the 23 that failed from the 54 recovered and you are left with 31 of the 2,400 species. In the just under 50 years of existence of the ESA, the act has resulted in a 1.3% return on investment when it comes to the goal of recovering species, or a 0.0003% success rate annually. Set aside my conservative values and set aside the radical environmentalist's values and just judge the ESA on effectiveness. There are absolutely zero projects or jobs that would survive in the private sector boasting the ineffectiveness of the ESA.

The list goes on and on. 20 years of climate change regulation and we still have supposed man made climate change. 35 years of the Beef checkoff to promote beef, harvesting \$43 million from producers annually, and we have less cattleman and reduced per-capita beef consumption. Lockdowns to stop a virus, and we still have a virus. Local governments using tax dollars to "address homelessness," and we still have more vagrants.

How about we set politics and emotions to the side and just analyze effectiveness. We can't place a financial and regulatory burden on everyone's freedom with no metric for success. I think government is big enough already, but to all of you who look to solve future problems through creation of more government, let's put sunsets on every program and metrics for success so if they don't succeed, they can join the scrap heap of failures, and stop the government practice of funding the scrap heap in perpetuity.



## Free Mulch!

Farm ♦ Business ♦ Home ♦ Garden

## Mulch Can Help So Much!

- 💧 Reduces Erosion
- 💧 Reduces Overexposure
- 💧 Reduces Water Evaporation
- 💧 Reduces Overwatering
- 💧 Reduces Wilting



## Bakersfield Compost Facility

661-835-8873 ♦ 2601 S MT Vernon AVE

## Available In Bulk

Every Day ♦ 7 AM – 4 PM

(661) 758-6484

HollowayAg.com



## Supporting the Community and Local Farmers Since 1932

- Inc.'s Fastest-Growing Ag Company of 2021
- Proven Soil Amendments, Agronomy Services
- Whole Orchard Recycling, Redevelopment



# Rice Farmers Enlisted to Sustain Pacific Flyway Birds

By Edgar Sanchez

*Reprinted with permission from the California Farm Bureau Federation*

Sixth-generation rice grower Jeff Gallagher is perpetually surrounded by birds on the Sutter County farm that has been in his family since 1872.

The soundtrack of his life is the din caused by the itinerant visitors—nasal honks of wild geese, hisses of sandhill cranes and other bird chatter at his 4,000-acre ranch in Rio Oso, a rice-farming region north of Sacramento.

“I’ll be laying in bed and I can hear the swans, the geese and the ducks,” Gallagher said. “It’s pretty cool. It’s definitely a unique environment.”

Gallagher is doing his part to preserve it by enlisting in a new program to flood rice fields for wildlife. It is designed to protect bird habitat in California’s Central Valley over the next 10 years.

He is one of numerous farmers engaged in a voluntary program to replace, at least temporarily, the valley’s bird-sustaining wetlands, 90% of which have vanished over decades.

The initiative was hatched by the Central Valley Joint Venture, or CVJV. The Sacramento-based coalition of 19 public and private entities seeks to ensure the survival of avian species that arrive via the Pacific Flyway.

Stretching more than 4,000 miles, the air path is used annually by birds—including threatened species—that

travel back and forth from South America and Mexico and as far north as Alaska and Canada.

Needing rest along the way, more than 100 million birds representing 400 species descend on the Central Valley each year, according to the CVJV. Some stay only a few days. Others stay longer, feasting on the valley’s food resources.

This is where willing farmers such as Gallagher get involved. He uses groundwater pumps in November, after the growing season, to reflood his fields to help birds in the winter and beyond—before the water seeps back into the aquifer for future use.

He’s been doing this for about five years, as part of various habitat enhancement programs sponsored by the California Rice Commission, the Nature Conservancy and other institutions. While the programs may overlap, all have the same goal: to help ensure that Pacific Flyway birds find comestibles during Central Valley layovers. Some programs provide financial help to farmers to flood fields at specific times.

Each fall sees a gradual spike in the number of bird visitors, when they start abandoning their northern habitats as temperatures drop.

“The peak is during the winter, when the birds choose the Central Valley to forage and stay away from those cold winters up north,” James Cogswell, the Central Valley Joint Venture coordinator, said. “In other places in the West, the birds can’t find the habitat or resources for their survival.



*Snow geese take flight in a Sutter County rice field. Rice growers and conservationists are partnering in a program that floods rice fields to simulate wetlands to serve as bird habitat. Photo: California Rice Commission*

“The Central Valley is vital” for them, Cogswell said. “It would be catastrophic if the birds arrived here and didn’t find enough water resources (and) enough food to give them the energy they need.”

Birds are not the only beneficiaries of strategic farm flooding, Cogswell said.

Farmers also can benefit by allowing recreational opportunities such as birdwatching on their properties. Some farmers earn extra income by opening their land to limited hunting.

The CVJV reaches across boundaries of land ownership to protect and restore dwindling habitat for birds, Cogswell noted in a prepared statement.

“We work with everyone from farmers and duck hunters to state and federal agencies, to nonprofit conservation organizations, coordinating efforts to protect and maximize bird habitat,” he said.

CVJV’s initiative calls for postharvest flooding of agricultural lands. This practice makes critical food resources available for birds, including leftover rice grain, seeds and other plant matter, and insects and other invertebrates.

California’s drought has made it challenging to flood farm fields, but farmers use a variety of water sources to do so for the birds’ well-being.

CVJV’s science-based project fits the schedules of many farmers, including California’s estimated 2,000 rice growers, nearly all of whom are in Northern California.

In Rio Oso, for instance, Gallagher and his crew typically assemble in late March to begin preparing 3,500 acres for rice planting. His 500 other acres are for walnuts and other crops.

“It takes us about a month to get 3,500 acres (of rice) planted,” Gallagher said. “We try to get the last field by the end of May. ... We start the harvest at the end of September, and we usually try to finish by the end of October, hopefully before the rain starts.”

His latest harvest was interrupted by a late October atmospheric river that brought 6 inches of rain to Rio Oso in just one day.

“I probably had a day and a half worth of harvesting to do when the rain flooded my fields,” Gallagher said. “We had to wait like two weeks for the fields to dry out so we could get the harvesting equipment out there.”

The fields were still soggy when the high-tech harvesters went in. Plowing through mud, they could not properly separate the soaked rice kernels from plant straw, Gallagher revealed. “Probably half of the rice ended up in the harvester’s tank,” he said, “and the rest of it went into the mud.”

Then groundwater pumps reflooded his fields in mid-November, as part of CVJV’s program.

“It’s shallow flooding, anywhere from 2 to 4 inches at the most,” Gallagher explained. “That’s really for breaking down the (rice) straw and decomposing it, so when you drain the fields in March, they’re going to be clear. There won’t be any straw, just bare soil, which will be ready for the planting of (the new) crop.”

Gallagher said he believes “it’s really important to be able to coexist with our environment and be able to sustain our farming practices at the same time.”

Because “a lot of the wetlands and habitats have disappeared” over the years, he said, farmers can contribute to field conditions that support birds on the Pacific Flyway. The CVJV program, he said, “is a perfect fit for us rice farmers.”

His participation is applauded by Luke Matthews, the California Rice Commission’s Wildlife Programs manager.

“Jeff is an excellent conservation-minded rice farmer,” Matthews said. “(He) has long-term thoughts about his farm and the impacts he can provide to the environment in his farming operations. He’s been participating in our programs for a couple of years. He’s been very good to work with.”

Other CVJV partners include the California Department of Water Resources; the California Department of Fish and Wildlife; Defenders of Wildlife; Ducks Unlimited; River Partners; the California Wildlife Conservation Board; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Audubon California.

More information about CVJV’s new 10-year endeavor can be found at [centralvalleyjointventure.org](http://centralvalleyjointventure.org).

Gallagher said he is pleased to be a participant. He calls the program a benefit to rice growers “and the rice industry as a whole,” and said he wants to protect bird populations for future generations.

“A lot of times, rice growers or farmers get kind of a bad rap as far as what we’re doing environmentally,” he said. “If there’s anybody that cares about this land and the environment that we live in and make a living off of, it’s us. And we try to do every day everything we can to sustain this environment and this industry that we are in.”

**FAMILY-OWNED & OPERATED. LOW-PRICE GUARANTEE!**

**NO LIMIT BULK AMMO**

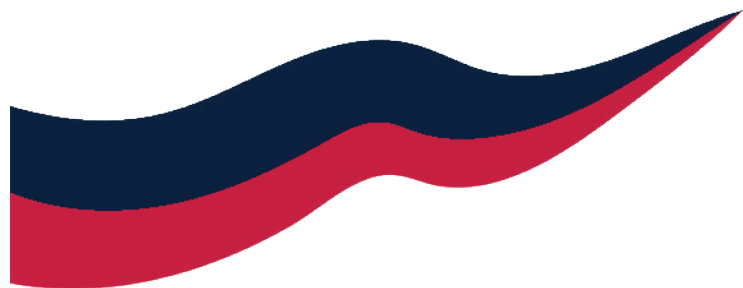
**DIRTY BIRD**  
GUNS & AMMO CUSTOM WORK

**AMMO. FIREARMS. GUNSMITHING. CERAKOTE.™  
CUSTOM-BUILDS. DEALER TRANSFERS. & MORE**

**2420 MOHAWK STREET N° 700 BAKERSFIELD, CA 93308**  
**DIRTYBIRDUSA.COM 800 992 5060 INFO@DIRTYBIRDUSA.COM**



# VALLEY PACIFIC



**Delivered Fuels | Lubricants | CFN Cardlock**

*We proudly sell products from these brands and more!*



## We Fuel California

**Family Owned & Locally Managed Since 1947**

9521 Enos Lane Bakersfield, CA 93314  
(661)746-7737 | [www.ValleyPacific.com](http://www.ValleyPacific.com)

## Western Growers Grant

*Continued from PAGE 1*

Last June, Western Growers launched AgTechX Ed, a new initiative aimed at improving education and teaching in agriculture with a focus on technology. The initiative was formed through the joint efforts of Western Growers and the CDFAs Secretary of Agriculture, Karen Ross, in hopes of establishing a state-wide narrative on improving agricultural technology education and training in California. The main goal of the initiative is to develop a common curriculum in California's two- and four-year universities, while also continuing to develop professors in AgTech and provide hands-on training in the field with AgTech experts.

Dennis Donahue, Director of Western Growers Center for Innovation and Technology, says that the idea for the AgTechX Ed initiative started with questions of how to make a new kind of worker in AgTech, how to reach the younger generations sooner, and how to start as early as possible to educate students and teachers and get them ready for the future of technology in agriculture. The current reality of California's water shortage issues also plays a large part in the development of new AgTech. Donahue says that "...growers are using analytical tools more earnestly to make sure water isn't wasted..." and that "necessity causes everyone to look harder for solutions." Western Growers is using their AgTechX Ed program to ensure those goals become a reality in California's near future.

One major component in improving education in agricultural technology is creating awareness about the new technologies, skills, and opportunities that are available in this field. Western Growers has taken the first steps towards creating that awareness by launching a series of events in colleges across California. The company



*Dennis Donahue, Director of Western Growers Center for Innovation and Technology*

has already hosted two AgTechX Ed events since its launch in June of 2021. The first event was held at Reedley College in August 2021 and the second was held at the end of January 2022 at Imperial Valley College. Both events featured speaking panels from leaders in AgTech, education, and workforce development, including fireside chats with CDEA's Karen Ross. Specifically, the panels covered "industry issues and skill identification; education and workforce development strategies; and current and future workforce needs on the farm." (Western Growers, 2022)

Western Growers has two additional AgTechX Ed events planned for April and June of 2022. The first will be held at Hartnell College in Salinas, CA and the second at Woodlands College in Woodland, CA. The exact date of these events will be announced approximately six weeks prior. A week-long summit for the Next Gen Ag program is also being planned for the Summer of 2022. To find out more information about Western Growers, the Next Gen Ag program, and the AgTechX Ed initiative, please visit their website at [WesternGrowers.com](http://WesternGrowers.com) | ([wga.com](http://wga.com)).

# FARMERS!

**DO YOU KNOW WHAT HUMIC ACID  
YOUR DISTRIBUTOR IS ADDING TO YOUR  
LIQUID FERTILIZER BLEND?**

## ASK FOR ENHANCE<sup>®</sup> THA TECHNICAL HUMIC ACID

The only Humic Acid backed by scientific data in studies done by the USDA. To find out more, talk to the experts at **Western Nutrients Corporation.**

Basic Manufacturer | Locally Owned | Established in 1984

Contact **Western Nutrients** Today!



(661) 327-9604 | (800) 542-6664 CA Only  
**WesternNutrientsCorp.com**

Sales: Mark Armstrong  
(661) 319-3690 | [mark@westernnutrientscorp.com](mailto:mark@westernnutrientscorp.com)

*Or consult one of our distributors: San Joaquin Nutrients*

Sales: Wes Miller  
(661) 428-3132 | [wes@sjnutrients.com](mailto:wes@sjnutrients.com)

We guarantee quality and the ability to ship the best products in their class at competitive prices world wide.

## WE ARE HIRING

**Western Nutrients Corporation is searching for a motivated, confident, and result driven Sales and Marketing Manager to assist in the advertising and selling of our company's products.**  
Contact [mark@westernnutrientscorp.com](mailto:mark@westernnutrientscorp.com)



# A Century in Produce: Giumarra Companies



**Audrey Hill**  
**Valley Ag Voice**

The year was 1922 when the Giumarra Companies began. Since their start at the Los Angeles Union Terminal Market,

they have grown to be an international powerhouse for moving, marketing and growing produce. The Giumarra label "Nature's Partner" can be found in almost all major grocery stores in the United States and Canada. They also work with many other producers across the world to provide the highest quality, best tasting fruits and vegetables for their customers. Stakeholders of Giumarra Companies, such as former president and current chairman of the Giumarra Companies, Don Corsaro, take pride in staying true to their original values and attribute the success of the company to continual dedication. Their mission states: "We are committed to the people we work with and those we serve. Very simply, we look to provide the best service and work to improve upon it every day." These goals can be seen through what the companies have done while bringing delicious, high quality produce to millions over the past 100 years.

The first Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company was a small stand in the open aired portion of the Los Angeles Union Terminal Market, now called the Los Angeles 7Th Street Produce Market. Giuseppe "Joe" Giumarra founded the company with help from his brother George Giumarra Sr., and brother-in-law Dominick Corsaro. They sold mainly navel oranges from

Highland, California, an area in the northwest portion San Bernardino. According to the recent article, Giumarra Companies Celebrates 100 Years in Produce, Joe Giumarra would drive to Highland, CA regularly to pick up these oranges directly from the grower while George Giumarra Sr. and Dominick Corsaro sold and managed produce wholesale (Packer, 2022).

The year 1939 became a major shift for the company's focus. As the company continued to improve their quality in service and produce in Los Angeles, the Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company bought land in Bakersfield in 1939 to start what would become Giumarra Vineyards. Now, Giumarra Vineyards is one of the largest table grape growers in California, ranking 5th largest grape grower in *Growing Produce* in 2014.

Giumarra Vineyards' growth has continued in the realm of breeding grape varieties. In partnership with the Karniel family and Grapa Varieties, the "ARRA" table grape launched in 2009. ARRA grapes have made a worldwide impact. In Grapa Varieties' news article announcing development of ARRA in India, the company states: "Since the launch of the first ARRA variety in 2009, Grapa has licensed over 10,000 hectares around the world, with a focus on Chile, Peru and Brazil, but with production now in around two dozen countries including South Africa, Australia, and Italy, as well as many other important regions" (2019).

The Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company went from being a small orange marketer to the ever-growing company it is today. Here are just a few highlights:

- Giumarra Reedley, the Central Valley-grown stone fruit, exotics, and citrus division, was first to be incorporated in 1968 with Don Jost.

- The Giumarra Nogales division was incorporated in 1971 with Elva "Vita" Carlota Podesta and her company Agricola Santa Teresa S.A de C.V. in Sinaloa, Mexico to market Santa Teresa tomatoes.

labels from Mexico.

- In 1982, the company opened an avocado processing, packing, quality control and marketing center in Escondido, CA to produce avocados from California, Chile, Mexico, and Peru year-round.



In 1993 Giumarra partnered with Videxport and the Salazar family in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico to incorporate their grapes and watermelons into the division. Now the Nogales division imports grapes, melons, and other vegetables with Fair Trade Certified and USDA Certified Organic

- Giumarra has also expanded to incorporate Giumarra Asparagus to provide year around supply of asparagus to grocery stores in the US and Canada, moving Fair Trade Certified asparagus from Mexico, Peru, and California.

See **GIUMARRA** on PAGE 19

**ING3NUITY IS:**  
**FAST-MOVING FRESH GOODS.**  
**AND A FRESH TAKE ON**  
**FARM-TO-FORK LOGISTICS.**

**ING3NUITY IS MORE THAN INTELLIGENCE. IT'S FORWARD-THINKING, SERVICE-CENTRIC, EFFICIENT AND AGILE SOLUTIONS THAT MOVE FRESH GOODS THROUGH THE SUPPLY CHAIN FASTER.**

**G3ENTERPRISES.COM**



# 'Narrow' Ruling On Pork Law Does Not Apply To Producers

**By Ching Lee Assistant Editor Ag Alert**

*Reprinted with permission from the California Farm Bureau Federation*

Legal challenges by grocers, restaurants and retailers have temporarily blocked enforcement of part of a new California law that bans the sale of whole pork meat from pigs housed in spaces that fail to meet the law's minimum requirements.

The business groups sued the state because the California Department of Food and Agriculture is more than two years late finalizing regulations for Proposition 12. The measure was approved by California voters in 2018 and sets minimum spacing requirements for breeding pigs, egg-laying hens and veal calves.

The Jan. 21 ruling focuses on regulations for intrastate pork sales, which took effect Jan. 1. Sacramento County Superior Court Judge James Arguelles agreed to delay enforcement for pork retailers, including grocers, until 180 days after final regulations are enacted. The business groups had asked for 28 months.

The court decision does not, however, change Proposition 12 requirements for pork producers, which must give breeding pigs at least 24 square feet of floor space.

CDFA said in a statement that the "narrow" ruling applies only to grocers and other retailers and not to producers providing pork products to California, and that "producers and suppliers remain subject to enforcement if they violate the square-footage requirement that went into effect Jan. 1."

The ruling also does not apply to sales of shell eggs, liquid eggs and veal in California, the department said. Earlier phases of the law dealing with spacing for veal calves and egg layers went into effect in 2020.

CDFA spokesman Steve Lyle said the department and the Attorney General's Office are evaluating the ruling to determine next steps.

"CDFA continues its work to develop implementing regulations for Proposition 12, moving as quickly as possible while ensuring full consideration is given to extensive comments submitted by stakeholders during a recent public comment period," he said. "In the meantime, CDFA continues with outreach and education efforts to support compliance by pork producers."

California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson said the organization agrees with the court ruling and that it will continue to engage in the regulatory process to ensure producers' voices are heard.

"Allowing restaurants, retailers and ultimately,

consumers time to adapt to the proposed regulations just makes sense," he said. "This process has been delayed by many factors, including COVID, and the regulatory process should not be rushed."

The law is controversial because not only does it set production standards for pigs raised in California, it also prohibits the sale of uncooked pork from other states that do not comply with Proposition 12 housing requirements.

Some 87% of pork sold in California comes from pigs born and raised outside the state, according to the hearing record.

The U.S. pork industry is highly integrated, people in the business say. Breeding pigs and their offspring are frequently raised on more than one farm, changing hands from farmers to processors to distributors before the meat is ready for sale. Because there is currently no system in place that traces pork sold in California to a particular pig raised outside the state, groups in the California suit say it would be difficult, if not impossible, to comply with Proposition 12.

The state argues that pork sellers and suppliers have had time to create their own interstate tracking system since the law was passed in late 2018.

American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said the organization is pleased with the California court decision, which he said recognized the state "rushed implementation of Proposition 12 without clear rules on how it will be enforced."

"Besides putting unfair pressure on retailers, it takes away farmers' flexibility to ensure hogs are raised

in a safe environment," Duvall said. "Small farms across the country will be forced to make expensive and unnecessary changes to their operations, which will lead to more consolidation and higher food prices for all of America's families."

AFBF and the National Pork Producers Council last year petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to weigh in on the constitutionality of Proposition 12, which they contend violates the Commerce Clause by regulating how other states comply with the law.

"The laws of one state should not set the rules for an entire nation," Duvall said.

Some grocery chains and pork suppliers have said they were prepared to comply with Proposition 12. Even so, groups in the California suit, including Los Angeles County-based meat processor Kruse and Sons Inc., contend they should not be exposed to the threat of criminal and civil sanctions when the state still lacks final regulations.

CDFA has said it does not expect to adopt final regulations until April or July. The state was supposed to finalize regulations in September 2019 on production facility registration, certification, verification audits, border-station inspection and penalties for violations, including an appeal process. However, the department did not publish its revised proposed regulations until Dec. 3 last year.

The proposed regulations would require pork distributors to register with CDFA to engage in commercial sales in California. The rules would also enable the agency to accredit third-party certifiers.

## Dry January Conditions Return Snowpack to Near Average Levels

*Press Release Provided by the California Department of Water Resources*

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today conducted the second snow survey of the season at Phillips Station. Following a dry January, the manual survey recorded 48.5 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 19 inches, which is 109 percent of average for this location for this date. The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of DWR's water supply forecast. Statewide, the snowpack is 92 percent of average for this date.

"We are definitely still in a drought. A completely dry January shows how quickly surpluses can disappear," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "The variability of California weather proves that nothing is guaranteed and further emphasizes the need to conserve and continue preparing for a possible third dry year."

Snowmelt during January has been minimal. However, with little to no accumulation of snow during January, snowpack levels are closer to average February 1 conditions, meaning that a return of winter storms in the Sierra Nevada is needed during February and March to remain at or above normal levels.

Regionally, the Southern Sierra snowpack is not faring as well as the Northern Sierra. Water supply forecasts for the south San Joaquin Valley are below average due to the lack of rain and snow in this region.

"These dry January conditions demonstrate the importance of continuing to improve our forecasting abilities and why these snow surveys are essential," said Sean de Guzman, Manager of DWR's Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit. "While we always hope for a generous snowpack, DWR's ongoing investments in forecasting techniques will help the state better prepare for both drought and flood conditions."

In light of last year's poor runoff, DWR has increased its efforts to improve climate and runoff forecasting by strengthening its collaboration with partner agencies and academia and by investing in proven technologies



*Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducting the second snow survey of the season at Phillips Station.*

to improve data collection and hydrologic modeling. One example is DWR's investment in remote snowpack measurements through the Aerial Remote Sensing of Snow program by partnering with Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc. (ASO). Data from ASO has proven to be the most accurate assessment of snowpack conditions that, when coupled with newer, sophisticated runoff models, will improve runoff forecast accuracy.

Although early season storms helped alleviate some drought impacts, a lack of storms in January has underscored the need for Californians to continue focusing on conservation. Most of California's reservoirs are still below average, and groundwater supplies are still recovering. California still has two months left of its typical wet season and will require more storms in those months to end the year at average.

DWR conducts four media-oriented snow surveys at Phillips Station each winter near the first of each month, January through April and, if necessary, one additional in May.



**THE ORIGINAL ORANGE TRACTOR**



**M7 Series**



**Kern County's  
Equipment Dealer  
Since 1910.**

**Berchtold.com**  
**3000 Pegasus Dr.**  
**Bakersfield, CA 93308**  
**661-323-7817**



**START BROWSING**



# Redox

Redox offers the following 3 products to help with root development and growth.



**RootRx™** increases crop root development and metabolism.

**Rootex™ Flowable** stimulates and supports root growth and branching.

**H-85™ Flowable** promotes soil microbial diversity, improving soil structure and plant nutrient availability.



Scan code to learn more.

1

Grab your phone



2

Open up the Camera or Google Lens



3

Scan the code



@redoxgrows

redoxgrows.com

## Hurtado Attends Historical Groundbreaking of Construction On Friant-Kern Canal

*Press release provided by Senator Melissa Hurtado*

On January 25th, Senator Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger) released the following statement after attending the historical groundbreaking of construction on much needed repairs to the Friant-Kern Canal:



“This year will mark a turning point in human security due to the increasing water scarcity across Western States,” said Senator Hurtado. “Now more than ever we need to secure clean water for generations to come. Today’s groundbreaking will allow us to conserve this precious natural resource that represents life, food, good health and so much more. This major milestone is the hard work of many men and women before me.”

Senate Bill 559—The State Water Resiliency Act

of 2021—as introduced would have allocated \$785 million to repair vital water delivery systems that provide drinking water to communities throughout California and to sustain the state’s leading agricultural economy. The funds would have gone to fixing the Friant-Kern Canal, the Delta-Mendota Canal, and major portions of the California Aqueduct, all of which have degraded and are losing water as a result of subsidence – the actual shrinking of land. Congressman Jim Costa and U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein have companion legislation in Congress.

In his May Revise, Governor Gavin Newsom proposed \$200 million to help repair the canals. In the budget ultimately adopted by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, \$100 million was allocated to fixing the canals. An additional \$100 million has been proposed in this year’s budget.

Senate Bill 559 passed out of the Appropriations Committee on August 26, 2021, with amendments that would place fund administration under the Department of Water Resources in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Under these amendments, the departments would have to follow various guidelines and conduct studies in order for funding to be released and allocated. These requirements will further complicate the process and the fund disbursement, slowing construction on the State’s water conveyance canals. Assembly Appropriations amendments also removed the intent language outlining where funding should be allocated and deleted the specific funding allotments planned for in SB 559 as introduced.

## THE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS EXPERTS.

We specialize in helping our clients cut through the red tape of government!

**Land Use Consulting  
Government Relations & Public Affairs**

We will help you with all of your Government Affairs needs. From violation notices to advocating on issues that impact your business.

**COMMON SENSE;**  
*consulting*

Consulting-CommonSense.com • 661.203.1838



# AGCO at the World Ag Expo

By Melissa A. Nagel  
Valley Ag Voice Contributor

The World Ag Expo hosted its 55th annual show in Tulare, CA from February 8-10th, 2022. Spread over the course of three days, the show featured



exhibitions from over 1,200 different ag manufacturers, distributors, and companies, as well as featuring many product demos, special events, educational seminars, and more.



Hesston by Massey-Ferguson WR series at the World Ag Expo. Photo: Dave Plivelich

AGCO, one of the world's leaders in agriculture manufacturing and distribution, was also present for the exposition. The company showcased a variety of tractors and other equipment from its brands Fendt, Massey Ferguson, and Hesston by Massey Ferguson, the latter which is also celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. AGCO's display

enhancements while offering an efficiency increase over previous models.

The WR Series windrower also features an improved hydraulic system that offers either a fuel reduction or power increase, depending on the preference of the operator. The model also has a new 150-gallon fuel tank, an improvement on previous models. Perhaps one of the most exciting features of the new windrower is the option to set different user profiles that will allow different operators to adjust the machine to their preferences at the push of a button.

Matt LeCroy, marketing director, Hay & Forage North America, also notes that the WR Series windrower has an auto-climate AC system that

does not disappoint. He states: "You can hang meat in there. I don't care if you're in Yuma, AZ and it's 120 degrees, you can hang meat in there. It's gonna keep you cold all day, even without having to tint the windows," which is a very exciting prospect for farmers working in California's extreme heat conditions.



Fendt 1100 Vario MT series tractor at the World Ag Expo. Photo: Dave Plivelich

booth was quite large and featured some of their newest equipment models, as well as interactive experiences for attendees.

Perhaps one of the most exciting pieces of equipment on display at AGCO's booth this year was its new self-propelled WR Series windrower from Hesston by Massey Ferguson. The new windrower was developed to provide a better all-around experience for hay farmers who have been known to spend more than 10 hours a day in the field. The WR Series windrower also boasts performance

AGCO's booth also featured many of its Fendt model tractors, including the new 1100 Vario MT tractor that is now available to customers in North America. The 1100 Vario MT tractor is designed to tackle large crop jobs, is fuel-efficient, features a dual-circuit hydraulic system, and is backed by Fendt's 3-year, 3,000-hour Gold Star Customer Care Plan.

While at the Expo, Valley Ag Voice's Russell Johnson had the opportunity to speak with Daniel Smith, Senior Strategic Marketing Manager for Fendt High Horsepower Tractors in North America. When asked what sets Fendt apart from other tractor manufacturers in the business, Smith states that, "The biggest one is gonna be quality... we take tremendous pride in the build quality of our machines." Next year's World Ag Expo is already being planned with dates set for February 14-16, 2023. For more information on the Expo, visit <https://www.worldagexpo.com> and for more information on AGCO, visit [www.agcocorp.com](http://www.agcocorp.com).

# Western Growers Releases Inaugural Global Harvest Automation Report



Press release provided by Western Growers

Growers are keen to adopt automation to bridge the growing labor gap and ensure that their crops can be picked in time, according to the Global Harvest Automation Report, a first-of-its-kind study commissioned by Western Growers. The report is the first in a new annual series that will track, measure and report on industry progress in harvest automation across the fresh produce industry.

The Global Harvest Automation Report is part of WG's Global Harvest Automation Initiative,

which aims to accelerate ag automation by 50 percent in 10 years.

"One of the main aims of the report was to take a comprehensive look at the entire harvest ecosystem and provide a quantitative look to the Western Growers membership at how much harvest innovation is impacting their operations across fresh products for specialty crops, where the most progress is occurring, and why," says WG VP of Innovation Walt Dufflock. "Second, we wanted to provide an in-depth view of the innovators who are doing the heavy lifting by crop type, so growers would know who to contact based on the crops they grow."

Among the findings of the report, which was prepared in collaboration with consultants at Roland Berger:

- 65 percent of participating growers have invested in automation over the past three years
- The average annual spend on automation was \$350,000-\$400,000 per grower
- Spending occurred in pre-harvest and harvest assist activities, including weeding, thinning, harvesting platforms and autonomous ground vehicles. It is anticipated that 30-60 percent of these activities will be automated by 2025.
- Harvest automation itself remains limited because of the technical difficulties in replicating the human hand to harvest delicate crops. It is anticipated that 20 percent of harvest activities will be automated by 2025.

# BE BOLD

## LEAVE YOUR MARK ON EVERYTHING\* MARCOMBRANDING.COM



We get it. Done.™

\*Even if your name isn't Mark.



# There's a New Sheriff in Town.

One of the Nation's Largest  
Ag & Ranch Insurance Companies  
is Finally in CA.

Request a Quote  
**CALL NOW!**  
619-800-6332

Visit: [farmandranchagents.com/insurance](https://farmandranchagents.com/insurance)

Now Hiring Sales Agents!

License #0G17930

## PERC at the World Ag Expo in Tulare

By Melissa A. Nagel  
Valley Ag Voice Contributor

The Propane Education and Research Council (PERC) was among the many exhibitors on-hand at the World Ag Expo's 55th show in Tulare, CA this February. The Expo is the



Propane powered mobile power unit. Photo: Dave Plivelich

largest agriculture exposition in the world and hosts upwards of 100,000 guests each year, bringing a large influx of revenue to Tulare and its surrounding areas. Valley Ag Voices' own Russell Johnson had the opportunity to talk propane one-on-one with the council and get some feedback on how propane benefits the agriculture industry.

The majority of farm equipment is powered by diesel fuel, but there has been a push in recent years to find cleaner sources of energy to decrease emissions and improve air quality. On one side of that initiative, you will find new electric options for farming equipment and on the other side, you will find propane. While many will argue that electric options are the way to go, the Propane Council aims to educate

the public about how using propane-powered equipment can actually be a 'cleaner' solution.

When asked how propane can deliver solutions in California and agriculture across the board, the Council's response is that propane products such as propane forklifts are "...cleaner than the electric grid can produce power here in the state of California." This all boils down to the fact that propane is clean energy that is being burned at the source, while electricity must be produced off-site and transferred from the power plant to the needed source through power lines and is less efficient all-around.

Propane is a clean energy source that meets EPA regulations, is approved under the Clean Air Act, and provides a reliable source of energy for farms across America. There are many propane equipment options available from forklifts and generators, to heating systems and grain dryers, and more. The Propane Education & Research Council also has an incentive program that can save producers up to \$5,000 for qualifying purchases. If you would like to learn more about PERC and how they are helping the Ag industry, as well as offering solutions for the home, visit [www.propane.com](http://www.propane.com).



Photo: Dave Plivelich



Propane powered water pump. Photo: Dave Plivelich



# Organic Farmers Fret About Costs, But Cheer Growth

By Ching Lee Assistant Editor Ag Alert

Reprinted with permission from the California Farm Bureau Federation

With sales of organic fresh produce continuing to grow, farmers say they remain optimistic about their market prospects, even as they face a potentially challenging season complicated by drought, shifting demand and higher costs.

The return of food service after pandemic-related lockdowns shuttered restaurants has not severely eroded growth of produce sales at retail outlets, where organic food purchases largely occur, according to food industry observers. Total U.S. organic produce sales topped \$9 billion in 2021, an increase of \$477 million compared to 2020, the marketing organization Organic Produce Network reported last month.

“If people think it’s more expensive, they’re not going to pay for it,” he said. “People think they can get it cheaper if it’s conventional.”

As the state enters what could be another dry year, Paul Muller, a partner of Full Belly Farm in Yolo County, said water availability—more than market trends—will determine what crops and how many acres he can grow. It will also impact pricing.

For now, he’s planting everything from potatoes to leafy greens—crops that are “more water thrifty” during cooler temperatures.

But the real test will be in the July-September summer months, when “we might see this whole system get a little bit stressed,” he said.



Yolo County organic farmer Jim Durst, seen here during the 2018 asparagus harvest season, says labor shortages have forced him to reduce his overall acreage this year. Photo by Ching Lee.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that it will keep growing,” said Monterey County grower Javier Zamora.

As people become more mindful about their health and the foods they eat, Zamora said he expects demand for organic produce will continue to rise. Growth in demand has already spurred conversion of more conventional acreage to organic production, he added.

Despite stronger demand from food service in 2021, Dick Peixoto said his farm, Lakeside Organic Gardens in Santa Cruz County (see related story, Page 13), did well last year selling produce to retail stores and companies that sell directly to homes. Peixoto said those markets remain “pretty good,” indicating that people who moved to eating more organic foods during the pandemic are sticking with it, which helps demand.

“A lot of them look to organic, as it is just one step in the right direction to eat more healthy,” Peixoto said.

He said he also thinks the organic trend has holding power as a new generation of shoppers raised on organic produce has an enduring allegiance to buying organic.

Because organic products are typically higher priced, San Diego County grower Noel Stehly said he thinks the sector will take a hit as shoppers pull back spending on organic items in reaction to overall inflation of food prices. He said he’s already seeing signs of this in his wholesale produce business and at his grocery store, Stehly Farms Market in San Diego.

If the farm needs to reduce acreage, Muller said, it may mean dropping some of its wholesale business so it can maintain farmers market sales and subscription produce boxes—two areas “where we can create a dialogue about fair prices.”

To save water, Zamora said he will not be planting crops such as kale, chard, spinach and cabbage that require overhead watering. Instead, he will grow more leeks, scallions, onions, tomatoes and squash that can be irrigated with drip tape.

With restaurants coming back, Zamora said he may

also look to grow more “boutique stuff” favored by chefs versus produce staples that are grown on a larger scale.

Muller said one area of concern for organic California growers is the influx of fresh-market tomatoes from Mexico grown in containers or hydroponic systems that directly impact the U.S. market.

Jim Durst, who grows organic vegetables in Yolo County, shares Muller’s concern. Despite “pretty strong” sales during the past two

years, he said increased competition from Mexico has driven down prices for U.S. organic farmers. Because of demand for organic produce, he said, every retailer wants part of that market, and for many of them, “it really doesn’t matter where they get it, just as long as they have it.”

“If they’re buying organic cilantro from Mexico at 30% of what California growers are selling it for, then they’re going to buy it from Mexico because cheap sells,” he said.

Though the drought remains a concern for all California farmers, Durst said his cropping decisions are now influenced more by what he thinks he can harvest, not by what he can sell. Everything he grows must be handpicked, and during the past two years, he said he had to leave 30% of his crops in the field due to labor shortages. This year, he’s reducing his acreage by 30%.

With restaurants coming back, Sacramento County farmer Curtis Lucero, who specializes in fresh-market organic tomatoes and is known for his heirloom varieties, said he’s planting more of them this year while reducing acres of eggplant and peppers, which haven’t done as well.

He described 2021 as “our best year in a while,” having sold nearly everything he grew—and he’s expecting the same this year. Even so, he said his profit margin “went way down” because of higher production costs. He hasn’t raised prices in the past two years but will need to this year, he said.

After cutting short his 2021 season due to lack of surface water, Tulare County farmer James Birch said he plans to grow all his acreage this year because he now has a well. With his crops on drip tape, he said he’s also added more high-tunnel houses, which allow him to use “a lot less water” and extend his season.

Birch’s farmers market business consists largely of presold orders from chefs and produce companies, with 20% in walk-up business. He said higher prices so far haven’t hurt demand because most of the chefs he sells to operate high-end restaurants that can absorb the higher cost by raising menu prices. Though his sales to restaurants evaporated in 2020, they’re now “back to normal, maybe even higher,” he noted.

“There’s huge demand for organic produce right now,” Birch said. “The restaurants that I sell to, they’re looking for organic produce. I think it’s the way of the future. I think the organic food market just keeps growing.”

## 2022 National Ag Day Agriculture Council of America Announces 2022 National Ag Day Date & Theme

Press release provide by the Agriculture Council of America

The Agriculture Council of America (ACA) will host National Agriculture Day on March 22, 2022. This will mark the 49th anniversary of National Ag Day which is celebrated in classrooms and communities across the country. The theme for National Ag Day 2022 is “Growing a Climate for Tomorrow.”

On March 22, 2022, the ACA will host a virtual Ag Day event and events in Washington, DC.

Additionally, the ACA will bring approximately 100 college students to Washington “virtually” to deliver the message of Ag Day to the Hill. A core leadership team of college students will attend events in DC. Another exciting feature of Ag Day 2022 is the Celebration of Modern Agriculture on the Mall, March 21-22.

These events honor National Agriculture Day and mark a nationwide effort to tell the true

See **NATIONAL AG DAY** on **PAGE 17**



HIGH QUALITY LEGAL REPRESENTATION  
Personal Injury · Medical Malpractice · Estate Planning  
Corporation/LLC Formation

Experienced. Trusted. Local.

THE LAW OFFICE OF  
**Kyle W. Jones**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

1620 Mill Rock Way • 833-1090 • KWJonesLaw.com



# Water, Fuel, Fertilizer Issues Impacting Tomato Farmers



**By Kevin Hecteman**  
Assistant Editor  
Ag Alert

Reprinted with permission from the California Farm Bureau Federation

The supply chain's weak links and California's

fickle winter weather are clouding the forecast for the state's processing-tomato farmers.

Aaron Barcellos, a diversified grower in Los Banos, already cut his tomato acreage by more than half last year—from 2,000 acres to 900—due to water supply shortages. This year, he's cutting back further, to 530 acres, and water's not the only reason.

"We've seen our cost just skyrocket over the past six or seven years," Barcellos said. "It used to cost us around \$3,000 an acre to grow tomatoes. We're projecting costs of over \$4,000 this year coming up. We just haven't had the revenues to match it." Yields have been flat or trending down over the past decade, he added, and "we haven't been able to get those yield increases to offset the cost increases."

Bruce Rominger, who grows tomatoes in Winters and serves as board chairman of the California Tomato Growers Association, named fuel and fertilizer costs among his top concerns.

"Primarily for us, the fuel cost hurts us in our production," Rominger said. "All our tractors, all our pickups, everything we do out here burns fuel. We are very concerned about what that does to our cost structure when we see our prices do what they've done in the last six months."

In January 2021, tomato processors intended to contract for 12.1 million tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistical Service. That figure was

lowered twice as the drought wore on—first to 11.6 million tons in May, then to 11.1 million tons in August.

The final harvest for 2021 was 10.8 million tons, well short of what growers wanted and processors needed, said Mike Montna, the president of CTGA.

"It puts us in a pretty low inventory position where we're going to have right around two months,

you're going to get paid before you commit and make the best decision with your water, because that's your limited resource." Having a price now gives everyone "the best chance to make the right decisions," he said.

Even with the price increase, "we still have to have a really good crop, it looks like, to make money," Barcellos said. "We just have so much risk on the producers' side with this tomato crop, and what

to do in a 40-hour workweek or eight hours a day. The labor pool is not what it was in the past, so it's not like we can run multiple shifts."

Rominger said he runs drip irrigation 24 hours a day at times.

"We can't find enough people to run three shifts," Rominger said. "We end up running several employees on a second shift that's more like a swing shift." These folks can change drip-irrigation valves at 10 or 11 p.m., he noted; valves should be good till 6 a.m. "That's going to be more expensive because of overtime issues this next season."

That assumes he was able to install the irrigation system in the first place.

"It's been really hard to get materials for putting in new drip-tape fields for drip irrigation, because the supply chain can't get it to us," Rominger said.

Barcellos is worried about fertilizer, noting that some products have doubled or tripled in price—if it's even available.

"There's concerns about availability this summer when we need a lot of these products," Barcellos said. "There's more unknowns than normal this year." Some of the main ingredients come from China, he added.

"A lot of that stuff just isn't getting over here, and China's got their own demands and needs for it as well," he said.

All of this could once again hamper output, Barcellos said.

"There's probably plenty of demand for a 12 million-plus-ton crop, but I don't think the industry's going to be able to source the acres or the water to produce that size of a crop," Barcellos said. "Until we have a decent water supply again in California, and have a nice wet year, I just don't see us having the acres to produce the crop for the demand that we'll have."



Ripe red and pink tomatoes boxes stored at a processing plant. Photo by Olena Yakobchuk / Shutterstock.com

maybe a little more than two months, worth of inventory starting June 1 based on projections," Montna said. "That's extremely tight."

Unlike most years, tomato farmers already have a set price for their crop this year. The CTGA and processors agreed last month on \$105 per ton, up from \$84.50 in 2021. Montna said inflation and farmers' increasing costs of growing factored into the price boost, noting growers and processors were motivated to reach an agreement early.

"From a processor perspective, they can make commitments to their growers," Montna said.

"From a grower perspective, you can know what

yields have been doing over the past 10 years, it's hard to justify putting a lot of acres in tomatoes right now."

Chief among the risks is water. Late last week, the state announced a 15% allocation for water contractors, up from zero at the outset of winter. Montna noted that the rest of winter will tell the tale, as a dry January followed a wet December.

"We're going to need a good February and a good March to figure out what water position we're going to be in," Montna said. "We need better than normal to improve the situation. Normal might sustain the situation, but you can't improve it with normal rainfall. We'll just have to see how that plays out."

Rominger said the allocation is helpful to a point.

"That 15% certainly helps quite a few growers, but a lot of us, including myself, don't get any state or federal water," Rominger said. "We're relying locally, here in Yolo County, on the water coming out of Clear Lake and Indian Valley, and there's still no allocation going to come out of there at the levels they have right now. We're still looking for a lot more rain and keeping our fingers crossed."

Farmers also cited the rising cost of labor as a factor, especially the lower overtime threshold. As of Jan. 1, overtime for employers of 26 or more people kicks in at eight hours in a day or 40 in a week.

"The overtime constrictions are going to really hamper a lot of growers," Barcellos said. "It's really hard to get everything done that you need

**C&H FENCE & PATIO**  
candhfence.com

- Electric Gate Operators
- Swimming Pool Fencing
- Ornamental Iron
- Security Doors
- Commercial / Residential / Farm
- Construction Fence Rentals

**Oldest and most experienced fence company in the Southern San Joaquin Valley!**

**Thank you for 55 years of serving you!**

**BAKERSFIELD**  
**661-327-4786**

**VISALIA**  
**559-651-0772**

**DELANO**  
**661-725-3600**



**FREE  
SUBSCRIPTION!**

[ValleyAgVoice.com/subscribe/](http://ValleyAgVoice.com/subscribe/)



# County Agricultural Commissioners Launch Pilots to Support Development of Statewide Pesticide Application Notification System

*Press release provided by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation*

On February 3rd, four County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs) announced a voluntary partnership with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to launch pilot projects to support DPR's development of a statewide pesticide application notification system. The pilot projects will launch between February and July 2022 and will help inform the design and implementation of the state's statewide notification system. The statewide system will provide more transparent and equitable access to information in advance of pesticide applications.

"The statewide notification system will complement existing pesticide laws and regulations that protect public health and the environment," said DPR Director Julie Henderson. "The purpose of the notification system is to provide transparent and equitable access to information to enable the public to make informed decisions about actions they may take to protect their health. This voluntary partnership between County Agricultural Commissioners and DPR on pilot projects is an important step in the development of a statewide system. We look forward to feedback from community members, growers, and commissioners on the pilots to inform the statewide system and improve community access to information."

The pilots will be conducted in communities located within Riverside, Santa Cruz, Stanislaus, and Ventura counties. Community members and growers will have the opportunity to share feedback on the pilots' implementation with their CAC to help inform the design of the statewide system DPR is in the process of developing.

Riverside Notification System Pilot will provide notifications in the Eastern Coachella Valley and is expected to launch as early as February. Community members can contact the Riverside CAC office for more information.

"We are looking forward to working in partnership with DPR to improve the access to information for our community regarding upcoming pesticide applications," said Riverside CAC Ruben Arroyo. "I'm hopeful these pilot programs will additionally support our collaborative outreach efforts to educate the public about the rigorous and unique pesticide program California has in place to protect people and the environment."

Santa Cruz Notification System Pilot will provide notifications to the Senior Village Community in Watsonville and surrounding homes. The project is expected to launch in July. Community members can contact the Santa Cruz CAC office for more information on the project.

"We look forward to collaborating with DPR and our community on this project," said Juan Hidalgo, Santa Cruz CAC. "We hope that in addition to providing notification to community members ahead of specific pesticide applications, this project will be helpful in informing our community about our state's pesticide use regulatory program and protections in place to protect human health and the environment. Input received from our community as the project is implemented will be valuable in helping DPR develop a statewide notification system."

Stanislaus Notification System Pilot will provide notifications to the community of Grayson. The project is expected to launch in April. Stanislaus CAC plans to coordinate community meetings in the near future to provide more information and will also share information on the pilot on the office's website.

"Stanislaus County is looking forward to being a part of this important notification pilot project," said Stanislaus CAC Kamal Bagri. "It will be beneficial to see how the system works for our communities and to identify potential challenges to better inform the public about pesticides around them. We hope the end result will make the statewide rollout a smoother process for DPR."

Ventura Notification System Pilot will provide notifications to the Nyeland Acres Community. The project is expected to launch in April. Community members can reach out to the county's Camarillo-based Pesticide Use Division (805) 388-4222 or contact the Ventura CAC online for more information.

"We look forward to conducting a pilot pesticide notification project in Ventura County to help develop a workable statewide program that will meet the needs of the community and build a stronger communication network among community members, farmers and the regulatory agencies that serve these sectors," said Edmund E. Williams, Ventura CAC. "Ventura County looks forward to working with our state partners at DPR on this pilot."

The 2021-22 state budget allocated \$10 million to DPR to begin the development of a statewide notification system. DPR anticipates implementing the statewide system in 2024. In addition to supporting county-led pilot projects, DPR is planning public workshops this spring to collect input on the statewide notification system's design. The department is additionally in the process of developing the technology for a statewide system and will draft the regulation to establish consistent, statewide requirements for the system's implementation in 2024. To learn more about the DPR's statewide notification system, visit the DPR's website.

DPR and the state's 55 CACs work together

to enforce California's comprehensive pesticide-use laws and regulations. DPR evaluates all pesticide products prior to registration for sales and use in California; creates regulations to mitigate any potential risk to human health and the environment; regularly re-evaluates pesticides based on scientific studies; monitors the air, water, and soil for pesticides; and tracks worker health and safety to inform mitigation efforts. CACs and their staff of more than 400 scientists and staff inspect pesticide application sites across all 58 counties; promote compliance with and enforce pesticide laws and regulations as guided by DPR and state regulations; and take action against violators. Commissioners' local, on-the-ground enforcement efforts are critical to the implementation of pesticide laws and regulations to keep people and the environment safe.

"Partnering with DPR to support and enhance development of an effective statewide pesticide

notification system is very important to California's CACs," said Rick Gurrola, Shasta County Agricultural Commissioner and president of the California Association of California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association. "Our role as CACs is to protect public health and the environment by rigorously enforcing and supporting compliance with all pesticide use laws and regulations. This new notification system will add an additional level of transparency and communication with the public and an opportunity to enhance education and outreach about the important rules and regulations in place to protect the health and wellness of fieldworkers and communities across California."

To learn more about the pilot projects in counties across California, visit DPR's website or visit your county agricultural commissioner websites for Santa Cruz, Stanislaus, Riverside and Ventura counties.

**JSS**  
**ALMONDS**

5600 Norris Road  
Bakersfield, CA 93308  
(661) 328-5755

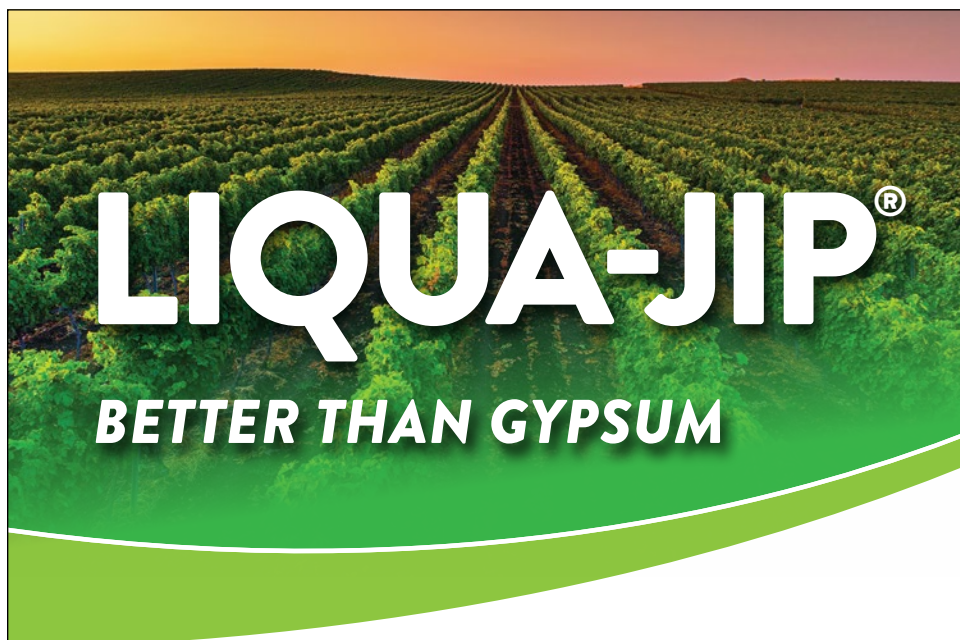
**Our goal is to highlight the great work our growers put into growing their almonds.**



**At JSS Almonds we work diligently to deliver continuously competitive and profitable returns to our growers.**

**For more information contact us at:  
Daniel Palla / Grower Relations Manager  
(661) 345-6613 / [daniel@jssalmonds.com](mailto:daniel@jssalmonds.com)  
[www.jssalmonds.com](http://www.jssalmonds.com)**





## MAINTAINING SOIL CATION BALANCE

LIQUA-JIP® is a free form of liquid calcium, derived from calcium organic acids, calcium amino acid complex, carboxyl poly hydroxy acid, and hydrolyzed proteins. The solubility of the calcium in LIQUA-JIP® is 100 times greater than other forms of gypsum.



- Provides high concentrations of calcium (essential for adding solidity to nut crops)
- Helps displace sodium ions—aiding to leach away excess salts from roots
- Replaces dry gypsum application, easily applied through irrigation, reducing costly application labor
- No concerns of clogging filters, emitters or nozzles
- No settling of product, as LIQUA-JIP® stays in solution
- Helps strengthen root systems
- Helps water penetration
- Improves soil texture and flocculation



(661) 327-9604 (800) 542-6664 CA Only  
WesternNutrientsCorp.com

We guarantee quality and the ability to ship the best products in their class at competitive prices world wide.

# New FFA Program Helps Students Make The Leap Into College

## Two-Day Change Makers Summit, With Support From Farm Credit, Opens Eyes To The Wide Range Of Ag-Related Career Pathways

*Press release provided by Farm Credit*

Going off to college is a big leap into the unknown for most college-bound high school seniors – especially when they’re doing so in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. To help ease the transition, the California Association of Future Farmers of America (FFA) has introduced a new program to make that leap a little more manageable – and to remind the students that there are many pathways to a career in California agriculture.

Funded in part by grants from Farm Credit, the Change Makers Summit: The Future Awaits! is a two-day program aimed at incoming high school seniors, explained Maureen Funk, the California FFA Foundation’s development director.

“The original plan, pre-pandemic, was that prior to their senior year, seniors would take time out and go to a conference at a college campus, experience life in the dorms, and have conversations with FFA alums about what skills they need to develop during their senior year to get ready for their next steps,” she said. “It’s an opportunity for them to stop and reflect for a bit – you’re almost done with this program, what’s next?”

Of course, due to COVID-19, the conference had to be virtual. The first one was held in the spring of 2021 for students about to graduate from high school, with a second session held in August for incoming seniors. FFA is planning to hold the program again this year, but plans are not yet final.

Rob Faris, President and CEO of Golden State Farm Credit, said the program is designed to help students use the skills they have gained and fulfill their life’s purpose after leaving the FFA blue and gold.

“The FFA alumni volunteers help students identify the specific skills they have gained from their FFA education and help them create a career plan that highlights how those skills will help them find success,” Faris said. “The volunteers also outline specific service projects seniors can undertake in their home commu-

nities or at college, and the seniors will leave knowing how capable, valuable and marketable they are.”

Farm Credit institutions supporting the California FFA are American AgCredit, CoBank, Colusa-Glenn Farm Credit, Farm Credit West, Fresno Madera Farm Credit, Golden State Farm Credit and Yosemite Farm Credit. They are all part of the nationwide Farm Credit System, the largest provider of credit to American agriculture.

Curt Hudnutt, President and CEO of American AgCredit, noted that another key part of the summit is outlining all the careers they can pursue in agriculture.

“Whether a student pursues a career in finance, joins their family farm or has an innovative business idea they want to bring forward, California agriculture – and U.S. agriculture – needs them,” Hudnutt said. “In 2022, the plan is to amplify this message by bringing in former FFA students now working in ag-related businesses to tell the students how they got where they are and help them understand the opportunities that are open to them.”

Funk said 164 students participated last April and another 207 did so in August.

“Our target was 150 participants at each session, so we were very pleased with the outcomes. Both sessions included a broad band of students from all our areas and participation was very good. The interns and volunteers all felt they got really good feedback and that it was a valuable experience.”

Farm Credit has supported FFA for more than 20 years, during which it has contributed well over \$550,000. Funk said Farm Credit’s strong support has been extremely important to helping FFA provide programs like the summit.

“Farm Credit is our most generous donor. They commit year over year to the organization, which helps us plan new things, knowing that those funds are coming in. And sponsors like Farm Credit keep our programs affordable for our students. We really value their support,” she said.

**Advertising in Valley Ag Voice  
is affordable and easy!**

**Visit [ValleyAgVoice.com/rates](http://ValleyAgVoice.com/rates)  
or call Dave @ 661-204-8160.**



# Innovative Solar Project Awarded State Funds: DWR Funds Turlock Irrigation District to Install Solar Panels Over Canals



Turlock Irrigation District's main canal rendering of solar panels. Photo courtesy of Solar AquaGrid.

Press release provided by the California Department of Water Resources

On February 8th, the California Department of Water Resources announced the award of \$20 million in funding for an innovative pilot project to install solar energy generation over water supply canals in California.

This funding, allocated by Governor Newsom and the State Legislature through the 2021-22 state budget, will be used by the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) to construct a solar energy generation project over the District's water canals.

"This is a really exciting project," said California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. "It connects our efforts in California to improve water conservation and build drought resilience with the clean energy transition we're driving across California."

TID will construct the solar energy project over multiple canal sections in its service area. The District will assess the impact of the project to reduce water evaporation in its canals, generate renewable, carbon-free energy, improve water

quality, and reduce canal maintenance.

As a partner on the project, DWR will provide funding from the state's General Fund to enable this project and offer technical assistance to TID.

"We are excited to explore new ways to advance the integration of renewable energy into our water supply delivery system," said Karla Nemeth, DWR Director. "The project offers great potential, and we look forward to collaborating with our partners to advance these types of multi-benefit projects."

The project is a partnership of DWR, TID, UC Merced, and Bay Area development firm Solar AquaGrid.

TID provides irrigation water and power to residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural customers within its service area. TID, which oversees 250 miles of canals and an electric utility with ability for direct interconnection, serves 4,700 irrigation customers covering approximately 150,000 acres of farmland.

For more about the project, visit TID's website at [www.TID.org/projectnexus](http://www.TID.org/projectnexus).

### Farm, Ranch and Transitional Use Properties

<b>FARMLAND</b> <b>PRICED REDUCED</b> <b>\$17,000±/AC</b> 20± acres, Kern Delta Water Dist, Kern Island Utility water, south Bakersfield	<b>ALMONDS</b> <b>PRICED REDUCED</b> <b>\$23,496±/AC</b> 111.42± acres, 1 well, 1 domestic well and 3.14 AF Wheeler Ridge Maricopa WSD contract water, Grade 1 Excellent Soils	<b>ALMONDS</b> <b>SALE PENDING</b> 156.56± acres, 1 well, 3.5AF Semi-Tropic WSD contract water, Young producing orchard, Open ground for new planting
<b>FARMLAND</b> <b>\$21,500±/AC</b> 117.82± acres, located in Kings County WD/1 Well grade 1 - Excellent Soils, Hanford	<b>TABLE GRAPES</b> <b>\$36,500±/AC</b> 119.92± & 150.27± acres, Delano Earlimart Irrigation District, Lower Tule River Irrigation District, Quality Varieties, Productive Soils	<b>FARMLAND</b> <b>\$13,000±/AC</b> 156.96± acres, Wasco Area, Semi-Tropic WSD non-contract water, 1 well, Productive soils, and Perfect for permanent crops
<b>WALNUTS</b> <b>\$32,000±/AC</b> 149.33± acres, Lindmore ID and Wells, Productive Soils, Lindsay, CA.	<b>TABLE GRAPES</b> <b>\$35,000±/AC</b> 154.36± & 406.65± acres, Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District, Quality Varieties, Excellent Soils.	<b>DRYLAND</b> <b>PRICED REDUCED</b> <b>\$2,250±/AC</b> 160± acres, mostly grade 1 soils, Near Valley Acres
		<b>WINE GRAPES</b> <b>\$18,378±/AC</b> 161.06± acres, Wasco area, Semi-Tropic WSD non-contract water, 1 Well, High-Density planting, Quality varieties, Productive Soils
		<b>ALMONDS</b> <b>\$17,500±/AC</b> 320± acres, Wasco Area, Semi Tropic non-contract water, 1 well, Grade 1 Excellent Soils, Almonds in full production.
		<b>ALMONDS AND FARMLAND</b> <b>\$21,790±/AC</b> 995.11± acres, Wasco Area, Semi-Tropic WSD Contract and non-contract water, 5 wells, Productive Soils, and Almonds in full production.

When it is time to sell your farm there is only 1 decision!  
Pearson Realty a Tradition in Trust Since 1919

**ROBB M. STEWART, AFM**  
[rstewart@pearsonrealty.com](mailto:rstewart@pearsonrealty.com)  
661.303.2930

**PEARSON REALTY**  
CalBRE Lic.#000020875  
4900 California Ave 210B,  
Bakersfield, CA 93309  
[www.pearsonrealty.com](http://www.pearsonrealty.com)

**KAMERON M. STEWART**  
[kstewart@pearsonrealty.com](mailto:kstewart@pearsonrealty.com)  
661.809.1817

**TONY MORENO**  
PHOTOGRAPHY

To see more and to purchase prints:  
[Facebook.com/tony.moreno.963](https://www.facebook.com/tony.moreno.963)  
661.703.0572 [amoreno2@bak.rr.com](mailto:amoreno2@bak.rr.com)

Become a Foster Parent

Because every child deserves Victory...

**VictoryFS.org**  
(661) 912-0111

## National Ag Day

Continued from PAGE 13

story of American agriculture and remind citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us. Many agricultural associations, corporations, students, and government organizations involved in agriculture are expected to participate.

National Ag Day is organized by the Agriculture Council of America. The ACA is a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public's awareness of agriculture's role in modern society.

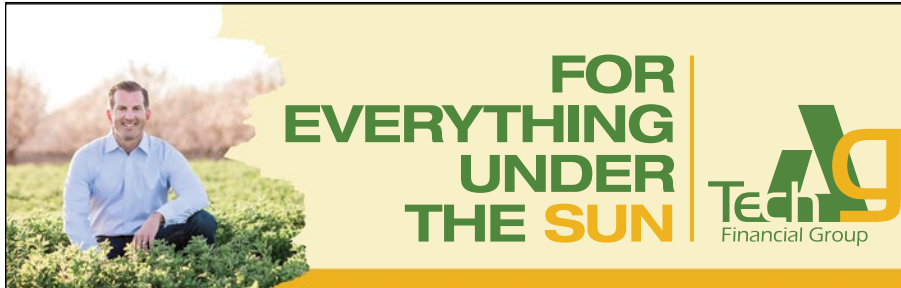
The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

- Understand how food and fiber products are produced
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant, and affordable products
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food, and fiber industry

In addition to the events on March 22, the ACA will once again feature the Ag Day Essay Contest. The winning essay will be presented on National Ag Day.

Visit [www.agday.org](http://www.agday.org) for more information on National Ag Day.





## MORGAN HOUCHIN

TechAg Financial Group, Inc.  
3430 Unicorn Road, Bakersfield, CA 93308

CA Broker DRE No. 01865336

Mob: 661-477-3669 | Off: 661-695-6500 | eFax: 661-384-6168  
MHouchin@TechAg.com | TechAgFinancial.com

## FEATURED LISTING



314.54 +/- Acres of Almonds & Open Farmland in Semitropic Water Storage District



Hosted by: Morgan Houchin & John Moore

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT US ONLINE AT [TECHAGFINANCIAL.COM](https://www.techagfinancial.com)

follow @techagfinancial



Podcast available on



## Winegrape Forecast

*Continued from PAGE 4*

have a good start; you didn't have any deep soil moisture. If we don't go into the spring with a reserve, that just compounds the problem even more. I definitely see the drought and the water concerns in the state continuing to plague all of agriculture, not just wine."

Supply-chain issues also are top of mind for grape growers. Bitter said that, in addition to fertilizer and herbicides, winegrape growers are having trouble getting the basic building blocks of a vineyard.

"If you want to put a vineyard in, you can't just call up your steel yard and say, 'Hey, I want to order 40,000 stakes and have them delivered in a couple weeks,'" Bitter said. "It's like, 'OK, I'll put you on the list, and I'll call you in three months and see where it's at—see if it's on the boat yet.'"

In the meantime, all a would-be grape grower can do is wait.

"You're going to want to develop a winegrape vineyard on steel stakes," Bitter said. "There's not really any good alternatives today."

When the ship carrying the stakes does finally show up, the price tags on the precious metal are likely to be higher. Stakes used to run \$3 to \$4 per copy, depending on the stake's height and width, Bitter said; now they run \$5 and up.

"When you plant a vineyard, you've got hundreds of stakes per acre," Bitter said. "It adds up pretty fast. You're talking about hundreds of dollars per acre in additional cost if it just goes up a buck or two bucks."

Boosting wine shipments, which Bitter cited as another means of easing oversupply concerns, may depend on demand. Speakers at the symposium noted the wine-drinking population is getting older.

"You have aging baby-boomer populations," said Mario

Zeponi of Santa Rosa-based Zeponi & Co., which specializes in mergers and acquisitions. "They're drinking less wine, and they're not being replaced by younger drinkers that have the same enthusiasm for wine." Part of this is because of what Zeponi termed a "better-for-you" movement.

"Consumers want less alcohol, a better, more holistic natural product—lower sugar, lower carb, lower calories—and this explains the phenomenon of seltzers," Zeponi said.

Danny Brager of Brager Beverage Alcohol Consulting pointed to a survey asking various age groups what adult beverage they'd most likely bring to a party. Nearly half of the 65-and-older respondents said they'd bring wine; that percentage declined steeply among younger drinkers, with only 15% of the 21-to-34 crowd saying they'd bring wine. Most of the rest of the younger demographic were more likely to bring beer, flavored malt beverages, hard seltzers or spirits.

"They're choosing different drinks right across the entire beverage alcohol spectrum, depending on the occasion," Brager said. "They're seeking authentic brands with authentic stories, open to exploration and discovery of something new to them, and often will pursue some form of entertainment as part of the drinking experience."

The question for winemakers, Brager said, is this: "How do we bring in younger, legal-drinking-age folks into the category, and build more onramps into the category so that they can start to enjoy wine?"

"If we don't keep bringing people into the category, we're going to have trouble, potentially, down the road," Brager said. "I'd encourage us to not just wait and not just hope for younger consumers to grow up into wine. If that happens, great. But if that doesn't happen, that kind of spells trouble. It's much better to be proactive."

The Unified Wine & Grape Symposium was presented by the American Society for Enology and Viticulture and the California Association of Winegrape Growers.



## SERVING CALIFORNIA GROWERS SINCE 1992



### DUST CONTROL

**MAG CHLORIDE**

**OIL BASED PRODUCTS**

SC250 - SC800 - SS1H

**PENNZSUPPRESS**

**LIGNOSULFONATE**

**TERRALIG FS**



**Contact American Ag Today**

**661-833-8311 | 844-299-8311 (Toll-Free)**

**Office@AmericanAgInc.com**

**AmericanAgInc.com**





# For What Reason?

By Joshua Stevens  
Faith Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

“[B]ut in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.” 1 Peter 3:15-16, (Crossway Bibles, 2001)

For some time now, America has had a steady decrease in church membership. “Americans’ membership in houses of worship continued to decline last year, dropping below 50% for the first time in Gallup’s eight-decade trend. In 2020, 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque, down from 50% in 2018 and 70% in 1999,” (Jones, 2021).

A mountain of articles, discussions, sermons, and even podcasts have dedicated time to the issue of

why people are leaving the church. Looking around, you can see a common through line from those who grew up in the church but later left. From Rhett and Link, hosts of “Good Mythical Morning” and “Ear Biscuits,” to young adults writing on blogs or posting videos on the internet, a large group of people leave the church when questions go unanswered or are answered incorrectly.

In the case of Rhett, we see someone who grew up in a Christian home whose faith was turned upside down when he discovered there was more truth to evolution than what his church had told him, (McLaughlin, 2020). Scenes like this are unfolding across the map, whether they are questions of science, the problem of evil, dealing with contradictions in the Bible, or cultural issues. Young people have questions and local congregations are failing to respond with a reason for why they should believe.

Imagine, for a moment, if instead of local leaders telling a young adult that there is no truth to evolution

(and it’s a vain attempt to dissuade people from the faith) that they would say something like: “Yeah, it might be true; I don’t think it holds water, but the gospel remains true regardless.” Or maybe even point him in the direction of evidence for how to reconcile the two beliefs. A recent book, William Lane Craig’s *The Quest for Historical Adam* would have been an excellent source to help someone work through the issue.

How then should Christians respond to someone asking questions about their faith? First, recognize that doubts are normal, and the questions that arise from them should not be feared. In Mark chapter 9, Jesus has an encounter with a father seeking healing for his son. During this encounter Jesus tells the father that his son’s healing is possible if he believes — to which the father responds in verse 24, “I believe, help my unbelief” (Crossway Bibles, 2001). Jesus did not admonish the father for his doubt, nor did he turn him away for it. Instead, Jesus, hearing the plea for help, did what was needed to settle the doubt. So, a first step would be to, in gentleness and love for those who doubt, seek to guide them through that doubt. In the above example, it might be a Bible study going through the first 11 chapters of Genesis, asking elders or pastors of the church on what sources might be good or using sources mentioned in previous *Centered on the Gospel* articles to help answer questions.

Secondly, respond to questions of doubt with prayer. In Philippians 4:6 we read, “[D]o not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God,” (Crossway Bibles, 2001). Prayer is a powerful tool for which people can individually and collectively petition the Lord for help and announce our gratefulness for what He has given. It should be a pillar of all Christian life,

but especially so when guiding others in their faith.

Finally, understand that “I don’t know” is a powerful tool, and it should be used when a Christian is uncertain about how to answer any question, but it shouldn’t stop there. Some questions are difficult to answer; they may be complex, counterintuitive, impossible, or at least impossible for us to answer. This does not mean Christians should abandon those who question — instead, there should be rejoicing. Questions arise out of interest, not disinterest. It shows a serious attitude towards the subject and a yearning to understand. When a student asks their teacher where to place a period, they do so because they want to know the answer. They want to get it right. Christians should share the same attitude when questions arise. Be joyful someone takes their faith serious enough to ask the question, grateful they trust you enough to answer it, brave enough to respond in truth and love, and, above all, quiet enough to hear the heart of the issue.

“Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.” 2 Corinthians 4:1-2

## References

Crossway Bibles. (2001). *The Holy Bible English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Good News Publishers.

Jones, J. M. (2021, March 29). U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time. Retrieved from Gallup : <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>

McLaughlin, R. (2020, February 3). Rhett’s Spiritual Deconstruction.



## Water Strategy

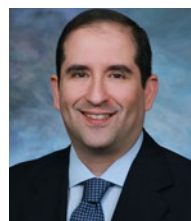
Continued from PAGE 1

California estimated that, on average, an average of 10-million-acre feet, surplus to all other needs, flows out the Golden Gate Bridge to the Pacific Ocean. That water is surplus to the in-Delta farm and community needs, environmental needs, and to the need to maintain in-Delta water quality. One fifth of that surplus water would solve the Valley’s water shortages, sustain local economies, replenish ecosystems, keep farmers in business, and keep Valley communities strong. There is no intention of degrading the sensitive Delta ecosystem — no need to take more water from the Delta in dry years. What is needed is the ability to capture a small portion of the surplus water during wet years.

What is at stake is not 500,000 acres of almonds, per se, but rather 500,000 acres of the most unique farmland in the world. While it may grow almonds now, it has the ability to grow an amazing variety of crops. With the world population increasing along with a demand for plant-based protein, why would a nation squander this resource simply because it can’t put surplus water to its best use?

These are the questions Californians need to ask to ensure those who create the policies are held accountable for the inevitable consequences.

## Trustee Jeff Flores Highlights High School District Priorities



By Jeff Flores  
Kern High School  
District Trustee

Serving as a Kern High Trustee is a responsibility I take seriously. The lives

of our students and the future of our agricultural industry depends on having high-quality schools. I wanted to take some time to fill you in on exciting developments at Kern High.

Workforce development and the success of our next generation is critical to our businesses and our local economy. This is the reason I am a passionate advocate for expanding career education. The past twenty months have shown us that education is more important than ever. Our ability to provide opportunities for inclusive growth and upward mobility depends on schools that produce graduates who are college and career ready. I thank our local Ag industry for your passion and support for our schools and—most importantly—our students.

Our district is always looking to Expand Career Education Opportunities where possible.

We have invested \$72 million to open a world-class Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC). The enrolled students have higher job placement after graduation. These students also

have improved graduation rates higher than both the district and state average.

The results speak for themselves; students can participate in more than 40 career education programs, including:

- Ag/Diesel Mechanics
- Auto Technology
- Bookkeeping & Accounting
- Computer Information Technologies
- Construction Trades
- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts
- Law Enforcement
- Medical Assistant
- Metal Fabrication
- Robotics
- and Small Business

to name just some of the innovative course offerings we provide.

All these career pathways are critical to cultivating the next generation of our agricultural workforce and leaders. Thank you for your passion and support of our schools and your ongoing contributions to Kern County.

## Giumarra

Continued from PAGE 8

• Giumarra Long Beach centers itself on sourcing grapes, stone fruit, citrus, and exotics from the Northern and Southern Hemisphere.

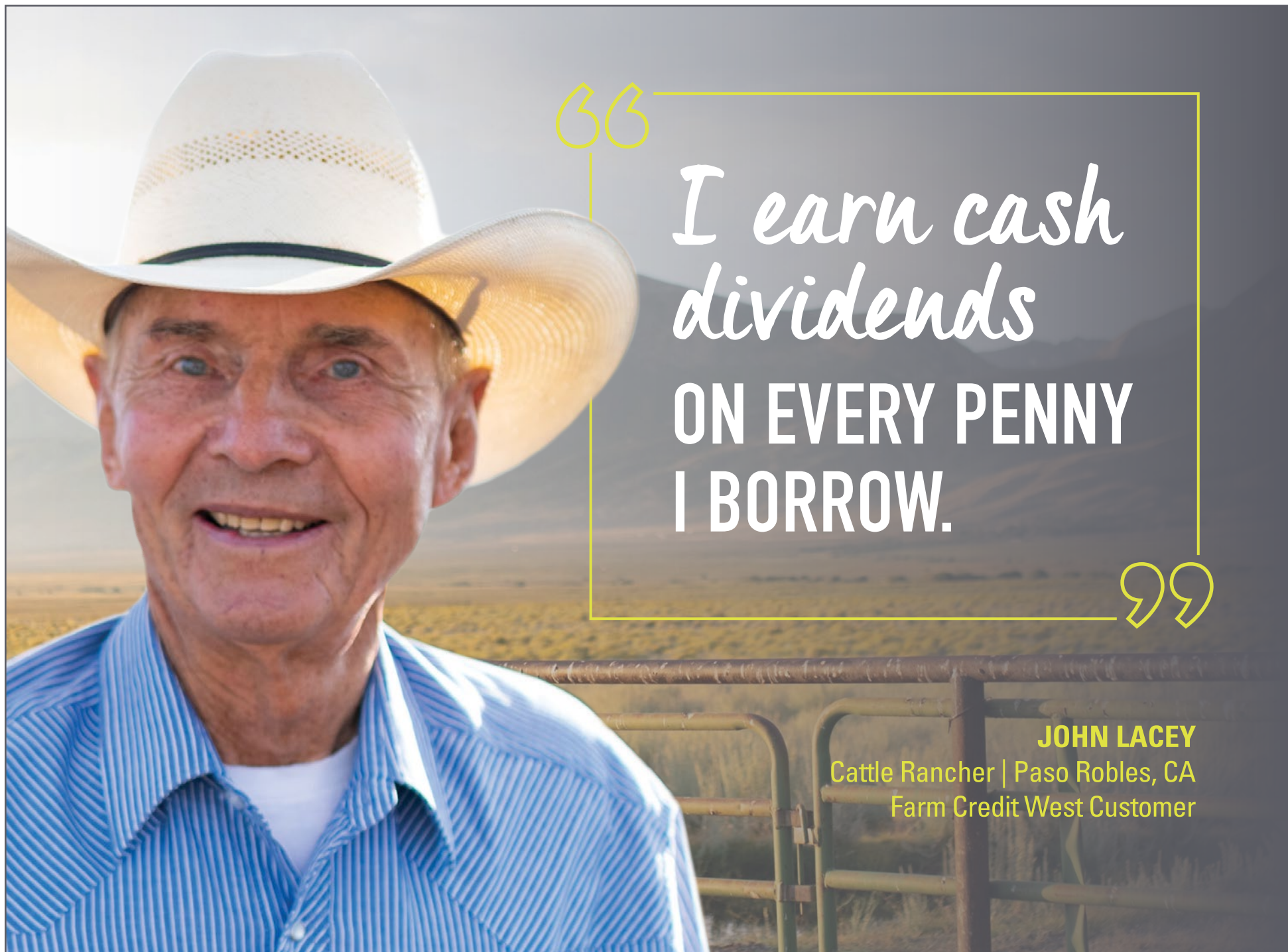
• Giumarra’s Wenatchee division markets imported and domestic apples, pears, and some citrus. They also provide a year-round availability to kiwi fruit.

Their small start in 1922 at the Los Angeles Union Terminal Market was backed with a dedication to make Giumarra a customer friendly experience with great service and great, healthy produce. Now, they provide produce, fruits from trees, vines, and bushes as well as vegetables from squash vines and pepper plants to a large part of the United States.



“A bunch of red ARRA grapes.” - giumarravineyards.com





*I earn cash dividends*  
**ON EVERY PENNY  
I BORROW.**

**JOHN LACEY**

Cattle Rancher | Paso Robles, CA  
Farm Credit West Customer

For 2021, our members earned 1.25% of eligible average loan balances in a cash patronage payment. If you're not earning a portion of your lender's profits back, **it's time to make the switch to Farm Credit West.**

**KERN COUNTY**  
661.399.7360

[FarmCreditWest.com](https://FarmCreditWest.com)

 **FARM CREDIT WEST®**

*Committed. Experienced. Trusted.*

