



Merced County Farm News



Merced County Farm Bureau brings Agribee Contest to local students



A program developed by
Butte County Farm Bureau



**By: Breanne Vandenberg,
Executive Director**

The Merced County Farm Bureau (MCFB) hosted the county’s first Agribee Contest on Friday, April 8 at the Mainzer Theater. The program, developed by Butte County Farm Bureau, is a spelling bee contest focused on the spelling and defining of agriculturally related words. Eligible students must be in the 4th or 5th grades and attend a local Merced County school. For the first year of competition, twenty-three students participated in the event.

“We were so excited to get the

turnout we did for our first Agribee,” said Denelle Flake, project specialist for MCFB. She continued, “The students should all be proud of the hard work they put in to study for the contest.”

Participating elementary schools were Ballico, Plainsburg, El Nido, McSwain and Washington. Students were able to complete the first round by either spelling or defining the word given. To advance further, participants were asked the correctly spell and define the word provided. Emma Jhuty, a fifth grader from McSwain Elementary School took top honors by accurately spelling and

defining “penicillin” and “aggregate.” Second place was awarded to Camila Aguayo, a fifth-grade student also from McSwain Elementary. First place received an iPad and second received a \$100 gift card to Barnes & Noble. The following students participated in the event:

- Ballico Elementary School**
- Elyse Arias, 5th grade
- Zaraiah Avila, 5th grade
- Barrett Buhrmann, 4th grade
- Sofia Davalos, 4th grade
- Kevin Gijon, 4th grade
- Austin Guenther, 5th grade

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21&24 FARM2U Day



from the
**President's
 Corner**
Joe Sansoni

Welcome to Spring, everyone! This is the time of year that typically signifies new beginnings and new hope for positive changes in life. We are currently living in some pretty tumultuous times – on many levels, and many of us in the ag community particularly are navigating through some incredibly uncertain times in which it has become increasingly more difficult to stay positive and keep hope alive for the preservation of our industry and the future of our farming and ranching operations. It is a difficult enough challenge in the present just to preserve and maintain the solvency of a farming operation in our ‘Great State of California,’ and for many, the most

difficult struggle is figuring out the “how’s and if’s” of sustaining their operations well into the future.

Farming and ranching have never been easy. We don’t expect it to be. It has always been an industry that sees roller coaster-like ups and downs. Feast or famine, as the old saying goes. Historically, a farmer or rancher could usually count on the knowledge that if he/she worked hard, made the best and most informed decisions possible, weren’t frivolous with their resources, kept up with and utilized new methods and technology, and did their level best each year to produce a quality crop with good yields...that despite the expected ups and downs of the markets, weather, etc...in the long run they’d ultimately be OK. This is no longer the case with the current trends of input costs in every category skyrocketing exponentially, prices paid to producers remaining stagnant and in many cases dwindling, overwhelming regulatory strangulation of our industry on a multitude of levels, and the ever-increasing burden of taxes, fees, assessments and requisite “dues” to the many various and growing regulatory agencies and coalitions. At every turn and on every level of business we are continually being shaken down for more money, while being forced to farm less ground, and it has reached a point where many farming operations – particularly family farmers whose livelihoods depend entirely on a solvent ag economy – are on the brink of unsustainability.

Many of you attended our Annual Meeting and heard my brief

comments and thoughts regarding the sustainability of the family farmer. For those of you who did not, I commented on the fact that our industry, related industries, and consumers have collectively been seduced by and fallen in love with the term “Sustainability.” Industry wide there are a multitude of programs, grants, incentives, educational seminars, field days and so on that focus on sustainability. Sustainability of the environment... natural resources...water resources... ecology...electricity generation... and the list goes on. If you can name it there’s probably a “sustainability program” for it. Frankly I’m exhausted with having the sustainability buzzword shoved down our throats at every turn. And not at all because I disagree with the concept in any way! The importance of environmental and resource sustainability cannot be denied, and I believe most of us in the industry are doing our best to get on board with and support sustainability initiatives. What bothers me is that very few if any of the politicians, people or entities who push hard for “sustainability” ever seem to acknowledge or even clue into the fact that the family farmer needs to be sustainable too. They need to be supported and protected right alongside all our other resources. They are the true stewards of the land and are a valuable resource for not only their industry but their communities as well. They pour their hearts and souls into preserving and protecting their land, resources, and the people who depend on them for their livelihoods and food supply. Additionally, they are the ones who volunteer their time and resources to community organizations, serve on school boards, coach youth

sports teams, lead 4-H clubs and groups, and much more because they are truly vested in their communities. Investment farming has become a big business in CA, and it certainly has its place in the industry, but it also has unfortunately become a wolf at the door of the family farmer who does not have deep pockets or multiple income streams from other ventures to absorb losses or breakeven year after year. It also does not provide or foster the same close-knit network of community support. If family farmers cannot sell their crops for more than it costs them to produce it, then they are unsustainable.

Thank you to all who attended and supported our Annual Meeting. It certainly was great to finally meet in person once again and to interact with many people whom I hadn’t seen for a long time! Hopefully we will be able to continue to host and participate in in-person events from now on without further interruption. I am honored to carry the torch as President of MCFB! I want to thank Eric Harcksen for the outstanding job he did as President the past two years, as well as our staff, executive committee, and board of directors for their past and continued time and involvement. We have a lot of high-quality people within the Farm Bureau family, both on the local as well as state levels, and it’s always enlightening and engaging to work together. We have opportunities for engagement by our regular membership on several different committees as well, so anyone who is interested in becoming more involved on a limited scale, please reach out to Breanne or the office staff!

Happy Easter, happy plowing, and have a wonderful Spring!

Merced County Farm Bureau’s Mission Statement

Merced County Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, grassroots organization that advocates for the men and women who provide food, fiber, and nursery products for our community, state, and nation.

Merced County Farm Bureau exists for the purpose of improving the ability of individuals engaged in production agriculture to utilize

California resources to produce food and fiber in the most profitable, efficient and responsible manner possible, guaranteeing our nation a domestic food supply.

Merced County Farm Bureau supports policies and legislation that promote and protect our Country’s number one industry - agriculture for future generations and the security of our nation.



from the
Director's Desk

Breanne Vandenberg

As our large events come back to being in-person, it feels as though we are officially taking a step in the right direction. We've leapfrogged from event to event starting with our Annual Meeting, wrapping our first spelling bee contest, Agribee, and now gearing up for our FARM2U Day taking place on Saturday, April 23rd.

You can find details on the Agribee contest within our newspaper, but congratulations to each of the students that participated. We placed them on a stage, with a microphone and with some pretty intense lights. They all did so well and should be proud of the work that they put in for the contest. I was most impressed with how each of them celebrated and supported their fellow candidates, no matter if they were allowed to move on or not. Students were simply excited to be outside of the classroom, engaging with their peers in a fun project. We hope to see each of the 4th graders

next year and the growth of this event continues.

I also highly encourage you to sign up any littles in your family for our FARM2U Day being held at the Merced Kid's Discovery Station. As mentioned in our press release, you can sign up through our website at www.mercedfarmbureau.org. This will be a much smaller scale event compared to what it has been in previous years, but we feel it will still be a beneficial impact to our community. Families will also be able to experience the Kids Discovery Station free of charge.

We are in the process of scheduling several of our committee meetings. One that is currently scheduled for Tuesday, May 10 is our Education Committee. This committee will be reviewing our Rooted in Agriculture Program, a program where teachers can submit their ag lesson plans for a chance to be awarded \$500 to use in their classroom. This committee will also hear a review of our current educational programs that are held throughout the year. If you are interested in sitting on this committee, please reach out to our office at your convenience.

In other news, we are monitoring many areas within water. Many of our Groundwater Sustainability Agencies are updating their Groundwater Sustainability Plans to comply with the requests by the California State Water Board. Surface water has been in the forefront as well as some districts have signed Voluntary Settlement Agreements, yet those do not include any of our local districts. Those fights and more will be coming in the near future.

We hope the best for your Easter weekend and continued success in the fields!

Calendar of Events

April 23
FARM2U Day (pg. 24)

May 6
Deadline to apply for Rooted in Ag Program (pg. 8)

Merced County Farm News

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Agribee

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Miguel Angel Hernandez Lucas, 4th grade
Estrella Magana, 5th grade
Circle Szelestey, 4th grade
Clara Trevizo, 4th grade
Amelia Zuniga, 4th grade

Plainsburg Elementary School

Walter Rossow, 4th grade

El Nido Elementary School

Alexander Aguirre, 5th grade
Yazmin Cruz, 5th grade
Angel Gomez, 5th grade
Natalya Melo Hernandez, 5th grade
Yesenia Lopez Inguanzo, 5th grade

Washington Elementary School

Ashley Ruby Castaneda, 4th grade
Serenity Knapik, 5th grade

McSwain Elementary School

Camila Aguayo, 5th grade
Ethan Bridgman, 5th grade
Emma Jhuty, 5th grade
Alissa Kuhr, 5th grade

Alexxis Rudich, MCFB Project Assistant stated, "We hope that the program teaches the participants and their families how important the agriculture industry is to our community." Rudich continued, "We cannot wait to watch this program grow in future years and for more schools to be represented."

MCFB would like to thank the following sponsors for their support: American Ag Credit, Arnold Farms LP, Chance Land and Cattle, Cortez Growers Association, Double G Farms, Fluetsch & Busby Insurance, Ed Silva Farms, Shannon Pump Company, Van De Pol Petroleum and Willow Tree Ranches. A special thank you to the Mainzer Theatre and Kimberly

Gardner for the use of the Mainzer facilities and aid in the coordination of the event.



Emma Jhuty spelling in the Final Round



Camila Aguayo from McSwain Elementary awarded second place



Emma Jhuty from McSwain Elementary awarded first place

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agribee

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2022 Scholarship Recipients



Tristan Cardey
Atwater High School
MCFB Scholarship

Tristan plans to attend Cal Poly SLO to study Ag Business to pursue a career in Finance or Accounting.



Izabella Ybarra
Delhi High School
MCFB Scholarship

Izabella plans to attend Modesto Junior College to study Animal Science to become a Veterinarian.



Autumn Miller
El Capitan High School
MCFB Scholarship

Autumn plans to attend Oklahoma State to major in Ag Communications.



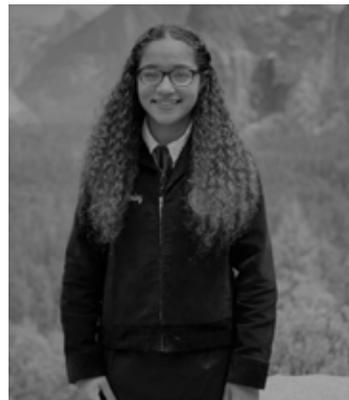
Jayson Lopez
El Nido 4-H
MCFB Scholarship

Jayson plans to attend Oklahoma State or Texas Tech to study Ag Education to become an Ag Teacher.



Alison Heupel
Golden Valley High School
MCFB Scholarship &
Arthur R. Nutter Scholarship

Alison plans to attend UC Davis to study Animal Science to become a Veterinarian.



Amethyst Lumley
Golden Valley High School
Farm Worker's Children Scholarship
Amethyst plans to study Mechanical Engineering.



Cameron Ivy
Golden Valley High School
MCFB Scholarship

Cameron plans to attend Fresno State to study Ag Education to become an Ag Teacher.



Tiffany Costa
Golden Valley High School
Arthur R. Nutter Scholarship
Tiffany plans to study Ag Business.



Daniel Gomes
Gustine High School
Arthur R. Nutter Scholarship

Daniel plans to attend Chico State to study Ag Business to pursue a career in Ag Lending.



Savanna Barcellos
Gustine High School
MCFB Scholarship

Savanna plans to attend Chico State to study Animal Science to become an Animal Nutritionist.



Tyler Borba
Gustine High School
MCFB Scholarship &
Arthur R. Nutter Scholarship

Tyler plans to attend Cal Poly SLO to study Ag Business with plans to return to work on the family farm.



Daniel Rocha
Hilmar High School
Arthur R. Nutter Scholarship
Daniel plans to attend UC Davis to study Ag and Environmental Technology to become an Ag Lawyer.

2022 Scholarship Recipients



Morgan Oliveira
Hilmar High School
MCFB Scholarship &
Arthur R. Natcher Scholarship
Morgan plans to attend Cal Poly SLO
to study Ag Communications to
become an Ag Teacher.



Aidan Mondo
Lancers 4-H
MCFB Scholarship &
YF&R Scholarship
Aidan plans to attend UC Santa
Barbara to study Political Science to
pursue a career with the 4-H Program.



Riley Lopez
Le Grand High School
MCFB Scholarship
Riley plans to attend Cal Poly SLO to
study Ag Communications and Ag
Business to become an Ag Lawyer.



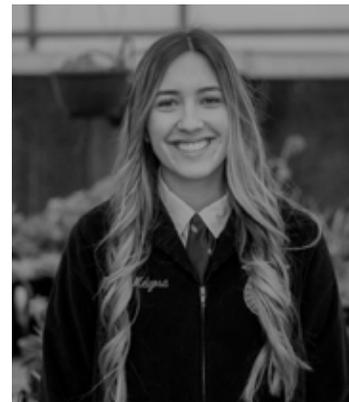
Valentine Aguilar Salto
Le Grand High School
Farm Workers' Children Scholarship
& YF&R Scholarship
Valentine plans to attend Merced
College to study Ag Education to
become an Ag Teacher.



Jenna Bates
Livingston High School
MCFB Scholarship
Jenna plans to attend Montana State,
Bozeman to study Ag Education.



Erin Vierra
Los Banos High School
MCFB Scholarship &
Arthur R. Natcher Scholarship
Erin plans to attend Oklahoma State to
study Ag Education to become
an Ag Teacher.



Taylor Melgosa
Merced High School
MCFB Scholarship
Taylor plans to attend Modesto
Junior College to study Ag Education
to become an Ag Teacher.

Congratulations to all our scholarship recipients! We wish you the best in your future endeavors.

Thank you to our Scholarship Partners

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Merced County Farm Bureau
Ag In The Classroom



The Rooted in Agriculture Rewards Program asks teachers to incorporate at least one agriculturally based lesson into their curriculum between February 21, 2022 and May 4, 2022 and submit a completed application for a chance to win \$500 for school supplies.

Applications due May 6, 2022

Please see application for all details and requirements
www.mercedfarmbureau.org/rooted-in-agriculture
dflake@mercedfarmbureau.org



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Fifty-five students benefit from Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc. scholarships

By: Denise Skidmore Director, Education & Public Relations

HILMAR, CA. April 7, 2022. Fifty-five students demonstrating community involvement and academic performance will each receive a scholarship toward their higher education through Hilmar Cheese Company's annual scholarship program. This program helps fulfill Hilmar Cheese Company's purpose to improve lives.

The scholarship program has four

categories: children of employees of Hilmar Cheese Company, Hilmar Cheese Company Visitor Center part-time staff, children of the dairy farm families who ship milk to Hilmar Cheese Company and students with an agricultural major living in the counties where the company is located. This last category is for students not affiliated with the company; but dedicated to the agricultural industry and living in Merced or Stanislaus counties in California or Dallam or Hartley counties in Texas. This year, previous recipients of a dairy

farm family child or employee child scholarship were invited to apply for a renewal scholarship. Twenty-four students received renewal scholarships.

First-time scholarship recipients include twelve children of Hilmar Cheese Company employees, four part-time visitor center employees, four children of the dairy farm families who ship their milk to Hilmar Cheese Company and eleven agricultural majors.

Renewal scholarships were awarded to twenty-four children of employees and the dairy farm families who ship

their milk to Hilmar Cheese Company.

The Hilmar Cheese Company scholarship program reflects the company's ongoing support of higher education and its commitment to employees, dairy farm families, the California and Texas agricultural industries and the communities where we operate.

Qualifying students are encouraged to apply November 1 through February 1, 2023. For more information about Hilmar Cheese Company's scholarship program, visit the About Us section of www.hilmarcheese.com.



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Translation provided

Escalon & Gustine Clusters Community Outreach Meeting

An Alternative to the in-Person Meeting
A Webinar Discussion
4-15-2022, 2 PM
[Register Here](#)

April 21, 2022 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Dairy Biogas Renewable Energy Projects in Escalon & Gustine

California Bioenergy is hosting a public meeting and discussion of dairy digester projects in Escalon and Gustine that will be building two clusters which will truck RNG to a nearby cluster to inject into the natural gas pipeline for use as a vehicle fuel.

Location

Modesto Junior College
2201 Blue Gum Ave.
Modesto, CA 95358

West Campus Pavilion
Agriculture Center for Education
View #28 on map

Topics

- How digesters work
- Environmental impacts
- Local economic development
- Job opportunities

Pizza & Beverages to be provided!

For more information contact: Vanessa Hyslop vhyslop@calbioenergy.com

Cooperative Extension Firsts in Modoc County

By: **Rebecca Gourevitch, UC Merced Library**

Additional material from the Modoc County, UC Cooperative Extension Records, part of the UC Cooperative Extension Archive at UC Merced, have been digitized and made available on Calisphere. Found in the collection are copies of Modoc County Ranch Roundup, a newsletter dedicated to Cooperative Extension activities in the region, including this issue from 1957.

Two articles publicize some exciting “firsts” for the county. A piece called “The Green and White Score Another First” describes the

establishment of a new demonstration program for 4-H participants in Modoc County and the Tulelake Basin region. In its capacity as a youth development program, 4-H delivers an assortment of activities from livestock management, home economic activities, dress revues, summer camps and much more. Participants are encouraged to perform demonstrations which, as the article states, is “the simple procedure of showing someone else how to do a job and explaining it as the work is done.”

Examples of 4-H demonstrations are depicted in several photographs in the UC Cooperative Extension Archive collection from Merced County.

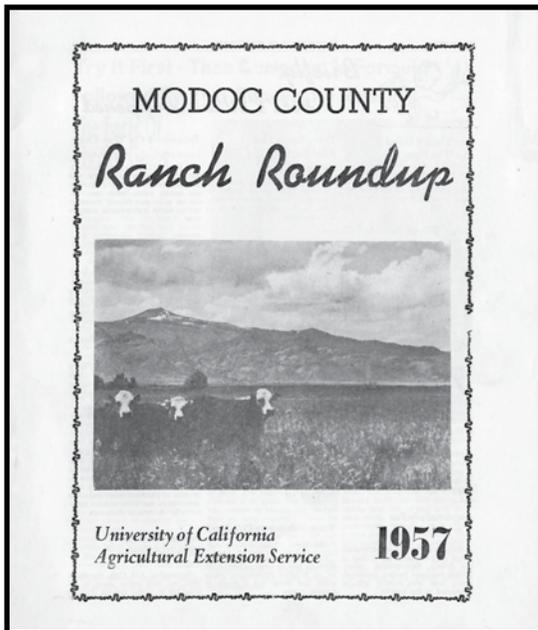
When describing the purpose and value of 4-H demonstrations, the article’s author states that, “demonstrations have a two-fold purpose in teaching recommended practices and helping boys and girls to think clearly, to work skillfully and to talk confidently when addressing an audience.” More activities of 4-H work in Modoc County are viewable in the digitized Annual Reports, in both statistical and narrative formats, available in our online collection.

An article entitled, “Modoc Milk Via 2,500 Gallon Tanker Brings New Agriculture Milestone to Modoc Co.” enthusiastically announces the introduction of a large, refrigerated

truck to carry milk long distances.

While the old method of transporting milk required back-bending labor, the new truck’s tank carries 2,500-gallons and “is so well insulated that at a 100 degree outside temperature, the milk will raise only four degrees in sixty hours.” This development was a major improvement to milk production and was much celebrated by Cooperative Extension staff working with dairy farmers during that the time.

Check out other issues of Modoc County Ranch Roundup and the rest of the digitized Modoc County, UC Cooperative Extension Records by using the QR code!



Modoc County Ranch Roundup, 1957



"The Green and White Score Another First"



Two boys give a presentation on a rifle, ca. 1968



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Atwater FFA Students Earn State Recognition at FFA Conference

By: **Shayleigh Miller, Atwater FFA**

The Atwater High School FFA earned top honors during the 94th annual California FFA State Leadership Conference in Sacramento, California on March 26-29th. This annual event gathered over 5500 FFA students representing 342 high schools throughout California to participate in a variety of leadership workshops, Leadership Development Events (LDE's), college and university recruitment workshops, a career fair, and the recognition of California's top agricultural education and FFA students.

This year's theme for the conference was "Embrace The Adventure". The conference began with students attending various sessions at the Golden One Center in Sacramento, California. Students were given the opportunity to attend a variety of leadership and development workshops. One example was "Meeting in the Middle" led by UC Davis college students. They presented a meaningful message "Every single individual has a different perspective and personality traits, but if we all work together, we can create a better

'Atwater FFA' Page 13



Atwater High School students joined 5500+ California FFA members for the 2022 California FFA State Conference held at the Golden 1 Center in Sacramento, CA

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Atwater FFA

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Atwater FFA Student, Ethan Slate, Atwater FFA Advisor, Shelby Fishman and Atwater FFA Student, Tristan Cardey showcasing their state championship plaque for their proficiency projects.

future.” Students also participated in various tours, visiting Flora Fresh, a wholesale florist; Students were also able to attend a tour of Universal Technical Institute, UTI, of Sacramento where students learned about the various programs the campus has to offer. “The FFA has so many different opportunities for each and every single student and you never know how much that one opportunity can influence a child's life,” said FFA advisor Sam Meredith.

Atwater FFA students Ethan Slate and Tristan Cardey were state proficiency finalists; proficiencies honor FFA members who, through their supervised agricultural experiences (SAE’s), have developed specialized skills that they can apply toward their future careers. Ethan Slate was a finalist for the Beef Production Entrepreneurship Proficiency and won the Diversified Agricultural Productions State Proficiency. Tristan Cardey won the State Proficiency Award for Diversified Livestock. “Students have spent countless hours with their projects and it is rewarding to see that the hard work and dedication paid off,” said FFA advisor Shelby Fishman.

In addition, the Novice and Advanced Parliamentary Procedure teams competed and qualified for the final round at the state level. The

Advanced Parliamentary Procedure team placed 2nd overall in the state and the Novice Parliamentary Procedure team placed 6th in the state.

For more information on Atwater FFA, please log on their award winning website at www.atwaterffa.org.







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Merced County Fair Announces Its Return After a Two-Year Hiatus, Bringing Back Five Days of Fair Tradition and Fun This June

By: Merced County Fair

MERCED, CALIFORNIA, April 12, 2022...After a two-year hiatus, the Merced County Fair is thrilled to announce its official return this summer with an in-person fair filled with carnival rides, live music, action-packed Grandstand shows, community performers, still and livestock exhibits, fair food and more! The 2022 Merced County Fair will take place June 8-12 and will feature an incredible line-up for the FREE Outdoor Theatre Concert Series presented by Coors Light, as well as the Grandstand shows presented by

Coors Light, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Save Mart and FoodMaxx. Tickets for the Merced County Fair will go on sale later this month.

"We are beyond thrilled for the return of the Merced County Fair after two years of modified operations," said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair. "We have greatly missed our community, and we know they have missed our fair! It will be a wonderful reunion to kick-off the summer for our community, complete with all the fair favorites: food, carnival rides, exhibits, concerts, community performances, our beloved tractor parade and so much more! We hope to see all of you at the fairgrounds June 8-12!"

From a returning country star to groovy jams, there's plenty of music that everyone is sure to enjoy! All Outdoor Theatre concerts begin at 8:30 p.m., and are free with paid fair admission. See below for the line-up.

You can always count on action-packed excitement in the Grandstands each fair and this year they're more thrilling than ever! Fair Management is expecting big crowds for the return of our Grandstand shows, proudly sponsored by Coors Light, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Save Mart and FoodMaxx. All shows begin at 7 p.m. and admission is \$5, except for opening day, which is FREE with your paid fair admission. Children 5 years or younger are free (both fair admission

and Grandstand) with a paid adult ticket.

There's also plenty of other free entertainment for the family to enjoy once inside the gates of the Merced County Fair such as the Coors Light Stage and Dignity Health – Mercy Medical Center Stage (formerly Bear Creek Plaza). New this year in the Sunshine Family Lane Area is the Pee Wee Stampede, where kids will put on a show and participate in mock rodeo events while the crowd cheers them on! Fairgoers will also be able to enjoy the return of the daily Tractor Parade, Discovering Science Exhibit, Petting Zoo and more! More details on entertainment and attractions will available on the fair's website soon.

FREE Outdoor Theatre Concert Series presented by Coors Light – 8:30 p.m. Nightly		
DATE:	SHOW:	ARTIST WEBSITE:
Wednesday, June 8	Coffey Anderson	www.coffeyanderson.com
Thursday, June 9	Queen Nation - A Tribute to the Music of Queen	www.queennation.com
Friday, June 10	Sheila E.	https://sheilae.com/
Saturday, June 11	Kalimba - The Spirit of Earth, Wind & Fire Experience	www.kalimbathespiritofearthwindandfire.com
Sunday, June 12	Banda Machos	www.facebook.com/BandaMachos

Grandstand Entertainment – 7:00 p.m. Nightly		
DATE:	SHOW:	EVENT PROMOTER:
Wednesday, June 8	Merced Speedway Auto Racing (FREE)	Merced Speedway www.mercedspeedway.net/schedule
Thursday, June 9	Destruction Derby	Merced Speedway www.mercedspeedway.net/schedule
Friday, June 10	Valley Tractor Pullers' Tractor Pull	Valley Tractor Pullers http://vtppullers.org/
Saturday, June 11	Humpz & Hornz "Bad to the Bone" 2022 Bull Riding Tour	Humpz & Hornz www.hnhnews.com
Sunday, June 12	Gran Jaripeo (Bull Riding, Dancing Horses, Banda Music & more!)	Humpz & Hornz www.hnhnews.com



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- ♦ Rangeland monitoring and assessment
- ♦ Rangeland stewardship and ecosystem services
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8:00 am - 5:00 pm

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Meet Morgan Oliveira

2022-2023 California FFA State Sentinel



By: Morgan Oliveira, 2022-2023 California State FFA Sentinel

My name is Morgan Oliveira, I'm a senior at Hilmar High school, and was just recently elected as the 2022-2023 California

FFA State Sentinel.

I was born and raised a third-generation dairy farmer and had always felt the support of my small-town community in Hilmar. I began showing dairy cattle at the age of nine in 4-H and transitioned my project into FFA. My freshman year I began with attending conferences, participating in

public speaking, judging dairy cattle, and ultimately was elected as the 2018-2019 Hilmar FFA Chapter Historian. I kept up with my involvement throughout my high school career, although the past two years on zoom challenged me to stay

active as best I could. Participating in virtual conferences and events, I found creative ways to connect with the members I served. At the end of my junior year, I ran and was elected as the Central Region South Vice President. Having the opportunity to serve members at the regional and chapter level this past year allowed me to create a larger community that I had always found growing up in Hilmar.

In pursuing a leadership position beyond the chapter level, I had the opportunity to connect and rebuild a community after our time with digital screens. My experiences helped me to understand that the FFA organization isn't limited to cows, sows, and plows, but enables members to pursue an

interest of their own. As a leader, I have understood that it's not where you serve, but how you serve. This year, I am fortunate enough to inspire and connect with the 97,000 members in the California FFA Association as the 2022-2023 California FFA State Sentinel.

After my year of service to the California FFA Association, I plan to attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a major in Agricultural Communications and at the end of earning my degree, then earn a teaching credential. My experiences in encouraging and connecting with members has enabled me to foster a passion for agriculture and share it to younger generations in my future career.



2022-2023 California State Officer Team. Photo credit: California FFA



Morgan Oliveira's Chapter and State FFA Jackets



Hilmar FFA at the 94th State FFA Leadership Conference



Morgan Oliveira at the 94th State FFA Leadership Conference held in Sacramento, CA

Merced County Farm Bureau congratulates Morgan Oliveira on her accomplishment!

Leadership Farm Bureau program announces 2022 class

By: CAFB

Seven agricultural professionals have been chosen for the California Farm Bureau's 2022 Leadership Farm Bureau program.

Leadership Farm Bureau class members will participate in a 10-month educational and development initiative that prepares them for leadership roles in Farm Bureau and agriculture in general.

The program includes 250 hours of instruction, with seminars on key issues affecting California farmers and ranchers and agricultural businesses.

The 2022 leadership class will also learn about government and legislation, media and communications, public speaking and team building. Participants will attend lobbying sessions in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., immerse themselves in federal and state policy and meet

with lawmakers, administrative and regulatory officials.

Here are the members of the 2022 Leadership Farm Bureau Class:

Amanda Berry, Calaveras County

A territory manager for Elanco Poultry, Berry is president of Calaveras County Farm Bureau and co-founded the Gold Country Young Farmers & Ranchers Committee. She holds a degree in animal science from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Abigail Fair, Stanislaus County

Fair is the owner of Blumen Flower Farm, raises cattle with her husband and is the membership coordinator for Stanislaus County Farm Bureau. She has a degree in agricultural communications from California State University, Fresno.

Daniel Jones, Solano County

Jones is farm manager for Monk

& Son Farming in Dixon, overseeing orchard and cattle operations. He serves on the California Young Farmers & Ranchers State Committee. He earned an agricultural business degree and played basketball at Oregon State University.

Kathleen Merrill, Santa Barbara County

An eighth-generation Californian from a Central Coast winegrape-growing family, Merrill is a special programs coordinator for the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau. She is completing a degree in agricultural business at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Madeline Schenken, Sacramento County

Schenken is a communications and marketing coordinator at for CalAgJobs and serves as the vice chair for the Sacramento County Young

Farmers & Ranchers Committee. She has a communications degree from California State University, Sacramento.

Stephen Waldron, Santa Barbara County

Waldron is a field automation supervisor for Plantel Nurseries, overseeing new technologies in agriculture production. He serves on the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. He earned a degree in agriculture business from California State University, Fresno.

Donald Wirtz, San Benito County

A winemaker for Delicato Family Wines, Wirtz is president of the San Benito County Farm Bureau. He has a master's degree in viticulture and enology from University of California, Davis and an animal science degree from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

California Farm Bureau Legislative Update

By: CAFB

April 8, 2022 -
Agricultural Employment Legislative committees are beginning to move bills of interest to California agricultural employers:

- AB 1751, by Assembly Insurance Committee Chair Tom Daly (D-Anaheim) extends the rebuttable presumption of work-relatedness of instances of COVID-19 for workers compensation purposes originally created by SB 1159 (2020) until January 1, 2025. Farm Bureau and other organizations concerned about the possible impact of COVID-19 claims on employers' workers compensation costs oppose AB 1751 unless it is amended to shorten this extension

to January 1, 2024. AB 1751 was approved by Assembly Insurance on a 10- 1 vote on March 30 and re-referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee

Legislation to require employers to mandate vaccination for all employees with no testing option to avoid vaccination (AB 1993, Wicks, D-Oakland) was scheduled hearing on March 30 and withdrawn at Wicks' request. Wicks' office released the following statement after withdrawing AB 1993 from consideration: "We are now in a new and welcome chapter in this pandemic, with the virus receding for the moment. This provides for us the opportunity to work more collaboratively with labor and employers to address concerns raised by the bill. That is why we have decided to put AB 1993 on pause, and allow space for these conversations to

continue and progress."

continue and progress."

The Assembly Labor & Employment Committee approved four Farm Bureau-opposed bills on March 30:

- AB 2095 by Labor & Employment Committee Chair Ash Kalra (D-San Jose) is a retreat of failed legislation Farm Bureau has previously opposed that requires reporting of compensation data correlated with various demographic factors like sex and race for the employer's entire U.S. workforce to the Department of Industrial Relations for certification by the state as "high-road employers." Such certifications and the data to support them will be public information, exposing employers to litigation by employment trial lawyers since the data will not include factors that might lead

- to differences in compensation like experience and location. The Labor & Employment Committee passed AB 2095 4-2 and re-referred it to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.
- AB 2182 (Wicks) expands the anti-discrimination and reasonable accommodation protections of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) to cover those with a new and very broadly defined category, people with "family responsibilities." Farm Bureau and other employer representatives oppose AB 2182 over concerns about new discrimination litigation. Assembly Labor & Employment approved AB 2182 4-2 and referred it to the Assembly Judiciary Committee.
- AB 2243 (Garcia, D-El Centro)

Legislative Update

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requires Cal/OSHA to submit proposed revisions to the Heat Illness Prevention Standard and the Wildfire Smoke Standard that would create new “ultra-high heat” procedures; require mandatory use of respirators when the Air Quality Index exceeds 200 but removes any requirement that poor air quality be associated with a wildfire; requires the agency to submit regulatory proposals to provide “additional protections for piece-rate workers;” and requires the agency to submit proposed revisions to the Heat Illness and Wildfire Smoke standards that are already well-defined, readily understood by agricultural employers and employees and Cal/OSHA. Farm Bureau opposes on the grounds that such changes to the Heat Illness and Wildfire Smoke regulations are best handled through the petition rulemaking process already provided for in the Labor Code and administered by the Cal/OSHA Standards Board; no such proposals have been submitted through that process. Labor & Employment approved AB 2243 4-2 and re-referred it to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

- AB 2693 (Reyes, D-Colton) extends the requirement to report COVID-19 outbreaks until January 2025. Farm Bureau opposes on grounds that such reporting is no longer necessary; AB 2693 passed Labor & Employment 4-2 and was re-referred to Assembly Appropriations.

On April 4, the Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee approved Farm Bureau-opposed SB 1162 (Limon, D-Santa Barbara) 4-1 and re-referred it to Senate Judiciary Committee. SB 1162 requires collection and dissemination of overly-broad and vague compensation information and requires employers to furnish “pay scales” to potential job candidates reducing employers’ flexibility in setting compensation.

On April 5, Cal/OSHA released draft language likely to be adopted

by the Cal/OSHA Standards Board at its April 21 meeting to readopt the COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) originally adopted in November 2020, readopted in June 2021, and readopted for the second time permitted by the Administrative Procedures Act in December 2021. The Governor’s February 28, 2022, executive order extended the life of the second readoption, allowed the Standards Board to readopt the ETS for a third time, and extends its life to December 31, 2022. The draft 3rd readoption eliminates requirements for surface disinfection and cleansing, deletes references to “fully vaccinated” to distinguish among employees; requires employers to furnish N95 respirators on demand to employees regardless of vaccination status, and ties quarantine and workplace exclusion requirements to guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health.

Forestry and Wildfire

The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force issued a Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire to expand the use of prescribed fire and cultural burning to build forest and community resilience statewide – efforts critical to forest management and wildfire mitigation. By expanding the use of beneficial fire, the state can utilize smart burning tactics on brush and other fuels to help both prevent the start of fires and mitigate the spread of wildfires.

Based on a collaborative effort of the state’s leading fire experts and managers, the Strategic Plan sets a target of expanding beneficial fire to 400,000 acres annually by 2025, a shared goal between state, federal, tribal, and local entities – part of an overall goal to treat 1 million acres annually in California by 2025. The state invested \$1.5 billion in wildfire resilience in 2021 alone, including significant support for prescribed fire and cultural burning. Some notable comments: “We know that returning good fire to the ground is one of our best tools in the fight against catastrophic wildfire and climate change,” said Task Force Co-Chair and California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot. “This Strategic Plan includes the key steps

we need to take over the next few years to build capacity, return to a culture of beneficial fire, and invest in our future.” And from the federal government: “This plan is vital to improve the health and resilience of the state’s forests, reduce wildfire risk of vulnerable communities, and increase stewardship by Native American fire practitioners,” added Task Force Co-Chair and U.S. Forest Service Regional Forester Jennifer Eberlien. The key elements of the Strategic Plan include:

- Launching an online prescribed fire permitting system to streamline the review and approval of prescribed fire projects;
- Establishing the state’s new Prescribed Fire Claims Fund to reduce liability for private burners;
- Beginning a statewide program to enable tribes and cultural fire practitioners to revitalize cultural burning practices;
- A prescribed fire training center to grow, train, and diversify the state’s prescribed fire workforce;
- An interagency beneficial fire tracking system;
- Pilot projects to undertake larger landscape-scale burns; and
- A comprehensive review of the state’s smoke management programs to facilitate prescribed fire while protecting public health.

The Action Plan will be funded by a proposed \$1.2 billion additional investment in forest health for fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Related legislation supported by California Farm Bureau includes Senator Dodd’s SB 926, which passed from the Senate Government Organization Committee with bipartisan support on April 6, 2022. The bill moves to Senate Appropriations with a recommendation it be placed on the Consent Calendar, meaning the bill likely will not face any opposition or members voting against the bill and it should move onto the Assembly.

Gas Tax Relief

The drama continues around Assembly member Kiley’s AB 1638. Last week, the bill was amended during the Assembly Transportation Committee hearing in a real time maneuver by Assembly Democrats rarely seen. AB 1638 was effectively

gutted and replaced with an approach to provide gas tax relief to consumers through a fund directly paid into by gas suppliers. The bill passed from Assembly Transportation on a 9-4 partisan line vote, with Republicans opposing a Republican bill and Democrats supporting. Now on the Assembly floor, for two consecutive days leading into the legislation spring recess, Assembly member James Gallagher, the lower house’s Republican minority leader, has withdrawn unanimous co (permission) of all those Members present, absent any objection, debate, or vote on the adoption of the committee amendments for two consecutive days. Clearly, the legislative and political maneuvering around the cost of gasoline and California’s gas tax is far from resolved.

Land Use

A bill by Assemblymember Jim Patterson, AB 1773, passed the Assembly Agriculture Committee and will now be heard in the Assembly Local Government Committee following recess. This bill would appropriate \$40 million for subvention funding for counties with lands enrolled in the Williamson Act. The bill was co-authored by Democrats and Republicans and passed out of committee unanimously.

Marketing

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has announced a vacancy on the Shell Egg Advisory Committee, which is responsible for making recommendations to the Secretary on quality standards for shell eggs, uniformity of inspection, adjustment of fees for administration and enforcement, and the annual budget. The vacancy is for one alternate industry member for a term to expire March 16, 2025. Individuals interested should send a brief resume by April 18, 2022 to: Ms. Penny Arana / Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety Branch 1220 N Street / Sacramento, California 95814 penny.arana@cdfa.ca.gov.

A Farm Bureau supported bill, AB 2153 (Joaquin Arambula, D-Fresno), passed the Assembly Human Services today. This bill would expand the existing EBT Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program to allow CalFresh recipients to

Legislative Update

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receive additional funds for purchasing California-grown fruit and vegetables at certified farmers' markets and retail locations. The bill will now be heard in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

AB 2500 (Joaquin Arambula, D-Fresno) would establish a Farm to Hospital Grant Program at the Department of Food and Agriculture. This program would provide funds to state and non-profit hospitals to purchase California-grown agricultural products and fund infrastructure improvements in hospital kitchens to prepare more agricultural product. The bill passed the Assembly Agriculture Committee, and the bill will now be heard in the Assembly Health Committee. Farm Bureau supports this bill.

Pesticides

The Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee heard a Farm Bureau opposed bill AB 2146 (Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, D-San Ramon) this week. This bill would prohibit the use of neonicotinoids for all users in California, with an exemption for agricultural purposes and under an emergency use declared by the Director of the Department of Pesticide Regulation. The bill will now be referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee to be heard after the Legislative recess.

Rural Broadband

Two bills have been recently amended that take different approaches to increase access to affordable broadband in communities that are often overlooked by internet service providers.

- Assembly member Eduardo Garcia amended his AB 2751 this week. The bill sits in the Assembly Communications and Conveyance Committee and as amended, would require the Department of Technology to establish and implement a Net Equality Program. The program would only allow for the state to contract with an internet service provider (ISP) that offers affordable home internet plans, as identified by the California

Public Utilities Commission.

Because the state cannot regulate broadband directly, ISPs can create an affordable home internet plan voluntarily. AB 2751 would create minimum performance and maximum monthly costs (\$40) for the plans. If the bill makes it into law, it could be a useful incentive to encourage the largest ISPs that conduct business in California and seek to do business with the state to make sure that all communities have access to broadband.

- While the state is prohibited from directly regulating broadband providers, it is permitted to regulate video cable television providers (cable TV) under authority granted by the federal government. Last year, Senator Caballero's SB 28 amended the statute that governs how cable TV providers are regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission for the first time in over fifteen years. Recognizing that the previously mentioned ISPs and cable TV networks are often one and the same, **Assembly member Chris Holden has now jumped through the window that Senator Caballero opened with AB 2748: The Digital Equity in Video Franchising Act of 2022.** The bill completely guts existing law, replacing it with a modern video franchising framework that acknowledges that while broadband is outside the scope of state regulations, the real work reality is such that the same network delivering cable TV also provides home internet to the vast majority of Californians. Together, the two bills use different approaches to increase broadband network development, and pricing to make it accessible and affordable in the communities still lacking service – namely rural, lower income census tracts.

Water

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has selected 11 organizations to receive \$5 million in funding through a new competitive grant program, the Water Efficiency Technical Assistance (WETA) program. WETA allocates funds to

support technical assistance for water efficiency and nutrient management for California farmers and ranchers. Supported activities include providing on-farm pump and irrigation system evaluations and recommendations, providing pump efficiency testing, and delivering training in irrigation efficiency and nutrient management. The full list of awardees can be found here.

Farm Bureau has discovered a two-page "Drought Well Drilling Requirements Fact Sheet" to help understand requirements in Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-7-22 issued last week. The Fact Sheet clarifies that local well permitting agencies retain permitting and enforcement authority, however they must consult with the local Groundwater Sustainability Agency to verify the permit will not adversely impact the Groundwater Sustainability Plan adopted. Additionally, the local well permitting agency must determine the new or replacement well will not interfere with existing nearby wells. Farm Bureau sent a copy of the Fact Sheet to each county Farm Bureau in an email this week.

A measure that would take a comprehensive approach to addressing California's chronic water shortage passed out of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee this week 13-0 with two members absent. As previously reported AB 2078 (Heath Flora, R-Ripon) would expand the Department of Water Resources Atmospheric Rivers research, mitigation, and climate forecasting program (AR Program) to include forecast-informed reservoir operations (FIRO) and integrate FIRO into the department's water supply operations and flood and hazard risk mitigation efforts. The bill would also advance the department's atmospheric river forecast capabilities and include refined climate projections for various environmental conditions. Farm Bureau is in support.

A measure to implement a recommendation in a recent report by the Planning and Conservation League (PCL) passed out of the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee this week 9-4 with Assemblymembers Dahle, Nguyen,

Salas, and Smith voting No. AB 2639 (Bill Quirk, D-Hayward) is one of several bills introduced to implement the PCL/water law professors' recommendations contained in a recent report entitled, "Updating California Water Laws to Address Drought and Climate Change." Farm Bureau opposes the measure unless amended to soften the date and remove the water rights moratorium language.

SB 880 (John Laird, D-Santa Cruz) passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee this week 6-0 with one member absent. As previously reported, SB 880 would extend indefinitely the January 1, 2023, sunset of existing law authorizing those who divert 100 acre feet of water or more per year to be considered qualified to install and maintain their water diversion measurement devices if they take a course taught by the University of California Cooperative Extension and pass a proficiency test. Farm Bureau supports.

A measure that would provide the State Water Resources Control Board with authority to allow water diverters options to use remote sensing methodology to measure water diversion and use amounts passed out of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee this week 8-0. SB 832 (Bill Dodd, D-Napa) took technical amendments in Committee to correct drafting errors. With these amendments Farm Bureau supports.

A measure that would dissolve the State Water Resources Control Board was amended in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee this week. SB 1219 (Melissa Hurtado, D-Sanger) as introduced would have dissolved the State Water Board as of January 1, 2025, and designate the Department of Water Resources as the successor. As amended this week, the measure would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency and the Secretary of Cal/EPA to convene a committee to develop and submit recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature for modernizing California water laws and regulations, and state and local water agencies. Farm Bureau is closely monitoring SB 1219, but has not taken a position.



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Star Creek Land 704-1790

FARM SUPPLIES

Ag Flag 357-3424
Cal Farm Service 358-1554
Kellogs Supply 722-1501
Livingston True Value 394-7949
Hardware & Farm Supplies..... 394-7949
Marfab 826-6700
Modesto Dairy Supply..... 669-6200
Stanislaus Farm Supply 723-0704

FUEL SERVICES

Amarants Propane Service 358-2257
Hunt & Sons, Inc. (916) 383-4868
Western States Petroleum Assoc. (661)
321-0884
Valley Pacific Petroleum..... 948-9412
Van De Pol Petroleum 667-0236

INSURANCE

Barlocker Insurance 383-0220
Fluetsch & Busby Insurance 722-1541
Rico, Pfitzer, Pires and Associates .. 854-2000
Walter Mortensen Insurance 353-2700
Western Valley Insurance 826-5667
Winton Ireland Insurance 394-7925

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Alice B. Contreras CPA 722-6778
American Ag Credit 384-1050/826-0320
Central Valley Community Bank..... 725-2820
Grimbleby Coleman CPAs 527-4220
Trans County Title Company 383-4660
Yosemite Farm Credit 383-1116

MISCELLANEOUS

Berliner Cohen LLP 385-0700
The Hat Source..... 357-3424
Merced County Fair 722-1506
P. B. Iyer, M.D..... 854-1120
Razzari Auto Center..... 383-3673
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MCFB Continues Effort on Ag Education through FARM2U Day



**By: Breanne Vandenberg,
Executive Director**

The Merced County Farm Bureau (MCFB) will be hosting the 11th Annual FARM2U Day on Saturday, April 23, 2022. This year the organization has partnered with the Kids Discovery Station to make this a family filled event. The event will

have multiple presentations focused on agriculture for guests to learn about the products grown in their backyards and the cultural practices associated with agriculture. Families will also learn tips for healthy nutrition and ways to make those choices daily.

FARM2U Day was originally created for local third grade classes to engage with local farmers, ranchers and those that work within the food supply and natural resources. Due to the impact of Novel Coronavirus, MCFB altered activities in early 2020 to adapt to a virtual format that consisted of interactive videos and educational slides.

While the organization has continued to produce virtual content, bringing it back to an in-person event was at the core of their vision.

“This program has always been a centerpiece of our educational efforts,” said Breanne Vandenberg, executive director of MCFB. She continued, “We knew we needed to bring it back in some capacity and partnering with the Kids Discovery Station seemed to be a logical step. We are thrilled that they agreed to the partnership.”

During this year’s event, families can attend the event together by signing up for one of two sessions. MCFB and its partners will host a 10am-12:00pm session and a 1:00pm-3:00pm session. Vandenberg stated, “This program has become an early entry into agriculture for so many in our community.” She continued, “For some, it is the first time they are able to see a chicken or engage with an individual who has a career in agriculture.”

MCFB appreciates the partnership with the Kids Discovery Station and the community support they have received since the early beginnings of the program in 2012. Sponsors, community members and those simply interested in agriculture are encouraged to attend the event. Attendees can visit the Kids Discovery Station free of charge on Saturday, April 23. To sign up, please visit the Programs & Events tab on the MCFB website at www.mercedfarmbureau.org. In addition, virtual videos can be accessed on the same platform by clicking the Virtual FARM2U Program link.

For any questions regarding FARM2U Day, please call Denelle Flake at (209)723-3001 or email at dflake@mercedfarmbureau.org.



Mariposa County Business Member Directory

Businesses Supporting the Farm Bureau

To be included in the directory, join Mariposa County Farm Bureau as a business member by calling 742-5875.

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 Mariposa Feed & Supply.....966-3326
 Bootjack Equipment Rental & Feed.966-3545

ASSOCIATIONS

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 Mariposa Chamber of Commerce 966-2456
 Mariposa County Farm Advisor 966-2417
 Mariposa County Farm Bureau 742-5875

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Bucks Construction 878-3702
 Tobey Guenthart Construction 374-3334

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Inter-County Title Company.....966-3653
 Yosemite Bank.....966-5444

HARDWARE STORES

Coast Hardware.....966-2527
 Foster Ace Hardware966-2692

MEDICAL

Mariposa Physical Therapy..... 742-7242

MISCELLANEOUS

Allison Sierra Inc966-4082
 Happy Burger Diner 966-2719
 Mariposa Friends of the
 Fairgrounds Foundation..... 742-4680
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 Mariposa Gun Works 742-5444
 Miners Roadhouse 14 966-2444
 Pony Expresso966-5053

REAL ESTATE

Cathey's Valley Real Estate..... 742-2121

SERVICES

Chases Foothill Petroleum..... 966-3314
 Edward Lien & Toso Ag Appraisers...634-9484
 Palmer Tractor374-3470
 Ranch Fence, Inc..... 966-5914
 Valley Pacific Petroleum..... 948-9412
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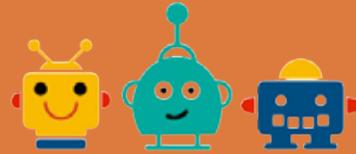
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10am-12pm
Afternoon Session:
1pm-3pm**

Join us for a fun-filled family day while you learn from agriculture and nutrition community leaders. Your families are welcome to enjoy the Kid's Discovery Station before or after your session.

**Register
Today!**



For more information:

www.mercedfarmbureau.org

(209) 723-3001

dflake@mercedfarmbureau.org