

Improved Orchard Recycling Practices, Grants Help Growers Transition to New Plantings

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

Drive down the I-5 or Highway 99 these days, and you're sure to see a few old, unproductive almond orchards looking the worse for wear.

That's because from 1997 to 2002, California planted an average of 22,765 acres of almonds a year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service, as the almond industry quickly grew to become the state's top specialty crop by 2011. By comparison, new almond acreage was down to its lowest

totals in two decades the past two years, with 19,873 acres planted in 2020 and just 14,998 planted in 2021.

That growth in plantings at the turn of the century, along with record production numbers for half those seasons, amounted to more than 182,000 additional acres of almonds going in during the six-year span, many of which are now (a quarter of a century later) coming out of production—if they haven't already been removed.

An almond orchard typically has a lifespan of about 20 to 25 years, and the Almond Board of California now projects about 30,000-40,000 acres of almonds will be coming out of production annually over the next decade.

And with ag burning being phased out in the San Joaquin Valley by Jan. 1, 2025, and permits and burn days becoming harder to come by, farming operations have few options for disposing of old fruit or nut trees. That leaves growers in a tough position, not only having to pay for the removal and chipping/grinding of old trees, but also cover the costs of having the shredded material hauled off—during a time when diesel prices are soaring to record highs.

Grants for WOR

Fortunately, there are grant programs and improved

GROWERS TRANSITION TO NEW PLANTINGS on PAGE 9

YEAR	ALMONDS PLANTED IN CALIFORNIA
1995	18,901 acres
1996	18,780 acres
1997	22,737 acres
1998	31,886 acres
1999	30,066 acres
2000	23,052 acres
2001	18,939 acres
2002	17,762 acres
Total	182,123 acres

(Data: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service)



Hens in livestock cages. (Photo: Bell Ka Pang / Shutterstock.com)

Avian Quarantine in California

By Audrey Hill, Feature Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

On February 23, 2022, the California State Veterinarian Annette B. Jones D.M.V. imposed a poultry quarantine and state entry requirements due to an outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in the U.S. The first cases were seen in South Carolina in January and have since spread throughout the U.S.; however, California has remained clear thus far. Over 40 million birds have been affected across 37 states and cases are still being reported every month. 199 reported cases have been from “backyard flocks” and 186 have been from commercial operations.

Poultry entering California must receive a permit if coming from a HPAI control area, however this restriction only applies to poultry from HPAI control areas or areas

suspected of having the virus. Currently, (updated July 8, 2022) the HPAI control areas are Weld, CO, Carson City, NV, Lancaster, PA, and King, WA. States with active HPAI in domestic poultry are Colorado, Maine, Oregon, Washington, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Nevada. The CDFA Avian Influenza alert page will continue updating these control areas and active virus states.

Fortunately, the strict regulations and quarantine currently imposed in California is helping the state to stay free of HPAI. Although no cases have been identified since the start of the outbreak, precaution is highly advised. In a video found on the YouTube channel *CDFA TV* and the CDFA Avian Influenza website page, Dr. Annette B. Jones discusses means of prevention and reporting at home. Common signs of avian influenza are lethargic birds, decreased food and/or water intake, and sudden

death. It is strongly recommended to notify a local veterinarian or call the CDFA Sick Bird Hotline: (866) 922-BIRD if any of these signs are seen. It should be noted that humans can but rarely contract avian influenza.

Dr. Jones states that wild birds are major carriers of avian influenza and separating personal flocks from wild is the best form of prevention at home. Larger producers such as Central Valley Eggs are taking the threats of waterfowl like ducks and geese very seriously and are on high alert during the Spring migration, which tends to bring in the most diseases. By removing spilled feed and stagnant water, or moving flocks away from the water, bird owners can help limit interactions with contagious wild birds. Limiting visitors and wearing clean attire can also be helpful as the virus can live on hands, boots, and equipment. It is times like these where everyday biosecurity measures can make or break an operation,

See AVIAN QUARANTINE IN CALIFORNIA on PAGE 5

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

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

Lessons to Be Learned From Frogs in Mississippi

By Scott Hamilton
President, Hamilton Resource Economics

You may think that your orchard or vineyard is not a habitat for endangered species. But the US Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) has the discretion and authority to deem it so under a recent regulatory rule change by the Biden administration. That should be a source of concern and a call to action.

The issue is born in the Endangered Species Act (the Act). Loss of habitat is the primary reason many species become imperiled. The purpose of the Act, as specified by Congress, is “to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved.” In that sense, the Act might



The dusky gopher frog. (Photo: Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.)

be better titled the Ecosystem Preservation Act, restoring emphasis to ecosystem preservation rather than species' preservation—a conundrum the Service faces when trying to protect the San Joaquin kit fox that prey on Tipton Kangaroo Rats—both of which are listed under the Act.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM FROGS on PAGE 4



FARM BUREAU NEWS

The United Voice of Kern County's Farming Community



President's Message

By Patty Poire
President, Kern
County Farm Bureau

Here we are in August, and July went out with a roar! You might ask why

a roar? Well, it is because of the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) deadline of July 27th. DWR issued a determination letter of an incomplete status back on January 28, 2022, with three deficiencies indicated in their review and determination. Since then, the Kern subbasin Groundwater Sustainable Agencies (GSA) have worked to collaborate and coordinate the response to DWR. Now that the submittal has been completed, DWR has stated that they will be reviewing then providing their final decision by the end of 2022. As I have mentioned in previous articles, that decision could end of up having the Kern subbasin going into a probationary status, which means the State Water Board steps in and begins their oversight and review. As a farmer, you want to have DWR come back and provide a complete status and have the basin move forward with the implementation of SGMA at the local level. You don't want the state!

And if that isn't enough to get you excited, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has proposed that businesses begin disclosing their "climate-related risks" by tracking greenhouse gas emissions throughout their supply chain. In the United States, the food supply chain is largely made up of all sizes of farms, small, medium and large, that send their products to processors or directly to market. According to Pacific Research Institute, Wayne Winegarden, senior fellow in Business and Economics, wrote in a filing to the SEC that the proposed rule would "mandate unachievable reporting requirements, (impose) costly new burdens on companies and (provide) information dubious of value to investors." As a farmer of any size, providing your "climate-related risks" would be subjective as well as objective and to what level would be required and would you be held accountable for

the disclosure? No one knows yet! Is the SEC stepping beyond its expertise and expanding its mission beyond what has been placed on it by legislation? One begins to wonder.

Now that I have your attention even more, the California Department of Pesticide (DPR) held several workshops to present their proposal on a state-wide notification system and to seek input from the public and the agricultural industry. The state's proposal would create a system where a user would input a California address and receive notifications 24 hours in advance of any restricted material products (pesticides) used within a 9-mile radius. The notification would not include the exact address of the application but would identify if it occurred within one mile of the user's address. It sounds like a useful notification until you realize that it will more than likely trigger more instances of use challenges through appeals and protester/trespassing incidents. And apparently at the workshops held by DPR, which were well attended, that comments from the agricultural industry were met with hostility and attacks from anti-pesticide advocates. This doesn't come as a surprise since anti-pesticide advocates have become more and more vocal about their desire to end the use of pesticides, as was on display at one of the Kern County Supervisor Board meetings. They proceeded to explain that the local Kern County farmers have a history of violations which is not the case. To be exact, Kern County farmers have the least number of violations. This type of behavior has just recently been given a tag name called "conflict entrepreneurs." It is defined as a person who profits, who makes a living, by sowing discord amount the public. Because honestly, most people and in this instance, most farmers and the public want the same thing, to be protective of the use of pesticides. And if the farmers apply correctly, the public is not in harms way, but these conflict entrepreneurs don't want solutions, they want conflict to continue so they can continue with their job. Amazing!

I should end with at least some good news, so the Friant Division of the Federal Bureau of Reclamation announced on Friday July 8, that they are increasing



Executive Director's Report

By Romeo Agbalog,
Executive Director, Kern
County Farm Bureau

August is the height of summer, and your local Farm Bureau is peaking with activity. Recently, your Farm Bureau spoke up and shared its concerns regarding the state's "Regions Rise Together" initiative to both the Governor and Speaker of the Assembly. We have been closely following the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and its process of developing a Statewide Pesticide Application Notification System, including engagement at public workshops, and submitting formal comments to DPR expressing concerns.

Your Farm Bureau sub-committees are humming with activity as well, with the activation of the Political Committee which is tasked with identifying key local, state, and federal races and interviewing candidates for these offices to determine which will be agriculture's strongest advocates and earn the coveted Farm Bureau endorsement. Of course, the Bounty of Kern County Committee continues its work planning and preparing for Kern's premier Farm to Fork event of the year slated for Saturday, October 8th. Also, right around the corner is our Save Water, Drink Beer event planned by our Education and Outreach Committee to be held on Thursday, August 11th at Temblor Brewing in Bakersfield. Should you have any questions about any of these events or would like to attend, please call us at (661) 397-9635 or email KCFB@KernCFB.com.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not mention a few past events and the hard work of the volunteers and supporters who make them happen. First, special thanks to Pam Brunni for her work on this year's Teachers Ag

Seminar that concluded and the end of July. Pam is a familiar face and the rudder behind Farm Bureau's Farm Day in the City, but her work with Teachers Ag Seminar is invaluable insights and knowledge to local area educators about the agriculture industry and its value to the community and beyond that can be shared with students in classrooms across the county. Also, congratulations to Kern's Young Farmer's and Ranchers for holding another successful farmers market at Norris Middle School that showcased a variety for fresh fruits and vegetables from local area farms and sharing proceeds to help Bakersfield's Edible Schoolyard program. Lastly in the spirit of advocating, educating, and promoting local area agriculture Farm Bureau Board President Patty Poire served as a guest speaker at the Kern County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Review Council meeting as well as guest speaker at Teachers Ag Seminar banquet. Farm Bureau officers serve on a volunteer basis, so I appreciate very much the time and effort they provide to promote the Kern County Farm Bureau and local area agriculture.



Save Water, Drink Beer this August 11th (Photo: Temblor Brewing)

the 2022 water allocation for Class 1 contractors from 15% to 20%. They even stated that they are optimistic that there may be an opportunity to increase the Class 1 allocation to 30%, if no additional water in Millerton Lake is required by the Exchange Contractors.

As I have stated in previous articles, the California farmer is on display and being challenged in so many ways, however, the Kern County Farm Bureau will continue the fight and works towards the betterment of you, the California farmer.

Young Farmers & Ranchers

VALLEY AG VOICE

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

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

DESIGN & PRODUCTION The Marcom Group

PRINTING S&S Printing

CONTENT SUBMISSION & OTHER INQUIRIES,
CONTACT US AT Info@ValleyAgVoice.com



KERN COUNTY FARM BUREAU
Romeo Agbalog, Executive Director
661-397-9635 • RAgbalog@KernCFB.com

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



By Timothy Collins
Chair, Kern County
Young Farmers
& Ranchers

This summer I took a day hike up in the San Emigdio Mountains, which form the south end of our San Joaquin Valley. From up in

the rugged terrain, the clearings in the trees give way to breathtaking views of the great valley beginning below me. The green fields spread out like a patchwork quilt of what is one of the most productive agricultural regions in the entire world, but it was not always so. The valley has changed drastically over the past couple hundred years and continues to change today.

I hiked down a trail not far from the El Camino Viejo—used by the Spanish in the 18th and 19th centuries as an inland alternative to the coastal El Camino Real. While looking out over the valley, I thought of what those who hiked down the mountains 200 years ago had looked at. Instead of patchwork fields, the San Joaquin was a largely unsettled flatland with marshes and lakes. I doubt they could have imagined that in the

21st century we would be growing over 250 different crops and yielding a third of all the produce grown in the United States. Just what will the San Joaquin Valley be in another 200 years? There are many challenges to the ag industry here today, from water shortages to suburban sprawl, and all of us play a part in what the



(Photo: Kern County Young Farmers & Ranchers)

future will hold.

In June, I attended the California Ag Teachers Association State Conference held in San Luis Obispo. Teachers from across the state are divided into six regions, mine being the San Joaquin Region. We are the group that is training up the next generation of the ag industry in the San Joaquin Valley. What direction the ag industry goes in this valley tomorrow will be determined by those kids in school today. If you are in the ag industry, be sure to connect with and support ag programs at the high school and college level. There is always more room for real local industry experience in the classroom.

Those who began settling the San Joaquin valley over 200 years ago and their descendants have created a vast agricultural powerhouse. Us Young Farmers and Ranchers today will be the ones to shape the future of the valley. Our goal, I believe, is that when anyone looks out over the valley 200 years from now they will see an even greater agricultural region that continues to feed the world by the ability to innovate and overcome challenges, such as the ones we face in our lifetime.

Email: KernYFR@KernCFB.com

Instagram: [@Kern_YFR](https://www.instagram.com/Kern_YFR)

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



Thompson Seedless grapes. (Photo: Macks Manu / Shutterstock.com)

Potential Merger is Good News for Central Valley Table Grape Growers

By Melissa Nagel, Feature Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

In a deal announced earlier this year, Special New Fruit Licensing (SNFL)—a global leader in table grape breeding and development—announced plans to combine with International Fruit Genetics (IFG). The transaction, which is currently under regulatory review, will bring IFG's and SNFL's industry-leading research and development, along with its breeding programs together, creating new opportunities for innovation and expanded market access for California's table grape growers.

SNFL has had a close relationship with California's table grape growers for more than two decades and is well-respected within the industry for its breeding program focused on health benefits, disease tolerance, and other important grower traits for common table grape varieties. California-based IFG has spent the last 20 years developing its own impressive breeding program, focused on consumer traits and flavor, which has led to the development of new and unique flavored varieties, such as cotton candy grapes, that have become popular with consumers across the U.S.

As it is becoming more important to growers to combine these once distinct approaches to breeding traits, the two companies believe that this merger will provide Central Valley growers with the best of both worlds. More importantly, the merger will also expand the ability for growers to increase consumer access and consumption of table grapes.

While the deal has raised eyebrows among a small number of grape growers, many in the industry see the huge benefits and both companies have stressed that this is a win for all sides. SNFL growers will maintain access to innovative technologies as well as to an entirely new portfolio of current and future grape varieties. Existing IFG growers are also set to benefit from the merger, as they'll be exposed to SNFL's innovations with varieties to be released soon that focus on disease resistance and antioxidant content in table grapes.

"Expanded market access for growers to sell value-added products while at the same time being able to use new technology to grow more sustainably and efficiently is key to the industry's future," said Pete Hronis of Hronis, Inc. "This merger will enable farmers to do both."

The companies have also sought to assure growers and consumers alike that there is no intention to cease support for any of the existing SNFL or IFG varieties or cease the development of any current breeding or research and development programs. The companies say this transaction is focused on supporting existing varieties and enabling more investment to enhance and improve new varieties.

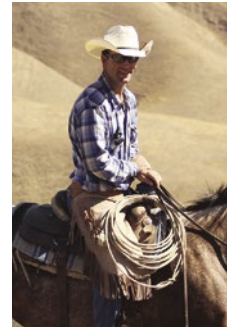
"The merger will level the playing field for California table grape growers looking to grow new varieties," said Jack Campbell of Four Star Fruit. "Now more than ever, we need to invest in advancing our industry to develop disease-resistant grapes that are high in antioxidants, expand unique flavors, and give our consumers access to healthy, high-quality fruit."

For consumers, the companies say the increased investment in research and development following the merger will lead to additional table grapes on the shelf at grocery stores and expand consumer access to high-quality, affordable, healthy food. The combination of the two breeding programs also promises to enable the development of the breeding techniques necessary to face the challenge of more severe climate conditions and reduce the need for pesticides, allowing growers to consistently deliver a quality product.

Dr. Andrew Walker of UC Davis said "We are at the precipice of a new chapter for table grapes with the merger of SNFL and IFG. This union will catapult the Central Valley towards deeper industry expertise, expanding the R&D to develop more resilient, cost-effective varieties with improved taste and quality."

In the days ahead, all eyes will be on the exciting opportunities at hand for the Central Valley's table grape growers.

The Cattleman's Corner



OPINION: Catalytic Converter Policy: Today's California in a Single Example

By Austin Snedden
Ranching Contributor,
Valley Ag Voice

My sister recently had her catalytic converter stolen, adding her to the ranks of thousands that have become victims of this crime in Kern County. The absurd story of the catalytic converter and California policy makes one of today's most prevalent crimes even more frustrating. Government has gotten so big that at all levels there are bureaucrats mired in minutia and almost all of them can't step back and look at the macro view of their policy, and with California leading the league in bloated government, there are plenty of examples of policy inconsistencies. Although California has plenty of missteps, many more egregious than this, the catalytic converter gives a snapshot of California's governing incompetence.

In the mid-1970s California required all new vehicles to be equipped with a catalytic converter. As a pioneer in burdening its citizens with regulation, California was the first to institute this tail pipe scrubber. Due to the number of vehicles sold in California, auto manufacturers eventually began equipping all vehicles for the U.S. market with catalytic converters, allowing the rest of the nation to share in the cost and burden

instituted by California policy. By 1984, California began requiring periodic

smog checks on vehicles to make sure they were equipped with a catalytic converter and conformed to state standards for vehicle owners to use their vehicles on public roads. Although government took credit for cleaning up vehicle emissions through mandates, these edicts did little to improve air quality. As is usually the case with everything, economics created the biggest cleanup of vehicle emissions. Rising fuel prices spurred the private sector to innovate creating electronic fuel injection and more advanced tuning, and the economic goal of burning less fuel had the largest effect in emission reductions, but government mandates don't shrink.

Fast forward to modern day where the world has embraced California's love for regulation and almost every vehicle on the entire planet is equipped with catalytic converters. The crucial components of catalytic converters require platinum, palladium, and rhodium, some of the most scarce and precious metals on earth. In a sane world, a government body that requires a scarce mined material to permit your vehicle to travel the public roads would simultaneously loosen mining restrictions to increase the amount of said required mined material. Not in California. In fact, after requiring vehicles to include this mined

See CATALYTIC CONVERTER POLICY on PAGE 15

Farm, Ranch and Transitional Use Properties



ALMONDS	PRICED REDUCED	\$22,500±/AC	DRY LAND	PRICE REDUCED	\$2,250±/AC
111.42± acres, 1 well, 1 domestic well and 3.14 AF Wheeler Ridge Maricopa WSD contract water, Grade 1 Excellent Soils			160 acres, mostly grade 1 soils, Near Valley Acres		
FARMLAND	PRICED REDUCED	\$19,000±/AC	WINE GRAPES		\$18,378±/AC
117.82± acres, located in Kings County WD/1 Well grade 1 - Excellent Soils, Hanford			161.06± acres, Wasco area, Semi-Tropic WSD non-contract water, 1 Well, High-Density planting, Quality varieties, Productive Soils		
TABLE GRAPES	\$33,500±/AC & \$36,500±/AC		ALMONDS	PRICE REDUCED	\$16,500±/AC
119.92± & 150.27± acres, Delano Earlimart Irrigation District, Lower Tule River Irrigation District, Quality Varieties, Productive Soils			320± acres, Wasco Area, Semi Tropic non-contract water, 1 well, Grade 1 Excellent Soils, Almonds in full production.		
WALNUTS	PRICED REDUCED	\$29,500±/AC	ALMONDS		\$18,964±/AC
149.33± acres, Lindmore ID and Wells, Productive Soils, Lindsay, CA.			394.47± acres, Wasco Area, Semi Tropic non-contract water, 3 wells, 863.4±KW Solar System, Productive Soils, Almonds in full production.		
TABLE GRAPES		\$35,000±/AC	WINE GRAPES		\$17,500±/AC
154.36± & 406.65± acres, Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District, Quality Varieties, Excellent Soils.			602.5± acres, Wasco area, Semi tropic WSD non-contract water, 4 Wells, High-Density planting, Quality varieties, Productive Soils		
FARMLAND		\$13,000±/AC	ALMONDS AND FARMLAND		\$21,790±/AC
156.96± acres, Wasco Area, Semi-Tropic WSD non-contract water, 1 well, Productive soils, and Perfect for permanent crops			995.11± acres, Wasco Area, Semi-Tropic WSD Contract and non-contract water, 5 wells, Productive Soils, and Almonds in full production.		

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



ROBB M. STEWART, AFM
rstewart@pearsonrealty.com
661.303.2930



4900 California Ave 210B,
Bakersfield, CA 93309
www.pearsonrealty.com



KAMERON M. STEWART
kstewart@pearsonrealty.com
661.809.1817

C&H

FENCE & PATIO

candhfence.com

Lic: #397784

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

Thank you for 55 years of serving you!

BAKERSFIELD
661-327-4786

VISALIA
559-651-0772

DELANO
661-725-3600

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

AFA BBB



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

Visit ValleyAgVoice.com/rates
or call Dave @ 661-204-8160.

VALLEY AG VOICE

The Local Voice for our Farmers, Ranchers and Dairy Producers since 2013

Lessons to Be Learned From Frogs

Continued from PAGE 1 Enter the case of the dusky gopher frog which once lived throughout coastal Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, in the pine forests that covered much of the southeast. More than 98% of those forests have been removed to make way for urban development, agriculture, and timber plantations. Timber plantations, in this scenario, are not unlike orchards—they changed the landscape in a way that made it uninhabitable for the frogs. The humble frog, or at least its legal case, made it to the Supreme Court because the Service included 1500 acres of plantation in its critical habitat designation, not because the plantation was habitat, nor had been for decades, but because the Secretary of the Interior is permitted to include in the definition of critical habitat areas that are not occupied but are essential to the conservation of the species. The Service saw the existing available habitat for the frog as insufficient to preserve the species and so included land that could be restored to habitat. The Supreme Court disagreed with the designation, essentially saying that if land is not currently habitat, it cannot be critical habitat. What the Service could have done is purchased the ephemeral ponds in the plantation that are so essential to the frog, and the surrounding land, restored the habitat, and then modified their critical habitat designation. But by designating the whole 1500 acres of the plantation as critical habitat, which in its entirety cannot be degraded under the Act, the Service substantially reduced the value of the property to its owners.

Under the Biden Administration, the Services reaction to the Supreme Court ruling is to take a broad and discretionary approach to determining what is or could be habitat, so that critical habitat is now within the designated area of habitat, even if it is unoccupied or never has been.

Landowners must now rely on the reasonableness of Service line staff to ensure property values are not eroded unnecessarily. That may give certain landowners little comfort

given that the Service is overwhelmed by new listings and is trying to anticipate protections in the future given climate change and wildfires without much science on which to support their decisions. One solution would be to amend the Endangered Species Act, but even attempts to modify the Act in relatively minor ways have failed over the past 30 years.

There is another solution, but it is not an easy one. It recognizes the intent of the Act to preserve ecosystems. The different types and extent of ecosystems that once existed in the San Joaquin Valley are well documented. They include grasslands, seasonal wetlands, riparian associations, and woodlands. The federal Endangered Species Act has a provision for Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) and the State has a counterpart in Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs). By preserving enough habitats to protect listed and other desired species, the need to take private property or to continually obtain permits to conduct otherwise lawful activities, such as cleaning stream beds to prevent flooding, is significantly diminished. The development of NCCPs in California waned as the burden of getting them permitted has increased. Some have suggested their lack of use has been due to the creation of arbitrary and unreasonable bureaucratic demands and hurdles. But the potential benefit of such plans could be enormous. The opportunity to develop such plans has been enhanced recently because the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act is likely to force hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland out of production and the State government is making tens of millions of dollars available to facilitate just such land retirement. Strategic retirement of land to facilitate ecosystem restoration in conjunction with the development of HCPs and NCCPs would protect those ecosystems for future generations, prevent future listings, and protect landowners from unreasonable regulations. But currently, such a comprehensive plan is lacking.

It's Just Your Size.

Carry cargo, passengers, or somewhere in-between.

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

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



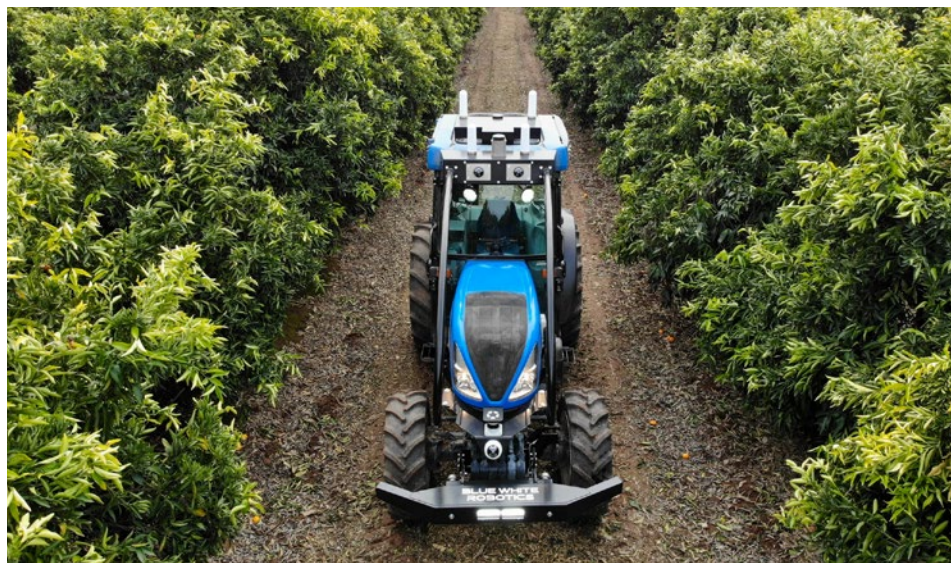
Schedule a Test Drive
(661) 836-3737

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

Mercedes-Benz
of Bakersfield

Bakersfield Automall (661) 836-3737





A tractor retrofitted with a Blue White Robotics autonomous system makes its way through a citrus orchard. Autonomous tractors are being developed as a means of dealing with labor shortages. The driverless vehicles can also apply crop-protection materials without exposure to workers. (Photo: Blue White Robotics)

Driverless Tractor Future May Be Arriving



By Kevin Hecteman
Assistant Editor,
Ag Alert

*Reprinted with Permission
from California Farm Bureau
Federation*

This is not your grandfather's Farmall tractor—because this new-age machine makes its way up and down an orchard or vineyard seemingly all by itself, carrying out multiple tasks with no human required.

As technology advances, autonomous tractors are becoming more attractive to farmers looking to keep their fields productive amid chronic labor shortages.

Besides offering driverless tractors, some companies can retrofit existing machines to operate autonomously. Connor Kingman runs one such outfit in Lemoore; his autonomous gear can be installed on a variety of makes and models.

"Nobody has to be out in the field in a van or anything, or out there monitoring it," Kingman said. "It runs 24 hours a day, only stopping for fuel." So far, a Kingman driverless tractor is found only in vineyards. But there, it's capable of "everything," Kingman said—"it will disk, it will mow, spray."

A farmer can monitor its performance through a smartphone app or an office computer, he added; if the tractor encounters an obstruction, it will stop and send an alert to the farmer, who can then check a live video feed or head to the field to investigate.

Customers tell Kingman the technology allows them to use fewer machines.

"We've got one ranch where there's just one tractor, and it's singlehandedly managing about 1,000 acres of grapes," he said. "For the farmer, that's not only an incredible amount of labor savings, but it's an incredible amount of capital savings, because typically you'd have five, six tractors. Now you're just running one, 24 hours a day, stopping just for fuel."

There may be other benefits as well for applications of crop-protection materials.

"Taking humans out of the equation and being able to spray without worker exposure is not only a huge benefit of the cost but also in terms of safety," Kingman said.

Blue White Robotics is also making a play for the driverless market. Alon Ascher, Blue White's chief business

officer, said a field team spends time with farmers once the equipment is installed, helping them master the

learning curve. Depending on the farm, one operator can oversee anywhere from four to 12 tractors, he added.

"Every crop, farm, equipment and operation is different and requires different approach and attention," Ascher said. "We see firsthand what are the needs, make sure performance and safety is adequate, and can provide additional solutions, from local communication networks to smart implements, if needed."

To Ascher, the goal is to help "farmers maximize saving on labor, equipment, input usage, maintenance, communication and energy at the same time, with data-driven and precise operation."

He said the tractor is just one aspect of a 21st century sustainable farm featuring ground and air autonomous vehicles, clean energy and fast communication.

Some makers of tractors that still require human drivers are now changing up the means of propulsion. Mani Iyer, chief executive of Solectrac, has two electric tractors: a 25-horsepower version on the market and a 70-hp model in testing for orchard, winery and vineyard work. It is expected to be available in 2023.

"Almost 80% of the tractor industry is 100-horsepower and below," Iyer said. "Our aim is to reach that category."

While the purchase price can be 25% to 30% more than a comparable diesel model, going electric pays for itself in the long run, Iyer said.

"The charging cost is 1/10th the fuel cost," Iyer said. "With one moving part against 300-plus moving parts of diesel—no oil, no fuel—maintenance is fairly low," Iyer said.

Mike Haney, a Yolo County farm manager, has been using a 25-hp Solectrac machine since December. So far, he's satisfied.

"We have a lot of fruit trees that I just planted," Haney said. "Running the compost and things like that, it works really nice."

One thing Haney appreciates most is the \$0 fuel bill since "diesel's so crazy high." He's not even spending money to charge it, as the farm has solar power.

One roadblock to widespread autonomous adoption in California is a state regulation mandating that "all self-propelled equipment shall, when under its own power and in motion, have an operator stationed

See **DRIVERLESS TRACTOR FUTURE** on the **NEXT PAGE**



Free Mulch!

Farm ♦ Business ♦ Home ♦ Garden

Mulch Can Help So Much!

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



Bakersfield Compost Facility

661-835-8873 ♦ 2601 S Mt Vernon Ave

Available In Bulk

Tuesday – Saturday ♦ 7 AM – 3:30 PM

Avian Quarantine in California

Continued from PAGE 1 no matter how small.

Larger operations must maintain a certain level of biosecurity. It is not uncommon to see these facilities add to or strengthen their biosecurity when an outbreak like this occurs. Central Valley Eggs located in northern Wasco, CA is not an exception to this. Dann Snyder, Complex Manager for Central Valley Eggs, has maintained an increased biosecurity since the outbreak and will continue to uphold these stricter standards of surveillance and entry.

"Humans are the main vectors," Snyder says, and without any cases in the state to keep people on high alert, "People will go to places where migratory birds are, and then go to work and infect the birds." Because of the risk, Snyder will "continue with the heightened biosecurity standard, only because there is a strong enough threat that it will occur next year." An outbreak on a

commercial farm has the potential

to kill many birds. Keeping them safe from infection means the difference between producing normally and starting new flocks completely. Once avian influenza has reached a farm, the state and federal governments must be notified, and the farm must be "depopulated"—truly, the worst loss to any animal production facility.

For now, California remains in the clear with HPAI and there is hope that it will remain that way. Cases seem to be dying down, however, a single case can change the fate of many. It is important that individual bird owners and commercial operations stay on high alert. Thank you to all who have worked so diligently to keep California HPAI free.

Videos, infographics, and updates on the virus can be found at the CDFA Avian Influenza website and is a major source of information for this article.

Improved Wheat Market Has Farmers Eyeing Fall Planting

By Ching Lee, Assistant Editor, Ag Alert

Reprinted with Permission from California Farm Bureau Federation

After years of languishing prices, the mercurial rise of the wheat market this year may inspire more plantings in the fall, but don't expect California growers to go gangbusters on the grain.

Wheat harvest is mostly wrapping up in the state, with farmers on track to deliver 80,000 acres of winter wheat, the same amount as last year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's June forecast. California farmers were also expected to harvest 24,000 acres of durum wheat, an increase of 4,000 acres from 2021.

Despite record-setting prices for wheat, many farmers contracted their crop before the surge and locked in prices that were "way lower," said Claudia Carter, executive director of the California Wheat Commission. Though prices have moderated in recent weeks, farmers could take advantage of the overall strength in the market by locking in prices for next year's crop, she added.

"The positive side is that for next year, we could see more wheat being planted and harvested—not significantly more, but slightly more than this year because the prices are still OK," she said. "But things can change."

Wheat prices, which have been climbing since 2020, spiked to record levels this year driven in large part by disruptions from the war between Russia and Ukraine, two major producers of the grain. In the U.S.—a top wheat producer and exporter—production is forecast to be the second lowest in 20 years, according to USDA.

Wheat remains largely a rotational crop for California farmers, most of whom plant it in the fall to take advan-



This wheat field in Clarksburg is ready for harvest. Yolo County farmer Larry Hunn says storms during planting flooded fields, causing delays—and now a later harvest. (Photo: Deb Hunn)

tage of the rainy season to germinate the seeds. They typically grow wheat to promote soil health in between more lucrative crops such as tomatoes.

Too much rain last fall led to unfavorable planting conditions, causing delays, oversaturated fields and lost plantings. Dry conditions during the growing season then forced some growers to irrigate the crop, increasing production costs. Farmers who grow dryland wheat saw yield reductions.

Yolo County grower Larry Hunn described a "frustrating" season in which he had to "muck" in the crop after storms that flooded his fields and killed his plantings. He replanted some of it in January, which he said he had never done before.

Because of the late planting, his harvest is also late; he expects to finish sometime next week. He described yields so far as average to below average. He blamed much of it on weather conditions and his late start in

irrigating the crop, as "we were all hoping and praying to get some rain."

Because he presold most of his crop last year, Hunn said he missed out on "the super-duper prices that maybe some of the guys got when this Ukraine war started." Even so, he said, his contracted price is much higher than what it had been in the past three to four years.

"This totally turned around in the last 12 months," Hunn said. "Who would've known that Putin would invade Ukraine? You couldn't have bet on that."

Hunn said he assumes wheat prices will hold strong through next spring, though "maybe not as high as what we saw." He said he also expects more wheat will be planted in California this fall. His concern, he said, is with Russia dumping wheat on the world market, causing a potential market crash. He noted the price of corn and wheat already is "settling out a little bit."

Because where he farms is susceptible to seepage from the Sacramento River that could wreck yields, Sacramento County farmer John Perry tends not to presell his crop until April. This year, that strategy paid off—big time. He said he sold 30% to 40% of his wheat "almost at the top of the market."

Perry finished harvest at the end of June. He said he plans to market the rest of his crop on the spot market. Though prices have dropped since April, Perry said they are still "substantially higher than they've been in the last 15 to 20 years."

"If we'd known what the price was going to be, we probably would've planted a little bit more," Perry said.

Even though he had to irrigate his crop twice this year, which he said is unusual, wheat still requires less water to grow than other field crops such as rice and corn. Besides being a good rotational crop, wheat also is "not a real high input crop" compared to tomatoes, rice or corn, all of which use more fertilizer and fuel to run tractors, Perry added.

Having presold a portion of his crop last summer, Yolo County farmer Jeff Merwin won't reap the more recent higher wheat prices. He was plagued by difficulties during planting due to rain and lost about 40% of what he planted.

He replanted two fields in February—the latest he had ever planted wheat—so he could deliver on his contract. Though the crop "turned out fine," he said, the dry spring meant he had to irrigate to make the crop, "knowing full well we were going to lose money on it."

"For those that hung on and waited (to sell their crop), they might have hit a home run this year," he said. "The problem was they had the same kind of weather issues we did."

Looking to 2023, Merwin said he's "constantly thinking about what's next year going to look like" and when to contract his future crop. He noted the price of wheat being offered a few weeks ago stood at \$360 a ton, higher than what it was in late April. With conditions not looking good in a few wheat-producing regions and the market seemingly unstable, Merwin said "the chance of it spiking just for a moment is pretty good."

For Imperial County farmer Ralph Strahm, how much durum wheat he'll grow this winter will depend on water and how much rain and snow is in the Colorado River watershed. Regardless of the higher price, he said he won't be growing more wheat than what he grew this year. He said he will also plant it on some of his less productive ground, as he wants to devote his water and better soils to his cash crops, which are carrots, onions, alfalfa and melons.

Even with rotational crops, Strahm said he has options. Wheat in his region is usually planted in December and harvested in May. He can plant sudan grass, for example, in April, at which time he will know what his water situation will be.

"It remains to be seen what price it is going to be at and if it's attractive enough for us to take that price," he said.

Driverless Tractor Future

Continued from the PREVIOUS PAGE at the vehicular controls."

Monarch Tractor, which is testing electric driver-optional tractors in the state, petitioned the Occupational Health and Safety Standards Board for an update. It argued current rules, which go back to the 1970s, are obsolete in light of technological advancements. The board denied the petition in June but asked Cal/OSHA to provide updates on testing progress.

Bryan Little, director of employment policy for California Farm Bureau and chief operating officer of the affiliated Farm Employers Labor Service, testified in favor of Monarch's petition at a hearing.

"It appears those requirements could hamper deploying autonomous agricultural vehicles in any location or situation where you would have workers working nearby," Little said.

He added, "I can't see a reason why you can't deploy autonomous agricultural vehicles anywhere where there are not workers working nearby." Cal/OSHA would not have jurisdiction in that case, he said.

Little described the hierarchy of regulating exposure to potential hazards in farm fields. Dangers can be addressed through engineering controls or technologies to remove the hazards. Safety can be achieved through administrative controls, such as governing length of exposure for workers or through use of personal protective equipment such as masks, goggles and gloves.

"An autonomous tractor removes the driver from

that potentially hazardous situation entirely," Little said. "It's the ultimate engineering control—because the person's never exposed—and it doesn't even involve PPE because the driver's never there in the first place."

Noting that labor representatives opposed Monarch's petition, Little said he believes labor unions' objections to driverless tractors boil down to a fear that such technology will put people out of work—"a bit of a flat-Earth view."

"If we've learned anything over the last 250 years of the development of national economies and the economics of firms and households, it's that development of technology and capital investment allows the more efficient use of capital and labor inputs," Little said. "It has the effect of increasing incomes, increasing levels of education and improving safety in the workplace. Why you would not want to do those things, I don't know."

Ascher said modern tractor technology could be an effective recruiting tool.

"This technology is a big opportunity to create new 21st century jobs, attract younger generations back to the farm for existing robotics and data jobs," Ascher said. "We work with local communities, high schools and universities to promote this idea."

Kingman, who's also a farmer, said his goal is simply to help farmers.

"Farmers are facing a lot of challenges right now—water and labor," he said. While he can't help on the water side, he added, "at a minimum, we can at least help with the labor side of things."

**BRAND MANAGEMENT
& PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS**

BE BOLD

**LEAVE YOUR MARK
ON EVERYTHING***

MARCOMBRANDING.COM

We get it. Done.™

**Even if your name isn't Mark.*



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2022

**Sponsorship & Team Registrations at:
VictoryFS.org/SFV2022**



**BECAUSE EVERY CHILD
DESERVES VICTORY...**

Victory Family Services supports children and foster families through continuous training, education, and development, because every child deserves Victory.

Worries of Milk Price Drop Weigh on Dairy Farmers



Record-high milk prices should have dairy farmers feeling good, but the drought, rising production costs and a volatile market are spoiling the mood. (Photo: California Farm Bureau Federation)

By Ching Lee, Assistant Editor, Ag Alert

Reprinted with Permission from California Farm Bureau Federation

With milk prices reaching record-high levels this year, dairy farmers should be feeling optimistic about the business. But impacts from the ongoing drought and soaring production costs are crimping profit margins and dampening spirits as they navigate a volatile market landscape.

Many remember too well the crisis of 2008-2009, when plunging milk prices coupled with elevated feed costs

led to unprecedented loss of producer equity and dairies closing their doors. With fears of another recession looming, dairy farmers are biting their nails about the sustainability of current market conditions.

Already, a growing number of market reports indicate higher milk prices have begun to zap demand, with sales of milk and dairy products slipping.

"I'll be honest, being in operation is scary," said Merced County dairy farmer David Barroso, "just knowing what input costs are as far as feed, as far as fuel and anything else, if milk prices decide to fall."

In its June report, Rabobank said it expects milk prices

have peaked and will begin to retreat through the rest of the year and into 2023.

"However, the decline in prices will be modest," the bank said.

Several factors have led to the record-setting milk prices. Perhaps the biggest is the decline in national milk production, which has led to tighter supplies. With rising feed costs, dairies are milking fewer cows. A stronger cattle market has also incentivized dairies to raise more bulls for beef rather than dairy replacement heifers, lowering U.S. cow numbers, Kings County dairy farmer Joaquin Contente said.

In California, water restrictions due to the multi-year drought have shortened the supply of feed available to dairies. Contente, who grows most of his own forage crops, said he will need to leave some of his land fallow. He did not plant about 40 acres last year due to water shortages. That means he has much less feed in reserve.

With water cutbacks constraining the amount of feed dairy farmers can grow, they must now buy more feed, Tulare County dairy farmer Joey Airosso said. He has had to idle about 18% of his acres this summer due to lack of water.

In his region, water shortages have put "a lot of pressure on everybody in dairy, especially the counties in the south," which have zero surface-water allocation, he said. Groundwater regulations have also limited how much water farmers there can pump.

"A lot of people in our area...have ground that you can't farm, because there's not enough water to farm it," Airosso said. "When people can't farm all the ground, it creates more of a demand for the feed that's grown locally, such as corn silage, alfalfa."

He said even though the current milk price is covering his increased costs, that may not be the case for all dairies, particularly those that must buy all or most of their feed.

"All things considered, the margins would be positive," he said. "When you overlay the water situation over the top, it becomes negative."

Contente said even though he has maintained his cow numbers, milk production has dipped because of the recent heat wave. Heat stress also hampers the reproductive performance of cows, which affects a dairy's profitability and production, he added.

"Combination of a lot of factors are putting a lot of pressure on the industry, even though we have these beautiful, beautiful (milk) prices," Contente said.

Barroso in Merced County also has not changed his cow numbers. Operating what he described as "a smaller dairy that's been around for 40-plus years," Barroso said his family has "absolutely" considered leaving the business and the state.

But for now, they've decided to invest in new technologies and installations to modernize the dairy, which he said had "fallen a little bit behind." Along with rising milk prices, the improved efficiencies and management changes he's made, he said, have allowed the dairy to be more profitable this year.

The surging cost of water and fertilizer needed to grow forage crops such as alfalfa hay and corn silage remains a challenge, Barroso said. Other feeds such as grain corn, soybean meal and almond hulls must be purchased. Most feed-price increases have grown by double digits for buyers in the western U.S., according to Rabobank.

Barroso said delivery of feed commodities such as corn, which come by rail, has "been a disaster." He noted there were four or five days last month in which he had to do without corn due to unexpected rail-service disruptions. He was forced to adjust his rations to feed more forage, which negatively affected milk production. The heat has dropped production by another 8%, he added.

Airosso said he, too, has maintained his milking-herd size because "it's really hard to get smaller when you have inflation." With all his costs going up, he said, shrinking cow numbers would create less income for the farm.

"The cost of doing business keeps rising," he said. "The cost of technology keeps rising. If you want to be futuristic and be thinking ahead, you've got to be able to afford that kind of stuff."

Senate Ag Committee Passes Cattle Legislation in Nearly Unanimous Vote

Press Release Provided by US Cattleman's Association

On Wednesday, the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry considered S. 3870, the Meat and Poultry Special Investigator Act of 2022, and S. 4030, the Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act of 2022.

The Committee unanimously passed S. 3870, with amendments offered by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa. One of those changes, which the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) supports, is to ensure that the assigned "Special Investigator" is a senior level U.S. Department of Agriculture career staff and not a political appointee.

After a lengthy debate, including remarks by Senator John Thune (R-SD) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) urging their fellow committee members to close the Product of the U.S.A. loophole and reinstate mandatory country-of-origin labeling, the Committee passed S. 4030.

Both critical pieces of legislation are now eligible for consideration by the full Senate.

USCA President Dr. Brooke Miller issued the follow-

ing statement: "USCA is

proud to stand with Senators Deb Fischer, Chuck Grassley, Jon Tester, and 17 other Senate cosponsors in support of the Cattle Price Discovery and Transparency Act. This bill is one of the much-needed solutions to an increasingly consolidated meat industry. Studies have shown that, without government intervention, negotiated trade in the U.S. marketplace will fall to zero percent by 2026 in parts of the country. When producers don't have the ability to negotiate a fair price for their cattle based on current market conditions, it results in a vertically integrated, corporate-controlled beef supply chain. This threatens the livelihoods of producers and the security of our national food system.

"USCA would also like to thank Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow for overseeing today's business meeting. Senator Stabenow is a strong advocate for a safe, resilient food system for consumers and a fair, competitive marketplace for producers. USCA urges the full Senate to follow the lead of Chairwoman Stabenow, and swiftly pass both of these important pieces of legislation. Once again, a vote *against* these bills is a vote *for* the status quo. Our members cannot wait another calf cycle for significant market reform."



For more information on growing for JSS Almonds contact us at:
Daniel Palla / Grower Relations Manager
(661) 345-6613 / daniel@jssalmonds.com
www.jssalmonds.com

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



Growers Transition to New Plantings

Continued from PAGE 1 Whole Orchard Recycling practices available for growers to help ease those costs and even improve soil conditions as they transition from aging orchards to new plantings and varieties they hope will remain productive for another 25-30 years.

Over the past couple of years, Whole Orchard Recycling has become eligible for funding via a number of programs, including:

- CDFA's Healthy Soil Incentives Program
- USDA-NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's Alternative to Agricultural Open Burning Incentive Program

Companies like Holloway have been working with growers to help efficiently remove, stack, grind and reincorporate orchard material into the soil—rather than having it hauled off, or burned to meet the requirements for grant funding.

“Fortunately we’ve been able to help many of our growers successfully apply for those grants, which is great,” said Brian Maxted, CEO of Holloway, an approved Whole Orchard Recycling service provider. “Now, there’s always a cost-benefit analysis that needs to take place, given the different ways to reincorporate woodchips, and different challenges that exist afterward. But it’s certainly something a farmer should consider.”

Maxted said other considerations include determining the appropriate carbon-to-nitrogen ratios to break down material after reincorporation, along with what crop the operation will be moving into.

That’s where working with a trusted provider, and consulting Whole Orchard Recycling data from the Almond Board and UC Davis can help growers navigate some of those decisions.

Additional Benefits of WOR

Reincorporating the wood material not only helps keep the air smoke-free, it prevents having to run more trucks to landfills and biomass power plants, cutting down on emissions.

The Almond Board of California also notes the following

- benefits of Whole Orchard Recycling:
- achieving zero waste by recycling all orchard material on site
 - increasing water-use efficiency
 - improving soil water holding capacity

Then there are the operational efficiencies that come with Whole Orchard Recycling, particularly when the material is ground into finer woodchips that are spread back across a new orchard floor in a more uniform fashion.

“The other benefit is it’s a faster, more efficient way to remove an orchard,” said Holloway Ag Operations Manager Alex Parsons, who previously worked as Farm Unit Manager for South Valley Farms in Wasco. “By reincorporating onsite, you can get the material spread out in a matter of days, versus having to haul it all off.”

Improve Soil Health

While cutting down on ag burning is a key benefit to Whole Orchard Recycling, Parsons added the benefits for the soil shouldn’t go overlooked. Reincorporating woodchips or grindings into the soil can increase carbon sequestration, as well as improve soil biological activity, nitrogen and organic matter in the soil.

In aging orchards, it can also be tough to break up soils and make for a homogenous root zone after dozens of tractor passes each season lead to compaction issues. But during the orchard recycling process, the soils are broken up when the trees and roots are removed and chiseled, and then again during the deep ripping and reincorporation process—when the woodchips are spread back into the soil.

Holloway Vice President of Farm Services Jordan Burt says post-removal, during the deep-ripping phase, is a great time to get soil amendments applied and incorporated deep into the soil profile where the roots of newly planted trees will be established.

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

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

Learn more about Holloway’s Whole Orchard Recycling process at: HollowayAg.com/WOR.



Holloway managing a whole orchard recycling project in Firebaugh. An excavator removes the trees and then later loads the dried trees into the grinder. (Photo: The Holloway Group)

SERVING CALIFORNIA GROWERS SINCE 1992

DUST CONTROL

- MAG CHLORIDE**
- OIL BASED PRODUCTS**
SC250 - SC800 - SS1H
- PENNZSUPPRESS**
- LIGNOSULFONATE**
- TERRALIG FS**

Contact American Ag Today
661-833-8311 | 844-299-8311 (Toll-Free)
Office@AmericanAgInc.com
AmericanAgInc.com

THE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS EXPERTS.

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

Land Use Consulting Government Relations & Public Affairs

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

Consulting-CommonSense.com • 661.203.1838

'Steady' Melon Crop Is Ready for Summer



A crew harvests watermelons from one of Bryan Van Groningen's fields outside Stockton. Van Groningen, whose family sells watermelons under the name Yosemite Fresh, says he anticipates a stronger season with better prices this year. The upbeat forecast comes after an uneven 2021 season. (Photo: Kevin Hecteman)



By Kevin Hecteman
Assistant Editor, Ag Alert

Reprinted with Permission
from California Farm Bureau

As this week's Independence Day holiday approached, watermelon farmers were anticipating booming business.

"We're encouraged because we like the way the crop looks, and it probably is going to be a steady crop," said Joe Colace, a Brawley-based farmer with fields in the desert and in the San Joaquin Valley. "We don't, at this point, see it bunching up anywhere, but that can change. You get three weeks out, that certainly could change if it got real hot or if it cooled down a lot." Colace said his Los Banos-area fields were anticipated to begin harvest at the end of June.

Watermelon grower and handler Art Perry said melons from fields in Bakersfield, the Coachella Valley and elsewhere are of good quality, with Manteca-area fields now gearing up. "The fields are looking good," he said.

"We cool down in the evenings," Perry said from his Manteca headquarters. "When you cool down in the evenings, more sugar gets in that fruit, and it's actually better-eating fruit."

Bryan Van Groningen's harvest crews have been hard at work on his melon fields outside Stockton, and so far, he's pleased.

"I'd say our fields are producing a decent crop at this point in time," Van Groningen said. "We're harvesting as much as we can prior to the Fourth of July holiday."

Van Groningen said harvest began June 20. He was aiming to have melons moving through his Manteca packing shed sooner than that, but cooler spring weather delayed his plans. "We had a few weeks there

that really kind of set the maturity dates back a little bit," Van Groningen said.

Colace said the majority of watermelon consumption is of 18- to 20-pound seedless varieties. If all goes well, he expects the Northern California harvest to go until mid-October.

Watermelon prices for the San Joaquin Valley crop are running ahead of last year's pace, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service. As of June 30, a 35-count carton of valley seedless watermelons was selling for \$150 to \$154, while the 45-count carton went for \$158 to \$161. That's up \$119 to \$126 from June 2021.

Seedless miniatures—"personal size," as Van Groningen calls them—were going for \$12.95 to \$13.95 for cartons of six- to nine-count melons at the end of June 2022, according to USDA. Last year, the price was \$8.95 to \$10.95 per carton of six- to eight-count melons.

Van Groningen said oversupply was a factor in last year's market, noting that 2021 was a lower-price, lower-volume year. Colace agreed that 2021 "was a really challenging year."

"It was overplanted, as it turned out; there was more supply than there was demand," Colace said. "Currently, there is very good demand for watermelons."

Colace said the watermelon market is better off with Independence Day being part of a long weekend.

"You're going to have the three-day weekend," he said, "and that gives families the opportunity to come together for larger celebrations."

Perry said miniature watermelons may gain popularity over time because of cost.

"There's definitely a certain clientele that will pick up the minis," he said, but with the larger seedless melons, "that's where you're going to see the cut fruit in the stores ... the trays, the cups, the halves, the quarters—that all adds up to a lot of usage of the big seedless."

At the top of most melon growers' minds is water. Colace calls the situation "very dire."

"Everybody grows watermelons with drip irrigation, which is your most efficient application of water," Colace said, noting that managing available supply takes effort.

"This is the first time that we really are going to witness restrictions, because the lower Colorado River basin really is at a critical low level," he said. "The San Joaquin Valley has been dealing with this now for several years. Whenever the farmer has to wait for the winter outcome of snowpack (and) rain, it's very difficult to make long-term plans."

Acreage is increasingly influenced by how much water a farmer has, Colace said.

"We're good this year," he noted. "We have ample acreage planted, but we don't know what that means for next year."

Van Groningen said his fields use deep-well water, adding, "As far as the deep well goes, yeah, we have good supply."

Perry said those with access to groundwater are pumping it, "but the cost of pumping has gone up, because electricity's gone up." Elsewhere depends on the seniority of a farmer's water rights, he added.

"I think we'll make it through as long as we have the rights to go along with the river, the riparian rights," he said. "I think most of the land that's planted in watermelons is safe for this year."

As to next season, Perry said, "We do a lot of praying around here."

Perry, part of a fourth-generation farming operation going back to 1925, said he likes to think his family grows, packs and ships "the two crops that children like the most"—watermelons and pumpkins.

"We're pretty proud of that, that we're actually handling a product that's maybe the top two items that children enjoy," Perry said. "We need enjoyment right now in our life. If we can make some children happy, or even families happy, with our products, it's something to be proud of right now, because we need it."

Rain Bird Agriculture Launches S5 Smart Spacing for Pressure Compensating Heavywall Dripline

The custom dripline product saves water, energy and labor

Press Release Provided by Rain Bird Agriculture

Rain Bird Agriculture, a leading manufacturer and provider of precision irrigation products, recently launched S5 Smart Spacing for Pressure Compensating Heavywall Dripline, the ultimate in smart irrigation

for growers of high-value fruit and permanent crops.

Rain Bird's S5 Pressure Compensating Heavywall Dripline features Smart Spacing, which allows growers to specify repeating patterns of variable spacing between emitters. This helps growers to deliver water directly to the root zone of the plants and not the areas in between. By eliminating unneeded emitters between plants, Smart Spacing can significantly reduce input

costs by saving water, energy, labor and fertilizer.

"At Rain Bird Agriculture, we are strongly committed to water conservation and the development of water-efficient products, such as our new S5 Dripline with Smart Spacing," said Greg Palumbo, Director of Rain Bird Agriculture. "With the ongoing uncertainty regarding water availability in the Western U.S., we feel a great responsibility to provide products that offer meaningful solutions for growers. By eliminating unneeded emit-

ters, Smart Spacing allows growers to conserve water and simultaneously reduce other input costs that are dependent on the irrigation system."

S5 Dripline uses Rain Bird's unique GritX™ Emitter, which features a filterless design that prevents clogging by allowing grit to easily pass through the emitter. GritX™ Emitter Technology features market-leading distribution uniformity, precise and accurate flow rates, and the fastest recovery time when grit gets into a system.

With a five-year workmanship and seven-year environmental stress-cracking warranty, S5 Dripline is recommended for use on almonds, apples, avocados, pecans, pistachios, walnuts and more. S5 Dripline can be purchased from authorized Rain Bird Agriculture dealers.

To learn more about Rain Bird Agriculture and its portfolio of precision irrigation products, visit RainbirdAg.com or call 1-800-Hello-AG.

About Rain Bird Corporation

Based in Azusa, Calif., Rain Bird Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and provider of irrigation products and services. Since its beginnings in 1933, Rain Bird has offered the industry's broadest range of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, commercial developments and homes in more than 130 countries around the globe. Rain Bird has been awarded more than 450 patents worldwide, including the first in 1935 for the impact sprinkler. Rain Bird and The Intelligent Use of Water™ are about using water wisely. Its commitment extends beyond products to education, training and services for the industry and the community. Rain Bird maintains state-of-the-art manufacturing assembly facilities in the United States, China and Mexico. Rainbird.com/Agriculture

(661) 758-6484
HollowayAg.com/90years

Bring Your Soils Back to Life

Turn to the Valley's trusted soil experts for your post-harvest gypsum, amendments and Whole Orchard Recycling services

Statement on the Bureau of Reclamation's Updated 2022 Water Supply Allocation for the Friant Division



Water allocation increased for Division Class 1 contractors. (Photo: FWA)

Press Release Provided by Friant Water Authority

On July 8th, the Bureau of Reclamation increased the 2022 water allocation for Friant Division Class 1 contractors from 15% to 20%. As in the prior two years,

Friant Division Class 2 contractors did not receive an allocation, which continues to reflect that the hydrology

for the 2022 water year is very dry. The increase in the Class 1 allocation is a welcome change, especially given other challenging conditions in the Friant Division, such as the deliveries of water supplies from Millerton Lake to the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors that began on April 1. As those deliveries ramp down, it increases our certainty that the remaining water in Millerton Lake can be allocated to the Friant Contractors. Based on current reservoir levels and forecasts, it appears that there may be an opportunity to increase the Class 1 allocation to 30% if no additional water in Millerton is required by the Exchange Contractors. FWA is optimistic that today's revised allocation is the first step towards achieving that number.

DWR Releases Draft Environmental Impact Report for Future Drought Salinity Barriers

Press Release Provided by California Department of Water Resources

In an effort to better prepare for future drought conditions in the face of climate change, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on July 11th released a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) analyzing potential construction effects of future drought salinity barriers in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The draft EIR looks at the impacts of installing a drought salinity barrier if needed along the West False River in the Delta twice within a 10-year timeframe. The barrier, which would remain in place for up to 20 months, would improve long-term planning and provide the State with greater flexibility to respond to future droughts, which are growing more frequent and extreme due to climate change.

The existing drought salinity barrier along the West False River, which was installed in 2021 following Governor Newsom's executive order, has helped to prevent salt-water contamination of fresh water supplies used by tens of millions of Californians. The barrier also helps

preserve critical water supplies in upstream reservoirs for later use by reducing the amount of water that must be released into the Delta to repel salinity during the dry summer months.

The draft EIR does not affect the existing emergency drought salinity barrier along the West False River.

"As California prepares for the possibility of a fourth dry year, these are the types of actions needed to adjust to more frequent, extreme droughts such as the one we are experiencing now," said Ted Craddock, Deputy Director for the State Water Project. "Climate change is having a direct impact on our water supply, and we need to take a proactive approach to prepare for future droughts and protect our State's fresh water supplies."

The release of the draft EIR kicks off a 45-day public comment period from now until August 22, during which time members of the public will have the opportunity to review the proposed project and provide comment. DWR will host a virtual public hearing on the draft EIR on July 27. Details on how to join the meeting will be made available on the project's website prior to the event. Information will also be posted on DWR's social media channels.

The existing emergency drought barrier is scheduled to be removed by November 30, 2022 as conditions allow.

For more information, visit DWR's Emergency Drought Salinity Barrier webpage.












The completed Emergency Drought Salinity Barrier on the West False River near Oakley in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in Contra Costa County. Photo taken April 20, 2022. (Photo: California Department of Water Resources)

LIQUA-JIP®

8% Calcium

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

Maintaining Soil Cation Balance

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



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

Western Nutrients Corporation has been developing and manufacturing high quality fertilizer, micronutrients and plant foods for commercial agriculture, horticulture, golf courses, and lawn & garden use since 1984. We guarantee quality and the ability to ship the best products in their class at competitive prices world wide.

STOCKPILING FOR EXTENDED STORAGE OF INHULL ALMONDS



The key to successful stockpile management is controlling moisture content and insects, which requires commitment and close coordination among growers and hullers/shellers.

Scan the QR code to learn about best practices for stockpile management to prevent aflatoxins and minimize the formation of concealed damage.



NASS Forecasts Smaller Almond Crop for 2022

to meet consumer demand around the world.



Harvest-ready almonds. (Photo: Deborah Lee Rossiter / Shutterstock.com)

Objective Forecast predicts harvest 2022 will be down 11 percent from last year.

Press Release Provided by the Almond Board of California

The 2022 California Almond Objective Measurement Report published July 8th by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) estimates that the crop harvested in 2022 will come in at 2.6 billion meat pounds, 11 percent below last year's 2.9 billion pounds.

The estimate is down 7 percent from NASS's subjective forecast in May and comes in a complicated year. Some growers were impacted by frost in spring while the entire almond industry, and all California farmers, have been navigating a difficult water year and continued logistical issues impacting the ability to ship almonds

"Growers have been working hard in the face of challenging circumstances and it demonstrates their dedication to improving stewardship practices and meeting the demands of consumers," said Brian Wahlbrink, chair of the Almond Board of California (ABC) Board of Directors.

The forecast for the average nut set per tree is 4,082, 12 percent down from 2021. The Nonpareil average nut set of 3,966 is also 12 percent lower than last year. The average kernel weight for all varieties sampled was 1.47 grams, up less than 1 percent from the 2021 average weight. The Nonpareil average kernel weight was 1.55 grams, up slightly from last year.

"Despite the shipping and logistical logjams, recent shipment numbers have set monthly records, which demonstrates the demand for California almonds continues to increase in the U.S. and around the world," said Almond Board President and CEO Richard Waycott. "Almond growers are putting what resources they can afford this year into producing their crop, and their efforts show. Although there was a drop from last year, the forecast reflects the efforts of growers to meet global demand and ensure a steady supply of high quality California almonds."

ABC's April and May 2022 Position Reports showed that almond exports set records for both months, even while facing shipping and logistical obstacles, and total almond shipments in May also set a record.

NASS conducts the annual Subjective Forecast, Objective Report and Acreage Report to provide the California almond industry with the data needed to make informed business decisions. Of the crop estimates, the 2022 California Almond Objective Report is considered the more accurate and is based on actual almond counts using a statistically rigorous methodology.

Statement on End of First of Two Beef Checkoff Cases

Press Release Provided by R-CALF USA

On June 28th, the U.S. Supreme Court denied R-CALF USA's petition requesting an appeal of the first of two lawsuits the group had filed against the operation of the mandatory beef checkoff program. The first lawsuit had previously been dismissed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

R-CALF USA CEO Bill Bullard issued the following statement in response to the effective end of its first lawsuit.

"While obviously disappointed that our effort to force even more needed reforms upon the beef checkoff program has ended in our first of two lawsuits, we are grateful for the important reforms we did achieve for U.S. cattle producers.

"Our objective in this case was to bring an end to the corrupt manner in which the beef checkoff program was being operated. Specifically, we set out to stop the U.S. Department of Agriculture from unconstitutionally compelling U.S. cattle producers to fund the private speech of private state beef councils.

"We largely succeeded in that effort early in our case. In response to our lawsuit, the USDA took steps to assume necessary control over the speech of the state beef councils identified in our case to limit their ability to express private messages with the money that cattle producers are mandated to pay into the program.

"The district court found that those corrective steps

taken by the USDA effectively transformed the preliminary injunction R-CALF USA had initially won into the lasting outcome the group had sought—"an end to USDA's allegedly unconstitutional government-compelled subsidy of speech." Having determined that we were the prevailing party in our request for a preliminary injunction, the district court awarded us over \$150,000 in legal fees.

"Importantly, the district court found that USDA's decades-long conduct in operating the beef checkoff program prior to R-CALF USA's litigation was not substantially justified and stated: "USDA should have known that the program that R-CALF challenged was unconstitutional..."

"Another important reform won in this case was that the USDA promulgated formal rules that now allow cattle producers to opt out of funding the activities of their state beef council.

"We will now focus on achieving additional reforms in our second lawsuit that alleges the USDA violated the law when it entered into agreements with numerous state beef councils to assume control over those council's messaging. More specifically, we allege the USDA ignored its legal obligation to conduct a formal rulemaking process before taking such action.

"We are grateful for the exemplary legal representation provided by our lead counsel, David Muraskin, Litigation Director of the Public Justice Food Project, who helped us preserve the important protections our U.S. Constitution provides every citizen."




NoDEF!

T4.110F LPC/ROPS

The Leading Low Profile Tractor

Berchtold.com

**3000 Pegasus Dr.
Bakersfield, CA 93308**

661-323-7817

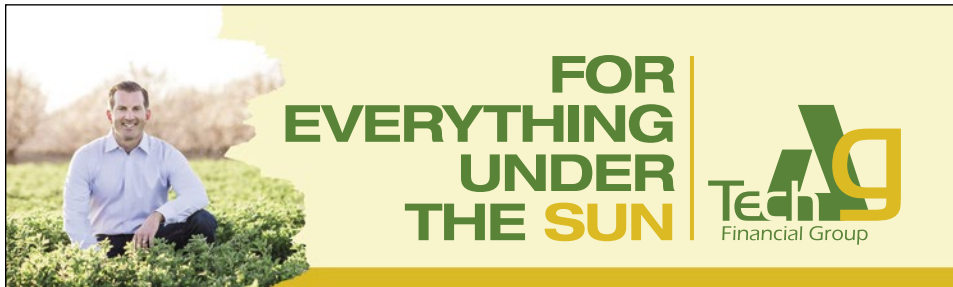
Kern County's Equipment Dealer Since 1910.



There's a new outlaw in town.



Tune in on Bakersfield's newest country station for ag news and the best country from 90's to now.



MORGAN HOUCHIN

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

CA Broker DRE No. 01865336

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

FEATURED LISTING



286.69 +/- Acres of Almonds in Semitropic Water Storage District
Price: \$6,880,560.00 (\$23,983 per acre)



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

follow @techagfinancial



Podcast available on



12 Central Valley High School Students Receive Wonderful College Scholarships

is one of the many ways the Resnicks strive to increase access to higher education

Annual Program Has Directed Over \$25 Million for More Than 2,300 Scholarships, Aiming to Break Down Barriers to Higher Education for Local Students

Press Release Provided by The Wonderful Company

As part of the Wonderful Community Scholarship Program intended to help college-bound students reach their full potential, 12 Central Valley students from the communities of Wasco and Shafter will each receive up to a \$30,000 scholarship to assist with tuition, living expenses, and other costs at an accredited college or university of their choice. Created and funded by philanthropists Lynda and Stewart Resnick, co-owners of The Wonderful Company, the program builds on their long-standing commitment to help Central Valley students fulfill the dream of a college education as a pathway to entering the workforce. To date, over \$25 million has been directed to more than 2,300 college scholarships.

With the goal of getting more children to and through college, the scholarship program helps first-generation college students prepare for, pay for, and persist through college. Currently, 17 percent of Kern County, California, residents possess a bachelor's degree, and many don't see college as a realistic option. This program

opportunities in the communities The Wonderful Company serves.

"Today's children are tomorrow's citizens, and we're determined to make sure the next generation of leaders in the Central Valley not only excels in academics, but that they also use their passions to ignite change in the communities where our employees live and work," said Lynda Resnick, vice-chairman of The Wonderful Company. "A quality education must be equitable and inclusive so that every child can gain the skills and earn the credentials needed for successful, fulfilling careers. Our children have so much to contribute to the world and, thanks to them, I know our future is bright."

Every year, The Wonderful Company and its co-owners invest more than \$30 million in community development, education, and health and wellness initiatives across the Central Valley and beyond. Established initially to provide college scholarships to the children of Wonderful employees from the Central Valley, the program has expanded over the last 28 years to also award college scholarships to Wonderful College Prep Academy graduates, Wonderful Agriculture Career Prep students, and now first-generation college students from high schools in Wasco and Shafter. Presently, 900 Wonderful scholarship recipients are enrolled in college and an additional 300 graduating seniors received a Wonderful College Scholarship this year.

"We're proud of our students for pursuing their educa-

WONDERFUL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS on NEXT PAGE

Grimmway Farms Appoints New Vice President of External Affairs and Corporate Responsibility

Press Release Provided by Grimmway Farms

In furthering its commitment to environmental sustainability and social responsibility, Grimmway Farms has appointed Dana Brennan Vice President, External Affairs and Corporate Responsibility. Brennan, who has served as Grimmway's Vice President of Government and Public Affairs since 2019, will continue in her current position as well as assume added responsibilities for the company's Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) data collection and reporting initiatives.

Grimmway is the largest carrot grower in the world and the largest organic producer in the United States. Under Brennan's leadership, the company recently released its inaugural ESG report, Responsible Growth for a Healthier World, quantifying its ESG progress across its multi-state operations and 8,000 employees. In her expanded role, Brennan will continue to spearhead ESG data capture and measurement company-wide, as well as lead the Grimmway ESG Task Force comprised of members representing all areas of the business.

"Grimmway has always been committed to environmental sustainability and responsible business practices and we're grateful to have Dana as the key driver in formalizing our ESG reporting structure," said Grimmway Farms Chief People Officer Sara Oliver. "Her

growing knowledge of the global ESG landscape, including alignment with our employees, customers and retail partners, will help us further measure and advance our initiatives and ensure that we continue to do the right things for our people and the planet."

"I am honored to have the opportunity to help Grimmway achieve and promote our ambitious ESG and overall corporate responsibility agenda," Brennan added. "It's a pleasure to work with such a dedicated, diverse team and company who are truly committed to measuring and reporting on our sustainability and social impacts."

With deep experience in public affairs, corporate philanthropy and community relations, Brennan was recently named chair of the Western Growers Association Climate Change and Sustainability

Working Group. She also serves on the U.S. Government Relations Council of the International Fresh Produce Association and on the boards of the Kern Economic Development Corporation and Mercy Hospitals of Bakersfield. She holds a bachelor's degree in history from Eastern University.



Dana Brennan, Vice President, External Affairs and Corporate Responsibility

The Wonderful Company Opens Application Window for \$1 Million Central Valley Community Grants

Grants Build on Company's Commitment to the Health and Well-Being of Local Communities and Supports Innovative Work at Schools and Nonprofit Organizations

Press Release Provided by The Wonderful Company

The Wonderful Company is pleased to announce that its \$1 million Wonderful Community Grants application process is now live, building on a long-standing commitment to help local organizations and schools in the Central Valley further their missions and programs. Over the last seven years, The Wonderful Company and its co-owners, Lynda and Stewart Resnick, have awarded over \$5 million in Wonderful Community Grants to more than 71 area nonprofits and 165 schools in California's San Joaquin Valley.

Designed to help spark increased engagement with local and regional organizations, the Wonderful Community Grants program encourages initiatives that support health and wellness, recreation, art, social services, and community beautification. The funds will directly support game-changing programs that demonstrate community need and yield tangible and visible results. Every year, The Wonderful Company and its co-owners invest more than \$30 million in community development, education, and health and wellness initiatives across the Central Valley and beyond. This program is at the center of the company's ongoing Wonderful Neighbor commitment to support the communities its employees call home.

"Giving back is an essential part of the way we operate every day," said Andy Anzaldo, chief operating officer, corporate social responsibility at The Wonderful Company. "The Central Valley is the heart of our business, and we have always been a company

focused on making the communities we serve more equitable places to live, work, and play. Whether it's through the grants we provide or inspiring volunteer efforts

of Wonderful employees, we believe in leading through action and we're passionate about helping our neighbors make a profound difference."

Organizations are encouraged to apply. To learn more about the application process and eligibility requirements, join the Wonderful Philanthropy team at one of the following upcoming virtual information sessions:

- **Thursday, July 7:** 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. PDT
- **Thursday, July 21:** 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. PDT
- **Wednesday, August 10:** 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. PDT (RSVP at [Wonderful.Zoom.US/Meeting/Register/jwpdeGtpz4jEtEy1S4dThDx9Zhi6QnJ7ZVD](https://wonderful.zoom.us/j/jwpdeGtpz4jEtEy1S4dThDx9Zhi6QnJ7ZVD))

All applications must be received by Wednesday, August 31, at midnight PDT for priority consideration and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis past the August deadline. The 2022–2023 class of Wonderful Community Grants recipients will be announced in October 2022.

For additional information and to submit an application, please visit WonderfulCommunityGrants.com or email CommunityGrants@Wonderful.com.

About Wonderful Community Grants

The Wonderful Company and its co-owners, Lynda and Stewart Resnick, have a long-standing commitment to invest in the communities their employees call home, especially in California's Central Valley. In addition to the millions of dollars the Resnicks and The Wonderful Company invest in the Central Valley every year, the Wonderful Community Grants program provides critical funding to organizations impacting change throughout the area. Local governments, area nonprofits, schools, and faith-based organizations can apply for grants in the categories of health and wellness, recreation, art, social services, community beautification, and COVID-19 recovery efforts for amounts between \$1,000 and \$100,000. Funds are available for program development/expansion, innovation, small scale capital improvements, technology, and equipment. More information about Wonderful Community Grants can be found at WonderfulCommunityGrants.com.

Wonderful College Scholarships

Continued from the PREVIOUS PAGE tional aspirations," said Russell Shipley, principal, Shafter High School. "It's more important than ever to help build and maintain the pipeline of diverse talent that will go on to be innovators and changemakers in our community for years to come. We're incredibly grateful

for the financial support to help our young leaders achieve their dreams."

The Community Scholarship Program aims to reach more communities and students in the future. For additional information about The Wonderful Company and its co-owners' philanthropic efforts, please visit Wonderful.com/CSR.

Catalytic Converter Policy

Continued from PAGE 1 material, California increased state mining restrictions and pushed for more stringent mining restrictions nationwide. These precious metals are on American soil, but most of our platinum, palladium, and rhodium come from South Africa and Russia. Already rare metals, coupled with anti-mining environmental policy, have created a scarcity that has driven these metals to \$20,000 an ounce or more.

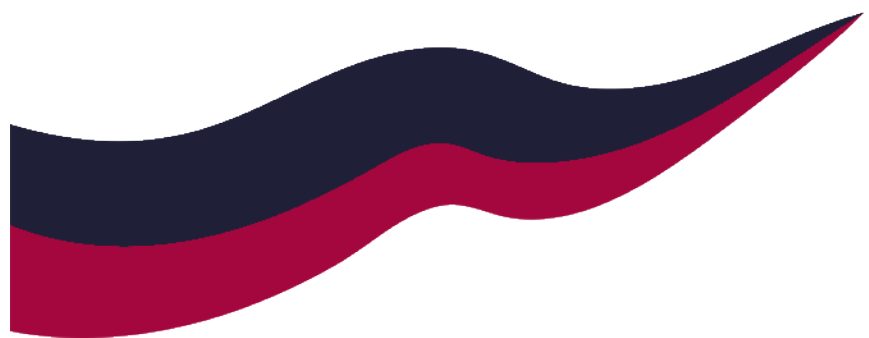
California's "progressive" justice system has created a situation where hardened criminals and drug dependent folks are slapped on the wrist or released out of prison early. A huge increase in the number of criminals walking among us, that previously in a civil society would have been behind bars, coupled with a vocal anti-police sentiment from some, and police officers fighting futility when they catch bad guys only to see them released by a negligent justice system, creates a perfect environment for thieves. Opening the door to thieves, while at the same time requiring all vehicles to be equipped with an easily stolen device containing precious metals worth over \$20,000 an ounce is a recipe for transgression. A recipe cooked up by incompetent bureaucrats and politicians.

To recap: I am mandated to have a catalytic converter to use the roads that I help pay for. This mandate has spread worldwide, creating demand for an already rare material. The state that mandated the use places stringent mining restrictions on extraction of said

materials and supports federal restrictions of mining of said materials driving black market value. The state that created the mandate and contributed to the exorbitant black-market value also lets criminals out of prison and doesn't punish them for theft. Here are some solutions that will sound simple because you readers have some logic that apparently eludes state policy makers: 1. Lock up criminals (groundbreaking thought). 2. Look to remove restrictions on mining of required rare metals. 3. If you are too dense to do 1 or 2, eliminate the catalytic converter mandate. Don't punish all of us because you can't see the big picture.

This is a small issue with relatively simple solutions, but it is characteristic of all of California's big issues. The lack of a macro view has created so many solvable problems in this state. The state doesn't deliver promised and paid for water and so farmers pump more, a government created problem that we all pay for through SGMA. The state lets criminals out of jail, doesn't regulate illicit drugs, while at the same time making hiring very expensive, and enacting some of the strictest, most expensive building regulations in the nation, and doesn't understand why we have a homeless problem. Though a good snapshot of California's ineptness, there are bigger problems than catalytic converters. Unless California voters and law makers step back and take a macro look at the problems, the productive folks will keep leaving this state and there will be fewer and fewer tailpipes to tax.

VALLEY PACIFIC



Delivered Fuels | Lubricants | CFN Cardlock

We proudly sell products from these brands and more!



We Fuel California

Family Owned & Locally Managed Since 1947

9521 Enos Lane Bakersfield, CA 93314
(661)746-7737 | www.ValleyPacific.com

TONY MORENO
PHOTOGRAPHY

To see more and to purchase prints:
Facebook.com/tony.moreno.963
661.703.0572 amoreno2@bak.rr.com

We do IT better when we do IT together.

Managed IT Service

Managed IT is quickly becoming popular among all industries. You pay a low, fixed monthly retainer to ensure networks, WiFi connections, servers, and backups are all working.

Demand Performance

Faster internet and hardware upgrades not making a difference? Don't build your network on a poorly performing infrastructure. Demand Performance. We build better and faster networks.

Advanced Phone Systems

Offering the most advanced wireless phone systems and solutions to make life easier and more efficient. Our Voice-Over IP solutions empower you to streamline communications fast.

Backups, Security + More!

Automated backups to full-business continuity services, we ensure the best solution for your organization, keeping resilience and cost in mind. Offering data backups, security, and much more!

COMM^WORLD

Your dedicated IT and Communication Partner

Managed IT
Demand Performance
Phone Systems
Data Security
Cloud Services
Audio & Visual

Contact us today to find out more about our services!

MyCommWorld.com

4600 Ashe Road #302, Bakersfield (661) 833-6361

Agriculturalists Offer Input on the 2023 Farm Bill

commodities grown here in California,” Johansson said. “You must find solu-



By Christine Souza,
Assistant Editor, Ag Alert

*Reprinted with Permission
from California Farm Bureau
Federation*

With Congress set to craft omnibus legislation to govern the nation’s agricultural and food programs, farmers and others with an interest in farm policy offered feedback on what is working and what isn’t.

“We want to hear where we can make improvements in the 2023 Farm Bill reauthorization,” said U.S. Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, a senior member of the House Agriculture Subcommittee who held a listening session last week at California State University, Fresno, as well as online.

Costa, farmers and others discussed how the next Farm Bill could help farmers navigate the many challenges facing agriculture—including extreme drought, a limited labor supply and supply-chain backlogs that impact trade.

“Clearly the No. 1 problem for pistachio growers at this time is the drought and the reduction or elimination of access to state and federal water,” said Richard Matoian, president and CEO of the American Pistachio Growers. “We urge your committee to expand or adopt existing or new programs that will increase water supplies for our growers.”

Fresno County farmer Dan Errotabere suggested that the next farm bill include funding for ecosystem restoration to improve water supplies and reliability.

“We hope the farm bill will include funding for programs that help the delta estuary that a lot of the water projects depend on,” said Errotabere, who added that better forest management also means a better yield of water into reservoirs.

Fresno County farmer Carol Chandler, a member of the Western Growers Association board, asked for increased funding for research on improving the nation’s labor system and elevating innovation in agriculture.

“On our farm, we’ve had to transition away from high-labor crops like raisin grapes and tree fruit to harvest more mechanized crops,” Chandler said. “We believe the farm bill needs to dramatically spur on innovation around automating harvest and farm labor in our sector.

“The speed of innovation is not fast enough,” she added, “and we want to be sure innovation reaches producers of all sizes and crops.”

In discussing trade, many participants touted benefits of the Market Access Program, or MAP, and other programs that aim to enhance the competitiveness of fruits and vegetables.

Matoian recommended that MAP funding be increased to \$400 million, double stagnant funding levels of previous decades. “We believe this program has been a great benefit to opening export markets,” Matoian said.

Discussions on the farm bill also centered on risk management, including federal crop insurance and a critical safety net for farmers.

California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson said crop insurance and disaster programs are needed to assist farmers, ranchers and foresters affected by changing weather conditions and “catastrophic wildfires that are burning more intensely and no longer limited to a season.”

“The Congressional Research Service estimates that only about 80 specialty crops are covered through crop insurance programs from the roughly 400 agricultural

tions to overcome limitations inherent in the current system and provide RMA (Risk Management Agency) with the necessary tools and structures. They need to close this gap.”

Johansson said Farm Bureau is also seeking sufficient funding for initiatives such as the Emergency, Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish program, or ELAP, the Livestock Indemnity Program, Livestock Forage Disaster Program, Tree Assistance Program, Dairy Margin Coverage Program and others.

“We must preserve the integrity of the crop insurance program,” Johansson said. He also called for expanding conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Reserve Program.

Dairy producers and others representing the sector called for improving the Dairy Margin Coverage Program.

“We need to make some changes to this program,” said Fresno County dairy producer Melvin Medeiros, who is involved in Dairy Farmers of America and the National Milk Producers Federation. “We feel that these programs are designed as safety nets and should be equitable for all-size producers.”

Kings County farmer Kirk Gilkey said cotton producers “must have an effective safety net.”

“This includes all commodity policy that provides either price or revenue protection for the prolonged periods of low prices and depressed market conditions,” Gilkey said. “This bill should also include a strong and fully accessible array of crop insurance products.”

As farmers face dramatic increases in production costs, Gilkey said, input increases have undercut protection from traditional farm policies and crop insurance tools designed to protect revenue against yield losses.

“These sharp increases translate into a significant decline in the effective safety net offered by the Price Loss Coverage (program) reference price,” he added. “Considering the big increases in production input cost, the PLC reference price needs to be evaluated.”

Many speakers emphasized the farm bill must continue funding for protection of agricultural commodities from pests and diseases. Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner Melissa Cregan, also representing the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association, praised the success of the Plant Protection and Quarantine Program.

“Given the program’s overwhelming success, we are urging Congress to authorize the plant protection act program at \$100 million each year,” Cregan said.

Jon Reelhorn, president of Belmont Nursery in Fresno, also called for continued support for the National Clean Plant Network. He said the network provides “improved access to clean plants for nursery crops such as tree fruit, citrus, berries, grapes and roses, and enhances the competitiveness of these sectors.”

Speaking on concerns over wildfires impacting Sequoia groves, Tim Borden of the Save the Redwoods League called for additional funding for prescribed burns, forest treatments and a streamlined permitting process.

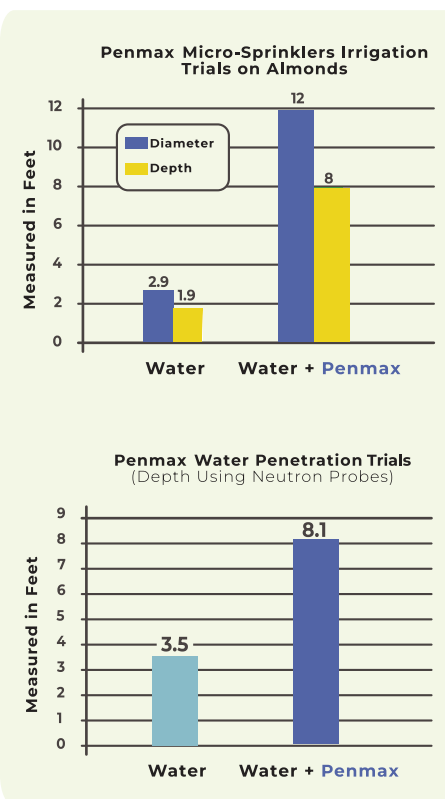
Ian LeMay, president of the California Fresh Fruit Association, said the farm bill is important because “growers deserve a bolstering of resources that can help propel our industry towards a sustainable and competitive future.”

“The production of our food and fiber is not only a national security issue but a global security issue,” LeMay said. “We have the opportunity to fortify that security with a reauthorization, and it is CFA’s hope that Congress will be bold enough to make the meaningful investment necessary to meet that moment.”

PENMAX® Water Penetrant

Penmax will greatly increase water penetration, flush salts away from the root zone, increase the beneficial microbial base and will reduce clouding and crusting. In permanent crops, Penmax will move water 8 feet vertically and 12 feet horizontally, which will bank water for later use.

- Penmax (non-ionic)
- No pH effect on soils
- No compounds formed with hard water
- Less product required
- Penmax enhances the activity of soil organisms
- Improves and balances the soil ecology
- Preserves soil moisture by minimizing water evaporation
- Allows water to move deeper and laterally in soils
- Helps carry excess problem salts away from roots
- Creates an improved root/soil interface
- Made in CA and can be delivered quickly



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

Western Nutrients Corporation has been developing and manufacturing high quality fertilizer, micronutrients and plant foods for commercial agriculture, horticulture, golf courses, and lawn & garden use since 1984. We guarantee quality and the ability to ship the best products in their class at competitive prices world wide.



“FARM CREDIT WEST
TREATS ME AS
*an individual...
not a
transaction.*”

DAVID PAGE
Cattle Rancher
Colorado River Reservation, AZ
Farm Credit West Customer

Who you are matters to us.

That's why most lending decisions are made at the branch level.

We take the time to get to know your business so you can get back to what matters most to you—running your operation.

KERN COUNTY

661.399.7360

FarmCreditWest.com



Committed. Experienced. Trusted.





The Gospel in the Gifts

By Joseph Delgado
Guest Faith Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

It's that time of year again! Pools are full, fireworks fill the sky, and you've probably spent some time around a BBQ. I'm willing to bet that you're preoccupied with planning family vacations and camp adventures and the last thing on your mind is a stable filled with shepherds, cattle, and Mary rocking baby Jesus to sleep. Did that just catch you off guard? Are you even a tad bit surprised that we'd be discussing a chilly silent night while you've just finished your third slice of watermelon on a lawn chair in your backyard? In the spirit of surprises and

considering that we're halfway through the year and quickly approaching one of the most popular holidays in the world, I've decided to celebrate a little Christmas in July by studying a SURPRISE we find in the widely known Christmas account that is often overlooked. One of the most widely debated aspects of the Christmas story revolves around the elements given to Jesus by the wise men. The bible reads "going into the house [the wise men] saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh" (*English Standard Version* Matthew 2:11). For centuries, scholars have pondered the significance of

these gifts and why they were appropriate to give to a divine two-year-old boy. On his commentary in *The English Standard Version Study Bible*, Michael Wilkins believes that these gifts had a practical use that would assist the family in fleeing to Egypt to escape King Herod's decree to put to death all males under the age of two in hopes to kill the prophesied king of the Jews (*ESV* Matt. 2:16). Wilkins states, "Frankincense is resin used ceremonially for the only incense permitted on the altar (*ESV* Exodus 30:9, 34-38). Myrrh is sap used in incense and perfume and as a stimulant tonic. The gifts were likely used providentially to support the family in their flight to Egypt." ¹ These incredibly expensive gifts could have been used for ceremonial and religious practices or could have easily been sold to purchase food and shelter for the family on their journey. *The Believers Bible Commentary* approaches the significance of the gifts in a more symbolic fashion in which each gift represents and foreshadows the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The commentary reads "Gold is a symbol of deity and glory; it speaks of the shining perfection of [Jesus'] divine Person. Frankincense is an ointment or perfume; it suggests the fragrance of the life of sinless perfection. Myrrh is a bitter herb; it presages the sufferings He would endure in bearing the sins of the world." ² So, what is the correct way to interpret what is being taught in Matthew's account? Why not both? The gifts were a divine provision from God for Mary's family while simultaneously being documented



The three wise on camelback. (Photo: John Dory / Shutterstock.com)

to encourage Matthew's audience and readers today that He has provided for us a way to enjoy eternal life in Jesus through Christ's life, death, and resurrection. As I've preached on this subject over the years, I've come to form a title that I believe captures the heart of the Father and the message of Christmas. If we look closely, we can see **The Gospel in the Gifts**.

¹ Crossway Bibles. *The ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008. Print.
² MacDonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

DPR Opens \$4.65 Million Grant Application Process to Fund Innovative Solutions Supporting a Transition to Safer, More Sustainable Pest Management Tools and Practices

Press Release Provided by Department of Pesticide Regulation

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) today opened the application period for the 2023 Alliance and Research Grants cycle, offering \$4.65 million in potential funding to accelerate the transition to safer, more sustainable pest management in agricultural, urban and wildland settings.

"California is a leader in the development of more sustainable pest management," said DPR Director Julie Henderson. "DPR-funded grant projects are critical to identifying and fostering new methods and tools to reduce reliance on pesticides and their impact on human health and the environment."

The increased funding for the 2023 Alliance and Research Grants, provided for in the 2021-2022 state budget, supports the state's goal to accelerate and increase the adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in

agricultural, urban, and wildland settings. IPM is an innovative approach to pest management that uses the least-toxic, most effective method to solve pest problems.

Over the last 20 years, the department has invested more than \$22 million to fund 92 projects within the Research and Alliance Grant programs. Last year's DPR Grants Programs cycle represented the first year of increased funding allocated by the state budget. The department awarded \$3.75 million in Research Grants to fund 10 research projects that explore IPM tools for urban, non-agricultural and agricultural pest management. DPR expects to award an additional \$1.8 million in Alliance Grants funding later this month.

The 2023 Research Grants Program will award grants for projects up to two and a half years in length that develop pest management tools and practices to reduce the use of high-risk pesticides or decrease the impacts of

pest management chemicals on public health and the environment. Project budgets may range from \$50,000 to \$3.15 million. Research Grant applications will be accepted through Thursday, September 22, 2022.

Highlights from past Research Grants projects include:

- Evaluated drone-based releases of biocontrol organisms.
- Tested non-chemical entrapment surfaces for monitoring and control of bedbugs.
- Studied the effects of pesticide-free plant immunity enhancing materials.
- Developed standardized practices for transplant greenhouses to reduce the need for fungicides.

The 2023 Alliance Grants Program will award grants for projects up to two and a half years in length that promote or increase the implementation, expansion and/or adoption of effective, proven and affordable IPM systems or practices. Project budgets may range from \$50,000 to \$1.5 million. Alliance Grant applications

will be accepted through Thursday, December 8, 2022.

Highlights from past Alliance Grants projects include:

- Provided land managers with the best available information regarding invasive plant management through the use of an online decision support tool.
- Drove the adoption of mating disruption among small almond, pistachio and walnut growers within field clusters.
- Conducted outreach on sustainable pest management methods to small growers in the Hmong and Lu-Mien communities.
- Developed herbicide-free best practices for combating invasive plants in native habitats.

For more information on the Alliance Grants and Research Grants Programs, including how to join our virtual information sessions aimed at providing grant applicants with additional information and answering questions on how to apply, please visit our department's website.



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

Experienced. Trusted. Local.

THE LAW OFFICE OF
Kyle W. Jones
ATTORNEY AT LAW
1620 Mill Rock Way • 833-1090 • KWJonesLaw.com

OUR TWO CENTS
PODCAST

Wisdom, advice, and insights
from the people that make up
the fabric of our community.

OurTwoCentsPodcast.com

CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS IT SYSTEMS AND CYBERSECURITY?

MICROSOFT CLOUD SOLUTIONS
SERVER SUPPORT
BACKUP AND DISASTER RECOVERY
MANAGED IT SERVICES
CYBERSECURITY
DESKTOP SUPPORT
VOIP PHONE SOLUTIONS
IT HELP DESK 24X7X365

THE VALLEY'S LEADING IT SERVICE PROVIDER



WWW.GRAPEVINEMSP.COM | 661-377-2992



Grapevine MSP
Technology Services