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A Comprehensive Solution to Address Water Issues

By Scott Hamilton
President, Hamilton Resource Economics

In March, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed by key water leaders to improve the health of rivers and landscapes in the Central Valley. Why does that matter? A major question facing regulators is how much water needs to stay in rivers in the Central Valley to keep them healthy. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) is required to update its Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan to protect native fish, wildlife, and other beneficial uses of water. Existing policies have proved ineffective in addressing declining abundances of native fish. Changes were needed. But the problem here

is that the health of the rivers depends on much more than just how much water is flowing through the Delta and, by extension, in rivers upstream that feed the Delta.

Before Europeans settled California, there were no levees on rivers to keep flood water contained. When the snow melted, huge areas of the Central Valley became wetlands. Those wetlands fueled the food web, provided habitat for waterfowl, and their waters drained back into rivers producing food for fish. In the last 100 years, large dams have been built that cut off salmon from their natural spawning grounds. Rivers and estuaries have seen the deliberate and accidental introduction of predators and species that compete with native species for food. For salmon, harvest and hatchery management practices continue to influence abundance of salmon. So, thinking that the abundance of native fish species can be restored just by increasing flows in rivers is naive.

The State Board understood that a comprehensive solution was necessary if abundances of native fish were to improve but were limited by the scope of their authority. Consequently, the State Board proposed some draconian measures that would require a minimum percentage of natural flow to stay in the rivers and would have severe impacts on water supplies in the Central Valley. Currently, much of the natural flow in the spring is stored in reservoirs for later use and is not needed to maintain healthy rivers. The State Board hoped that

(Chart: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California)

their proposal would be sufficient motivation for stakeholders to develop their own comprehensive solution – the development of “Voluntary Agreements” (VAs). For a while stakeholders engaged in vigorous negotiations but over time the negotiations began to deteriorate. First, many environmental organizations withdrew from the VA process, and then in 2020 water districts reliant on water from tributaries to the

See A COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION on PAGE 5



Holloway President Vard Terry Retires After 50 Years of Service

Part of three generations of Holloway employees, Terry celebrated 50 years of service on Dec. 18; He will remain with company as senior advisor



Vard Terry has worked in Central California agriculture for 50 years this December. (Photo: The Holloway Group)

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

Holloway President Vard Terry has announced his retirement after 50 years with the company.

Terry, who started at Holloway on Dec. 18, 1971, celebrated his 50th anniversary with the Central California-based company this past December. He officially retired on April 1, 2022.

While Terry will be stepping away from his full-time post, he will continue working with the staff as a senior advisor this year – Holloway's 90th as a company.

“Holloway wouldn't be where it is today without the contributions of Vard, and the Terry Family,” said Holloway CEO Brian Maxted. “He represents what Holloway is all about – integrity, trust and experience, building long-term relationships with customers, and putting our people, and our community, first.

“I'm excited for Vard to begin this next chapter of life, but also selfishly thrilled he will remain active as a senior advisor – in what marks our 90th anniversary as a company this coming May,” Maxted added. “We look forward to building on the legacy, experience and relationships Vard forged here at Holloway.”

In his five decades, Terry saw truckloads of changes to Holloway, which has grown from a gypsum mining operation to a multi-faceted company that provides numerous products as well as services to not only the

agriculture industry, but the environmental and logistics industries as well.

Terry has witnessed Holloway's Lost Hills Mine evolve from the area's top-producing gypsum mine to also include a full-circle waste management facility. He has also seen Holloway grow to offer a full line of agronomy, orchard removal and redevelopment services, as the company was recently named Inc. Magazine's fastest growing ag and natural resources company for 2021-22.

“I've made so many great relationships and met so many wonderful people during my time with Holloway,” Terry said. “I think that's what I've enjoyed most during my time here, the people. Whether it's the customers we work with, or our employees in the office, or in the field or at the mine, it feels like a family here.”

See VARD TERRY RETIRES on PAGE 8

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FFA State Finalists

By Audrey Hill, Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

A big congratulations to all FFA students and supporters who were recognized with an FFA award this 2022! There is no doubt that the Future Farmers of America are a high achieving group of high school students, but some go above and beyond their requirements and are rewarded every year. At the national and state levels, large leadership conferences recognize many students across a wide variety of agricultural fields. This year's California FFA State Leadership Conference was held from March 26th to 29th in Sacramento and recognized roughly 500 students, awarding scholarships to 80.

To win a state or national leadership award, FFA students

See FFA STATE FINALISTS on PAGE 7



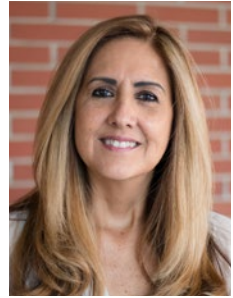
Chas McPheeters pictured transplating cattails on Pintail Slough Land Company in February of 2021. (Photo: Tristyn Hopfe)



FARM BUREAU NEWS

The United Voice of Kern County's Farming Community

President's Message



By Patty Poire
President, Kern
County Farm Bureau

The toughness and resolve of the California farmer is truly being challenged now more than in the last couple of years. With the increased costs for fertilizer,

labor, regulatory and don't forget water, these costs are taking over the agricultural industry with no end in sight.

As for water, it appears that this is going to be more of a dry water year than anticipated. The water year began with storms in December and early January but unfortunately tapered off to the point where the State pulled back its original allocation and then the Federal project proceeded in the same direction, pulled back. Now the Governor issued an Executive Order N-7-22 on March 28th, 2022, that extends his previous executive orders that began on April 12, 2021, with three additional executive orders that continued throughout the year of 2021.

Interestingly, in January the governor requested Californians do their "fair share" of decreasing their water usage by 15% in February. Californians saved less than 1% while agriculture was already looking at no allocations. In some



Pivot sprinkler system. (Infographic: Department of Water Resources)

areas, the water usage increased, and thus, the governor felt an executive order was necessary.

To assist in understanding the impacts to the reservoirs, see the current reservoir conditions as of April 10th, 2022. I am not sure that most Californians understand that water for agricultural means people are working, and food is being produced to be available at their favorite grocery stores.

I wish that water was the only topic requiring the Farm Bureau attention, but unfortunately it is not. Sacramento is having another robust year of cranking out legislative bill after legislative bill to regulate more of your life and what you can do in your life as it relates to agriculture. COVID-19 is and has remained one of Sacramento's vehicles to regulate. For example, AB 1751 would extend the date to report instances requiring workers' compensation to January 1, 2024. WOW, it appears that if you had COVID-19 now, you would have until January 1, 2024 to file a workers compensation claim. How many farmers would know two years from now who had COVID and when? California Farm Bureau is working on legislative bills like AB 1751 to stop the movement to the governor's desk. Maybe with this year being a mid-term election year and there are several candidates running now for governor, even if it makes it to his desk, he might have a reason to not sign! One could hope!

Speaking of mid-terms, that will be interesting as it gets closer to the primaries especially with the new districting that has occurred in California. Kern County has been divided into parts that go as far north as Fresno, as far south as San Bernadino and as west as the coast. It is like the State is wanting to "spread" Kern County instead of allowing it to control its own destiny. One item is for sure, agricultural in those areas is not as important as it is here, and to have some one who hasn't experienced Kern County agricultural, it will be a challenge to educate them as they vote in Sacramento. The Kern County Farm Bureau will be establishing its Political Committee and if you would like to participate, please contact Executive Director Romeo Agbalog.

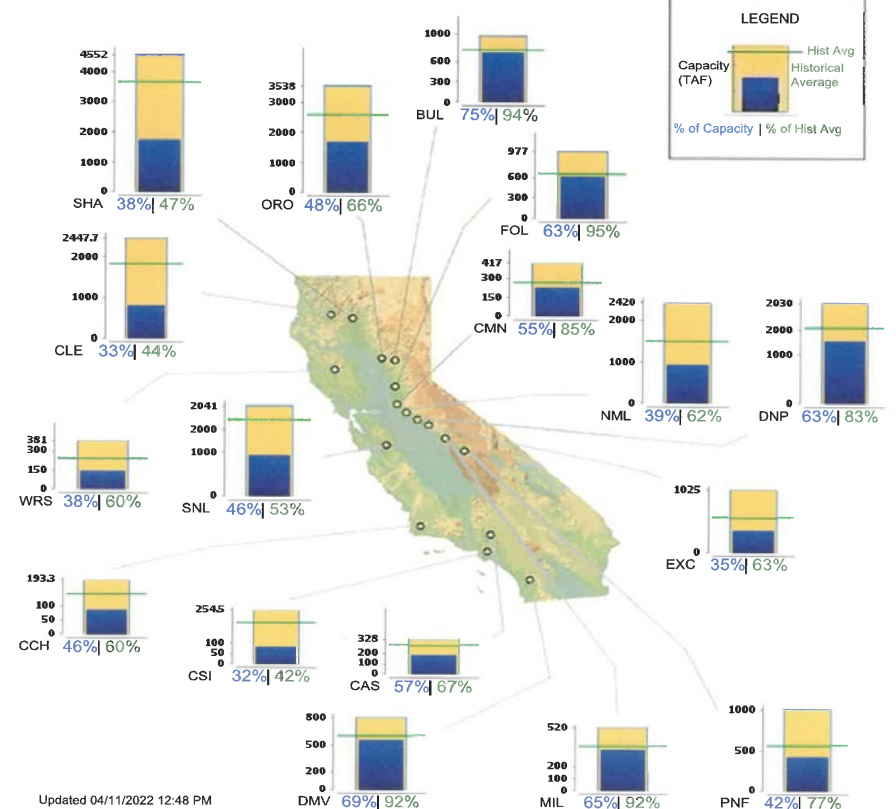
We know the toughness and resolve of the Californian farmer is on display and being challenged. Let's continue the fight and work towards the betterment of California agriculture.

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CALIFORNIA MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS CURRENT CONDITIONS



Young Farmers & Ranchers

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By Timothy Collins
Chair, Kern County
Young Farmers
& Ranchers

It had been several years since our last Young Farmers and Ranchers dairy tour as a club, and with milk consistently being one of

Kern's top five commodities, we felt it was time to do another tour. In March, we toured Lakeview Farms Dairy located southwest of Bakersfield. It's a relatively new and modern dairy, and we all walked away surprised and impressed at the level of technology now incorporated in milk production. From the cows being monitored with implanted identification chips, to an entire manure digester producing natural gas, every step of the process has been affected by technological advancements. It is this innovation in the agriculture industry that allows us to continue to produce milk and everything else more efficiently and with higher quality than ever before.

Not only is agriculture embracing "smart" technologies, but it is also embracing "green" technologies that make



Dairy tour of Lakeview Farms. Left-Right: BJ Schoneveld (dairy owner), Tristan Wieser, Jared Johnson, Eric Schoenheide, and Tim Collins. (Photo: Kern County Farm Bureau)

it a part of California's continued energy sustainability push. Lakeview Farms is not alone in installing a massive digester system that is able to capture natural gas from cow manure and then use that gas to power a generator or be sold into the pipeline. On top of that, surrounding many dairies are rows of solar panels to help provide power as well. On the water side of sustainability, water at dairies is never wasted but rather used multiple times

before it even makes it out to irrigate the fields. Agriculture is not an industry that is opposed to sustainability, quite the opposite. Agriculture has always been about sustainability, and it's been part of the industry long before it became a focus of our state.

I was recently at a farm equipment dealership checking on my student interns when I began talking to the manager

about one of the modern potato planters that they were assembling. This was a piece of equipment that did multiple jobs at once and required much skill and knowledge to design, set up, and operate correctly. Especially in California's diverse agricultural industry, there is much more room for those with ambition going into ag to use their ability to innovate.

See **YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS** on the NEXT PAGE



The French Bakery being moved to the Kern County Museum in 1962. (Photo: Kern County Museum)

French Bakery Revival at the Kern County Museum



By Mike McCoy
Executive Director,
Kern County Museum

When the Laxague Family decided to build a new brick building for their historic Pyrenees Bakery in 1961 on East 21st Street, they donated

the original wooden building to the Kern County Museum. As was typical at that time, the building was “rebadged” by the Museum and used to create a dress makers store and watch repair shop. Several of the buildings in Pioneer Village were repurposed to create a variety of retail and commercial portrayals. For example, the old cook shack from the Piute

Meat Packing Company became a “Land Office” and a worker housing unit from Hart Park became an “Undertaker’s Parlor.”

“Mr. Bailey wanted to give the impression of a small American town at the beginning of the 20th century,” said historian Rachel Hads. “In some cases, this made sense, but in others the original building had historic provenance that merited keeping it as the original use.”

This is certainly the case with the bakery building. In the bustling town of Kern in 1910, the bakery was an important business in the largely immigrant community. For the French and Spanish Basque newcomers, a bakery was an important reminder of home. Originally founded by the Gueydan Family in 1893 as the Kern City Bakery and then the French Bakery, Pierre and Juanita Laxague bought the bakery in 1947. The small wood frame building served as the retail showroom for the baked goods and also served as the family’s home. The Pyrenees Bakery is still in business 75 years later.

This spring, museum staff began turning the building back into a bakery. With the support of long-time bakery owner Marianne Laxague and the Ellen Baker Tracy Guild, the exterior was returned to the original white paint with red trim. A new sign was added for the front, the interior was painted white, and the front interior was opened back up and returned to a bakery retail area. The Museum hopes to use the new space as a small entertainment area for showers or parties.

Ms. Laxague donated two original oven doors to create a faux bread baking area in the back of the building and the original 20 foot “peels,” or bread paddles. She also offered a vintage cash register and several historic photos. “Bringing this 100-year-old building back to its original purpose was important,” Rachel said. “And it is a great reminder of the significant contribution our Basque community made to the development of Kern County.”



The Laxagues at their Pyrenees Bakery. (Photo: Kern County Museum)

Young Farmers & Ranchers

Continued from the PREVIOUS PAGE At the recent state FFA conference, I was pleased to see our state’s Young Farmers and Ranchers set up at the career fair and reaching out to all the ag students. YF&R is the next step students need to get the most involved in agriculture after graduation. Agriculture is an exciting industry that has always been filled with innovations and technologies and will continue to have much room for improvement in the future. We need to continue to

raise up the next generation of farmers and ranchers for the industry that not only embraces but pioneers new technologies, making it a leader in the twenty-first century.

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.

Email: KernYFR@KernCFB.com

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RENEGADE ROUND-UP

Rodeo Club at Bakersfield College



By Andrea Prise
Professor, Bakersfield
College

Have you heard the exciting news? This year, Bakersfield College has started a Rodeo Club that is competing in the West Coast Region of the

National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association (NIRA). As a new member of the NIRA, Bakersfield College is able to offer their students more ways to participate in the farm and ranch lifestyle that helped build our great community.

Bakersfield and the surrounding areas hold a rich history in cowboy and rodeo culture. The first official Bakersfield Rodeo was held during the Bakersfield Homecoming Week in April 1914 and drew in crowds and competitors from around the country including cowboy poet and competitor “Skeeter Bill” Robbins and National Cowboy Hall of Fame inductee bronc rider Dorothy Morrell. Ranching families that settled the area still run cattle on the hillsides and mountain tops that surround Bakersfield.

While the city of Bakersfield continues to grow, the small-town culture has remained strong. From the mountain communities of Kernville, Tehachapi, Frazier Park and Glenville, to the flat lands of Mojave, Lost Hills, Maricopa and Delano, the usual “six degrees of separation” becomes a one to two degree when cattle or horses are involved. It is common to meet someone for the first time at a rodeo or horse show one week and see them again with a mutual friend the next. It is hardly a surprise anymore because “It’s Bakersfield!”

With such a strong background in Western Heritage, it is only natural that Bakersfield College should provide



(Photo: Rodeo Club, Bakersfield College)

students the opportunity to participate in college rodeo while continuing their college education in their hometown. Adding another college to the NIRA helps keep our Bakersfield ranching families involved in our community while allowing students who may not have the Western background the opportunity to learn more about rodeo and the cowboy way of life.

The NIRA has been an organization since 1948 and has grown from the founding 13 member schools to 137 member schools and universities with over 3,500 students competing in over 100 rodeos a year. Bakersfield College is proud to be part of the growing number of students and members for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. This year, Bakersfield College has traveled to rodeos hosted by Feather River College in Quincy, Lassen College in Susanville, Fresno State in Clovis, West Hills College in Coalinga, Cuesta College and Cal Poly University in San Luis Obispo, and will be traveling to compete at the South Pointe Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas rodeo.

College students from 18-24 years of age with a high school diploma or GED that are currently enrolled in at least 12 units of college classes per semester can compete in

See RODEO CLUB AT BC on PAGE 11

DAILY AG NEWS

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The
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Do It Yourself and Find Out

By Austin Snedden
Ranching Contributor,
Valley Ag Voice



There are a fair amount of folks that have been managed by someone who has never done the job they are managing. The frustration commences when an experienced person is told how to do something by someone that has never done it. We see this a lot in the adverse relationship that government has with private businesses, regulations, and fees to incentivize doing business a certain way when the desk-bound bureaucrat sending the edict has never participated in production in any way. Whether talking to a private sector boss with no savvy or a bureaucrat with soft hands, it is dangerous to respond, “Do it yourself and find out if your way is better,” when we all know that is what needs to be said. I do this myself sometimes in thinking I know how everything should be done, but frankly, I regularly overestimate my own knowledge. Some of the best learning happens when I know from zero experience how something should be done and I do it myself, only to find out quickly why it isn’t done that way.

These days, everything is costing more and when you have periods of extreme inflation like this, you find out in a hurry what are luxury items. Although we are seeing gross inflation, thankfully most goods and services still aren’t overpriced. Things are expensive based on what we are used to, but are they *really* too expensive? Competition keeps prices lower which means I can shop around for a price I like. The ultimate factor in competition is that if I don’t find a price I like, I can grow it, build it, or do it myself. Occasionally, when I do it myself, I find out I can do it better and cheaper... but rarely.

“Beef is too expensive!” is a line I hear regularly. Even though the meat packers have had record margins over the last several years, is it too expensive? Do the job yourself and find out. You will need to start out with a calf. You might be able to get a decent weaned calf for \$700, but if you think the \$700 is too expensive, you can start from scratch and maybe buy a cheap cow for \$500. You can cut a corner and artificially inseminate the cow instead of having to buy a bull; maybe someone generous would do that for you for \$50, including semen. There is a 60% chance she gets bred from this; otherwise, you’ll

(Photo: Cameron Watson / Shutterstock.com)

have to repeat the process. Let’s assume you now have a bred cow, you will need to purchase a large stack of \$20 bales of hay to feed her for nine months until she calves. Maybe you are

looking to grass-feed and want to skip the cost of hay. You can hunt down a piece of property to lease or buy, which in our area takes about 30 acres to run a cow for a year, and that is with average rainfall. Hopefully, you won’t have to commute very far or haul water to the property with fuel prices at \$6 per gallon. In nine months, there is a good chance you will have a live calf. Keep in mind if you are hay-feeding, the lactating cow and growing calf are going to now require more feed. If you feed the calf conventionally, he will be ready to harvest in about 18 months, but you will need to buy a lot of grain. If you want to go the grass-fed route, you will need to grow him for 22 to 29 months for good quality on grass in this region.

Now it is time to harvest. If you have the skills, the tools, and a strong back, you can do it yourself. Or you can have a professional do the harvesting and have it cut and wrapped for maybe around \$1,000. Hopefully you have a large freezer and don’t have to purchase one. Hopefully you won’t have any veterinary expenses, and maybe you can skip buying insurance in case your animal gets out on the highway and totals a vehicle. Anywhere from 27-39 months after you started, and several thousand dollars later, you will have a freezer with about 500 pounds of meat in it. Do it yourself and find out if the beef in the store is too expensive. This is not exclusive to beef, this example could fit many things, especially in agriculture.

One of the things that many people think is overpriced (and even fewer people have tried do themselves) is the cost of a farrier. Getting shoes on a horse or having them trimmed can get pricey. The cost seems even more pricey if you have never done it yourself and you have a farrier that makes it look easy. Occasionally, I will trim a few of our own horses. After only a few horses, I think to myself as my sweat-soaked body crawls to the gate to turn the horses out, “Maybe the farrier isn’t that expensive,” and then I spend the next several days in a more aerodynamic position as I hunch forward because my back won’t straighten.

I am in no way defending inflation and the government-created mess we are in. Things could be cheaper, and things should be cheaper. I am offering a different perspective, looking from a production standpoint. Thankfully there are still those of us that like to be in production, and there are still consumers that will spend their hard-earned dollars on the things we produce.

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A Comprehensive Solution

Continued from PAGE 1 San Joaquin River also withdrew. That deterioration was partly a problem of too many cooks in the kitchen. There was no way to satisfy everyone’s needs with the limited water supplies available. After August of 2020 the process stalled. Seeing a pending crisis, the governor called key stakeholders back to the VA negotiating table. Those stakeholders were primarily state and federal agencies and water leaders from around the state.

On March 29th, the MOU was signed. Signatories to the agreement committed to finalize several initiatives including:

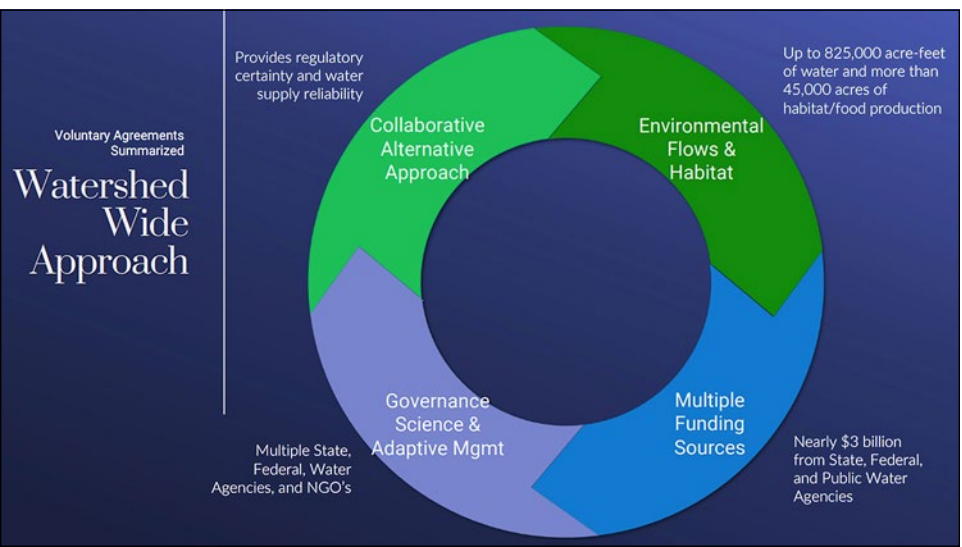
- **Up to 824,000 acre-feet** of additional flow to and through the Delta in the January to June window – an important period for salmon (target flow volumes vary with the type of water year but will be above current regulatory conditions)
- **20,000 acres** of additional floodplain habitat
- **20,000 acres** of rice cropland inundated to improve food web conditions for fish
- **Restoration of over 5,000 acres** of additional tidal wetlands and associated floodplain
- **Nearly 3,300 acres** of additional spawning, and instream and floodplain juvenile rearing habitat.

According to the state press release, implementation “is estimated to cost \$2.6 billion, to be shared by water users and the state and federal governments. Water agencies will self-assess fees to support implementation of the voluntary agreements. Water users and the state will make flows available through a combination of reduced diversions, year-by-year purchases of water, long-term or permanent purchase of water, and voluntary fallowing of agricultural or pasture lands.” For Kern County, the cost is significant. The funds needed for environmental initia-

tives includes a fee of \$10/acre foot for water exported from the Delta. That puts Kern County’s share at around \$600,000 per year. But for once, it is not solely water exporters who are bearing the cost of improving environmental conditions in the Delta.

The MOU recognizes there is still much to be done, but it reignited the process, opening the pathway to a solution. Given that most of the environmental organizations withdrew from the process, it is ironic that some of them complained about the “backroom” negotiations (see a blog by Doug Obegi, Director of NRDC’s California River Restoration Program - Who (and What) are Excluded from Backroom Bay-Delta “Deal” | NRDC at [NRDC.org/Experts/Doug-Obegi/About-Deal-Bay-Delta](https://www.nrdc.org/Experts/Doug-Obegi/About-Deal-Bay-Delta)). Two implications emerge. First, over the past three decades, water managers have become far more knowledgeable of and proactive in addressing environmental issues. By understanding the environmental issues but also the needs of their constituents, water managers are positioned to offer reasonable and balanced solutions. Second, the more extreme environmental organizations do not appear to be interested in balanced solutions. While there are, of course, some very responsible environmental organizations—The Nature Conservancy, Environmental Defense and Audubon, to name just a few—it appears leaders are finding it increasingly difficult to collaborate with the more extreme environmental groups whose proposals are not supported by the best available science and are out of touch with reality.

Jennifer Pierre, general manager of the State Water Contractors saw the value of the MOU and the collaboration that led up to it saying, “Our only path forward is together, and the VAs create an appropriately sourced governance approach that will allow resource agencies, public water agencies and conservation groups to work together to better balance the environmental and economic needs of our State. We look forward to working with our partners and state leaders to move the VAs



(Charts: Metropolitan Water District of Southern California)

forward to achieve reliable water supplies for Californians and our ecosystems.”

In a water-short state like California, the resource allocation decisions are difficult and the consequences of

making a wrong decision are severe. Creative solutions are needed. Collaboration can be very effective in developing those solutions, but participants in those processes should not be afraid of what the science might tell them. Good decisions necessitate the use of good science.

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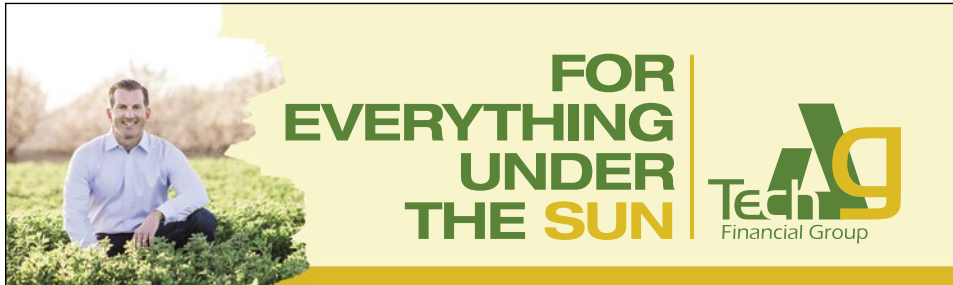


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Bill Would Remove Regulatory Barrier to Financing of Processing Facilities

Press Release Provided by U.S. Cattlemen's Association

On April 8th, Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) introduced the Amplifying Processing of Livestock in the United States Act, or the A-PLUS Act.

The bill would allow livestock auction markets to hold an ownership interest in, finance, or participate in the management or operation of a packing facility that has a slaughter capacity of less than 2,000 animals per day or 700,000 animals per year.

Currently livestock auction yards are NOT allowed to finance or manage processing facilities – a regulation that dates back to terminal livestock markets in the 1900s when there was little separation between buying and selling agents.

USCA President Brooke Miller issued the following statement:

“The Packers & Stockyards Act is over one hundred years old – it’s time to modernize parts of this historic legislation that no longer make sense in the modern world.

“Today’s livestock auctions are often family-owned and regionally based. If one of these entities wanted to invest in a local processing facility to increasing processing capacity for producers in their area, there shouldn’t be an outdated regulation holding them back from doing so. USCA would like to thank Representatives Panetta and Hartzler, and the Livestock Marketing Association, for working to advance this commonsense regulatory fix.”

Two New Cattle Market Studies Validate Ranch Group's Call for Meaningful Congressional Action



Calves feeding in a farm. (Photo: Dusan Petkovic / Shutterstock.com)

Press Release Provided by R-CALF USA

On March 31st, R-CALF USA is calling on Congress to cease consideration of the Cattle Market Price Discovery and Transparency Act of 2022 (modified compromise bill) that was drafted without the benefit of two new cattle market studies. The ranch group says the new studies contain monumental findings that suggest Congress must do much more to reform the fundamentally broken cattle market than is contemplated in the modified compromise bill.

Yesterday, a summary of a developing research project that explores the pricing behavior of beef packers in the United States was issued by economists from Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, Georgetown University, and Ohio State University. The summary, Buyer Power in the Beef Packing Industry: An Update on Research in Progress, focuses on the potential cause for the unprecedented “packer spread” – the spread between live cattle prices and wholesale beef prices – manifest from 2015 through 2019.

According to R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard the increased packer spread referenced in the summary is associated with depressed cattle prices paid to America’s cattle farmers and ranchers and inflated beef prices paid by consumers.

The reason for this increased packer spread, as thus far revealed by the research, may be the beef packers’ exercise of buyer power in the fed cattle market made possible by the packers’ use of alternative marketing arrangements (AMAs) that now predominate the U.S. cattle market.

The researchers’ analysis to date has found that “a one percent increase (of) the fraction of cattle purchased

under AMAs is associated with a 5.9% reduction in the cash market price.”

As a preliminary recommendation for policy makers, the researchers state: “As a matter of economic theory, our research suggests that eliminating AMAs or increasing competition among packers—for example by barring multi-plant ownership—could better align the price of fed cattle with the economic value that is provided by feedlots and other upstream participants.”

Their research also demonstrates that the five regional cattle procurement regions established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for purposes of reporting cattle prices “should not be interpreted as economically independent geographic areas.” Bullard pointed out that the modified compromise bill is predicated on this erroneous interpretation.

A second independent economic analysis was also issued recently by researchers at the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, Iowa State University, titled, Multi-plant Coordination in the US Beef Packing Industry. This analysis focuses on the contribution that multi-plant ownership has made to the increased packer spread observed in recent years.

The researchers found that prior to about 2005 (when the volume of cattle procured in the competitive cash market was over 60%), the largest packers that owned multiple packing plants nevertheless operated each plant as an independent profit center. But sometime after 2005, the largest packers began coordinating procurement and slaughter activities across their plants. The researchers explain that “it is as if more than 20 separate economic agents suddenly consolidated into four.”

And the researchers assert that it is this movement toward multi-plant coordination, along with its close relationship to other factors such as transportation costs and the largest packers’ use of AMAs, that lead to wider packer spreads. Their research shows that “beef packers employing multi-plant coordination leads to wider spreads between downstream beef prices and upstream fed cattle prices.”

“These comprehensive analyses are earthshattering for the cattle industry,” Bullard said adding, “They contradict earlier studies used by conventional agricultural economists to pressure Congress into taking only minimal action, if any, to reform the broken cattle market, as is exemplified by the minimalist approach in the modified compromise bill currently under congressional consideration.”

Appellate Court Upholds Grazing on Federal Lands



By Kevin Hecteman
Assistant Editor,
Ag Alert

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from California Farm Bureau
Federation*

Ranchers with grazing permits in the Stanislaus National Forest and elsewhere are no longer in danger of being run off their allotments after a federal appeals court rejected an appeal from environmental groups seeking to hamstring cattle grazing on federal lands.

The Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center and Sierra Forest Legacy groups sued in federal court in March 2017, alleging violations of the Clean Water Act, Environmental Policy Act and Forest Management Act. Specifically, the suit challenged cattle-grazing allotments on Bell Meadow, Eagle Meadow and Herring Creek allotments authorized by the U.S. Forest Service.

California Farm Bureau Senior Counsel Kari Fisher said the Forest Service and state water boards have had a deal in place for more than 40 years that no additional water quality permits are needed under state law. The agreement recognizes that the Forest Service practices for protection of water quality on federal land comply with state water quality laws. The environmental groups' lawsuit argued the deal was void.

"It's a heavily managed grazing system," said Sherri Brennan, a rancher whose family has been running cattle on forest-land allotments for decades. "Those best-management practices are in place to meet the agreements that the agency has with the water boards."

Dick Gaiser, chairman of the Stanislaus National Forest Grazing Association, said all of the allotments are used by family operations, some of which have been running cattle on them for five or six generations. "We as a group deal very well and work very well with the U.S. Forest Service on our allotments," Gaiser said. "We try to keep the lines of communication open, and we work with them, and I think that's been very beneficial for us."

California Farm Bureau, along with several other organizations, intervened in the case on behalf of the Forest Service.

Fisher said Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center



Nebraska Hereford Cattle. (Photos: Dani O'Brien / Shutterstock.com)

"conducted monitoring to try to show why grazing should no longer happen in the forest areas." She explained that "this was their attempt to prevent grazing or severely restrict grazing by alleging that the Forest Service doesn't have permits under state law."

After the plaintiffs' claims regarding the National Environmental Policy Act were dropped, a district court ruled in favor of the Forest Service and the ranchers in August 2019. The environmental groups appealed the Clean Water Act portion of the ruling, and on April 8, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit upheld the lower court's decision. Developing a program of implementation of water-quality objectives, the court ruled, is outside its jurisdiction.

The regional board sets water quality objectives by considering conditions that can "reasonably be achieved through the coordinated control of all factors which affect water quality in the area," the court ruled. Nothing in the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act of 1969, under which regional boards regulate water quality and discharges, "would make a discharger directly liable for violating a water quality objective contained in a basin plan that is not contained in the applicable (permits)," the court ruled.

Fisher said the ruling means that one cannot be found liable for something that is not in the permit. She said ranchers receive instructions from the Forest Service before they are allowed to release cattle to graze, based on the Forest Service's evaluation of the land and conditions.

"They have to manage cattle on the allotments in a way that is protective of the environment," Fisher said of the

ranchers. "It's not like they just have free range of the whole grazing area. They constantly have to move the cows throughout the allotment so that no cow is in that area too long to destroy the area, including riparian growth, streambanks, meadows and water quality."

Having to secure state permits on top of federal permits would have resulted in ranchers spending more time wrangling paperwork than cattle, dealing with "duplicative regulations, duplicative management practices, duplicative reporting," Fisher said. "In our mind—which was affirmed by the district court and the 9th Circuit—the Forest Service was in compliance with both state and federal water-quality regulations and therefore didn't need additional permits," she said.

Brennan said the grazing allotments all "have a private-property component associated with them." She added, "That means if you step away from the public-lands piece, and you don't have the capacity, you could be stepping away from ranching entirely. It certainly would have been a make or break for our operation."

This is the second time this year a court has ruled that regulating water is not its job. In February, a state appeals court turned aside claims in Monterey Coastkeeper v. Central Coast Water Quality Control Board that state water regulators were not doing their jobs and that the court needed to take over.

"We've had a lot of partners in this litigation, and those partnerships are so important," Brennan said, naming Farm Bureau, the California Cattlemen's Association and local grazing associations and permittees. "I just personally would like to say thank you."

FDA Won't Conduct Broad Sampling of Leafy Greens in the Salinas Valley in 2022

*Press Release Provided
by Western Growers*

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration will not conduct broad sampling of leafy greens grown in the Salinas Valley region of California for the 2022 growing season.



(Photo: George Dolgikh / Shutterstock.com)

The decision was made based on data from Western Growers, the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture inspection activities.

The FDA encouraged the organizations to continue to work with the agency to enhance the sharing of industry information on pre-harvest and post-harvest testing as all parties aim to assure the safety of leafy greens.

"Western Growers is committed to developing and deploying data collection and analytic digital tools to further enhance the sharing of industry information," said De Ann Davis, WG's Senior Vice President of Science. "We think this is an encouraging development for our members as we strive to grow the safest produce possible."

The FDA notes they are considering risk-based surveillance sampling based on historical data and information from previous outbreaks of foodborne illness and reserves the right to reassess this approach if unforeseen events occur.

About Western Growers:

Founded in 1926, Western Growers represents local and regional family farmers growing fresh produce in California, Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico. Western Growers' members and their workers provide over half the nation's fresh fruits, vegetables and tree nuts, including half of America's fresh organic produce. Connect and learn more about Western Growers on Twitter and Facebook.

FFA State Finalists

Continued from PAGE 1 must first compete with their chapter in a sectional competition, with winners advancing to regionals, then area, and finally, to nationals. California has more than 300 FFA chapters that are geographically divided into six regions. Kern County represents 11 of those chapters and is divided into two different sections. The first is the South Valley section which accounts for areas West of the CA-99 and encompasses Frazier Park to McFarland. The second is the Kern Inyo section which accounts for areas to the East of the CA-99 and stretches as far as Bishop. Students from all chapters compete during sectionals to move up to the San Joaquin regional competition, with winners advancing to compete at the state level. All winners will be recognized at the Washington Leadership Conference in October of 2022.

Many of the competitions and awards given are based off rigorous online record keeping that students do individually. The Agriculture Proficiency Award is given to those who present their projects with accuracy and show high involvement and determination. Projects in this award category range from agriculture communications to viculture production, turf grass management, and more.



LEFT Chas McPheeters accepts his Wildlife Management State Agriculture Proficiency Award at the Golden 1 Center in Sacramento this March. **RIGHT** Tristyn Hopfe snaps a photo of Chas McPheeters while culling predators on Pintail Slough Land Company in February of 2021 (Photos: Tristyn Hopfe)

Chas McPheeters, a senior at Frontier High School, was awarded the Agriculture Proficiency Award for wildlife management this year at the State Leadership Conference. His early involvement in a Lost Hills duck club sparked an interest in wildlife management. He says that, "from the help of my ag advisors, Mrs. Downs and Ms. Noels at Frontier High School, I learned that the time I spent helping manage the wetland and wildlife could be put towards an SAE."

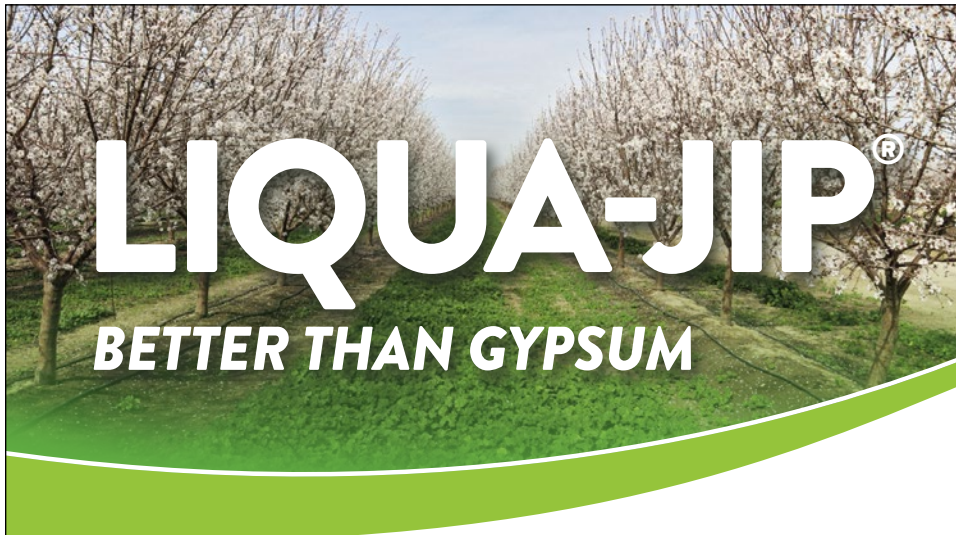


SAE is short for Supervised Agricultural Experience and describes hands-on learning environments like research where students can really get involved. FFA students are encouraged to find and get involved in SAEs to enhance their learning and engage in agriculture experiences outside the classroom. McPheeters has around 4 years and over 1500 hours of work at Pintail Slough in Lost Hills. His tasks were culling predators for a better nesting success for waterfowl as well as doing common labor

required to maintain a 280-acre wetland such as repairing dikes and irrigation.

This project and his diligence have earned him a spot at the California FFA State Leadership Conference; a huge congratulations to him on his efforts! After McPheeters graduates high school, he will be attending the University of Wyoming and will study Agriculture Business: Farm and Ranch Management. He also plans to add a minor in meat science and hopes to own and operate his own meat packing center. McPheeters plans to "savor my last few months [at Pintail] before I head to Wyoming for college. Hopefully I will be able to someday manage a wetland similar to Pintail Slough. It is where I cut my teeth as a conservationist and learned the importance of sustainable agriculture."

Agriculture Proficiency Awards like the one awarded to Chas McPheeters made up a large portion of the awards given at the California FFA State Leadership Conference. This year, 121 hardworking students were recognized with this award. Other awards for speaking competitions, ag-science fairs and some that recognize teachers and advisors were also presented. Congratulations to all the students, teachers, advisors, and FFA staff who work tremendously hard to bring all these pieces and people together.



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Senators Release Updated Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act



Cattle in a farm. (Photo: Alejandro Camicero / Shutterstock.com)

Press Release Provided by U.S. Cattlemen's Association

On March 28th, Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE), Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Jon Tester (D-MT), and Ron Wyden (D-OR) released a revised Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act.

The updated bill comes after hours of deliberation with leaders of the Senate Agriculture Committee and weeks of technical feedback from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The U.S. Cattlemen's Association's (USCA) Marketing and Competition Committee will review the proposed revisions.

USCA President Brooke Miller issued the following statement:

"Thank you to Senators Fischer, Grassley, Tester, and Wyden for their relentless pursuit to advance legislation that strengthens the bottom line of the U.S. cattle producer. There has never been this much momentum for indus-

try change, both in the countryside and in the Capitol.

"USCA stands with county, state, and national producer associations across the U.S. in supporting mandatory cash trade minimums – a concept that is also supported by the majority of Senate Agriculture Committee members.

"A study compiled by Texas A&M's Agricultural and Food Policy Center forecasted that without enactment of significant cattle market reform legislation, like the Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act, negotiated trade in Texas-Oklahoma-New Mexico is expected to fall to zero percent by 2026.

"Zero percent negotiated trade is the end of the independent producer, and with it, a sovereign and secure food system. We cannot allow corporate interests to steer a sinking ship – we need to immediately restore marketplace fundamentals and implement guardrails to prevent the industry from capsizing.

"Further, it's worthwhile to note that economic analyses completed by the University of Arkansas and by Colorado State University's Stephen Koontz are based off of a time when cash trade was occurring at around 60 percent. Mr. Koontz himself states in his study that 'the research question is worth revisiting' due to the limited availability of relevant data. USCA is pleased that this legislation will provide additional economic analysis to define robust cash trade, based on current market conditions."

"USCA looks forward to reviewing the updated legislation and providing our feedback in the days ahead. We are hopeful that the proposed changes will strengthen the intent of the bill's authors in establishing a fair cattle marketplace, but must thoroughly review the language first."

Vard Terry Retires

Continued from PAGE 1 For Terry, it literally has been a family operation here at Holloway.

President since 2012, Terry is part of three generations of Terrys who have worked with Holloway – including his father, Vard Sr., brother, Allen, and now his son, Daniel, who is Vice President and Head of Ag Products for the company. The Terrys have combined to work for Holloway for more than 200 years.

"The big thing I've learned is to find something you love, and stick with it," Terry said. "In today's business, a lot of people get into the habit of thinking the grass is greener somewhere else. But it's tough to build relationships if you're jumping around and don't love what you're doing every day. It sparks something in you when you love your job, and are able to grow with the company you're working for – which is what I was able to do for 50 years here at Holloway."

Holloway will recognize Vard Terry for his 50 years at its 90th anniversary customer appreciation event next month. For a video tribute to Vard Terry's 50 years, along with a photo gallery from his time with the company, visit HollowayAg.com/ThankYouVard.

About The Holloway Group

Founded in 1932 as H.M. Holloway Inc., a gypsum mine located in Lost Hills, Calif., Holloway has grown into a multi-unit group of privately held, affiliated companies in the agricultural, environmental, mining, and logistics industries.

Headquartered in Bakersfield, Calif., Holloway Agriculture is a full-service, one-stop shop operation, working with growers from planning stages through materials delivery and application, while also assisting with waste collection and other elements of farm management.

Ultimately, Holloway's goal is to provide its customers with sustainable products and services at an excellent value.

Learn more at HMHolloway.com.



Holloway President Vard and wife Carol Terry at one of the many events Holloway has sponsored over the years. (Photo: The Holloway Group)



Vard Terry in front of a spreader. (Photo: The Holloway Group)

Winegrape Grower Nourishes Soil to Combat Drought



By John Beck
Reporter & Documentary
Filmmaker

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from California Farm Bureau
Federation*

When Paul Bernier learned to “dry farm” grapes from old Italian growers in the

early 1970s, the idea was simple: “In a climate where it rains in the winter and it’s dry in the summer, you had to figure out a way to retain the moisture in the soil,” he said.

Bernier embraced that philosophy at a time when deals were made with handshakes, which was well before drip irrigation lines were strung across Sonoma County’s Dry Creek Valley vineyard region.

“They call it ‘dry farming’ now, but they used to just call it farming,” recalled Bernier.

Over the past five decades, Bernier has used less water than many grape growers use in a year. Granted, his operation is relatively small scale. Aside from his 1.5-acre family vineyard, he farms 35 acres of mostly head-trained zinfandel, paying each landowner around a quarter of the yield, while selling his grapes to Sbragia, Dutcher Crossing, Nalle and Peterson wineries. None of the vineyards use any irrigation lines.

“I’m basically building up the nutrients in the soil because the dirt is a sponge for the rain and the moisture that comes in the wintertime,” he said, explaining his no-irrigation cultivation. “All that organic matter in the soil makes more of a sponge, and more of sponge means bigger plants and more crop.”

Now, as the third year of a severe drought bears down on California farmers, and the dry-farming approach of Bernier and others is tested to its limits, it raises a very relevant question: Could North Coast growers in Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino counties get by with watering less during the drought?

Last September, a University of California, Davis, study showed that giving vines 50% less water than they typically demand didn’t affect yield, taste, color or sugar content.



Paul Bernier, working in his Sonoma County vineyard, embraced “dry farming” long ago. He shuns traditional irrigation lines and instead works to retain moisture in the soil with cover crops and compost, including ingredients from duck manure to crushed oyster shells. Studies from University of California, Davis, researchers suggest vines can use 50% less water with little impact on quality. (Photo: Jose R. Pizarro / Shutterstock.com)

“The idea of the trial was, it’s so hot and we’re having these heat waves; do we need to increase the amount of water that we apply?” said Kaan Kurtural, a UC Davis professor of viticulture and enology. The results of the study he co-authored showed that may not necessarily be the case.

Bernier is a believer. To retain moisture, he cultivates his soil by turning over a healthy cover crop of native vetch and mustard, along with planted legumes. He layers that with various composts he makes from grape pomace and duck and horse manure. That helps hold moisture in the soil well past the rainy season and into the annual harvest. He also occasionally enriches the soil with crushed oyster shells he sources from Suisun City.

Last June, in the dog days of the drought, he texted a photo of moist soil only 6 to 8 inches below the surface, showing his vineyard was still holding moisture.

But he is not one to brag or to try to convert others; Bernier’s journey has been one of necessity. He had to farm this way because most of the neglected vineyards he inherited and nursed back to life had no wells or scarce water resources.

He’s not the only one. There are a few other dry farmers in Sonoma County. Across the Mayacmas Mountains,

there’s a cabernet sauvignon test plot at the UC Davis research vineyard in Oakville that hasn’t been watered in 29 years and still produces 6.5 tons to the acre.

The most recent UC Davis study took place in 2019 in a Napa cabernet sauvignon vineyard. It was just before the current drought but when heat waves, especially late-summer ones, were prevalent.

Kurtural said the findings are promising for water conservation.

“Looking at cabernet, which grows all over California, we found you can get by with 50% of plant demand and still get a very handsome yield with top-notch quality, and with soil microbes still living in the vineyard as well,” he said.

It’s nothing Bernier didn’t already know. In the late ‘70s and ‘80s, when drip irrigation recast the vineyard landscape and dry farming was forgotten—almost like a lost art—he could see how the daily drip affected vines.

“When you treat a vine with irrigation, you give it the water it needs, and it doesn’t need to expend energy going out looking for food,” he said. “So its root system is not out utilizing all the ground. It’s just hanging around where it’s wet, where the dripper is. It’s like an alcoholic at 6 a.m. waiting for the bar to open to get his shot before he goes to work.”

Over the years, other grape growers and wineries have taken notice and adapted based on Bernier’s methods. In 2017, Bernier led a dry-farming workshop sponsored by the California Alliance with Family Farmers, with several dozen growers in attendance.

“It just makes sense,” says Fred Peterson, owner of Peterson Winery, who started buying grapes from Bernier in the mid-1990s. Seeing the benefits, he started composting regularly in his own vineyards and is now conducting a dry-farming trial in a vineyard on Bradford Mountain. “It’s that idea of ‘healthy soil makes for healthy vines,’” he said.

Applying annual compost additions, “really made a difference,” Peterson said. “It costs around \$350 an acre to put on 5 tons per acre. But nowadays, with what fertilizer is going for, that’s actually a deal.”

Peterson said most growers don’t dry farm because typically more water equals more tonnage, and that equals more money. But more tonnage doesn’t always equate to better quality grapes.

“Just having bigger yields doesn’t mean your quality is gone,” Peterson said. “But at some point, it’s diminishing returns. At some point, you’re growing bags of water. You’re just pumping them full of water and waiting for the sugars to come up.”

Last year, Bernier’s average yield of 3 to 4 tons to the acre was cut in half because of the drought. As the bone-dry climate continues, he’s now thinking about laying temporary irrigation lines in his vineyards in July for a flash watering to sustain them into the harvest.

At 73, Bernier is gradually handing the reigns over to his son, Zureal, who grew up farming side by side with both of his parents. Paul’s wife, Yael, runs Bernier Farms in Geyserville, growing organic vegetables and a cult-favorite garlic prized by local restaurants.

This summer, Paul and Yael are planning a long-awaited, cross-country road trip in their VW bus—that is, if they can step away from the farm long enough to “semi-retire” for a few months.

He has this advice for his son as he takes over the family farm in the interim:

“Water if you have to,” he said. “It’s not a religion. We’ve got to make a living, too.”

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Rodeo Club at BC

Continued from PAGE 3 10 different events. The men’s events consist of Steer Wrestling, Tie Down Roping, Team Roping, Saddle Bronc Riding, Bareback Riding, and Bull Riding. The women’s events are Barrel Racing, Team Roping, Breakaway Roping, and Goat Tying. Students can enter once in any event and enter for the All-Around by competing in all men’s or women’s events. A full team consists of 14 individuals competing in one or more event.

Bakersfield College hopes to grow its Rodeo Club in the coming years and has already received great feedback and support from the community. If you would like more information about the Rodeo Club, visit the Club’s Facebook page “Rodeo Club at Bakersfield College” or the Instagram page at “bcrodeoteam.” You may also contact the head coach, Andrea Prise, through email at Andrea.Prise@BakersfieldCollege.edu. The Rodeo Club is currently recruiting new members for the 2022-2023 school year and welcomes sponsorships and donations for entry fees, travel costs, practices and other operational costs.

Our final rodeo of the season will be May 14-15th at the South Pointe Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. While our first season may be ending, our excitement to compete as Bakersfield College in College Rodeo is just getting started. We can’t wait to see what our Renegades will do this year and years to come! *Go Renegades Rodeo!*



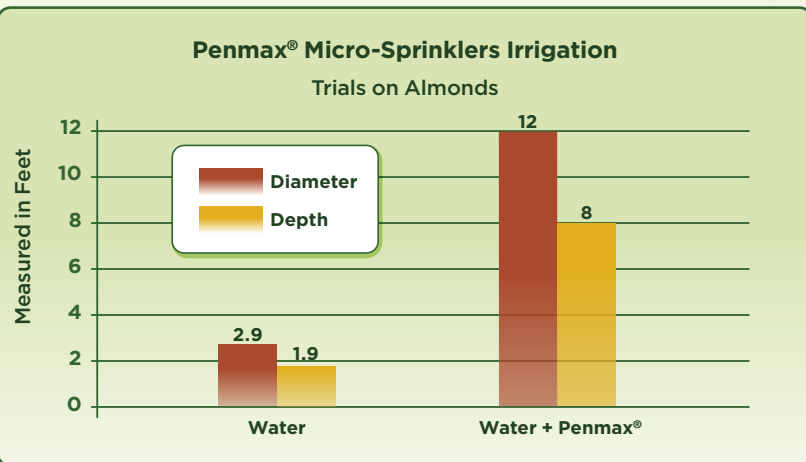
(Photos: Rodeo Club, Bakersfield College)

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Water Cuts Leave Hard Choices for Farmers

(Photo: Christine Souza)



Fresno County farmers Jacob Sheely and his father, Ted Sheely, stand in a field of volunteer wheat that they would have planted with another crop if they had the water this year.

By Christine Souza, Assistant Editor, Ag Alert

Reprinted with Permission from California Farm Bureau Federation

Hit with a third consecutive year of drought, farmers on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley who grow trees, vines and row crops are making difficult decisions on what to farm and what to fallow.

“We’re just in a tough situation right now. We’ve been dealt a really tough hand of cards,” said Fresno County farmer Ryan Ferguson, who farms trees and row crops in Lemoore. “We have enough water to get our trees through, but there’s going to be fewer acres planted on the ranch. We’re fallowing about 1,200 acres of row-crop ground.”

Ferguson serves as board president of Westlands Water District, the state’s largest agricultural water district. He is a contractor of the federal Central Valley Project. This is the second year that the district received a zero water allocation due to drought. In 2020, the allocation was 20%.

“Water’s the primary concern, and for us and for a lot of growers who are row-crop farmers and have permanent plantings, it’s (about) protecting that long-term investment, which potentially could be a multi-generational investment,” he said. “We can survive on zero, short term.”

Most west side farmers, Ferguson said, rely on a portfolio of different water sources. But insufficient supplies have them looking at which trees to topple or crops to idle to conserve water.

“We’ll fallow a lot of row-crop ground, we’ll pump some well water, we’ll purchase water through the district’s supplemental pool and probably purchase a little bit of water on the open market,” Ferguson said. “Supplemental water brought in by the district is really expensive water. You can’t afford to farm a whole crop on it, but it’s part of your water portfolio.”

Neighboring farmer Ted Sheely grows a mix of tree, row and field crops in Lemoore. Sheely said he began preparing for spring planting last fall, adding, “Our thing has been let’s plan for the worst and hope for the best.”

Sheely said he is pondering these questions: “What contracts can we sign? And, how much water do we have that we’re going to carry over?”

“Between all the entities,” he said, “there’s about 1,300 acres being fallowed. We want to make sure that we have enough water to supply our needs during the year.”

Sheely’s water portfolio includes supplemental water from last season that he purchased for \$1,100 per acre-foot in his Westlands account.

“You’re not going to grow any crop (with supplemental water), but when you just need a little bit—a proportional amount like a tenth of an acre-foot—you put that in there,” Sheely said. “We keep some because, when bad things happen, it’s good to have a little bit more in reserve. We’ll buy supplemental water this year.”

Both farmers said they are also concerned about economic

impacts to employees and local communities.

“It’s just unfortunate. The socioeconomic impacts of fallowed ground trickles down to all throughout the community,” Ferguson said. “For us, it’s fewer acres planted, less work for employees and less business that we’re doing with our ag retailers and less commerce that’s being conducted in town.”

Agricultural production within Westlands Water District generates more than \$4.7 billion in annual economic activity and supports more than 35,000 jobs, according to a study released in March by Michael A. Shires, a professor at the Pepperdine University School of Public Policy.

The study found a correlation between local poverty levels in Fresno and Kings counties and available surface water.

Ernest Conant, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation regional director of the California Great Basin region, said the region is facing water challenges unseen in more than 160 years.

“We now find ourselves in the lowest January, February and March of records going back to 1858, and we wouldn’t expect to get very much more precipitation beyond this point,” Conant said last week during a meeting of the California State Board of Food and Agriculture held at the University of California, Merced. “This year, the settlement contractors are not going to allow any transfers south of the delta, so that is another impact.”

Conant added: “There’s just going to be very little transfer water available because things are so difficult in the north. There’s going to be hundreds of thousands of acres in the Sacramento Valley that have never been fallowed before that are going to be fallowed this year.”

In discussing the low levels of most of the state’s reservoirs, Conant said storms added very little to Lake Shasta, the state’s largest CVP reservoir at 4.5 million acre-feet. Lake Shasta is at 38% capacity, which is 48% of the historical average. San Luis Reservoir, a critical south-of-delta holding facility for the CVP and the State Water Project, remains at 46% of average or 53% of the historical average.

Conant said the federal water provider’s primary goals are now public health and safety and trying to build storage.

Meanwhile, he said 2 million to 3 million acre-feet a year is needed to repel salinity in the critical Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. But this year a petition was granted to reduce standards in the delta to preserve water storage in key reservoirs.

Conant said the Bureau of Reclamation is working with the state on reconsultation of long-term, biological opinions that guide CVP and SWP operations.

The federal agency joined the state and major water districts as signatories to voluntary agreements that promise to increase flows for salmon and native fish, and financially compensate Northern California rice farmers who fallow land to save water.

The agreements are being advanced as an alternative to the regulatory regime of the Bay-Delta water quality control plan by the State Water Resources Control Board.

Seeking to increase the supply of water, the bureau completed feasibility studies for projects that may receive federal funding, including building Sites Reservoir and Del Puerto Canyon and expansion of Los Vaqueros and San Luis Reservoir.

Reacting to efforts to increase the water supply, Ferguson said, “I think there’s a future of farming in Westlands. It’s probably going to look different than what it has been historically, but I think we’re going to have to get innovative.”

Sheely added, “Agriculture is a key industry. You really want it in your country.”

But he said he is worried that restrictions on California farms could result in forfeiting agricultural production to other nations.

“When you farm agriculture out to other countries,” he said, “you’re really putting yourself at risk.”

Is Newsom's Executive Order a Moratorium on Well Drilling? Here's the Background Causing the Buzz

By Don A. Wright, Publisher, Waterwrights.net

Reprinted with permission from Waterwrights

California's Governor Gavin Newsom released Executive Order N-7-22 on March 28, 2022 in response to the state's ongoing drought conditions. It is effective immediately and covers the entire state. The entire order could perhaps be viewed as part five of his four previous drought related executive orders from 2021.

The order is formatted like a proclamation, it has two pages of whereas explaining the Governor's thoughts on why the order is needed. He blames everything on climate change and doesn't mention any other causes such as the possibility of government mismanagement of storage and supplies. However, in whereas number five he does mention farms alongside vulnerable communities and fish and wildlife, so at least agriculture wasn't ignored. Page two yields a therefore let it be written, let it be done followed by four more pages listing 15 items or directives.

The items include:

- Urging Californians to conserve water
- Tasks the State Water Resources Control Board to consider adopting emergency regulations to gather data from urban water suppliers showing how they've managed their water shortage plans
- Tasks the Department of Water Resources to consult with the commercial, industrial and institutional sectors to define regulations that will ban watering lawns but not ornamental trees basically. Item 4 exempts school fields, sports fields and parks – so it looks like the golfing community can breath easier – for now
- The California Environmental Quality Act will be suspended in some cases
- Sections of the Water Code will be suspended to expeditiously consider petitions that add a fish and wildlife beneficial use
- State Board is tasked with stepping up inspections of illegal diversions with warrants if property access isn't granted
- County permits for new wells or altering existing wells must be reviewed by Groundwater Sustainability Agencies before they can be granted

CEQA Exemptions

The California Environmental Quality Act has morphed from a well-intentioned law to protect habitat and communities from pollution and rapacious spoilage to a blunt, obstructionist weapon to use in lawsuits. You may recall recently a so called neighborhood group sued the University of California, Berkeley to limit its student enrollment claiming the higher number of students violated CEQA. Almost

any imaginable project from construction to water infrastructure has to go through the CEQA process and is open to legal wrangling.

The executive order suspends CEQA review for certain recharge and infrastructure projects. Local and state agencies can capture flood water for recharge without going through CEQA. SGMA grant funded recharge projects are exempt from CEQA.

Although this looks like good news for capturing flood waters and improving the aquifer there are strings attached. The Secretary of Natural Resources has to review the project and determine their eligibility under this order. The Secretary is Wade Crowfoot and he has a reputation for being more balanced than many other regulators and bureaucrats in Sacramento.

One of the big questions being asked about this part of the order is – does the CEQA pass apply to supplies, projects or both? There are people working to answer these questions and help flesh out the order for practical applications.

Item 9

One of the areas of most concern is Item 9 and the relationship and responsibilities it places on counties and Groundwater Sustainability Agencies. Here is the language:

“9. To protect health, safety, and the environment during this drought emergency, **a county, city, or other public agency** shall not:

1. Approve a permit for a new groundwater well or for alteration of an existing well in a basin subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and classified as medium- or high-priority without first obtaining written verification from a Groundwater Sustainability Agency managing the basin or area of the basin where the well is proposed to be located that groundwater extraction by the proposed well would not be inconsistent with any sustainable groundwater management program established in any applicable Groundwater Sustainability Plan adopted by that Groundwater Sustainability Agency and would not decrease the likelihood of achieving a sustainability goal for the basin covered by such a plan; or
2. Issue a permit for a new groundwater well or for alteration of an existing well without first determining that extraction of groundwater from the proposed well is (1) not likely to interfere with the production and functioning of existing nearby wells, and (2) not likely to cause subsidence that would adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure.

This paragraph shall not apply to permits for wells that will provide less than two acre-feet per year of groundwater for individual domestic users, or that will exclusively provide

groundwater to public water supply systems as defined in section 116275 of the Health and Safety Code.”

DWR's Take

Item 9 applies to both new wells and the alternation of existing wells. It doesn't apply to permits for wells of two acre feet or less per year providing water to domestic users.

I spoke with Paul Gosselin, DWR's Deputy Director of Sustainable Groundwater Management about what Item 9 means to GSAs attempting to implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

“First, we're very sensitive to the workload of GSAs during this unprecedented drought,” said Gosselin. “[Item 9] Is not an unfunded mandate and it isn't a change in statute.” He hopes the GSAs and counties will understand the state is experiencing severe drought. The order is not unending and all parts of the government are going to have to work more to last through the worst of it.

Gosselin said GSAs are not required to analyze permits under the order – only to provide verification the groundwater in the area of the well is accounted for. He said this will bridge the gap between the permitting agency and the GSAs within that agency. For most farm areas counties usually issue the permits.

Counties are meeting with their legal counsel as are GSAs to ascertain what the order brings as obligations and changes. As reported previously GSAs in Fresno County have sought well permit reviews from both the county and cities within their jurisdiction. But that was a voluntary agreement and not a binding order from the state.

Gosselin helped clarify GSAs do not have veto power over the county issuing a well permit. “GSAs can tell the county this well will be a new demand not covered in the GSP. There is no enforcement with this part of the order,” said Gosselin.

Paragraph b

Paragraph b in Item 9 states a county shall not issue a permit for a new or alteration of an existing well without first determining if the new or altered well's pumping will not likely interfere with existing nearby wells or cause subsidence that could adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure.

This brings up the question of liability. If farmer Fred drills a new well and farmer Bob's old, unmaintained well happens to fail shortly thereafter – how do you prove the failure was due to the new well? What if Bob sues? Who does Bob sue, Fred, the county, the GSA? Gosselin agreed indemnification against lawsuits over well permits needs to be looked at carefully.



Governor Gavin Newsom. (Photo: J. Asenbrennerova/Shutterstock.com)

Gosselin said DWR is preparing to initiate a good deal of engagement with the counties and the GSAs on the executive order. He said the Association of California Water Agencies, the California State Association of Counties and the Rural County Representatives of California are already setting up meetings to go over the issues in the executive order.

Other Views

Many in the ag industry believe this order amounts to a moratorium on well drilling statewide and feel once again agriculture has been left holding the bag. Talk amongst the attorneys, managers and directors of GSAs is consistent – this is not a good time to lay more work on staff.

One attorney who spoke on background said there may be more than just a little wishful thinking or perhaps even naivete in asking the GSAs to review permits while the groundwater data has yet to be fully gathered and compiled everywhere. How will anyone be able to answer the question of what impacts a well will have in 40-years?

This is California and this is water therefore history is populated with myriad examples of unintended consequences from government actions. The legality of this order is questioned. Property owners have rights to the groundwater they overlay. Written into the Sustainable Ground Water Management Act GSAs do not have any power over water rights. The legal opinion has been over-layers have a right to access their groundwater and that means a well. However, under SGMA a GSA can limit how much can be pumped.

Before this order GSAs have been developing language for counties to include in permits. It could be including a notice you can drill and develop a well but you may not be able to pump under certain conditions. That could be one way to comply with keeping rights as rights and not letting them drift into government granted privilege territory while still addressing the real need to prevent subsidence and the other SGMA goals.

To paraphrase Steinbeck California careens from drought to drought, wet year to wet year and doesn't seem to remember one from the other and more importantly learn the lesson each teaches. Perhaps that's changing. We'll see.

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- ☐ Review & Verify Filter Controller Flush Times
- ☐ Service Filters for Leaks & Media Condition

In the Field:

- ☐ Flush Main & Submains
- ☐ Flush Irrigation Laterals & Hoses
- ☐ Service Air Vents
- ☐ Repair Leaking Riser Tee's
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Survey Finds Little Snow as Statewide Snowpack Drops to 38 Percent Following Record Dry Months

Press Release Provided by California Department of Water Resources

On April 1st, The Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducted the fourth snow survey of the season at Phillips Station. Following three straight months of record dry conditions, the manual survey recorded just 2.5 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of one inch, which is four percent of average for this location for April 1. Statewide, the snowpack is just 38 percent of average for this date.

The snowpack at Phillips Station has plummeted since the beginning of the year. On December 30, the snowpack stood at 202 percent of normal for that date. In a normal season, the snowpack depth would be about five feet deep at this time of year.

The snow water equivalent measured at the snow survey shows the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of DWR's water supply forecast, including anticipated runoff into the state's reservoirs.

April 1 is typically when the snowpack is at its highest, however the statewide snowpack likely peaked in early-March this year and the Northern Sierra snowpack peaked in mid-January.

"The conditions we are seeing today speak to how severe our drought remains. DWR has been planning for the reality of a third dry year since the start of the water year on October 1," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "While DWR has made significant investments in forecasting technology and other tools to ensure we make the most out of the snowmelt we do receive, water conservation will remain our best tool in the face of this ongoing drought and the statewide impacts of a warming climate. All Californians must focus on conserving water now."

Dry conditions are impacting every region of the state, as the Northern, Central, and Southern Sierra snowpacks are all standing just above 28 percent to 43 percent of average for this date.

"With the exceptionally dry conditions during the past three months, our latest statewide snowmelt forecasts are only 44 percent of average," said Sean de Guzman, Manager of DWR's Snow Surveys and Water Supply



DWR Director Karla Nemeth and CNRA Secretary Wade Crowfoot look on as DWR staff conduct the April 1 snow survey at Phillips Station. (Photo: DWR)

Forecasting Unit. "While today usually marks the typical peak of the state's snowpack, this year's snowpack likely peaked in mid-January in the Northern Sierra. Most of the snow accumulation this year came from just two storms in December that were followed by the driest January and February on record in the Sierra, and unfortunately March only brought a few weak systems."

"Today's snow survey reinforces what we've all observed – California just experienced the driest three months on record, and drought is worsening throughout the West," California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot said. "Climate-driven water extremes are part of our reality now, and we must all adapt and do our part to save water every day."

While the state continues to take necessary actions to help extend the state's existing water supply, all Californians are also encouraged to do their part now to conserve as much water as possible to make it last. Governor Newsom has called on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 15 percent with simple measures to protect water reserves. Earlier this week, the Governor called on local water suppliers to move to Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans, which require locally-appropriate actions that will conserve water across all sectors, and directed the State Water Resources Control Board to consider a ban on the watering of decorative grass at businesses and institutions. Individuals looking for information about reducing water consumption at home can visit SaveOurWater.com for water-wise tips.

Farm, Ranch and Transitional Use Properties



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117.82± acres, located in Kings County WD/1 Well grade 1 - Excellent Soils, Hanford

TABLE GRAPES \$33,500±/AC & \$36,500±/AC
119.92± & 150.27± acres, Delano Earlimart Irrigation District, Lower Tule River Irrigation District, Quality Varieties, Productive Soils

WALNUTS PRICED REDUCED \$29,500±/AC
149.33± acres, Lindmore ID and Wells, Productive Soils, Lindsay, CA.

TABLE GRAPES \$35,000±/AC
154.36± & 406.65± acres, Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District, Quality Varieties, Excellent Soils.

ALMONDS SALE PENDING
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FARMLAND \$13,000±/AC
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WINE GRAPES \$18,378±/AC
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TABLE GRAPES AND FARMLAND SALE PENDING
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WINE GRAPES \$17,500±/AC
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DWR Releases Funds for Repairs of the Friant-Kern Canal



The Bureau of Reclamation, Friant Water Authority, and DWR celebrate the groundbreaking of a \$187 million construction project to restore capacity in a 10-mile portion of the Friant-Kern Canal. (Photo: USBR)

Press Release Provided by CA Department of Water Resources

With California now in its third year of drought, collaboration among state, federal and local partners is critical to improving the resiliency of California's water system.

Today, the California Department of Water Resources announced it has released \$29.8 million in funding to the Friant Water Authority (FWA) to repair segments of the Friant-Kern Canal, a key water conveyance facility in the San Joaquin Valley damaged by land subsidence.

"Through this investment, we are furthering a partnership to restore California's major water conveyance systems to improve the resiliency of California's water supply during drought and flood conditions," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "The projects, when completed, will maximize the canal's capacity to move water efficiently through the system and improve California's ability to boost and store its water supply."

The state-funded program, which aligns with Governor Newsom's Water Resilience Portfolio to improve water quality and supplies for California, is part of a cooperative approach to fixing California's water conveyance infrastructure pursued by local, state, and federal agencies, who will financially support the projects.

The Friant-Kern Canal plays a critical role in delivering water to 1 million acres of farmland and more

than 250,000 Californians from Fresno to Bakersfield. In January, FWA began the first phase of the Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project, which will restore carrying capacity along 33 miles of the 152-mile-long canal in eastern Tulare County. The Friant-Kern Canal, owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, has lost more than 60 percent of its original conveyance capacity in the middle section due to land subsidence. Phase one of the project is expected to cost \$292 million and be completed by early 2024.

"This funding is a large part of the reason that we were able to break ground on the Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project in January," said FWA Chief Executive Officer Jason Phillips. "Our partners at the State of California have invested in the San Joaquin Valley's future at a critical time, and we are grateful to the Newsom Administration and for DWR's dedicated efforts to release these funds as quickly as possible in recognition of the urgent need to implement the project."

The Friant-Kern Canal is one of four projects that

will receive funds as part of a \$100 million initiative in the California Budget Act of 2021 to improve water conveyance systems in the San Joaquin Valley. DWR is working on agreements for projects on the Delta-Mendota Canal, San Luis Canal, and California Aqueduct.

To receive program funding, participants must show proof of adequate non-state cost share to match the State financial assistance. Program funds will be used to pay for planning, permitting, design, and construction of near-term subsidence rehabilitation projects, such as raising canal embankments or repairing check structures. Agencies with funded projects will need to investigate the risk of subsidence and how to prevent continued subsidence.

An additional \$100 million in funding is slated for the coming fiscal year.

Subsidence is a long-term issue for water conveyance systems that has been exacerbated by recent droughts. If not addressed, continued subsidence will further reduce the water delivery capacity of regional canals and aqueducts and increase the costs for remediation.

State Water Contractors Respond to Governor Newsom's Executive Order Requiring Public Water Agencies to Increase Drought Response and Conservation

Press Release Provided by the State Water Contractors

On March 28th, Governor Newsom issued an Executive Order requiring urban public water agencies to increase their efforts to combat this unrelenting drought by activating their individual Water Shortage Contingency Plans to a minimum of Level 2. The Order also directs the State Water Resources Control Board to consider a ban on wasteful watering of decorative grass

around commercial, industrial and institutional buildings. The move is a reflection of the seriousness of this extended drought and comes on the heels of decreasing water allocations to State Water Project contractors to five percent plus health and human safety on March 18, 2022 in response to limited state water supplies.


Statement from Jennifer Pierre, General Manager of the State Water Contractors:

"This is a serious drought that requires serious action. We learned a lot from the last drought, in addition to the increased drought planning requirements and responsible preparation that were put in place, the Governor is wisely focusing on local shortage contingency plans with today's Executive Order.

Urban water agencies throughout the State have Water Shortage Contingency Plans that can be activated right

away to ensure conservation and other actions consistent with their region's unique circumstances.

Managing through this drought requires each and every Californian to reduce their water usage. The Governor's Order today recognizes the diversity of California communities and their water supply conditions. Ordering agencies to exercise their specific plans strikes that important balance of statewide needs and local action."



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Top State Scientist to Head CA Agricultural Research Institute

Press Release Provided by California Farm Bureau Federation

Dr. Amrith Gunasekara, manager of environmental programs for the California Department of Food and Agriculture, has been hired to head a research foundation conducting and supporting scientific studies on critical matters affecting California farm communities.

Dr. Gunasekara will serve as director of science and research for the California Bountiful Foundation. The foundation, which is affiliated with the California Farm Bureau, will serve as a research clearinghouse compiling scientific data on agriculture, water and the environment.

“Bringing together Dr. Gunasekara’s considerable expertise and experience and the collective contributions of our 31,000 farmers, ranchers and supporting businesses presents a tremendous opportunity to the people of California,” said California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson. “Science and agriculture are the bedrocks of our society and our state, and now we have the best of both working to bring more food, fiber, flora and fauna to the people in a healthy and sustainable way.”

Dr. Gunasekara served as scientific advisor to California Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross and manager of the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation. He

previously served as a senior environmental scientist for CFDA, specializing in environmental issues related to fertilizer use.

He is also a former research scientist for the California Department of Public Health and worked as a graduate assistant with the state Department of Pesticide Regulation.

Dr. Gunasekara earned his doctorate in agricultural and environmental chemistry from the University of California, Davis. He holds a master’s degree in plant and soil sciences and bachelor’s degrees in environmental sciences and anthropology from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

The California Bountiful Foundation aspires to become a leading agricultural research institute, supporting studies on climate-smart agriculture, farming technology, forest management, and water and economic security for agriculture.

The California Bountiful Foundation replaced the Agricultural Clean Water Initiative Foundation, which was founded in 1998 with a goal of supporting scientific research on surface and groundwater management in California.

State Initiates Review of Research Application for Use of Genetically Engineered Mosquitoes in Tulare County to Reduce Mosquito Populations

Press Release Provided by CA Department of Pesticide Regulation

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has initiated the review of a research authorization requested by Oxitec, Ltd to release and study the use of genetically engineered *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes to reduce the current *Aedes aegypti* mosquito population in Tulare County, California. DPR’s review of the research authorization application will entail a rigorous scientific evaluation, consultation with government agencies and consideration of public comments and input. DPR anticipates that the evaluation and review process will take at least several months.

The department opened a 15-day public comment period beginning April 5 and ending on April 19 at 5 p.m. to collect information and feedback from the public to be considered as part of the review and evaluation process for the application. Comments will be accepted via email at Mosquito.RA@CDPR.CA.gov.

DPR must approve a research authorization application before an unregistered pesticide can be field tested in the state. DPR toxicologists, entomologists, microbiologists, ecotoxicologists, and other department scientists will review the application, research design, scientific studies, and additional information.

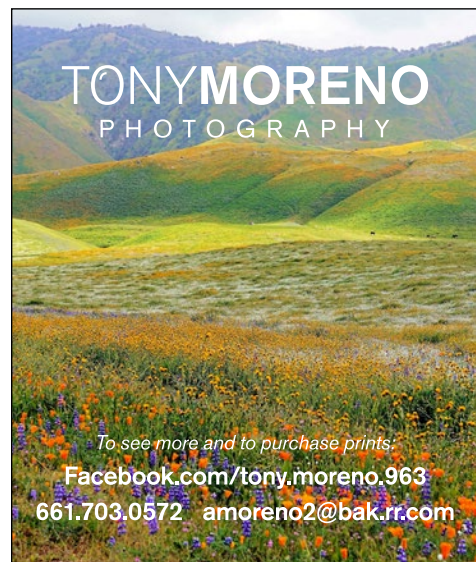
Research authorizations are approved or refused based on an evaluation of whether that research may involve a hazard to handlers or field workers, public health, or the environment. Approved research authorizations limit both the area and the time period that the product may be tested and may include strict requirements or limitations on use, as well as monitoring and reporting requirements.

DPR’s evaluation of the research authorization application will include consultation with the California Department of Public Health, the County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, the Delta Mosquito and Vector Control District and other appropriate government and local agencies.

Oxitec’s research authorization application proposes conducting field studies in Tulare County, California. The application submitted by the company proposes to release 5,000-30,000 mosquitoes per week at multiple study sites located within the county. The company has not yet identified specific sites for the release—a requirement for DPR’s review of the research authorization application. The proposed locations of the release sites, number of sites necessary to conduct the requested research and the number of mosquitoes released per site will be evaluated by DPR as part of its review of the application.

The department has posted on its website the following documents submitted by Oxitec as part of its research authorization application:

- Application for research authorization from Oxitec, Ltd
- U.S. EPA documents submitted to DPR by Oxitec related to its research authorization application



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Taxpayer Advocate Laura Avila Announces Endorsement of Sheriff Donny Youngblood

Press Release Provided by Avila For Assessor-Recorder 2022



Kern County Sheriff, Donny Youngblood (above) has endorsed Laura Avila to be the next Kern County Assessor-Recorder

Kern County Sheriff, Donny Youngblood has endorsed Laura Avila to be the next Kern County Assessor-Recorder. This endorsement adds another high-ranking community member and leader that are supporting Laura Avila to be Kern County's next Assessor-Recorder.

Youngblood said, "Kern County needs a tough taxpayer advocate like Laura Avila in the Assessor-Recorder's office. Laura is a proven defender of Proposition 13 and she will fight for property owners when politicians in Sacramento try to come and unfairly tax Kern County residents. Join me and vote Laura Avila for Kern County Assessor-Recorder."

Laura Avila commented, "I am so appreciative to Sheriff Youngblood for his endorsement. He has always worked hard to protect the citizens of Kern County and I am grateful to be considered a defender of Kern County property owners rights as well. From one protector of the people and their rights to another, I am fortunate to be part of a community that is so passionate about protecting its citizens' rights."

Youngblood joins other high profile County leaders like Supervisor Mike Maggard, Dick Taylor, Kern County Assessor-Recorder Jon Lifquist and previous Assessor-Recorder Jim Fitch in their support of Laura Avila for Assessor-Recorder.

California Walnut Board Marketing Order Update: Status & Next Steps

Press Release Provided by California Walnut Board

The California Walnut Board (CWB) has been actively working to update the Federal Marketing Order rules governing inspection. As part of the process, the USDA will hold a hearing on April 19 and 20, 2022 to discuss the recommended updates. Following the hearing, USDA will publish its Recommended Decision in the Federal Register for public review and comment and then schedule a referendum, which will give growers an opportunity to vote on the proposed amendments to the Marketing Order. The vote will be managed by USDA and is anticipated to be held in the later part of the year.

The CWB Grades & Standards Committee began working with USDA in 2020, looking into ways to update the outbound inspection process to remove redundancies and duplicative costs to bring more efficiency to the industry. As a result, the CWB voted to suspend enforcement of mandatory USDA outbound inspections of California walnuts. This action resulted in USDA issuing a preliminary six-month moratorium on the enforcement of the mandatory inspection requirement, effective September 1, 2021, which is expected to be extended until Marketing Order amendments are finalized.

Since that time, the CWB's Marketing Order Revision Committee (MORC) has been meeting with staff on a regular basis to make decisions on how to evolve the



Whole walnuts and kernels. (Photo: Gorkem Demir / Shutterstock.com)

Order to ensure the new version will benefit the industry in a much stronger way.

Jack Mariani, a California walnut grower and member of MORC stated, "the updates are long overdue and being made with committee input representing growers and handlers. I believe the updates will help the industry keep up with current market demands, save resources and increase efficiencies."

The Federal Marketing Order rules governing inspection, which date back to the Order's inception in 1948, are outdated as market and customer quality demands have since surpassed USDA grading standards.

The Marketing Order update is among many endeavors the California Walnut Board & Commission undertakes to provide greater benefit to growers and handlers. To learn more, visit Walnuts.org/Walnuts-Industry.

The Wonderful Company Co-owner Lynda Resnick Expands Support for Wonderful College Prep Academy Faculty and Staff with an Annual \$3 Million Investment Announcement

Press Release Provided by The Wonderful Company

On Tuesday, March 22, during her town hall address to Wonderful College Prep Academy (WCPA) faculty and staff, Lynda Resnick—philanthropist, vice-chairman, and co-owner of The Wonderful Company—announced an annual \$3 million gift to recognize and celebrate teachers for their unwavering dedication and passionate commitment to provide students with a world-class academic experience.

Amidst a global pandemic and national teacher shortage, this investment will allow WCPA to increase salaries for every employee and to provide bonuses and commuting reimbursements, supporting a more resilient education environment—both in and out of the classroom. This gift will enable WCPA to increase teacher total compensation by a minimum of \$10,000, and to provide every WCPA employee with at least a five percent raise. The additional funding will also support the continued focus on crucial mental health and wellness counselors and programs. With this gift, WCPA educators in Delano and Lost Hills will be the highest paid teachers in Kern County, and among the highest paid in the state of California.

"Education is the key to improving the trajectory of families in the Central Valley for generations to come," Mrs. Resnick stated in her speech. "We built extensive, all-encompassing programs in Delano and Lost Hills based on the belief that education is a fundamental human right and the single most important investment in our collective future. This has never been truer, and I hope this gift helps all WCPA teachers feel empowered to reach their full potential."

WCPA's long-standing commitment to education centers on providing training resources and building community to prepare today's youth for the global workforce. Beyond offering a highly competitive compensation package, WCPA also provides a robust benefits program and extensive opportunities for career growth and professional development. With a focus on hiring, developing, and inspiring the next generation of educators to make teaching a

lifelong career, WCPA aims to hire 25 teachers across all grade levels and content areas by June 2022.

"We are continuing to build a path of opportunity for our teachers to grow their careers at WCPA, so they can create better lives for themselves and their families," said Ana Martinez, superintendent, WCPA. "WCPA is uniquely positioned to play an essential role in supporting teachers as they pursue their passions and purpose, while helping prepare our children for the future. We are proud to lead the way in recognizing our teachers for their hard work and commitment to excellence."

WCPA teachers receive many critical resources and attractive perks, including:

Health & Wellness:

- Free healthy scratch-made meals daily
- Free access to the Wonderful Wellness Clinics and Fitness Centers
- Free health insurance (vision, dental, medical) for teachers and competitive plans to add family members

Employees' Children:

- Access to full-day preschool for \$50 per week
- Eligible to receive financial support for children attending college

Additional Incentives:

- Ample planning periods for all grade levels and early dismissal Fridays, followed by dedicated professional development time
- Access to State Teacher Retirement System (STRS)
- Fully paid two-year induction program (California's two-tiered teacher credentialing system)
- Access to the waitlist for local new and state-of-the-art homes at subsidized lease rates
- Voluntary 403(b) with employer match
- Annual and multiyear retention bonuses
- No supervision or yard duty
- Eligible to participate in community giving program for charity of choice



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Local Growers Honored as Citrus Family of the Year

Gless Family's contributions to be highlighted April 22 in Ivanhoe

Press Release Provided by Farmer Bob's World

Three generations of the Gless Family will be honored as the "Citrus Family of the Year" during a dinner program on Friday, April 22 at Farmer Bob's World in Ivanhoe.

Farmer Bob's World, a non-profit 501(c)(3) agricultural education program that offers farm tours and field trips, was founded by Bob McKellar, owner of McKellar Family Farms.

The Gless Family has been growing citrus and managing groves throughout California for 60 years, and their contributions to the industry will be the highlight of the fourth annual "Tree to Table: Dinner in the Groves" event that runs 5:30-8 p.m. Friday, April 22. The evening will include a barbecued steak dinner, orchard tour and entertainment by Lon Hannah of Sons of the San Joaquin. Tickets are \$100 each; table sponsorships start at \$600.

"Our mission is to convey that families are behind California produce," McKellar said. "We want to dispel the notion in the minds of customers that oranges, and other citrus, come from 'factory farms.' In fact, citrus in the San Joaquin Valley is grown by families like the Gless Family who eat the same oranges they grow and sell."

Gary Caviglia, board president of Farmer Bob's World, said the Gless Family stood out among those nominated.

"Our board selected them as outstanding representa-



Gless family portrait. (Photo: Gless Family)

tives of the growers in our valley," he said. "The citrus industry is dominated by multi-generational family farmers who take great pride in producing food for our nation and the world."

In Tulare County, citrus is the second-ranked crop after milk, according to the 2020 Agricultural Commissioners Report. Navel and valencia oranges alone represent more than 87,000 harvested acres in the county. The majority of those groves are owned by family farms.

Second-generation farmer John S. Gless said the family is humbled to be named Citrus Family of the Year.

"I feel so blessed to work with my dad and my son," he said. "The whole family has a work ethic that we were taught at an early age, and that is to work harder than everybody else. We are blessed to be working with great

people, some of whom have been with us for 45 years. It's all about having the right team."

The Gless Family's citrus-growing pursuits started in 1960 with 20 acres and today encompasses 10,000 acres in Kern and Riverside counties. They also manage acreage in Tulare County.

Janet and John J. Gless purchased the initial 20 acres in 1960 in the Woodcrest area of Riverside.

Planting the grove himself, John accepted and ultimately won a \$100 bet from an Orange County farmer who was certain that citrus would never be viable in the area's granite-filled soil. The groves thrived, and skeptics began to take notice. Investors sought out John's expertise in planting and farming ground in the area, and John

J. Gless Orchard Care was born. By 1978, a fruit stand was erected, enabling the family to sell direct to consumers. As a youth, John S. Gless designed a logo that is used today for Gless Ranch. Visitors can still buy fresh California citrus at this fruit stand in Riverside.

The family's operations expanded to include Hemet and the Coachella Valley. But with development encroaching in Southern California, Gless Ranch decided to add acreage in Kern County. In 1992, the family purchased 160 acres after a devastating freeze forced many growers out of business. They soon began farm management for other growers in both Kern and Tulare counties, specifically in the Porterville and Terra Bella areas.

Historically, the family performs an important task: managing the orange grove at California Citrus State Historic Park in Riverside. The park interprets the citrus industry's role in the history and development of California, and explains the complexities of the time when "Citrus was King" in Southern California.

Today, John J. Gless and Janet maintain an active role in the company.

John S. Gless lives in Bakersfield with his family and leads San Joaquin Valley operations. He is a board member of California Citrus Mutual, the California Ag Labor Association, and is a member of the California Citrus Advisory Committee. He is also a trustee at the Biosafety Level-3 laboratory for Huanglongbing Research at UC Riverside.

Following in the traditions of his grandfather and father, John C. Gless maintains operations in Southern California where he lives with his wife and children, who represent the fourth generation of Gless Ranch. That includes oversight of Gless Ranch Nursery in the Coachella Valley. The nursery was purchased in 2015 from Dowlin Young, who for years supplied Gless Ranch with the trees needed for their farming operations. John C. is active in industry organizations, including the Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC) and the Citrus Research Board.

California State Senate Confirms Nicole Elliott as Director of the Department of Cannabis Control

Press Release Provided by Department of Cannabis Control

Nicole Elliott was confirmed today as Director of the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) by the California State Senate. In a show of confidence, 34 senators voted in favor of Elliott's confirmation, and no senators voted in opposition.

Representatives of local government, cannabis businesses, law enforcement and labor unions voiced support for Elliott's confirmation during the Senate Rules Committee hearing on March 30, 2022. Supporters noted Elliott's strong leadership, her ability to make government accessible to all Californians, and her willingness to address challenges proactively and creatively.

"From day one, Director Elliott hit the ground running, responsibly leading the newly created Department of Cannabis Control, building a strong organizational culture and team, and creating meaningful stakeholder engagement opportunities," said Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency Secretary Lourdes Castro Ramirez. "With Director Elliott at the helm, California will continue to be a national leader, forging new pathways for innovation and strengthening cannabis regulation."

Elliott was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom on July 13, 2021, as the first Director of DCC, and immediately began work leading the department during its formation. Under Elliott's leadership, DCC has:

- Awarded \$100 million in grants to support local governments in transitioning provisional licensees into annual licensure
- Launched a fee waiver program to support equity businesses
- Proposed reforms to simplify and strengthen the cannabis regulatory framework, including consolidating three sets of regulations into one and proposals that would make comprehensive improvements
- Merged the organizational structure of three programs into one department, and named a permanent and transitional leadership team
- Launched CannaConnect, a series of educational resources to help licensees maintain compliance

Elliott has led cannabis policy development and implementation at multiple levels of California state and local government since 2017, immediately prior to the start of adult-use (recreational) sales. Elliott served as Governor Newsom's Senior Advisor on Cannabis from 2019 to 2021 and as the Director of the Office of Cannabis for the City and County of San Francisco from 2017 to 2019.



Scientist examining cannabis. (Photo: Yanukit Suji / Shutterstock.com)

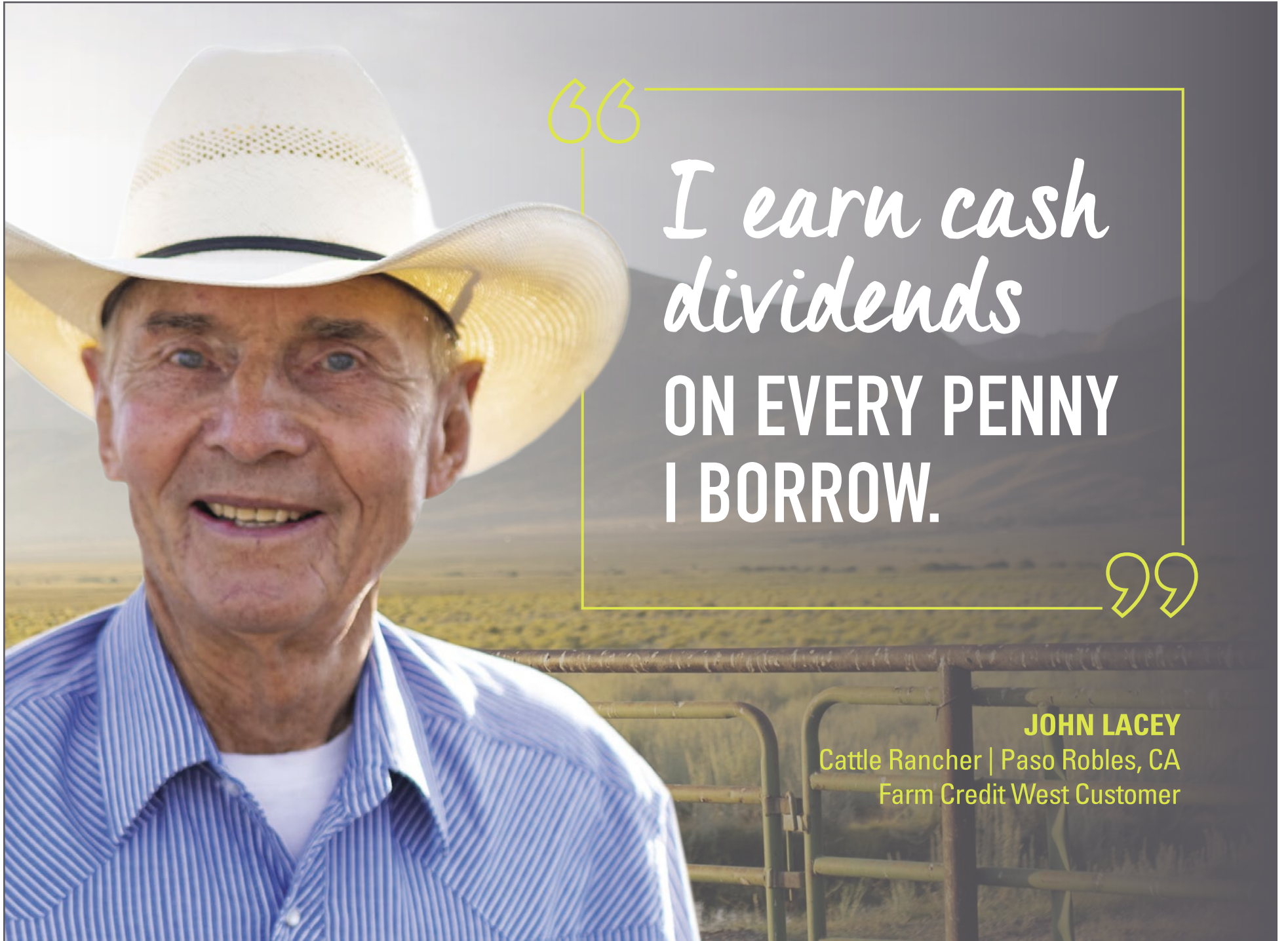
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Ministry Spotlight: StoryRunners

By Joshua Stevens
Faith Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

StoryRunners is a ministry dedicated to church planting in people groups whose cultures are more focused on the oral tradition. Many of these people groups and cultures have never heard the gospel, much less ever seen a Bible. “If you hand them a physical Bible, they’ll never be able to learn from it or internalize truth from it as well as they will from an oral means of presenting the Word,” says Nolan Cason, fund development representative for StoryRunners.

“Our ministry focuses on developing a set of Bible stories into the language we are working with at that point.” (Cason, 2022) StoryRunners uses “School of Storying”

which involves anywhere from 12 to 18 locals as well as the Story Runner staff going through 42 stories called “The Promise” and translating them into the native language as well as teaching those locals how to deliver those messages. These stories are developed in “cycles” where six stories are taken each cycle and developed to be biblically accurate, orally reproducible, naturally told, and appropriate to the culture. “The goal is to get an unchurched person to get a story that conveys the truth of God’s word but in a way that’s going to make sense to them.” (Cason, 2022)

In March, Nolan went and saw the process firsthand heading off to Tanzania where they are doing their third school of storying in six months working with a tribal people group who live primarily as herdsmen.

During this storying they had twenty people, all of which were Christian. “What was special about this storying compared to others is that nine of the volunteers we had were essentially training to be able to do these kinds of school of storying’s on their own with minimal American assistance. That’s our long-term goal is to be able to train local people to be able to run the whole thing with little American assistance. They’ll always be some of course, in back translating and making sure the stories that are developed are faithful to God’s word. By the end of the project, they were leading the story development with little oversight and help from the American trainers.” The project wasn’t only successful in preparing the local trainers to do the school of storying, but all of the participants were excited to evangelize. “The morning and part of the evening is spent developing the story and the rest of the evening is spent going out and telling those stories to the people.” (Cason, 2022) The last part of the storying is training participants on how to lead a “small group” where a leader will learn how to tell a story, teach others the story, engage, and reflect on the story. “The goal after the project is that the participants will form these groups and these groups will form the basis for a church.”

“My biggest passion is unreached people groups—unreached people groups *still* around three billion people where it’s unlikely in their lives that they will receive the gospel, meet a Christian, go to church. Each ministry is valuable but when we’re talking about unreached people groups, I consider it a mission’s emergency.”



Founded in 2003, StoryRunners exists to equip the world’s unreached people groups to produce and use oral Bible stories to launch communities of multiplying disciples. (Photo: Hi Desert Egg)

(Cason, 2022) “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 (Crossway Bibles, 2001) A passage known as “The Great Commission” and StoryRunners has taken that calling and ran with it.

To listen to “The Promise” as well as find ways to support or pray for this ministry you can visit their website at StoryRunners.org.

Cason, N. (2022, March 25). Fund Development Representative. (J. Stevens, Interviewer)
Crossway Bibles. (2001). *The Holy Bible English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Good News Publishers.

Easter Tradition No Longer a Major Driver for Selling Eggs

By Ching Lee, Assistant Editor, Ag Alert

Reprinted with Permission from California Farm Bureau Federation

The Easter egg hunt may still be a tradition this time of year, but egg producers say sales of their product around the holiday aren’t what they’re cracked up to be.

“It might push demand up a touch, but Easter is more of a chocolate holiday,” said Marty Zaritsky, an egg producer and distributor in San Bernardino County.

Even though some people still dye eggs for Easter, he said Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s remain the most lucrative holidays for egg sales, as that’s when people are baking and cooking more.

San Diego County egg farmer Frank Hilliker said he continues to see “a nice little bump” in sales a week before Easter as stores stock their shelves with eggs, but the holiday is not the huge driver it was 30 years ago. He says his highest demand for eggs is around Christmas.

At Easter time, he said, “those plastic eggs kind of rule the world.”

What is different this year is an outbreak of avian influenza across at least 24 states, though it has not been detected in California. The highly pathogenic virus has affected commercial and backyard flocks, resulting in the loss of more than 24 million birds as of last week. That has led to shorter supplies of eggs nationwide, driving up egg prices.

The higher market price is needed, Hilliker said, because the cost to produce eggs has soared. He noted the price of chicken feed has doubled from what it was two years ago. He’s also paying 25% more for packaging, 40% more for fuel and 10% to 15% more for labor.

Hilliker said he expects egg prices will remain higher until farms affected by avian influenza repopulate their barns. Though he is earning more for his eggs, he said the rise in prices has also begun to slow demand.

“With these higher prices, orders are down,” he said.

“(Customers are) saying, ‘no, I’m not paying that.’”

Zaritsky said the market has already begun to correct itself, with prices coming down last week. Egg prices have become so high, he said, that “a lot of people are not buying, so eggs are starting to back up a little bit.”

“Now I will have to adjust my prices down,” he said, even though his production costs remain elevated.

The implementation of Proposition 12, which took effect at the start of the year, also affected his business, Zaritsky said. The law established minimum spacing requirements for housing egg-laying hens, breeding pigs and calves raised for veal.

Zaritsky’s own farm has always produced cage-free eggs, but he also sold commodity eggs from caged birds raised on other farms. With Proposition 12, cage-free production is now standard in the state.

“(Cage-free) was like my niche,” he said, “and now everybody does it.”

He said he’s now focusing more on specialty cage-free eggs such as fertilized eggs and “super-dark yolk eggs” that Asian shoppers favor.

Hilliker said he believes Proposition 12—which requires other states selling eggs into California to meet the law’s housing requirements—has contributed to shorter supplies of eggs, because some producers either quit the business or didn’t convert their operations.

“With all these high costs, it’s hard to find the money,” he said, noting that he himself has two barns that have yet to be completed.

To meet projected demand, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimated that about 66% of U.S. egg-laying hens will need to be in cage-free production by 2026. As of last year, organic and cage-free egg production accounted for more than 29%, or 96.1 million hens, of total U.S. egg production. That’s up from 14% in 2016 and 4% in 2010. By 2026, nine states—including California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon,



Cage-free eggs are packed at Hi Desert Egg in San Bernardino. The farm, in Lucerne Valley, produces brown and white eggs. (Photo: Hi Desert Egg)

Rhode Island, Utah and Washington—will require all egg layers to be cage-free.

After losing a lot of her restaurant customers during the past two years due to the pandemic shutdowns, Sonoma County egg producer Tiffany Holbrook said she’s “trying to find unique ways to sell” her eggs, including “trying to take advantage of Easter.” The farm is now selling all-natural egg-coloring kits and eggs that have been dyed, to show that her light-brown eggs “still hold these beautiful colors.” She’s also offering discounts on smaller eggs.

Holbrook used to sell 60% to 70% of her eggs wholesale. But at the start of the pandemic lockdown, when grocery stores were running out of eggs, her farm’s egg vending machine “got very, very popular, so we were able to greatly increase our customer base” through direct sales. The surge in demand prompted her to increase her bird numbers and egg production. But sales have since mellowed.

“Now we’re actually trying to produce less because the wholesale didn’t quite come back as we had hoped it would,” she said. “We definitely are producing more eggs than we’re able to sell right now. We hope that Easter might change that for a week or so.”

Holbrook said she has seen robust demand at the nation-

wide level, with buyers saying, “name the price and they’ll do what they can to match it.” But as a small producer, she said she “can’t really fulfill” the large orders those buyers are seeking, typically in the amount of 50 dozen a day.

Despite organic feed costs rising nearly 30% since mid-2020, Holbrook said she’s not charging more for her eggs. Instead, she said she’s exploring other enterprises such as giving farm tours and selling different merchandise to boost revenue.

DaVonne Johnson, who runs a flock of about 400 layers in Contra Costa County, said she’s had to raise her prices for the first time in six years. In addition to paying 30% more for feed, she said the cost of other materials has gone up, including fuel, egg cartons, labels and shavings for chicken-coop bedding.

The Easter holiday won’t impact her sales, she said, because “we only sell brown eggs, and they’re not desirable for dyeing.” Even with the price of her eggs higher since the beginning of the month, she said she has not noticed a slowdown in her direct sales.

“Here at the farm,” Johnson said, “people are so happy to get the eggs that I haven’t heard anything back regarding the price.”

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