



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

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Experts Suggest No Easy Solutions for Water Woes

By Scott Hamilton,
President, Hamilton Resources Economics

In July of 2020, the Governor released his Water Resilience Portfolio. It is the Administration's blueprint for equipping California to cope with more extreme droughts and floods, rising temperatures, declining fish populations, over-reliance on unsustainable groundwater, and other challenges. Its four main objectives are to maintain and diversify water supplies, protect and enhance ecosystems, build connections, and become prepared for droughts, climate change, and natural disasters. These are sound fundamentals but the plan lacked substance.

The Resilience Portfolio was followed in August of 2022 with a water supply strategy intended to ensure that California has the water needed for generations to come. It proposed initiatives to increase supplies over time—1.6 million acre-feet by 2030 and 2.9 million acre-feet by 2040. Those objectives are to be achieved through a combination of recycling, desalination, increased conservation, and increased stormwater capture. Nearly all of that supply is targeted at urban areas. And given that the Valley's shortages alone are estimated to be 3 million acre-feet, the plan is still well short of where it needs to be.

Against that background, the Valley Strong Energy Institute and the Kern Community College District hosted a webinar on September 13th titled "Water Policy in the San Joaquin Valley: New Tools and Solutions" presenting a panel of three speakers: Alvar Escrive-Bou, a senior

fellow with the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), Thomas Ott from the Desert Research Institute, and Josué Medellín-Azuara, an Associate Professor in Environmental Engineering at UC Merced.

PPIC has a good reputation for producing sound work, especially when it comes to gathering and presenting the information. Escrive-Bou summarized some of DWR's main concerns with Groundwater Sustainability Plans: they tended not to adequately address the impacts of subsidence and the impacts of overdraft on drinking water wells; some plans don't coordinate adequately on data methods and management approaches; some plans don't propose enough actions to close the supply-demand imbalance. These issues have largely been addressed in revised Groundwater Sustainability Plans recently resubmitted to DWR. Additionally, PPIC thought some plans



OpenET uses data from a constellation of satellites. (Illustration: NASA)

underestimated the overdraft and were overly optimistic about the potential for new supplies while placing too little emphasis on demand management. PPIC's proposed priorities for state support are heavily demand-oriented—a strategy likely to have severe economic and social

See **NO EASY SOLUTIONS TO WATER WOES** on PAGE 7

Newsom Approves Bill and Pushes Environmental Responsibility to Plastic Producers

By Audrey Hill, Feature Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

It is not a mystery that packaging and foodware quality directly impacts the freshness of the produce that it contains. Transportation and processing of foods out of the fields can be nonnegotiable in terms of time, even if that means only hours. Unfortunately, getting produce to market as fast as possible is sometimes not fast enough. Because of this, today's produce packaging plays a very important role in making sure fruits and veggies are still fresh when they are brought home from the grocery store and when they are packed into lunches or brought out for dinner. For many, the plastic packaging that is purchased with almost all grocery goods isn't given a

second thought after it's thrown away. However, as the state moves forward as a national and world leader in its sustainable development, plans are in place to change that.

Just as energy and water have been the battlefield for change towards environmental resilience in California, recycling, and waste industries are up next, specifically with plastic packaging producers on the chopping block. Senate Bill No. 54, approved by Governor Newsom on June 30, 2022, will enact the Plastic Pollution Prevention and Plastic Producer Responsibility Act. This act has set a goal to "source reduce" plastic packaging material to ensure that by 2028, 30% of plastics used in California are recyclable. The long end of the bill hopes to reach 65% recyclability by 2032. The bill also reports that in 2021

"only five percent of post-consumer plastic waste in the United States was recycled, down from a high of 9.5 percent in 2014, when the United States exported millions of tons of plastic waste to China. Even then, much of this material was incinerated or dumped into the environment and not recycled." (SB54, 42040, Part 3A)

Improving recycling from 5 to 30 percent in six years is quite ambitious, however, by forcing producers to commit to a gradual decline in the production of single-use plastics, the percentage of materials able to be recycled should grow drastically. The bill intends to have plastic packaging producers "take responsibility for the costs associated with the end-of-life management of that material and ensure that the material is recyclable or compostable." (SB54, 42040, Part 3B.) Hopefully, this means that the generated funds will be used to develop a better recycling system.

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Heaps of garbage in a landfill. (Photo: SeeCee/Shutterstock.com)

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Global Table Grape Summit Brings International Audience to Bakersfield

By Melissa Nagel
Feature Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

The recent Global Table Grape Summit in Bakersfield brought together stakeholders from across six continents to learn about the latest table grape innovations and opportunities for expanded market access, as well as how the industry can confront "the avalanche of stressors" it currently faces. The August 20 summit was organized by Perishable Pundit founder Jim Prevor, who put together a compelling and informational event that showcased Bakersfield, and the Central Valley's table

grape growers, to the world.

Kathleen Nave, President and CEO of the California Table Grape Commission kicked off the summit. Throughout the day, more than 25 expert panelists covered a wide range of topics, from the school grape program 'lunch bunch,' to perspectives from retailers and wholesalers, to learning about new innovations in breeding and the value of evolving grape varieties.

Panelists discussed customer and retailer experiences, with most retailers seeking the "best red" or "best green" table grape rather than asking for a specific variety. This brought about a discussion on the benefits of naming grapes based on certain taste profiles, challenging the industry to think differently about marketing their products.

See **GLOBAL TABLE GRAPE SUMMIT** on PAGE 5



FARM BUREAU NEWS

The United Voice of Kern County's Farming Community



President's Message

By Patty Poire
President, Kern
County Farm Bureau

WOW! It's been one year for me as President of the Kern County Farm Bureau, and

it has gone by fast. Not sure why so fast, is it because time flies when you are having "fun" or is it because there have been so many issues coming at agriculture? I think it is a combination of both! I have had "fun" this past year working on the issues coming at agriculture and below are some of those highlights of the last year and where those issues are today.

In my first article, I provided you with an idea of who I am and what I do. I am the Executive Director of the Kern Groundwater Authority (KGA), one of the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) who submitted Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) back on January 31, 2020. Since then, DWR has come back with their determination of the Kern subbasin GSPs with an inadequate determination, meaning that additional information and/or data was needed before DWR would provide their "final" determination. That final determination is expected from DWR by January 2023 and the Kern subbasin GSAs are looking to have an approved determination at that time. That approved determination is not, however, the end of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) process, but only the beginning. The implementation of the GSPs is where agriculture begins to understand, especially in Kern County, what curtailments mean. With curtailments occurring during the last couple of years under the guise of "drought relief," water deliveries from the State Water Project and Friant will continue to be diminished, thus decisions will need to be made about how to reduce the demand. In Kern County, the only way to reduce the demand is to reduce the amount of agricultural acreage. Not a good choice!

Also in my first article, I mentioned Governor Newsom's Executive Order of 30x30 which was signed back in

September 2020. Unfortunately, the Executive Order has "grown legs and arms" and is traveling throughout the state's departments to implement what his Executive Order means, the state in control of 30% of all working lands and 30% of all waters by 2030. There was a release of a draft and final pathway to achieve the ambitious goal of 30x30, but only time will tell!

Another subject that continues to be a hot topic is pesticides. It is amazing the misunderstandings that are being presented as "truth" about the use of pesticides by those who want agriculture to stop using them. In the last couple of months, there has been a change of leadership in the Department of Pesticide Regulation. Julie Henderson, DPR's new director, is working to develop a statewide notification system that should be completed towards the end of this year. The Kern County Farm Bureau signed an opposition letter pushing back on the Governor's request to institute a setback requirement of 3,200 feet from urban development that would first be placed on oil wells and evidently would make its way to agriculture. It is amazing, people act as if the agricultural and oil industries encroached on urban development but actually, it is the other way around, urban is the encroacher.

Finally, but not the least of all, is the one topic that keeps me up at night! Two little words, climate change! It seems like everything is somehow related to climate change, especially in California. In my last month's article, I discussed how the Governor is so worried about climate change that he published his California Water Supply Strategy adapting to a hotter, drier future. All the curtailments, most of the legislation this year, and the regulations being pushed by the State Water Board, are using climate change as the basis, need, and reasoning, for what is needed to "prevent" or respond to climate change. I read an article recently about John Coleman, the founder of the Weather Channel, and one of his appearances on CNN. When asked about climate change, he described himself as a skeptic, not a denier, because he believed that science is not a consensus but is about facts. He stated that "If you get down to the hard, cold facts, there's no question about it, climate

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Young Farmers & Ranchers

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By Timothy Collins
Chair, Kern County
Young Farmers
& Ranchers

As the Kern County almond harvest began back in August, the Young Farmers & Ranchers drove out past Wasco and the many surrounding almond orchards to tour Semi Tropic Almond Huller. After touring the blossoming almond orchards at Holtermann Farms early last year and then touring JSS Almond's processing plant in the fall, we were excited to complete the path of an almond by touring a huller.

Semi Tropic general manager, Mason Otten, gave us the tour. Beginning with piles of the three parts of an almond, he explained what it takes for almonds to go from the tree to the store shelves. Unfamiliar to most of us was just how many varieties of almonds are grown locally; Mason showed us at least a dozen. With harvest now in full swing, we got to see all the equipment in the plant running with freshly hulled and shelled almonds filling the bins. As is so common in the ag industry today, no part of the product goes to waste. Almond



(Left-Right) Tim Collins, Tristan Wieser, Katie Verhoef, Emily Lopez, Amy Mebane, Robert Holtermann, and Mason Otten next to an almond shell pile at Semi Tropic Almond Huller. (Photo: Kern County Young Farmers & Ranchers)

hulls are sold to dairies as cattle feed, and shells are used for bedding.

Almonds are consistently among the top five crops in Kern County and also in California. Our state produces 80% of the world's almonds and 100% of the commercial supply in the U.S. Living in Kern County, we may take

the sights of almond blossoms in February and shakers driving through the rows in the fall for granted, but for most of the country the opportunity to see the process firsthand doesn't exist.

Semi Tropic Cooperative also shows the story of a changing ag landscape in Kern County. It was originally built as a cotton gin when cotton was king and almonds were far from taking any top commodity spot. The cotton gin closed several years back and the much more recently built almond huller now runs 24/7 for nearly half the year.

The access to such an incredible variety of crops grown in California gives more potential and importance to ag education locally. The school year is now two months in and it has been three years since students have had an optimistic start to the school year with no worry of shutdown and the surety of showing ag projects at the county fair. What exactly the next 60 years of agriculture will look like no one knows. But we know the ones that will be shaping it. Whether high school FFA students or YF&R members, the future is in our hands. Let's be a part of the Golden State feeding the world for generations to come.

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The Cattleman's Corner



Terminal Force

By Austin Snedden
Ranching Contributor,
Valley Ag Voice

The cattle industry in general has a magnetic force towards terminal traits. It is a natural draw as all marketing pressure and economic rewards are given to producers whose cattle offer more end-product value. The rewards need to be weighed against the costs, and producers need to decide whether there is a balance they can strike between end-product value and range cattle efficiency. Historically the leading price indicator for cattle was weight. Before there was much emphasis on carcass quality, pounds were the primary driver of the overall market return. With the advent of quality grades, valuation became a combination of weight and marbling. Cattle producers are rewarded based on their cattle potential or history to yield and grade. An intense focus on growth and carcass traits has created a void in selection for practical traits such as fertility, longevity, mature cow weight, structural soundness, and udder quality.

Cattle producers must manage the ability to raise a marketable beef animal, while at the same time not ignoring the practical maternal traits that keep their operation economically sustainable. There are individual exceptions to every generalization, but in general, a more moderate frame-size cow will offer more fertility and more longevity. It is also generally true that a heavier muscled cow will offer less fertility and longevity. The larger, heavier muscled cow will also require more

nutritional inputs. Knowing this, we know there is an antagonism between what upstream markets want, and what is practical for our cow-calf operations. There is a balance to be struck genetically between end-product value and maternal value, but we must stay with an increased focus on maternal value because the role of the range cow is so diverse and so demanding. The role of the range cow requires that she calve every year. She rebreeds while in heavy lactation while sometimes on challenging nutrition, raises a calf at side while growing a fetus inside, weans a calf and gets a few months off, then starts the process over again. This is a far more complex biological and instinctual requirement than what we ask of the steer that enters the beef chain. The maternal traits that encompass biological, instinctual, and structural traits take generations to select for, whereas the terminal animal can be created in one mating.

Widespread drought has caused the liquidation of many producing cows. Couple this with decades of selection for more terminal traits and you are left with a situation where the cows that have left production are having difficulty being replaced with others because of a lack of fertility and longevity. A national cowherd reduction because of drought, and a cowherd that turns over more often because of lack of practical traits, has created a natural demand situation for replacement females. Seeing \$3,000 bred commercial heifers selling this fall in a drought illustrates the point. As the pendulum swings, there will be increasing opportunities in the coming years for commercial producers that have focused on fertility to capitalize on an industry that has become hungry for productive cows. Going forward, it may be judicious for breeders to select for acceptable end market value, but double down on maternal value and strike a balance that works for the whole industry.



It's so much easier to hire a passionate pilot that cares about his/her role in farming and the protection of the food supply. (Photo: Jon Slikker, Jr.)

How to Become a Crop Duster

By Jon Slikker, Jr., Aerial Applicator, Vince Dusters

Crop Duster—today we love to be called a Crop Duster. When you go into town, you meet someone new, they ask what you do, and you say you're a crop duster; 9 times out of 10 their faces light up and instantly start asking how crazy and dangerous and cool our job must be. We are more. We are aerial applicators. We are more like farmers and less like daredevils. We will come back to why I am opening with this. This article is about how to become an aerial applicator, aka "Crop Duster."

To receive the legal requirements of being able to work for hire and fly its very simple.

1. Obtain a Pilot's license through the FAA. You must obtain a minimum of a Commercial pilot license to work for compensation.
2. Acquire a license to dispense crop protection materials through your state's department of agriculture or pesticide application regulation agency.
3. Spend a significant amount of time as an apprentice/unexperienced ag pilot learning the nuances of the trade and eventually become a journeyman/seasoned aerial applicator.

I will refrain from outlining the small details that will go along with these steps. I really feel that many aspiring aerial applicators can navigate these steps easily. Most operations who look to hiring a pilot want to ensure you can successfully apply the crop protection materials in a way that is effective in controlling the pest or problem. Probably the largest hurdle for new

aspiring aerial applicators is proving this before they even get into an aircraft. Aerial Pest Control Operators/Business owners want you to spend time on the ground learning the basics; various types of chemicals and their unique mode of action, tank mix order and issues, farming cultural practices, crop identification and various aspects daily operations. Owners want to see you have "skin in the game".

What I see is the start of a relationship. I come from a background of sales. I have learned early on that it's not entirely what you know, but who you know. YES! You do need to know a lot, but you also need to listen, be active, and do the work. When I expressed interest in becoming an aerial applicator my dad, Jon Slikker Sr., said that I had to want it. Meaning PASSION! I needed to prove that by learning the trade before I flew my first load. I started to develop a rapport with the local farmers and learning all about how they farm. Why they made the decisions they made. Talk to the Pest Control Advisors about their expectations and learn why they recommended certain crop protection materials over others. Essentially, I was learning how to farm.

It's hard to want to hire a pilot that is only about flying an airplane. It's so much easier to hire a passionate pilot that cares about his/her role in farming and the protection of the food supply. Developing the relationship with the owner and them witnessing your growth will get your foot in the door.

If you'd like to know more about becoming an aerial applicator, feel free to contact Jon at Jon.SlikkerJr@gmail.com or call 1-661-979-7503.

Farm, Ranch and Transitional Use Properties



- ALMONDS, HOME, AND SHOP** **SOLD**

37.73± acres, NWC of 7th Standard Rd & Poplar Ave, 1 well, 1 domestic well, mature almonds, 2,534 sq ft home, 960 sq ft shop
- ALMONDS** **PRICED REDUCED** **\$22,500±/AC**

111.42± acres, 1 well, 1 domestic well and 3.14 AF Wheeler Ridge Maricopa WSD contract water, Grade 1 Excellent Soils
- FARMLAND** **PRICED REDUCED** **\$19,000±/AC**

117.82± acres, located in Kings County WD/1 Well grade 1 - Excellent Soils, Hanford
- TABLE GRAPES** **\$33,500±/AC & \$36,500±/AC**

119.92± & 150.27± acres, Delano Earlimart Irrigation District, Lower Tule River Irrigation District, Quality Varieties, Productive Soils
- WALNUTS** **SALE PENDING**

149.33± acres, Lindmore ID and Wells, Productive Soils, Lindsay, CA.
- FARMLAND** **PRICED REDUCED** **\$12,000±/AC**

156.96± acres, Wasco Area, Semi-Tropic WSD non-contract water, 1 well, Productive soils, and Perfect for permanent crops
- DRY LAND** **PRICE REDUCED** **\$2,250±/AC**

160 acres, mostly grade 1 soils, Near Valley Acres
- WINE GRAPES** **\$18,378±/AC**

161.06± acres, Wasco area, Semi-Tropic WSD non-contract water, 1 Well, High-Density planting, Quality varieties, Productive Soils
- ALMONDS** **PRICE REDUCED** **\$16,500±/AC**

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- ALMONDS** **\$18,964±/AC**

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**

406.65± acres, Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District, Quality Varieties, Excellent Soils.
- ALMONDS AND FARMLAND** **\$21,790±/AC**

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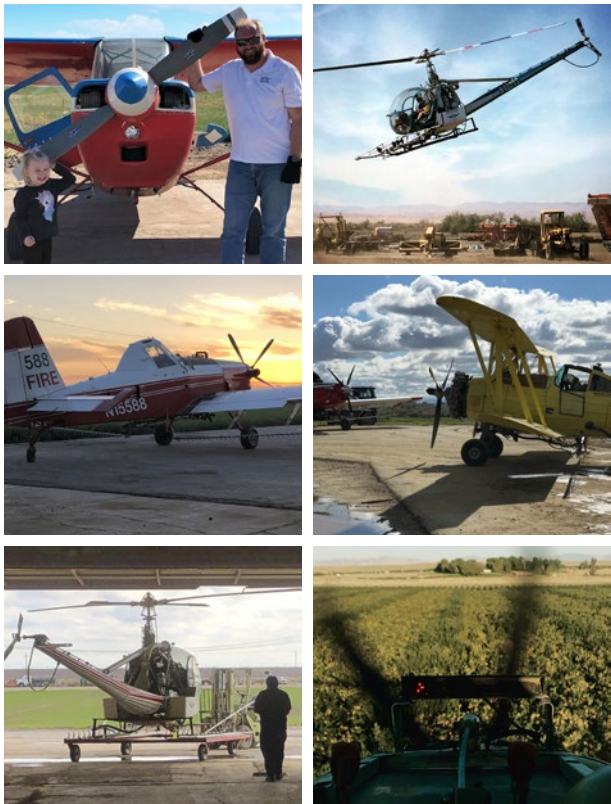
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President's Message

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change is not happening, there is no significant, man-made global warming now, there hasn't been any in the past, and there's no reason to expect any in the future. There's a whole lot of baloney." Unfortunately, John Coleman passed away, but his expertise and knowledge should not be forgotten. Climate change ideas have driven most California regulations for the last couple of years and looks like it will continue! Not sure how much more the agricultural industry can absorb!

I sincerely thank you for the opportunity to represent the Kern County Farm Bureau as President and look forward to seeing you all at the Kern County Bounty on October 8th at the Kern County Fair Grounds. Let's celebrate the industry that continues to feed the country and the world!



Aerial applicators are more farmer than daredevil. (Photos: Jon Slikker, Jr.)

Environmental Responsibility

Continued from PAGE 1 Furthermore, the bill states that “producers will be required to eliminate, redesign or shift packaging” designs that cannot uphold the standards of the bill - i.e. cannot be adequately recycled (SB54, 42040, Part 4). All these requirements will be overseen by CalRecycle, which intends to ban certain plastics outright if their production and usage are not being cut back.

But what does this mean for growers and produce markets? Gail Delihant, Director of Governmental Affairs for Western Growers Association, mentioned in a webinar presented by *The Packer* entitled “What New Recycling Legislation Means to Growers and Grocers,” that during the bills deliberations, she worked to keep agricultural field plastics like drip tape and films exempt from the new standards. So, the changes applied by the bill will be on packaging sold to consumers, referred to as “covered material.” These include flexible and ridged single-use packaging for produce like bagged salads, grape bags, chip bags, etc. Prices for packaging will increase due to this bill, but how much depends on the producer and what change the producer will make to stay in line with the bill’s qualifications.

Retailer representatives present at the webinar like Stephanie Morris, Sustainability Coordinator for Jimbo’s, and Chelsea Minor, Corporate Director of Public Affairs for Raley’s, seemed ready to “nip our dependence on plastic” (Minor). They are also prepared to help educate consumers on the plastics that are sold in the store and offer consumers the chance to recycle smarter. Grocers like Jimbo’s and Raley’s are considering upscaling their store drop-off of plastics that cannot be recycled in the city or county facilities. Despite many grocery stores offering take-back programs for plastics that can be recycled (but not through city or county facilities), many people are not aware of these programs. Although grocers are offering solutions to improve the recyclability of food packaging that would otherwise go to the landfill, those speaking in the webinar agreed that it is not the job of the retailers to become the equivalent of a plastic dump, especially if recycling starts to ramp up due to SB54. Roxanne Spiekerman, Vice President of Business Development for PreZero Recycling, pushes for the state to use the funds generated from the plastic producers to expand the infrastructure of materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and hauling equipment so that grocers and retailers don’t have to carry the burden and so recycling can still happen curbside. Certainly, the state will need to provide more support and funding to recycling and recovery industries if the amounts of recyclable materials increase at the rate the state hopes for.

Plastic packaging may be a cheap and easy way to move foods across the nation, but it also combats food waste and can be disease resistant. This bill is securing plastic as a viable form of packaging in California’s future by pushing plastic producers to create products that can work in an environmentally friendly society. Much more collaboration between industries needs to occur to decide the best, most efficient way to get the right materials into the right waste stream, but consumers should expect a change relatively quickly.

AirBurners Clean Burn Technology Brings Value to Valley Ag Producers



By Geoffrey Taylor, MA

As Valley agricultural producers struggle to find meaningful solutions to vegetative waste disposal through burning, finding new and innovative ways to dispose of vegetative waste is key to any streamlined agricultural operation.

With the only byproduct of this clean burn technology being nutrient rich biochar, this air curtain burning technology provides farmers and ranchers with a Best Available Control Technology to dispose of up to 9 tons of vegetative waste per burn hour. And with the ability to operate continuously until all vegetative waste has been disposed of, this technology has been used heavily throughout California to help dispose of diverse types of compliant natural and vegetative waste including leaves, branches, trunks, roots, stumps, untreated branch and grape support sticks, vines, canes and other natural waste generated on farms across the state.

“This proven clean burn technology utilizes a continuously blowing curtain of air over a burn pit box that helps to contain harmful smoke particulates into the firebox, leaving only that nutrient rich biochar as a byproduct,” said Ed Martinez, Vice President of Rancho Tree Service

located in Bakersfield, California, a leading vegetation management organization in the San Joaquin Valley and beyond, “AirBurners can safely and sustainably handle a large amount of vegetative material in a short amount of time. This type of burn technology can make all the difference in offsetting the costs of trucking vegetative waste to landfills or other challenges associated with rural waste disposal.”

With fallowed orchards and vineyards dotting the parched San Joaquin Valley, a local orchard clearing and debris disposal organization has recently received permitting to operate AirBurners FireBox technologies in the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District. This CARB certified burn box technology provides.

“From orchard and vineyard debris disposal to post-wild-fire vegetation and tree disposal, this technology is approved and endorsed as the cleanest way to burn vegetation without putting harmful chemicals, fine particulates and other potential pollutants into our air here in the Valley,” said Martinez, “Our agricultural and governmental clients find a lot of value in the this technology because it reduces the risk of wildfires or incidents associated with open burning, but also provides users with the flexibility of on-site waste disposal in a sustainable way.”

AirBurners FireBox burn box technology comes in a variety of formats, but the SJVAPCD permitted models utilized locally by Rancho Tree Service offer



This technology is approved and endorsed as the cleanest way to burn vegetation without putting harmful chemicals, fine particulates and other potential pollutants into our air. (Photo: Geoffrey Taylor, MA)

the perfect balance of vegetative waste disposal and ease of on-site mobilization and demobilization. This specific application of the AirBurners FireBox Technology provides flexibility for local producers and ranchers in the SJVAPCD jurisdiction to cleanly and safely dispose of waste on their own land in a legally compliant manner.

For more information on vegetative waste disposal, debris disposal, land clearing, orchard clearing or other tree care and arborist needs, please contact Ed Martinez, Vice President of Rancho Tree Service today at Ed.Martinez@RanchoTreeService.com. With diverse solutions to vegetative waste problems commonly incurred in agricultural and ranching operations, it’s critical to have a partner offering the right solutions to complex problems on the farm or ranch.

COMMENTARY: Practices Can Optimize Soil Health, Benefit Farmers

By Jeffrey Mitchell, Chair, Conservation Agriculture Systems Innovation Center Professor and Cooperative Extension Cropping Systems Specialist, University of California, Davis

Reprinted with Permission from California Farm Bureau Federation

For many years, a large billboard displayed along Interstate 5 near Tracy in San Joaquin County proclaimed that no-till “farmers do their share to clean the air.”

Whenever I drove by, I marveled at the visibility and positive message the sign may have had for farmers in the region, even though there were likely no more than a handful of no-till farmers within a 100-mile radius of the sign.

To be clear, farmers of perennial crops such as citrus, nuts and grapes have adapted to reduce soil-degrading tillage over many years. However, for the vast majority of annual crops, tillage-intensive practices are still very much the norm.

A current media blitz around the notion of “soil health” is unfolding now in recognition that maintaining soil function for crop production is a major requirement of agricultural systems and global food security.

Its momentum can be traced to 2012 and the Carroll, Ohio, farm of longtime no-till and cover crop farmer

David Brandt. There, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service launched “Unlock the Secrets in the Soil,” a national campaign about the core principles of conservation agriculture and soil health.

From 2017 to 2021, NRCS provided over \$160 million in funding for soil health-related conservation activities on over 2,000 projects in California. Since 2017, California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Healthy Soils Program has invested over \$75 million in more than 900 incentivizing effective soil health management practices.

Over the years, farmers and researchers have explored various approaches to optimize soil functions that are essential for productive and profitable farming. Practices known as “conservation agriculture” reduce soil disturbance and erosion, enhance biological diversity and maximize healthy root systems.

But the reflections of Ray Archuleta, a former longtime scientist with the NRCS and member of the agency’s original Soil Health Division, are worth noting. When it comes to soil health, Archuleta is fond of pointing out, we may have become accustomed to working with an essentially “degraded resource”—because we no longer recognize what good soil function and health actually look like.

For example, some growers may be used to ponded water in the low parts of their fields following rain events, very low soil structural stability, or high water evaporation in their soils as the norm. But improved soil-health practices could add long-term value to farming operations.

Why is there this apparent disconnect between soil health principles being understood and pursued by some, but ignored by many others? Some historical perspective might be useful.

In the first half of the 19th century, farmers faced a similar challenge of how to care for the soil. According to “Larding the Lean Earth—Soil and Society in the 19th Century” by Steven Stoll, a national debate unfolded about whether agriculture ought to preserve good husbandry and soil stewardship of farmland with the Eastern Seaboard region of the 13 original colonies, or whether

those lands should be abandoned and farms moved west after depleting the soil’s capacity.

Arguments flared over calls to action for greater attention to soil health. One camp, which became known as the “improvers,” argued that good soil care at existing farms was what was needed. Another saw agriculture’s future in migration.

Today’s situation is thus not new. Some farmers are heeding the call to improve their soils, while many still are clearly not. Yet perhaps now more than ever, the agricultural marketplace appears to reward food production systems that focus on improved soil health and greater efficiencies with water capture and storage by soils. Some farmers are considerably ahead of the curve in realizing improved performance production systems.

Our own soon-to-be-published long-term research in the San Joaquin Valley provides strong evidence that the combined use of fundamental soil health principles improves soil health compared to conventional practices for annual crop rotations.

Our data suggest that farmers stand to gain multiple benefits for the coupled use of these practices by increasing soil structural stability, water infiltration and storage, and agroecosystem biodiversity, while improving the efficiencies of the carbon, nitrogen and water cycles in their production systems.

These improvements represent potential new opportunities in annual crop fields throughout the state. While the up-front implementation outlays may discourage initial adoption by some, the common-good costs of achieving such sustained ecosystem improvement rightly need to be borne by our food system at large, rather than farmers themselves.

Thus, more robust market- and outcome-based mechanisms will be needed to help farmers make these critically important—and beneficial—changes.

Jeffrey Mitchell is chair of the Conservation Agriculture Systems Innovation Center and a professor and Cooperative Extension cropping systems specialist at the University of California, Davis. He may be contacted at JPMitchell@UCDavis.edu.

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A billboard near Interstate 5 promotes alternatives to tillage-intensive agriculture. The farm marketplace appears to be rewarding food producers that are embracing improved soil health practices. (Photo: Jeffrey Mitchell)



Harvest unfolds at a Monterey County vineyard planted as part of a biochar trial. (Photo: Monterey Pacific Inc.)

Ancient Nutrient Biochar May Boost Farming Future

By Lisa McEwen, Reporter, Exeter

Reprinted with Permission from California Farm Bureau Federation

California may be primed to become a production hotbed for a lightweight black residue that has helped vast rainforests thrive on infertile soils.

The material is biochar. It is a potentially valuable soil enhancement that can be produced from biomass of forest waste or dead orchards and vineyards.

Its production dates to ancient techniques originated in the Amazon basin. There, in the terra preta or black earth, dense tree and plants grew with help of high-charcoal content nurtured by indigenous soil management using deteriorating organic matter.

Now potential benefits of integrating biochar into all aspects of farming operations are being considered in California. The concept was presented to farmers, food processors, scientists and inventors gathered at the International Agri-Center in Tulare.

"I am trying to get the conversation started within agricultural producers," said Mayo Ryan, founder of Sitos Group, and a biochar manufacturer. "It doesn't happen without the farmer."

Modern biochar production results from a process known as pyrolysis, which involves using extreme heat to breakdown biomass without oxygen or fire. The biochar is the residue left when the biomass thermally decomposes.

Farmers can apply biochar during planting, when it can improve soil quality, increase water retention and improve yield. After harvest, they can then convert winery pomace, rice husks, nut hulls or dead vines into biochar for sale to others.

Given the nearly complete ban of orchard burning mandated by the California Air Resources Board by 2025, Ryan is encouraging farmers to look at alternatives for the biomass of orchards removed from production.

"What's going to happen to all those orchards and vineyards? It is a great opportunity for us as California growers and processors," he said.

Already some California counties are considering biochar processing plants. A German biochar company, Pyreg, which sponsored the Tulare gathering, was aiming to connect with California growers and processors to discuss its technology.

Pyreg produces multiple-sized units, the largest about the size of a three-car garage, that can cleanly process a variety of biomass materials, including urban green waste.

While individual pyrolysis units are cost-prohibitive for most, growers could form a collective, burning waste and producing biochar for sale, one of two income streams available from biochar. Another is carbon dioxide removal certificates or CORCs, which are carbon credits that can be sold on the global carbon market.

Demand for physical biochar and carbon credits is growing and outweighs supplies, Ryan said.

"It's time to start thinking about those almond hulls differently because you're leaving money on the table," he said. "It is an economic game-changer for us in California."

Doug Beck, science advisor at Monterey Pacific Inc., a Central Coast vineyard farm management firm, presented the results of an 8-acre trial conducted in a vineyard with sandy soil and harsh growing conditions from 2016-2021.

See **BIOCHAR MAY BOOST FARMING FUTURE** on PG 8

Global Table Grape Summit



Breeding as a Base for Industry Prosperity panelists: David Marguleas from Sun World, Andy Higgins from IFG, Josep from SNFL, Rafi Karmel from Grapa. (Photo: Melissa Nagel)

Continued from PAGE 1 There are currently over 100 varieties of table grapes, and breeders are

working to innovate even more to meet both customer and grower needs. Josep Estiarte, with Special New Fruit Licensing (SNFL) said, "In order to compete with other improving produce, we must make the grape pie bigger." The table grape industry stakeholders, growers, breeders, retailers and wholesalers recognized the importance of supporting each other during a difficult period of rising input costs and flat consumption, so the industry could be successful long-term.

The future of table grapes is all about the varieties and capitalizing on the innovation and progress that has occurred over the past ten years. Raising curiosity through the development of varieties and building awareness of what they are will increase customer appreciation and affinity toward table grapes.



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Sale of Table Olive Processor Signals Industry Transition

By Ching Lee, Assistant Editor, Ag Alert

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The acquisition of Bell-Carter Foods by a Spanish olive company marks the end of an era for the largest table olive producer in the U.S. and one of two remaining olive processors in the state.

Announced last week, the deal between Bell-Carter and Aceitunas Guadalquivir, or AG Olives, comes as California farmers continue to remove their table olive orchards, forcing state canners to look globally to source the fruit.

Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed. However, the Walnut Creek-based company—known for its Lindsay brand of black ripe olives—said the sale allows for immediate upgrades to its production facility in Corning. This includes updated olive cookers, expanded warehouse space and new production lines, Bell-Carter said. The investments signal the company's intention to stay in the table olive business—and in California—effectively maintaining the state's olive-processing infrastructure.

Under the new ownership, fourth-generation CEO Tim Carter, who took the helm in 2012, will continue to lead the business his family founded 110 years ago. Bell-Carter will keep its name, its nearly 300 employees and all active contracts with 80-plus growers across 3,000 acres in Tehama and Tulare counties, the company said.

The change also forms a new alliance between two veteran olive-producing families—the Carters and the Escalantes—whose business relationship stretches back more than 30 years. Since 1991, Bell-Carter has been sourcing jarred green table olives from AG Olives' factory in Seville, Spain.

"This acquisition is really the product of a very deep trust that the families have in one another, so that we can continue the Bell-Carter Foods name, mission and values," Carter said.

AG Olives CEO Francisco "Paco" Escalante described



Olive trees at sunset. (Photo: Deyan Georgiev / Shutterstock.com)

the partnership as "more than just smart business. It's a promise of even more growth and innovation."

Escalante noted his long ties to the Carters: He was a 14-year-old exchange student learning English in the U.S. when he first got to know the family during a visit to Corning, where he toured the cannery and some of the region's olive groves.

"Thirty years later, we are here with this alliance that just seemed the natural thing to do for both families," Escalante said. "It's driven by our mutual commitment to grow family, quality and innovation."

As part of the deal, the Spanish olive oil cooperative Dcoop, a former partner of Bell-Carter, will hold a minority interest in the company.

Bell-Carter sold 20% of its share to Dcoop in 2018 and began buying more Spanish raw olives for processing. The following year, Bell-Carter terminated some 350 contracts with California growers, who accused the canner of using a loophole in a provision that allows it to avoid paying import tariffs on the raw olives.

Some growers found a home for their fruit with Tracy-based Musco Family Olive Co., the state's other major table olive processor. But others have left the business.

Last year, Dcoop and two other related companies sued Bell-Carter, claiming they were induced to purchase their stake based on intentional misrepresentations of the processor's inventory value, projected earnings and financial position.

With the acquisition of Bell-Carter, Tim Carter said the legal matter with Dcoop "has been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties." Though Dcoop no longer supplies raw olives to Bell-Carter, Carter said the company has not changed its "necessary and successful implementation of a global sourcing model." He said Bell-Carter will continue to buy olives from California growers and other countries in the European Union and elsewhere. Relying on global sources for raw olives has been key to Bell-Carter's business and all U.S.-based olive producers, he added.

Meanwhile, state bearing acreage for table olives continues to decline, standing at 12,000 this year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That's down from 16,000 acres in 2019.

Carter acknowledged he does not know what growers will do, but he said "we can remain committed, and we can continue investing in contracts, in the Corning plant and the stability for them as they consider the future of their olive groves." He noted Bell-Carter this year changed most of its grower contracts from one-year evergreens to three- to five-year contracts.

Ed Curiel, who grows olives in Tehama County, is one grower who signed a multiyear contract with Bell-Carter. He said his family has been growing olives his whole life. Even though he has diversified into almonds and walnuts and has abandoned some of his olive orchards due to lack of water, Curiel said he expects he will always maintain some olive acreage and will continue selling the crop to Bell-Carter for as long as he can.

"There's romanticism," he said. "Olives have been good to my family for two or three generations now. It's put food on the table. It's putting my kids through school. We're

kind of loyal to the crop, to the company, to the town."

As a former Bell-Carter grower who now sells to Musco, Tulare County farmer Chris Lange said he has continued to grow table olives because he has access to surface water and because the crop is "quite inexpensive to farm," except for pruning and harvesting costs. He noted growers have been transitioning away from table olives for at least two decades, and he expects the trend to continue.

"Growers with land and water envision a higher per-acre return," Lange said.

Tulare County Musco grower Rod Burkett said the industry has known for 20 years that there would not be enough olive acreage in the state to support the two processors. With the high cost of water, he said he thinks more growers—himself included—will pull their table-olive trees because the crop will not pencil out.

"I can see the handwriting on the walls," he said. "You're crazy to keep growing olives. You're going to have to plant high-value crops to stay in the business in California."

Meanwhile, Musco continues to promote its "million trees" initiative with free nursery stock to encourage growers to remove their existing orchards and plant new trees that could be mechanically harvested. Most of the state's table olives remain hand-picked.

Dennis Burreson, Musco vice president of field operations and industry affairs, said the initiative has "far surpassed expectations and is setting the stage for the future."

Unlike Bell-Carter, which has now transitioned completely to Spanish ownership and uses "only a small percentage of California acreage," he said Musco remains committed to the California grower and relies "first and foremost on California-grown olives" and turns to imports to supplement the state crop when there is a production shortfall.

"We believe the future of the California table olive industry is extremely bright," Burreson said.

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Ask Your PCA: How Do You Control Asian Citrus Psyllid?

is budget-friendly because of the reduction in applications.



By Chris Boisseranc,
Southwest Ag
Consulting, Redlands

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The Asian citrus psyllid is a pest that carries the bacteria for huanglongbing, or HLB, also known as citrus

greening. HLB will kill the trees, but it takes three to five years, starting with the root system, then the upper canopy.

HLB is a vector-based disease spread by the psyllid. Typically, the psyllid will start in one area of the grove, move into the trees and feed on an infected tree, then move to an uninfected tree, spreading the disease.

Most of Southern California is under federal quarantine for HLB. Once a federal quarantine is in place, if an infected tree is found, a 5-mile quarantine is placed over the entire area. These quarantines make it difficult for

growers to transport their fruit to market.

In Southern California, growers are doing regionwide treatments to maintain psyllid levels as low as possible and keep the HLB at bay.

In coordination with pest districts, the applications are done in a tight timing pattern so that growers can really knock down the psyllid. The goal is treat everything within a two-week window, using a material that's appropriate not only for the psyllid but also mealybug, red scale and citrus mites. Doing combined applications for several pests

Organic and conventional materials are available. Some chemicals kill all the pests—ACP, mealybug, red scale and citrus mites. These materials are a little more expensive. For organic growers, there is an oil that suffocates most of these pests all at the same time, and it does a good job.

Several chemicals are available so that growers can rotate and prevent resistance from building. Really good control has been seen with these products, particularly with tighter application timings in the regional districts during the 14-day window.

No Easy Solutions to Water Woes

Thomas Ott

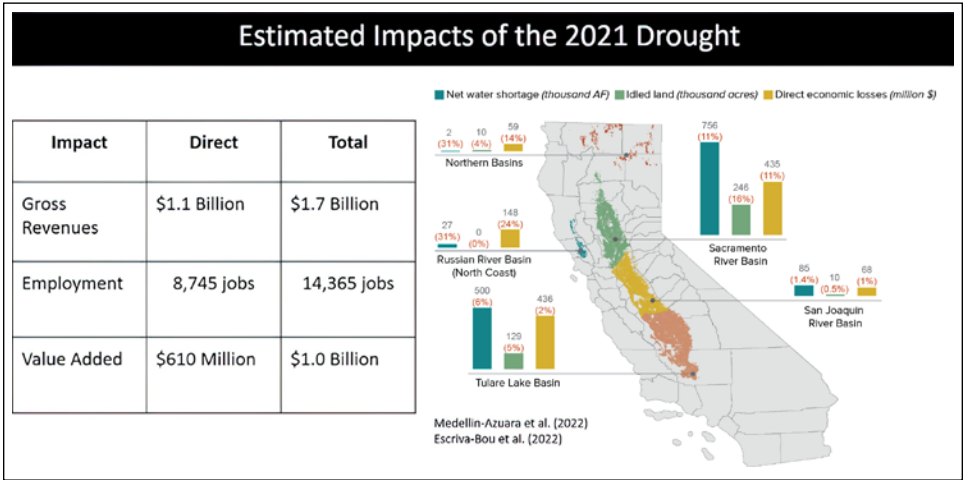
Continued from PAGE 1 consequences for the Valley. They suggest that those consequences can be mitigated through more active water markets, but current state law prohibits the transfer of water outside of a water district unless the water is surplus to the needs of the district. Under SGMA, that is now a high hurdle and so the mitigating effects of water transfers are likely to be minimal.

updated the audience on the recent developments of using satellite imagery to estimate crop consumptive use, particularly the “OpenET” tool—a source of valuable information for groundwater managers and farmers. The tool was developed as part of a collaborative effort between USDA, USGS, Google Earth, the Desert Research Institute, and several universities. The tool uses several

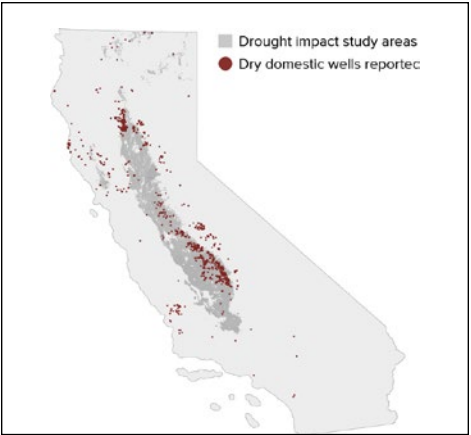
different models—with the accuracy of the models varying with crop and soil conditions. Generally, the satellite estimates were within 10 percent of estimates provided by flux towers (weather stations) in the field. Ott noted though that citrus and almond growers in Kern County had some concerns with the estimates being provided, which will require additional model calibration to correct.

Josué Medellín-Azuara ended the presentations by providing an overview of the drought impacts in 2021. Surface water supply shortages to agriculture were about 5.5 million acre-feet in 2021, offset by 4.2 million acre-feet of groundwater pumping resulting in net water losses of 1.34 million acre-feet. Idling of rice fields in Sacramento valley, cotton in the San Joaquin Valley, and other row crops represented the most losses in acreage. Drought-related idling of land was at least 385,000 acres in the Central Valley with the bulk of it in the Sacramento Valley during 2021. The preliminary direct economic impact of the 2021 drought on crop agriculture in the study area is estimated at \$962 million worth 8,745 full and part-time job losses and \$610 million losses in value added. Medellín-Azuara's look ahead contained numerous words of caution: expect extremes in climate to continue, expect water shortages to increase with the implementation of SGMA, and consider alternative crop mixes—combinations of row and permanent crops—to better manage variations in the water supply.

The economic and social impacts due to the drought this year and last are likely a sign of things to come as drought impacts are replaced by those due to the implementation of SGMA. While demand management and repurposing of ag land will necessarily be a part of the solution, it should be the last option, not the first. As the signs along Highway 99 suggest, there is a need to make better use of the 10 million acre-feet per year, on average, that flow to the Pacific from the Delta that is not needed for any other purpose.



Drought hit Sacramento Valley and North Coast agriculture hardest as a share of crop revenues. (Graphic: Medellín-Azuara et al. (2022), Adapted)



Around 1,000 domestic wells were reported dry during 2021, most of them in the Central Valley. (Graphic: Escrivá-Bou et al. 2022, Data: DWR)

‘California Marketplace’ Set for Farm Bureau Conference

strations.

By Ag Alert Staff

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For the first time, the traditional tradeshow at the California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting will be transformed into an opportunity for members to show and sell the bounty and other artisan goods from their farms and ranches.

Called the California Marketplace, this interactive event will be held Dec. 4, from 1-7 p.m. The California Marketplace is one of several new features of the 2022 Annual Meeting, set for Dec. 2-7 at the Portola Hotel & Spa in Monterey.

An estimated 700 attendees from both the Annual Meeting and Young Farmers & Ranchers State Conference will come together to explore the California Marketplace, traveling region by region at the Monterey Conference Center. The idea of the marketplace is to replicate the experience of tasting and shopping one's way across the Golden State.

Held in conjunction with the marketplace, a welcome reception also highlights how the state's diverse regions collectively propel California to the No. 1 spot among U.S. agricultural producers. Appetizers and beverages served will give a nod to each region, with selections that showcase top commodities. Local chefs will feature California-grown ingredients in live cooking demon-

strations. Additionally, partners of Farm Bureau who operate in service- or education-oriented sectors will host exhibit booths at the California Marketplace, giving members a more traditional tradeshow experience.

Booths representing the next generation of farmers and ranchers will provide a new dimension to the event's networking opportunities. FarmPAC will host a cornhole tournament, with registration open to all attendees. This is a fundraiser to benefit FarmPAC, which supports decision makers who value agriculture and family farms and ranches.

The deadline to purchase a California Marketplace shop or exhibit booth is Oct. 31. For more information, visit CFBF.com/Ag-Events or contact Miranda Jachens at Sponsorship@CFBF.com or 916-561-5594.

The California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting features sessions of the organization's House of Delegates and educational workshops on agricultural policy, advocacy, state and federal regulations and pesticide licensing issues. County Farm Bureaus from across the state will hold receptions, and regional farm tours are open to attendees of the Annual Meeting and the YF&R conference.

Registration materials for the California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and YF&R State Conference will be available in late September, with updates at CFBF.com/Annual-Meeting.



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California Farm Bureau Reacts to Court Ruling on Water Rights

Press Release Provided by California Farm Bureau Federation

A new web-based tool developed by the Department of California's Sixth Appellate District Court of Appeal has issued a ruling protecting longstanding water rights of California farmers, ranchers and water agencies.

The court ruled that the California State Water Resources Control Board cannot target senior water rights holders for across-the-board curtailments in water deliveries. The ruling declares that the state board does not have the power "to curtail an entire class of pre-1914 appropriative water rights solely on the basis that the Board believes that there will be insufficient water to serve all pre-1914 appropriative water rights."

California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson called the court ruling an important affirmation of water rights, which should serve as a wake-up call for state policymakers.

"The Farm Bureau is pleased that the court has recognized senior water rights, which are critical to California communities, agriculture and securing our nation's food supply," Johansson said.

"As food prices continue to skyrocket, this is a wake-up

call for those in charge of California's water system to reject their current policy of scarcity. We need to build water storage and invest in improved water conveyance, as a vast majority of California voters called for in approving the Proposition 1 water bond in 2014. This is a reminder that the state needs to act on those voter wishes."

California Farm Bureau Senior Counsel Chris Scheuring said, "The decision is a win for the water rights system and certainty in its administration, even though in some ways it's just a statement of what has always been the case—the state water board has direct regulatory authority over only those water rights developed after the enactment of the Water Commission Act of 1913.

"As a practical matter," Scheuring said, "it's a recognition that the state can't regulate itself out of a water supply and demand crisis by targeting senior water rights, and a signal that we must renew our focus on new supply and infrastructure."

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 32,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of nearly 5.6 million Farm Bureau members.

Biochar May Boost Farming Future

Continued from PAGE 5 The results from the field research project, funded by the California Department of Water Resources and administered by the Sonoma Ecology Center, were promising.

Yield increased 45% to 70% over the control block over the years of the trial. The application of biochar mixed with compost had a significant effect on flowering and fruit set.

"Compost and biochar together is kind of like magic," Beck said.

But a downside was the high trucking costs to transport the biochar from Humboldt County to the project site in King City in the Salinas Valley. As a result, Beck's advice is "you might as well produce it where you use it."

Monterey Pacific is looking at building its own biochar production plant and is applying the material to current and new plantings.

Proponents of biochar say they envision its use in a circular agriculture economy, which includes turning biomass waste into value, reducing CO2 emissions and promoting regenerative farming practices through the production and application of certified biochar.

But citrus farmer Joe Russell of Visalia, whose acreage is both organic and transitioning to organic, questions the practicality of applying biochar in established citrus groves.

"I'm the type of guy who would trial it," he said. "There

are a lot of benefits to it, for sure, but it is premature to know what is and isn't working. I would need to see data to know what the costs and benefits are, to see if it would actually perform."

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has yet to issue standards for biochar.

Meanwhile, depending on the quality of the pyrolysis process, biochar has varying quality. Because the pH of soil varies throughout the state, farmers may need to customize their biochar before application.

Joseph Gallegos, CEO of UmidaAG, a subsurface irrigation system company, is working with clients who are adding biochar in irrigation trenches at the time of installation. He is also conducting a test plot at California State University, Fresno.

Gallegos said he has witnessed biochar's benefits and believes it could help farmers battling challenges in times of drought.

"I am starting to realize biochar is a soil structure element that is able to act like a sponge for the different microorganisms in the soil, to give them a home and they can then multiply at greater quantities," he said. "That's what I'm seeing as an advantage."

"The enzymes produced are what we want, as they break down the minerals in the soil and make them available to the plant."

Gallegos said he believes biochar technology will catch on throughout the state over the next decade.



"With the large amount of orchards in California, it will take off," he said. "Anytime you see a pile of dead trees, traditionally, those have been burned. But with a drive to eliminate burning, biochar is a good path."

Biochar can be produced from forest biomass and orchards that are removed from production. (Photos: Monterey Pacific Inc.)

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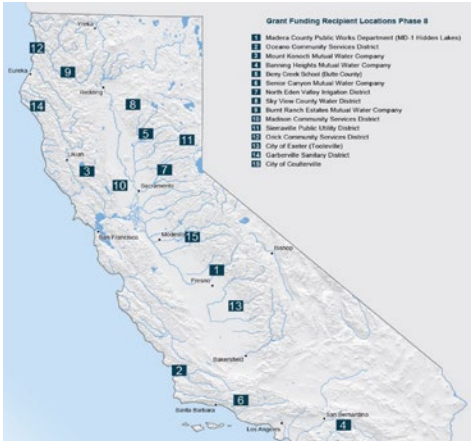


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15 California Communities to Receive Drought Funding Amid Extreme Conditions



Grant Funding Recipient Locations Phase 8. (Graphic: DWR)
Press Release Provided by California Department of Water Resources

As part of ongoing efforts to help small communities address water supply challenges amid extreme drought and build water resilience for the future, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced its eighth round of funding through the Small Community Drought Relief Program.

In coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board, the program will provide \$40 million to 15 projects in Butte, Humboldt, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Placer, San Luis Obispo, Riverside, Sierra, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Ventura and Yolo counties. Of the selected projects, 12 will directly benefit disadvantaged communities to implement long-term solutions such as pipeline replacement, well installation, and infrastructure upgrades to improve water resilience and water quality.

“Many of our state’s most vulnerable communities still struggle to get access to clean, safe drinking water. These funded projects will increase local water supplies while helping communities adapt to more extreme weather patterns caused by climate change,” said Kristopher Tjernell, Deputy Director of Integrated Watershed Management at DWR. “As we prepare for a fourth dry year, we will continue to work with the State Water Resources Control Board to expedite assistance to our communities in need.”

Some of the communities set to receive funding include:

- **Oceano Community Services District:** In San Luis Obispo County, the water system serving the Oceano Community has several pipelines that are leaking and losing significant amounts of water. The district will receive \$268,000 to replace approximately 1,350 feet of pipelines, which will save approximately 270,000 gallons of water per year.
- **Mount Konocti Mutual Water Company:** In Lake County, the community’s water supply is threatened as the drought causes water levels to decrease in Clear Lake. Furthermore, the community is experiencing substantial

water loss from its existing water storage tanks. The company will receive \$2.3 million to replace leaking water storage tanks and install low water intake pumps.

- **Banning Heights Mutual Water Company:** In Riverside County, the community of Banning Heights is struggling without a water source due to the prolonged drought and damage to critical water infrastructure caused by the Apple Fire in 2020. The company will receive \$3.7 million to construct a new well and water tank and implement a hauled water program.
 - **Sky View County Water District:** In Tehama County, the local disadvantaged community relies on one groundwater well and is struggling to meet water demands for residents and fire protection due to aging pipelines. The district will receive \$5 million to provide safe drinking water to residents.
 - **Burnt Ranch Estates Mutual Water Company:** In Trinity County, the water system serving the small mountain community is stressed due to leaky infrastructure. The company will receive \$2.5 million to replace two water storage tanks and leaking pipelines.
 - **Madison Community Services District:** In Yolo County, the water distribution system serving the Madison community is leaking excessively and experiencing catastrophic pipeline failures. Recent fractures have led to the loss of 315,000 gallons of potable water. The district will receive \$3.8 million to replace the existing water distribution system and implement well site improvements.
 - **Garberville Sanitary District:** In Humboldt County, three of the community’s tanks are leaking and capacity of the tanks has been reduced by 60 percent. As a solution, the district will receive \$4.5 million to replace the three leaking tanks with two new tanks.
 - **City of Exeter (Tooleville):** In Tulare County, the community of Tooleville has struggled with securing a safe water supply for years and currently relies on bottled water for drinking water needs. In addition, the current drought has caused the water quantity and quality of the two wells serving the community to deteriorate further. The community will receive \$7.2 million to construct a new well and intertie to consolidate with the nearby City of Exeter.
- The Small Community Drought Relief Program has delivered \$216 million in financial assistance since receiving funding from the Budget Act of 2021. In this year’s budget, the program received an additional \$121 million that will allow the program to continue to assist small communities and start a new Water Tank Program. Expected to launch this fall, the new program will provide tanks and hauled water to communities that are in immediate need of potable water supplies. The program will be led by DWR in coordination with the California Office of Emergency Services, Department of General Services, and the State Water Resources Control Board.
- The Small Community Drought Relief Program has delivered \$216 million in financial assistance since 2021. (Photo: N. Velichko / Shutterstock.com)*



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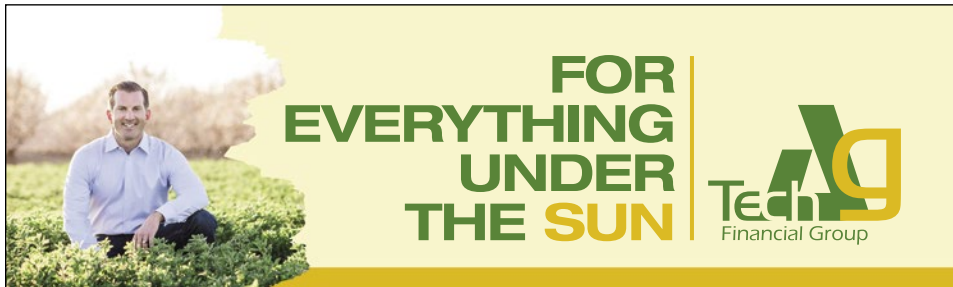
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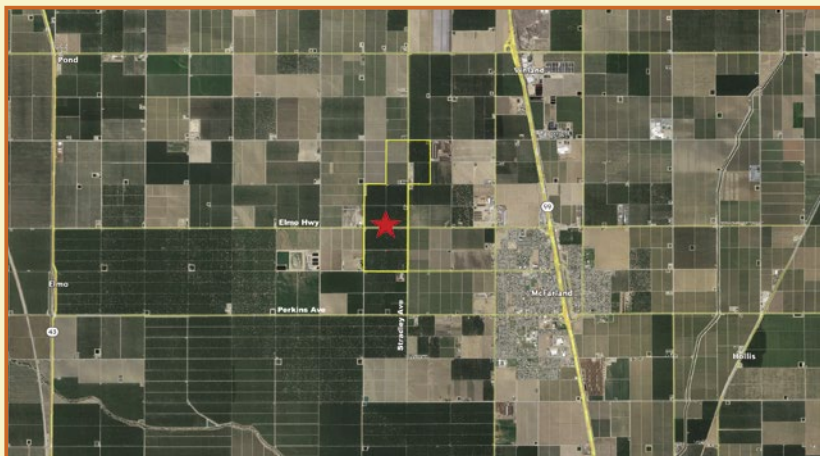
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The Charles E. Meyer Desalination Plant in Santa Barbara, California, which helps improve water reliability and resiliency for the City during the drought years. (Photo: California Department of Water Resources)

DWR Announces \$6 Million to Support Desalination Projects

Press Release Provided by California Department of Water Resources

As California faces a hotter, drier future and ongoing extreme drought conditions, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is offering \$6 million in financial assistance to support desalination projects that will help develop new sources of local water supplies in California.

Funded by Proposition 1, the Water Desalination Grant Program is offering \$6 million to support construction and design pilot projects that desalinate naturally occurring brackish and ocean water for potable water supply. Desalination is the process of removing salts and minerals from brackish water and seawater to produce water suitable for consumption, irrigation, and other supply needs.

“Desalination remains a critical water supply source in communities where traditional water supplies are limited,” said Karla Nemeth, DWR Director. “California faces a range of water supply challenges and climate change continues to intensify impacts and weather extremes. Our priority is building water resilience through a set of actions that will prepare our water systems to support our growing state in a hotter, drier climate.”

Funding request applications must be submitted by October 5 using DWR’s online submittal tool, GRanTS. DWR expects to announce the final awards in Febru-

ary 2023. Eligible applicants include public agencies, mutual water companies, nonprofit organizations, and Tribes. Interested parties can find more information about the funding and eligibility requirements in the Proposal Solicitation Package.

This funding supports actions identified in the Governor’s recently announced strategy document, “California’s Water Supply Strategy, Adapting to a Hotter, Drier Future.” The strategy outlines a series of proposed actions to help replenish our state’s water supply and make our system more resilient, which includes capturing stormwater and desalinating ocean and salty water to help diversify supplies.

To date, DWR has awarded over \$81 million in Proposition 1 desalination grants ranging from over \$100,000 to \$10 million to 17 projects. In addition to supporting local desalination efforts, DWR contributed \$16 million to the National Alliance for Water Innovation (NAWI) in 2021 to help advance desalination research. Led by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, NAWI and its team of 180 institutions are conducting a five-year research project to lower the cost and energy required for desalination. The research will also improve brine management, increase longevity of system components, and develop methods to optimize operational efficiency. It is hoped that the benefits realized in the desalination industry will support other industrial sectors.

CDFA Accepting Grant Applications for Pollinator Habitat Program

Press Release provided by California Dept. of Food and Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is now accepting grant applications for the Pollinator Habitat Program (PHP) administered by its Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation.

The 12-week application period is set to open August 31, 2022 and will close on November 23, 2022 at 5 p.m. PT.

Detailed information, including application processes and requirements, and registration links for two informational webinars to review program guidelines can be found on the program website at CDFA.CA.gov/OEFI/php.

Pollinators are essential to many of California’s agricultural crops and to the vast biodiversity of the state’s natural ecosystems. The Pollinator Habitat Program’s primary objective is to support pollinators through the provision of floral resources, host plants, and other

elements of suitable habitat.

The program is designed to help strengthen pollinator populations and improve pollinator health. Projects funded through the PHP can be expected to have additional benefits to California’s biodiversity and agricultural production.

The program was established by the Budget Act of 2021 (Senate Bill 170, Skinner). An appropriation of \$15 million to CDFA will provide grant funding for the establishment of pollinator habitats on agricultural lands throughout California.

Eligible entities can apply for up to \$2 million in PHP grants to work with farmers and ranchers to install pollinator habitat on agricultural lands throughout California. Eligible entities include Resource Conservation Districts, non-profits, Tribes, and California public higher learning institutions. For more information about eligibility and a full list of eligible applicants and funded pollinator practices, visit the program website at CDFA.CA.gov/OEFI/php.

50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The Almond Conference

The Almond Conference has been held every year since 1973, making this the 50th consecutive year. The event now attracts more than 250 exhibitors and covers the latest advancements in growing, producing and supplying high-quality, great-tasting, and healthy almonds!

This year's agenda will be packed with content focused on helping growers improve ROI, including but not limited to:

Tuesday:
Water Supply
Pollination

Wednesday:
Irrigation
Fertigation

Thursday:
Rootstocks
Pest Management

Make plans now to join your fellow almond industry members at The Almond Conference on December 6-8 at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center in downtown Sacramento.

Register now at Almonds.com/Conference

San Joaquin Valley Farm and Food Project Awarded \$16 Million in Federal Funds



F3 will help diversify our regional economy by developing clean technology needed for sustainable food production both here and around the world, and it will help connect our small farms and local-serving food businesses to global economic opportunity. (Photo: UC ANR)

Press Release Provided by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources

Local food marketing, business and market support for small-scale farmers and food producers, new agricultural products and technology development are parts of a University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources project designed to boost jobs and farm resiliency in the San Joaquin Valley.

The Fresno-Merced Future of Food Innovation Coalition, or F3, received a \$65.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's \$1 billion Build Back Better Regional Challenge. Of that award, about \$16 million is designated for the Local Farm and Food Innovation initiative led by UC ANR. With the addition of matching share of cost contributions, the total budget for UC ANR's project is over \$20.5 million.

"As a key part of the broader F3 project, this Local

Farm and Food Innovation initiative is going to be transformative," said Glenda Humiston, University of California vice president for agriculture and natural resources. "By strengthening the parts of the food system to better support each other and drive innovation across the region, it's going to deliver many environmental and economic benefits to Californians."

Gabriel Youtsey is chief innovation officer for The VINE, a UC ANR initiative that helps new technology make it to market and businesses get off the ground by connecting entrepreneurs with mentors and resources, and aligning university and startup technology development with industry needs.

"The Local Farm and Food Innovation initiative is a win for inclusive innovation in agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley and a critical part of the F3 project," said Youtsey. "It provides a broad set of training and support

resources and expertise to help farms,

food producers and vendors of all sizes to grow their businesses profitably and sustainably, in alignment with the economic goals of the region."

To ensure technology solutions address the needs of small-scale farmers, food business owners and local communities, they will be invited to participate in directing the innovation activities, Youtsey said.

"With our deep roots in the San Joaquin Valley, UC Cooperative Extension is uniquely positioned to draw expertise from other parts of UC and expand its efforts in helping farmers and food entrepreneurs realize enduring prosperity and community resilience," Humiston said. "UC ANR experts are already helping immigrants and other underserved communities adapt to climate change, add flexibility to supply chains and grow grassroots innovations. We are excited the federal government is investing in making food systems more equitable and profitable, and the solutions more scalable."

To assist small-scale farmers in complying with new regulations and production challenges, adapting to climate change and finding new markets for their produce, UC ANR is convening the Small Farms Technology and Innovation Alliance. They are collaborating with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers and other nonprofit organizations to provide translation services, training and marketing assistance to farmers and food producers.

Ruth Dahlquist-Willard, UC Cooperative Extension small farms advisor for Fresno and Tulare counties, and Houston Wilson, UC Organic Agriculture Institute director and UC Cooperative Extension tree crops entomology specialist based at UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Parlier, are leading outreach and engagement with small-scale

and organic farmers.

"While we certainly need to create new tools to address the unique challenges of organic agriculture, it is critical that farmers and other end-users be involved from start to finish," said Wilson. "The development of appropriate technology requires communication across a wide range of stakeholders."

To make new technology more accessible for small farmers and food producers, UC ANR will create a new team to test and demonstrate technology that is developed as part of F3 and by startups around the world. To promote adoption, the team will create a tool lending library so farmers can borrow and try out equipment and get training to use it.

"This project will expand on current efforts to support small-scale farmers with access to equipment, new markets and technical support," said Dahlquist-Willard. "Our team is committed to meaningful engagement of farmers and San Joaquin Valley communities in the development of new tools and resources for the benefit of the region."

For local food entrepreneurs and vendors, UC ANR will launch the Cultiva La Salud Kitchen and Food Academy and the Saint Rest Food Entrepreneurship Program, which will provide a kitchen, equipment and training. These will create new jobs and, over time, provide a marketplace to sell those products. The Local Food Marketing Assistance Program will promote purchases of locally grown produce and food products.

The Fresno-Merced project was one of 21 projects funded of the 529 proposed for the Build Back Better Regional Challenge intended to uplift underserved communities.

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources brings the power of UC to all 58 California counties. Through research and Cooperative Extension in agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, economic and youth development, our mission is to improve the lives of all Californians. Learn more at [UCANR.edu](https://ucanr.edu) and support our work at [Donate.UCANR.edu](https://ucanr.edu/donate).

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CDFA Announces Funding for 2022 CalAgPlate Grant Program

Press Release provided by California Dept. of Food and Agriculture

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is accepting proposals for the 2022 California Agriculture Special Interest License Plate (CalAgPlate) grant program. This program projects an estimated \$250,000 in grant funding available to promote agricultural education and leadership activities for students at the K-12, post-secondary, and adult education levels.

Proceeds generated through the sales of specialized, agriculture-themed license plates through the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) have made this opportunity available.

Funding is available on a competitive basis for state-ad-

opted Agricultural Education Programs (Education Code

Section 52450-52454), government agencies, and non-profit organizations that administer agricultural education programs. The application deadline is Friday, October 7, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. PT.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to visit the programs website CDFA.CA.gov/CalAgPlate for detailed application instructions.

The CalAgPlate program has funded more than \$1.9 million in youth educational activities since the program's inception. You can help support agricultural education and the CalAgPlate program by purchasing a special interest license plate at your local DMV office or online today.

WAPA Welcomes Edward Holquin to the WAPA Team

Press Release Provided by Western Agricultural Processors Association

The Association would like to welcome Edward Holquin to the WAPA Team! Edward is the Association's New Senior Safety and Food Safety Specialist. Edward comes to the Association with an extensive food safety background. Over the past 10 years he has served as a food safety compliance specialist for Baloian Farms,



WAPA welcomes Edward Holquin

and Food Safety Manager for Nature's Produce and Dayka and Hackett, LLC. During that same time period, he received his Bachelor's Degree in Food Science from Fresno State. Edward also served for 4 years in the Army National Guard. Edward is responsible for developing and implementing safety and food safety programs for our members working hand-in-hand with our Safety and Food Safety Specialist.

New Directors of Almond Board of California Begin Their Terms

The new Board of Directors of the Almond Board of California (ABC) took their seats on August 4th with four voting members beginning new terms to help guide ABC's support of one of California's most important crops.

Press Release Provided by Almond Board of California

Board members, whose terms officially began Aug. 1, also elected Alexi Rodriguez as chair and re-elected George Goshgarian Jr. as vice chair.

"Our industry is facing many challenges right now," said Rodriguez. "I'm looking forward to working with this talented and dedicated board and organization. I believe we have the resources and experience to navigate these complicated times."

The 10-member ABC board has five grower members – three representing independent growers and two representing cooperative growers – and five handler members, also with three independent and two co-op representatives. Some members sit in three-year seats, others in one-year positions.

The grower representatives elected or re-elected in this year's elections are:

Paul Ewing, an independent from RPAC, LLC in Los Banos. He was re-elected to a one-year term.

Brandon Rebiero, an independent grower from Gold Leaf Farming in Modesto who previously served as an alternate and was elected to a three-year term.

The handler representatives were re-elected in both positions this year. They are:

Darren Rigg, an independent handler from Minturn Nut Co. in Le Grand. He was re-elected to a one-year term.



The new Board of Directors, including voting members and alternate seats, began serving their respective terms at the August 4 meeting in Modesto at the Almond Board of California offices. (Photo: ABC)

Mel Machado, a co-op handler with Blue Diamond Growers from Modesto re-elected to a three-year term.

In addition, the board has three alternates elected or re-elected this year:

Katie Staack-Dorsett, an independent grower with Grizzly Nut, LLC from Waterford This is her first term as an alternate.

Chad DeRose, an independent handler with Famoso Nut Co., LLC in McFarland, who was re-elected.

Mark Jansen, a co-op handler with Blue Diamond Growers from Sacramento who was also re-elected.

The ABC board sets policy and approves budgets in major areas, including production research, public relations and advertising, nutrition research, statistical reporting, quality control and food safety.

ABC is a Federal Marketing Order dedicated to promot-

ing California almonds to domestic and international audiences through marketing efforts and by funding and promoting studies about almonds' health benefits, as well as ensuring sustainable agricultural practices and food safety.

About California Almonds

California almonds make life better by what we grow and how we grow. The Almond Board of California promotes natural, wholesome and quality almonds through leadership in strategic market development, innovative research, and accelerated adoption of industry best practices on behalf of the more than 7,600 almond farmers and processors in California, most of whom are multi-generational family operations. Established in 1950 and based in Modesto, California, ABC is a non-profit organization that administers a grower-enacted Federal Marketing Order under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more information on the Almond Board of California or almonds, visit Almonds.com or check out California Almonds on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and the California Almonds blog.

SEAT	VOTING MEMBER	TERM
Grower #1:	Paul Ewing, RPAC, LLC	1 year
Grower #2:	Brandon Rebiero, Gold Leaf Farming	3 years
Grower #3:	Joe Gardiner, Treehouse California Almonds, LLC	3 years
Handler #1:	Alexi Rodriguez, Campos Brothers	3 years
Handler #2:	Bob Silveira, Vann Family Orchards	3 years
Handler #3:	Darren Rigg, Minturn Nut Co. Inc.	1 year
Co-op Grower #1:	George Goshgarian Jr., Goshgarian Farming Co.	3 years
Co-op Grower #2:	Christine Gemperle, Gemperle Orchards	3 years
Co-op Handler #1:	Mel Machado, Blue Diamond Growers	3 years
Co-op Handler #2:	Alicia Rockwell, Blue Diamond Growers	3 years
SEAT	ALTERNATE MEMBER	
Grower #1:	Katie Staack-Dorsett, Grizzly Nut, LLC	
Grower #2:	Vacant	
Grower #3:	Chris Bettencourt, Suvik Farms	
Handler #1:	Ron Fisher, Fisher Nut Company	
Handler #2:	Dexter Long, Hilltop Ranch, Inc.	
Handler #3:	Chad DeRose, Famoso Nut Company, LLC	
Co-op Grower #1:	Kelli Evans, Evans Farming	
Co-op Grower #2:	Kent Stenderup, Stenderup Ag Partners	
Co-op Handler #1:	Mark Jansen, Blue Diamond Growers	
Co-op Handler #2:	Dean LaVallee, Blue Diamond Growers	

MANRRS Opens Application Period for National Grain and Feed Foundation Scholarship

Press Release Provided by the National Grain and Feed Association

The Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) national society announced on Sept. 12 that it is accepting applications for the National Grain and Feed Foundation scholarship.

The Foundation, which announced the launch of its annual scholarship in partnership with MANRRS in

2021, provides three \$5,000 competitive scholarships, each of which is renewable for one additional year, as well as the opportunity to meet with hundreds of agribusiness leaders at the National Grain and Feed Association's annual convention. Each scholarship recipient is a MANRRS student member engaged in undergraduate or graduate studies in agriculture science, agriculture economics, agriculture communications, agriculture education, environmental science,

plant and soil science, or a closely related field.

The 2022-2023 scholarship application period runs from Sept. 12 – Oct. 12, 2022. Go to MANRRS.org/Our-Scholarships to apply.

Recipients of the 2021-2022 National Grain and Feed Foundation Scholarship were Catherine Fremaux, North Carolina State University, and Kayla Braggs, Florida State A&M University, both now in their second year of the scholarship, and Ernest Dixon, formerly a student at Alcorn State University now employed by

NGFA-member company Cargill.

MANRRS is a national society incorporated in 1989 that welcomes membership of people of all racial and ethnic groups participating in agricultural and related science careers, with a focus on providing networks to support professional development of minorities.

The National Grain and Feed Foundation, established in 1965, supports public education and research projects that benefit the grain, feed, and processing industry, enhance the industry's presence to the public, and positions it for future growth. The Foundation is funded entirely by voluntary corporate and individual contributions.

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The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District seeks to eliminate agricultural burning by 2025. (Photo: Oleksii Astanin / Shutterstock.com)

Association Calls on the Need for the California Clean Biomass Collaborative

Press Release Provided by Western Agricultural Processors Association

On September 15th, Association President/CEO Roger Isom testified before the Governing Board of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District on the issue of biomass and the air district's efforts to eliminate agricultural burning completely by 2025. Isom reminded the Governing Board "while the incentives to chip and incorporate prunings have grown tremendously and is very successful, the funding is not in perpetuity, and long-term solutions are needed. We need the California Air Resources Board, the Air District and industry to reinvigorate the Clean Biomass Collaborative and help find long

term solutions like building operating plants that can provide renewable diesel, cellulosic ethanol, biochar or electricity." Isom also took the opportunity to blast Valley Public Radio for providing misleading information to the public and doing the general public a disservice by not providing a complete picture of the biomass problem during a recent series of air quality hit pieces on the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Specifically, Isom thanked the Air District for highlighting the impact of the closure of the 15 of the 20 operating biomass plants in the San Joaquin Valley over the past 20 years. Without those plants, growers have no option but to burn. This fact was left out of the Valley Public Radio news stories and lead the reader to believe that agriculture was not doing its part to help clean the air.



Robot programmed to work on the farm premises feeding animals. (Photo: Andrey-Sha74 / Shutterstock.com)

Robots to Conquer Fresno Fields at FIRA USA in October 2022

Press Release Provided by Western Growers

The beginnings of a robotics revolution in the agricultural world will take place in California on Oct. 18-20.

Over 800 people who work in the food system, technology experts and others are expected to gather at FIRA USA in Fresno, Calif., to discover the latest self-sustaining solutions to farm labor shortages and environmental challenges.

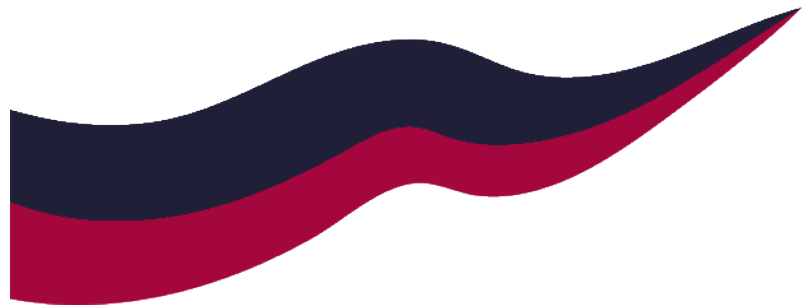
They will be joined by representatives of the University of California, Western Growers, Fresno-Merced Future of Food (F3) and the City of Fresno. Karen

Ross, California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary, will kick off FIRA USA by outlining challenges to the food system that technology may address.

FIRA stands for "Forum International de la Robotique Agricole" in French, or "International Forum for Agricultural Robotics," and was launched in 2016 in Toulouse, in the south of France. Since then, GOFAR organizes the World FIRA every year in Toulouse, and launches regional FIRA around the World to address specific markets.

More information and registration is available here: FIRA-AgTech.com/C/FIRA.

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Cattlemen Raise Concerns With White House Executive Order on Biotechnology



Charolais cattle. (Graphic: ABO Photography / Shutterstock.com)

Press Release Provided by US Cattlemen's Association

On September 16th, the White House announced an Executive Order on Advancing Biotechnology and Biomufacturing Innovation for a Sustainable, Safe, and Secure American Bioeconomy. It outlines a "a whole-of-government approach to advance biotechnology and biomufacturing towards innovative solutions in health, climate change, energy, food security, agriculture, supply chain resilience, and national and economic security."

On its face, the executive order promotes a science- and risk-based system to support the development and use of products of biotechnology. U.S. cattle producers are regular consumers of products developed using biotechnology, from livestock feed derived from genetically modified ingredients to medically important vaccinations administered to livestock to treat and prevent disease.

However, the Executive Order directs the Secretary of Agriculture to "submit a report assessing how to use biotechnology and biomufacturing for food and

agriculture innovation, including...cultivating alternative food sources."

At a press conference held in anticipation of the release of this Executive Order, a senior Administration official further specified that, "We're also looking to improve food security and drive agricultural innovation, including through new technologies that protect crops from disease, enhance seeds and fertilizers and foods made with cultured animal cells."

U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA) President Brooke Miller issued the following statement:

"The cultivation of animal cells for human consumption does not further the goals of the Biden Administration in supporting independent agricultural producers. Instead, it promotes corporate and consolidated control of the food supply system. Cell-cultured products cannot be independently produced – the technology is shrouded in intellectual property protection and requires intensive capital resources. These factors could lead to the monopolistic control of America's sovereign food supply that we see already today in the U.S. livestock and meat industries.

"USCA applauds the \$1 billion investment by the Biden Administration towards beefing-up independent producers and processors of wholesome, nutrient-dense animal protein. However, this Executive Order flies in the face of that investment by proposing increased funding and support for the massive, multinational corporations that are behind the production of cultured animal cells. The record profits these companies have made off the backs of cattle producers should be more than enough to fund their petri-dish protein production. U.S. taxpayers should not foot the bill for a product that we aren't even sure is safe for human consumption. For these reasons, USCA opposes the provisions of this Executive Order calling for the advancement of foods produced using cell-cultured technology."

Governor Newsom Signs CCA-Sponsored Bills

Press Release Provided by California Cattlemen's Association

August 29th, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that he had signed two CCA-sponsored bills, Assembly Bill 2415 (Lackey) and Senate Bill 880 (Laird), into law.

CCA applauds Governor Newsom for signing these common-sense provisions and supporting California's cattle ranching community.

CCA-sponsored SB 880, authored by Senator John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), permanently reauthorizes University of California Cooperative Extension water measurement instructional courses which enable ranchers who divert more than 100 acre-feet per year to self-certify as "qualified individuals" for purposes of installing and maintaining their own water measurement devices. These courses allow water diverters to avoid thousands of dollars in costs associated with hiring professional engineers and contractors and have resulted in improved water quantity data reported to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

As former Secretary of California's Natural Resources Agency, Sen. Laird understands the benefits of cattle ranchers' land and water stewardship as well as the regulatory burdens placed upon the state's cattlemen. CCA thanks Sen. Laird for authoring SB 880 and ensuring that water rights holders and the SWRCB continue to enjoy the benefits these courses provide. CCA also thanks

Assemblyman Frank Bigelow, whose AB 589 (2017) first authorized the UCCE courses. Asm. Bigelow co-authored this year's SB 880 and helped to shepherd the bill through the Assembly upon its passage in the Senate.

CCA extends our thanks, too, to Senator Laird's hard-working staff and the UCCE advisors who have assured the success of these vital training courses.

CCA-sponsored AB 2415, authored by Assemblyman Tom Lackey (R-Palmdale), extends by three years – until January 1, 2026 – the agricultural vehicle exemption to the California Highway Patrol's (CHP) Basic Inspection of Terminals (BIT) program. That exemption was initially secured by a 2016 bill also authored by Asm. Lackey, AB 1960. The BIT program would subject agricultural producers to costly, invasive and time-consuming inspections despite the shining safety record of California's agricultural fleet. AB 2415 continues to exempt California's agricultural producers from these burdens, and CCA will work in the coming years to further extend this exemption.

A 28-year veteran of CHP, Asm. Lackey's reputation and agency expertise were critical to ensuring the success of AB 2415. CCA thanks Asm. Lackey and his stellar staff for shepherding AB 2415 through the Legislature this year, and for their continued support of the livestock industry.

Finally, CCA thanks our members for their enduring support and for encouraging their representatives in the California Legislature to support AB 2415 and SB 880!

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Trusting in Silence

By Joshua Stevens
Faith Contributor, Valley Ag Voice

It seems as inevitable as the sun rising over the horizon and setting once more that there will be times in our lives when we do not feel the presence of God. It may be in times of great sorrow when we reach up to the heavens asking for comfort and in return, we are greeted by nothing but the star's silent stare. What can be done in such a time and how should we respond when we see someone going through this?

First, we should continue in the practices that have worked. Which is to continue praying, worshiping, communion, gospel work, and fellowship. By doing this we

will show our trust, allow our brothers and sisters in Christ to rally around us, seek counsel from the elders, and continue to grow and be sanctified in the Lord. In **James 1:12**, we read "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."¹

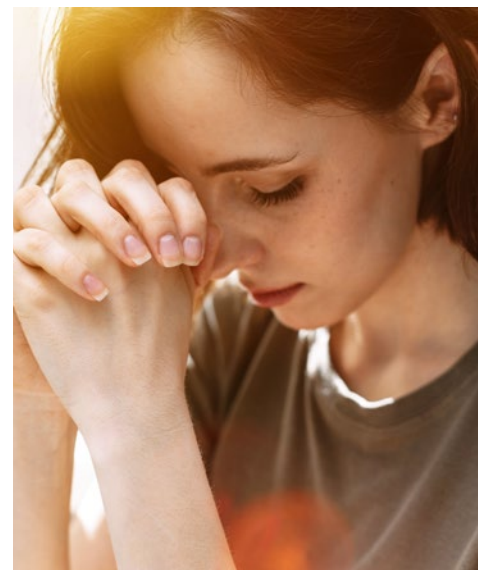
Second, we should remember the promises that have been made to us. We know that God is with us for He told the Israelites, "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you," **Deuteronomy 31:6**. In **Zephaniah 3:17** we read, "The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing."² Some may say these are not promises given to us

as Christians and so we cannot claim them as our own. Such a statement is true. I do not intend to say that God is going before us to slay our enemies, however, I do intend to say that God is always with us regardless of whether or not we feel His presence. We should be encouraged that our God is watching over us, and we should be encouraged that, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." **James 1:1**

There is another way to put it as well, "God designs the world, therefore, not to shield us from hardships, but to facilitate our progress toward perfection through our constant encounters with dangers, difficulties, and misfortunes..."² It could be true that in such a world a greater amount of good is achieved. For if a world was created where no evil and difficulty existed, then we would not be able to experience certain virtues such as courage or empathy. However, because evil exists not only do we experience the good of such virtues, but also experience the good of overcoming such evils.

So then when we see others enduring hardships how should we respond? We should come alongside those who suffer to encourage, pray, and help them however we can. **Galatians 6:2** "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."¹

Lord, you are good in all you do and we thank you for the blessings you have rained upon us. I pray that as we



Praying for answers. (Photo: Nasya Korotkova / Shutterstock.com)

consider this article our eyes are opened. So when we enter into difficulties and trials we may identify them and be joyful that this process will bring us closer to You. Help us to encourage others who seem far away from you and remind us of your glory daily. Amen.

¹Crossway Bibles. (2001). *The Holy Bible English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Good News Publishers.

²Scott, M. S. (2010). Suffering and Soul Making: Rethinking John Hick's Theodicy. *The Journal of Religion*, 313.

Innovation Contest and Seminar Applications Open for 2023

Press Release Provided by International Agri-Center®

Innovation and education are hallmarks of World Ag Expo®. Exhibitors and ag experts can now apply to put their mark on the 2023 show via the Top-10 New Products Contest and the Seminar series.

The Top-10 New Products Competition at World Ag Expo® has introduced the world to autonomous sprayers, handheld feed analyzers, electric tractors, and more. The show is now on the lookout for the next 10 standout products and services from their 2023 exhibitors. Past winners have pointed to the Top-10 New Products Contest as a catalyst for success.

"Winning the Top-10 Award in 2010 at World Ag Expo launched our company and our innovation on the international agri-tech stage," shared Lisa Fast of Livestock Water Recycling. "It boosted our company's profile and solidified our reputation as the leading and most trustworthy brand in manure treatment. Winning again in 2021 has massively expanded our market reach and provided a very helpful platform to

share our technology advancements."

The Top-10 New Products Contest application is available now at [Bit.ly/WAE23Top10App](https://bit.ly/WAE23Top10App). Entrants must be exhibitors at the 2023 World Ag Expo® and only products released anywhere in the world between February 11, 2022 and February 16, 2023 are eligible. The application deadline is October 31, 2022 and winners will be announced in December 2022.

Seminars at World Ag Expo® are included with the price of admission and feature some of the most knowledgeable professionals working in agriculture. Each year, tracks include Dairy & Livestock, Technology, Irrigation & Water, Demonstrations, and more.

Each day of the show educational seminars are given in three separate rooms in the Seminar Center on the southeast side of the grounds. Sessions are either 25 or 55 minutes and include a Q&A session. Exhibitors, universities, government agencies, and invited speakers share their expertise at no cost to help improve



Burro, a 2022 Top-10 New Products Winner, show their autonomous "wheelbarrow" platform. (Photo: International Agri-Center®)

producer information and practices.

The Seminar application is available now at [Bit.ly/WAE23SeminarApp](https://bit.ly/WAE23SeminarApp). World Ag Expo® provides seminar space and AV equipment for each session, as well as making the schedule and speaker information available online, in the show app, and in the printed show guide. The application deadline is October 31, 2022 and

speakers will start to be confirmed in November 2022.

Entering its 56th year, World Ag Expo® is the largest annual outdoor ag tradeshow in the world. In 2022, the show saw 98,387 attendees from 49 states and 34 countries. With more than 1,200 exhibitors on 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space, World Ag Expo® provides a platform for networking, education, and business in one of the most productive ag counties in the United States.

Limited exhibit spaces are still available for agriculture companies. To learn more about World Ag Expo® and request space, please visit WorldAgExpo.com/Exhibitors/.

International attendee ticket packages are on sale now. General admission and ag tour tickets go on sale October 3, 2022. Attendees can purchase tickets and plan their visit at WorldAgExpo.com. The 56th edition will run Tuesday, February 14 through Thursday, February 16, 2023 at the International Agri-Center® in Tulare, CA.

For more information, visit WorldAgExpo.com.

The International Agri-Center® is home to World Ag Expo®, February 14-16, 2023 in Tulare, California. An estimated annual average of 100,000 individuals from 60 countries attend World Ag Expo® each year. The largest annual agricultural show of its kind, World Ag Expo® hosts more than 1,200 exhibitors displaying cutting-edge agricultural technology and equipment on 2.6 million square feet of show space. Learn more at WorldAgExpo.com



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