



Merced County Farm News



‘A race to the bottom’: New bill aims to limit frenzy of well drilling on California farms

By: Ian James, Los Angeles Times

In farming areas across the Central Valley, a well-drilling frenzy has accelerated over the last year as growers turn to pumping more groundwater during the drought, even as falling water levels leave hundreds of nearby homes with dry wells. Counties have continued freely

issuing well-drilling permits in the years since California passed a landmark law, the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014, which is intended to address the problem of excessive pumping over the next two decades to preserve groundwater. Some state legislators are now supporting a bill that they say would strengthen oversight and limit the well-drilling frenzy by requiring a review of permits for new wells by the same local agencies that are charged with

managing groundwater. “It just makes common sense that the agency in charge of trying to get groundwater pumping into a sustainable yield should be able to weigh in on new wells going into that very same aquifer that they’re trying to monitor,” said Assemblymember Steve Bennett (D-Ventura), who introduced the bill. The way the system stands, Bennett said, counties have been signing off on permits and agricultural landowners have been “rushing to get their wells

in” before limits on pumping take effect. “I think the rush to sink more wells will continue, if not accelerate, if we don’t have this,” Bennett said. The bill, AB 2201, was approved April 26 by the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee, and next goes before the Appropriations Committee. The bill would require so-called groundwater sustainability agencies,

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Water allocation increased for MID growers

By: MID

April 26, 2022 - Merced Irrigation District growers will receive an increase in their surface water allocation as a result of the most recent late-season storm. Today, the MID Board of Directors voted to raise the allocation of Lake

McClure surface water for MID Class 1 growers to 1.67 acre feet per acre. The decision was made after the latest storm brought fresh rain and snow to the Sierra. Previously in March, the MID Board had adopted an allocation of 1.1 acre feet per acre, based on the dry winter weather and available water supply in Lake McClure. Orders may be placed anytime using MID’s automated water ordering

system at (866) 825- 2475. During weekday business hours, orders may be placed by calling MID Customer Service at (209) 722-2720 or toll-free at (800) 750-2720. To place an order online, growers must first register at www.mercedid.org and then place their first water order by calling Customer Service. After that, orders can be made through the website.

Address

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from the President's Corner

Joe Sansoni

The irrigation season has begun to ramp up and I find myself thinking about a great many things and chewing on a multitude of different thoughts and ideas as I go about the often mundane business of starting pumps, checking panels, cleaning VFD filters, programming backflush controllers, and so on. One thought prevails this year - once again - as it has in the not-so-distant past: "At least we have some water to pump!" For this I am incredibly grateful. Grateful for being a member of a couple different irrigation districts that actually can deliver us at least some water. Grateful that several years ago prior to the last significant drought we were able to get some wells drilled and developed to supplement our surface water allotments and allow for out-of-season irrigation when needed. That makes me one of the lucky ones, in a sense. Concerning the wells,

we're only safe as long as they continue to produce water, which is never a long-term guarantee with any well...and until SGMA comes online, of course.

"What's SGMA?" I probably shouldn't be by now, but I'm always surprised at how often I still get this question from some whenever I bring it up. I should clarify...I'm surprised at how often I get it

from people who own and/or manage some kind of farmland or ag operation. "The Sustainable Ground Water Management Act...you're not familiar with it?" I ask. The responses of the unfamiliar range from "Not at all" to "Not really, no" to "I've heard of it, but I don't know much about it." My first thought is always an incredulous questioning as to how someone with an interest in even a small ag operation or investment does not know about SGMA? After all it has been in the works and been actively talked about for several years already. And it will almost certainly change the landscape of valley agriculture as we know it for the future. In some areas it will completely change it forever.

The bottom line is that depending on your specific groundwater basin, you'll be limited to how much water you can legally pump from your ag wells. These numbers have yet to be officially adopted or published, but we are very close to that point and the initial outlook for most basins is anywhere from .75 to just over 1 acre foot per acre. That essentially means that in extremely dry years when there is zero surface

The SGMA Blues

water available, or if you happen to be in an area where you have no surface water (aka "white areas") you will have an apportion of a water allotment to a very limited number of acres. For example, if you have a 30-acre parcel, and you are only allowed to pump 1 acre foot of groundwater per acre, you've got 30-acre feet to work with. So, you obviously can't farm a full crop on the full 30 acres. Depending on the crop you want to grow, or already have planted as the case may be, your strategy will have to be planned in such a way as to utilize your allotment to either fully irrigate a small fraction of the acreage, or else to try to just barely keep alive a permanently planted crop such as almonds or grapes.

This probably all seems pretty remedial to many of our members/readers. Most full time and professional growers and farm managers have been keeping abreast of the SGMA conversation and issues for quite a while if not years now, but there are still many people who have ag land who are not up to speed on it and who don't fully understand the ramifications of SGMA and how it IS going to affect them and their operations, no matter how big or small. I have personally had several conversations with folks who fall into this category...from professionals who own investment properties, to people who inherited ag land but have never actually worked it themselves, to people who have or are about to invest in some ag property because "someone told them it was a great idea." If you're reading this and you are not familiar with this topic, do yourselves

a massive favor and work hard to get fully informed ASAP!

How will the "authorities" enforce the new coming groundwater pumping regulations? That's a great question, and one that has an even better answer. With space age technology, that's how. Don't for a second laugh or scoff or exclaim "Ha! They can't put a meter on every well! And who's going to read them all?!" They don't need to do any of that. They have all the information and technology at their fingertips to determine who pumped how much, where, on what crops, and exactly when, using satellite evapotranspiration data and ground parcel imagery. And this technology has proven to be scary accurate. They can figure out what you've pumped or irrigated within less than an inch or two per acre from a computer in an office hundreds of miles away. What will they do to enforce the coming regulations? We don't exactly know yet, but I'm willing to guess it'll look a lot like a bill or a fine that if not paid gets sent to collections. Which in this state under the current leadership will likely mean liens and potentially seizure of properties for those who don't play by the new rules.

I promise that I'll write about plenty of more uplifting and positive things during my tenure as your MCFB president! But this issue has been in the forefront of my mind recently, and this is my wake-up call to any and all members who aren't yet fully aware or informed about SGMA to get educated ASAP! Pass the word along to your family, friends, and neighbors as well! You may very well thank me someday!

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

In April, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-7-22 outlining the temporary strategies for California to manage the ongoing drought. Within this order, he outlined rules for counties, cities, and other public agencies as it relates to new wells or alterations to an existing well. One now must be given written verification from the Groundwater Sustainability Agency that the new well or alternations “would not be inconsistent with any sustainable groundwater management program established in any applicable Groundwater Sustainability Plan adopted by that Groundwater Sustainability Agency and would not decrease the likelihood of achieving a sustainability goal for the basin covered by such a plan.” If not the above, then Item 9b under this order also applies as it indicates that a permit for a new well or alteration of an existing well must first determine that

the proposed well is “(1) not likely to interfere with the production and functioning of existing nearby wells, and (2) not likely to cause subsidence that would adversely impact or damage nearby infrastructure.”

Members also must be reminded of AB 2201 authored this session by Assemblymember Steve Bennett (D-Ventura). This is similar to Newsom’s Executive Order N-7-22; however, while Newsom’s is a temporary order, AB 2201 is permanent. From an 8-5 vote, the bill was passed by the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee and now moves to the Appropriations Committee.

While this has been an alarming notice to many, Merced County began this discussion in 2021. To fully understand the reasoning behind this, some brief history should be presented. Adopted in 2015, Merced County carried out a Groundwater Mining and Export Ordinance. This was in relation to concerns of groundwater being moved from one subbasin to another and on the heels of the adoption of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 2014.

The local ordinance does not allow for new wells to be placed within a quarter mile of another operating well. In addition, a new well would have difficulty in being placed on a property that has not previously been irrigated in the matter that they are intending. For instance, if a permittee wanted to place a well on native pasture and intended to plant almond trees, they would have to go through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to be granted approval, if they

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Calendar of Events

June 8-12
Merced County Fair - Wine Booth (pg. 24)

July 29
MCFB Summer BBQ (pg. 24)

Merced County Farm News

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Farm Bureau at work

By: CAFB

May 6, 2022-
Agricultural Employment
The Assembly Judiciary Committee approved AB 2182 (Wicks) on May 3 by a 7-2 vote. AB 2182 imposes new requirements on employers to not discriminate against, and offer accommodation to, employees with vaguely-defined “family responsibilities.” Farm Bureau opposes as such ambiguities inevitably lead to some employees abusing the program and employers who incur the litigation expense.

Forestry & Wildfire

Wildfire and Livestock Update

Ranchers in Placer, Nevada, and Yuba Counties, along with UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and the County Agricultural Departments from these three counties, have established a Disaster Livestock Access Program to facilitate livestock and human safety before, during, and after wildfire and other emergencies.

Evacuating livestock from commercial ranching operations may not be possible in the event of a major incident, due to scale of operation. Sheltering-in-place may be the best and safest alternative. Safe access by trained and qualified ranch personnel is critical to livestock welfare, firefighter safety, and public safety. The geographic scope of this project aligns with the CALFIRE administrative unit for the region (Nevada, Placer, and Yuba Counties).

Livestock Access Passholders may be permitted into evacuation zones, or other restricted areas, to provide feed, water, medical treatment, and other care to commercial livestock.

Qualified Commercial Livestock Operator: For the purposes of this program, a commercial livestock operator is defined as owning/managing 50+ head of livestock (including in utero, e.g., 25 bred cows), 100+ poultry or rabbits, or 50+ beehives that reside in Placer, Nevada, or Yuba County for at least a portion of the year, or a person

who, through an agreement with that owner of livestock, has authority and is responsible to oversee the care and well-being of the livestock. This program applies to commercially raised species of livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, poultry, rabbits, llamas, alpacas, and bees. “Commercially raised” means the livestock are raised as part of a business.

Application for Registration: To enroll in the program, a Commercial Livestock Operator must provide contact information, APNs and/or physical addresses of grazing sites, general season(s) of use, livestock description and count, and other information by completing the online form at <https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=37083>. If you need assistance completing the online registration, contact Dan Macon at (530) 889-7385 or dmacon@ucanr.edu.

Mandatory Training: A new Commercial Livestock Operator must complete an initial 4-hour training, which will be held in June at the UC Sierra Foothill Research and Extension Center in Browns Valley. If you received a pass in 2021, you would need to complete a 1-hour virtual training session currently under development.

For more information contact Dan Macon, UCCE Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor (Placer-Nevada-Sutter-Yuba) at dmacon@ucanr.edu or (530) 889-7385.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Taskforce Meeting
The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Taskforce met on Thursday May 5, 2022, in Santa Rosa at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. The

meeting began with a tribal blessing by Melissa Elgin, Tribal Council Secretary of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

James Gore, Sonoma County Supervisor District 4, and Secretary Wade Crowfoot from California’s Natural Resources Agency (CRNA) kicked off a substantive discussion

highlighting the need for regional leadership, so that state or national standards do not dictate local resource strategies. The North Coast Resource Partnership was held up as a gold standard for a collaborative working

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Farm Bureau at work

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group that is addressing specific regional wildfire and watershed needs.

Taskforce Director Patrick Wright presented a Director’s Report that focused on some of the recent landscape level block grants being made by federal and state agencies, including the previously discussed North Yuba and Stanislaus watershed projects announced by USFS. Also, CRNA’s 30x30 framework was referenced as an important tool to provide lands management strategies. The Taskforce is tracking all of its actions and has made every item available for public view. If you want

to view the status of the 99 different action items, you can view the Taskforce’s progress here.

Director Wright discussed how the Taskforce is building a Forest Data Hub, and a common reporting platform so that local, state, and federal projects can be tracked on the same metrics. The goal is to measure progress on reaching the 1 million acres treated strategy, but there are challenges because of how different agencies track and report their work. At a regional level, this common platform would allow collaboration between state, federal, tribal, and private parties (utilities, land-owners) to leverage fuels treatments planning and delivery. By November, the Taskforce hopes the reporting platform will be complete so that the treatment picture becomes

clearer. The data hub hopes to capture information about different forest stand indexes, and other resilience metrics so that grant making can get better at targeting the highest priority projects.

Next, the Taskforce staff debuted a Taskforce specific website that is going to launch in June 2022 that will include links to the progress tracker, including project specific details. The website will feature content that explains the science behind forest health and management activities, as well as a monthly roundup of edited materials. Clearly, the website will help to provide promotional and marketing support to the Taskforce to help explain to the public and stakeholders how billions of taxpayer dollars are being spent on wildfire mitigation.

Karen Mouritsen, the California Director for the Bureau of Land Management said that BLM completed 38 projects since 2019 focused on high-risk lands and communities to do fuel reductions near roadways and critical infrastructure. She said BLM received an additional \$2 million in the 2022 federal budget, for a total of \$11 million, but that BLM also leveraged \$18 million in CAL FIRE grants, too. Through their Good Neighbor Agreements, they hope to collaborate with adjacent lands to ensure projects are extended to as much scale as possible.

The Taskforce then launched into two panels, the first of which featured

'Farm Bureau at work' Page 6

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Farm Bureau at work

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speakers from the North Coast Tribal Leadership & Governance, the North Coast Resource Partnership, Napa RCD, and Tehama RCD. Then, the Regional Partner Panel featured speakers from the Cultural Fire Management Council, Fire Forward, the Karuk Tribes, Redwoods Rising, Intertribal Indigenous Stewardship Council, and the Mid Klamath Watershed Council. Both panels focused on the vital need for regional stakeholders to collaborate in order to accomplish landscape scale wildfire risk reduction, and to encourage healthy, resilient forests.

Forest Health Grants

California announced \$98.4 million in forest health grants today at the first in-person meeting of Governor Newsom's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force. In conjunction with the Taskforce meeting and events throughout the state for Wildfire Preparedness Week, CAL FIRE announced \$98.4 million in grants for landscape-scale, regionally based land management projects to restore the health and resilience to existing and recently burned forests throughout California, while enhancing long-term carbon storage.

CAL FIRE's Forest Health Program awarded 22 grants to local and regional partners implementing projects on state, local, tribal, federal, and private lands spanning over 55,000 acres and 14 counties. Fuels reduction and prescribed fire treatments funded under these grants are aimed at reducing excess vegetation and returning forest and oak woodlands to a more fire-, drought-, and pest-resilient condition. You can view the awarded projects here.

Several projects include work within landscapes severely burned in recent wildfires. Three projects located in Plumas and Lassen counties will restore and reforest approximately 24,000 acres burned in the 2021 Dixie Fire; another project targets 1,990 acres located in the headwaters of the Wild and Scenic North Fork Eel River that burned in the 2020 August

Complex; and finally, 1,690 acres burned in the 2020 North Complex Fire in Butte County will be reforested.

Transportation

Earlier this year, CAFB joined a large coalition to support AB 2406 (Aguiar-Curry – D). This bill would prohibit an intermodal marine equipment provider from imposing per diem, detention, or demurrage charges on an intermodal motor carrier and beneficial cargo owners. Under ordinary circumstances, these fees are designed to encourage the efficient use of containers. However, during our recent and ongoing port congestion crisis, late charges have been imposed on California businesses by international ocean carriers even when containers cannot be returned due to circumstances not within the control of the importer, exporter or trucker. Agricultural exports including almonds, pistachios, dairy products, wine, and walnuts have been severely impacted by the recent COVID-19 pandemic and resulting port complications. In 2019, California agricultural exports totaled \$21.7 billion, which was an increase of 3.4% from 2018. A University of California Davis report analyzed the effects of the 2021 supply chain gridlock and resulting shipping container shortage on California agriculture. Because of the shortage of containers, California's containerized agricultural exports declined by an estimated \$2.1 billion, about 17%, from May to September 2021. While detention and demurrage fees have increased across the globe, ocean carriers are charging two to ten times the fees in Los Angeles and Long Beach versus other major ports worldwide. The bill would help alleviate the pressure that these fees put on California businesses and attempt to address one of the many issues facing our ports. This bill has passed out of the Assembly and moves to the Senate.

Water

The first California Farm Bureau Water Forum was held this week with approximately 50 county Farm Bureau members in attendance. Those in attendance had the undivided attention of Department of Water Resources Director, Karla

Nemeth and State Water Resources Control Board Chairman, Joaquin Esquivel for nearly three hours. The townhall type format allowed for an incredibly productive exchange of key issues, ideas, questions and answers for Farm Bureau members and for Director Nemeth and Chair Esquivel. Additionally, members of the California Water Commission and key legislative policy committee consultants heard firsthand from real world "boots on the ground" California farmers and ranchers about the challenges of dealing with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, unimpaired river flows, water quality issues, water rights curtailments and more. The event proved to be insightful for key Sacramento water policy makers and may provide a good model for future forums. Farm Bureau appreciates all those that took advantage of this opportunity.

Wildlife

Department of Fish and Wildlife recently released a depredation report that occurred at the end of April. A USDA Wildlife Specialist responded to a report of a wolf sighting near livestock in Southern Lassen County. Upon arrival, a 300 lb. calf carcass was discovered near where the wolf sighting occurred. After an investigation, tooth scrapes were found on both hind legs and the left flank of the carcass. The location and size of the bite marks was consistent with wolf depredation, and the report reflects that this loss is a confirmed

wolf kill. In addition to eyewitness observation of wolves in the area, wolf tracks were found near the carcass and collar activity placed LAS09F in the area that same day.

Members may be aware that CAFB has been working for several months with the Department and fellow stakeholders on last year's budget allocation for the Wolf Livestock Loss Compensation Grant Program. The \$3 million allocation aimed to compensate ranchers for wolf related losses. The pilot would provide funds and reimbursement for 1) direct loss due to wolf depredation, 2) pay for wolf presence (negative impacts on cattle due to stress), and 3) reimbursement for efforts to deter wolf/livestock interaction (i.e., fencing). CAFB lead the small subgroup in hopes of drafting a program that would benefit our members and compensate them accordingly. In March, the Department stopped all progress on these efforts, deciding to restructure the workgroup at an undetermined date. In the interim, the Department released a temporary program in order to meet their fiscal responsibilities laid out in last year's budget. This program is in no way comprehensive, and only issues reimbursement for confirmed and probable wolf losses. Farm Bureau remains an active participant and continues to advocate for farmers to be reimbursed for all impacts that the increasing number of predators in the state have on their livestock. If you need any help with the form, or have any questions about the program, please reach out to Farm Bureau staff.



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Merced County Ag Crimes

By: Investigator Jay Struble, Merced County District Attorney's Office

Did you know that the Merced County District Attorney's Office has a designated Investigator assigned to investigate Ag Crimes? Merced County receives funding from the State of California for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of Ag Crimes.

The designated Ag Crimes Investigator works closely with the Deputy District Attorney assigned to Ag Crime(s) prosecution to achieve successful prosecution of individuals arrested and charged with Ag related crimes.

There are tools available, through the Ag Crimes Investigator, to assist farmers in identifying their property.

The application of SmartWater to equipment and machinery can be beneficial in identifying stolen property. SmartWater is cutting edge forensic science, scientists created safe, water-based solutions, which contain a unique forensic 'signature'. With millions of 'signatures' available, the solutions are robust and difficult for criminals to remove. They can be used to mark valuable property at risk of being stolen. Each solution contains a unique forensic signature assigned to a particular location, the benefit being that the property marked with SmartWater can be identified months later through simple forensic analysis.

The Merced County District Attorney's Office also has a tool that is used to apply an "Owner Applied Number." What is an "Owner Applied

Number (OAN)?" An OAN is a unique number, chosen by the owner, which is stamped into a piece of property. If the property were to be stolen, the OAN can be entered into the national database identifying the property as stolen. The OAN becomes crucial when and if the original manufacturer serial number has been destroyed and/or removed. When law enforcement comes across a piece of property with an OAN, they can check the OAN in the national database to check if the property has been reported stolen.

The Merced County District Attorney's Office is dedicated to Ag Crime investigation(s) and prosecutions. Below is the contact information for the District Attorney Investigator assigned to Ag Crime

investigations.

Investigator Struble said, "I look forward to working closely with the Ag community in Merced County and establishing working relationships throughout the Merced County Ag community. Together I believe we can reduce crime(s) in the Ag community and hold individuals committing Ag crimes accountable."

**Investigator Jay Struble
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June Dairy Month is Almost Here!



**By: Denise Skidmore, Director,
Education & Public Relations, Hilmar
Cheese Company**

HILMAR, CA. May 3, 2022. The Hilmar Cheese Company Visitor Center provides fun family activities for June Dairy Month with tours, a book signing and more.

Starting June 1, summer ice cream making activity and tours are Monday - Friday at 11 am. Participants get to "shake, rattle and roll" the magic jars to freeze then enjoy homemade ice cream. Each ice cream maker will also receive a souvenir pencil,

activity booklet and a cow ear tag. The activity is \$3 per person. Sign-up in advance at hilmarcheese.com/booktours. The tour also includes the MOOVie and a guided exploration of the hands-on exhibits. Visitors can get an inside look of the plant to watch the

cheese makers package a 640-pound block of cheese. This is the only place in the world to see the "BIG" cheese. Self-guided tours of the exhibits and the MOOVie is available during open hours.

Hilmar Cheese Company will have a booth with cheese samples and goodies at the Hilmar Dairy and Farm Festival on Saturday June, 4 from 5 pm to 10 pm. The free event held at the Hilmar High School football field features farm equipment, local vendors, the Little Milkmaid and Milkman Competition and a fireworks

show at dark.

On Wednesday, June 15 at 10:30 am, celebrate June Dairy Month with a free children's book reading of "Clarice, the Red Cow." Marueen Lemos and her family ship milk from their dairy to Hilmar Cheese Company. She will read her story and answer questions about cows and her experiences on the dairy farm. All children who attend will also be give free squeakers, fresh cheese curds! The 11 am ice cream making tour will follow.

The best way to enjoy June Dairy month is with a dairy fun activity, a grilled cheese sandwich, a scoop of ice cream or a cream cheese brownie.

Celebrate June at Hilmar Cheese Company Visitor Center. Open Monday

– Friday from 7 am to 6 pm. Call 209.656.1196 with questions.



Hilmar Cheese Company Ice Cream Tour

Processing tomatoes and Fusarium wilt race 3 management



from the
Farm Advisor
Scott Stoddard
UC Cooperative Extension,
Merced County

Merced county is one of 4 California counties with processing tomato production greater than one million tons annually. In 2021, production was 1.157 million tons from 24,900 contracted acres, which is 46.5. tons per acre on average. Soluble solids were 5.33, and color (Hue) was 21.2 using the new system. Harvest tonnage was skewed towards late season, with more than 237,000 tons picked in October. In Stanislaus County and north, Curly Top virus was a problem for some. In Merced County, Curly Top was low to average in our production area, Fusarium race 3 infests nearly every field but is being managed through variety resistance, and resistance-breaking root knot nematodes (RKN) may be on the radar.

Weather had the biggest impact on early planted fields from Fresno south – it was simply too hot (and smoky), which resulted in a split set. Average yields were down nearly 22% from the prior year. At one point in the season, forecasted production was the lowest in 20 years, but late season fields in Merced, San Joaquin, Colusa, and Yolo counties had a late season surge and the state finished at about 10.8 million tons, about 0.8 million

tons less than contract intentions. This was similar to 2020, when production was about 1 million tons short of what the processors wanted. As a result, contract intentions for 2022 are 12.2 million tons.

Resistant-breaking RKN, or Rb-RKN, does not seem to be a production issue, yet, in Merced County. This may be because our production area is dominated by heavy clay loam and loamy clay soils that are not conducive for root knot nematodes (this pest prefers sandy soils, and is a major issue in the Atwater and Livingston area). Or it could simply be that the pest is here, but just hasn't infested many fields. If so, this would be similar as to what happened with Fusarium wilt race 3, when I first confirmed this in the Dos Palos area around 2008. By 2011, it was popping up all over the place.

Fusarium wilt race 3 (*Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *lycopersici*) [F3] continues to be a problem for tomato

growers. This soil fungus has been spreading both in scope and severity for more than 10 years in Merced County. There are numerous F3 resistant cultivars now available that provide very good control of this disease, however, demand outstrips seed supply. According to Scott Picanso with TS&L Seeds, about 45% of the central production area was planted to F3 resistant cultivars in 2021. N6428 and H1662 were the #1 and #2 varieties grown in the state last year, and both have resistance to F3. Furthermore, every new variety being released by the seed companies has F3 resistance. Resistant varieties are one of the best and easiest ways to manage this disease. Based on my fungicide evaluations on F3 control in an infested field, resistant varieties have yielded on average 24.7% more than susceptible varieties (Table 1).

Can fungicides help? In 6 years of testing, fungicides have shown consistent short-term suppression of

this disease, usually 60 days or less, but impacts on yield have been mixed. In 2017, 2019, and 2021 there were yield increases in the susceptible varieties when fungicides were used at or near transplanting, but in 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2021 there were no significant yield improvements. Averaged across all years, the fungicides fludioxonil (Maxim) and fluopyram (Velum) have shown an ~ 10.8% yield increase as compared to untreated plots.

Equipment sanitation is another management technique to help limit the spread of Fusarium wilt in your fields, especially if you are farming a new field with no tomato production in the last 10 years. It takes just 3 years for Fusarium to take hold and cause significant yield reductions once introduced on infected soil or plant debris, and therefore you should implement a clean equipment protocol for new fields with no known history of Fusarium problems.

Date	F3 Variety, susceptible	F3 yield, Tons/A	Susceptible yield Tons/A	difference, Tons/A	F3 variety, % <u>yield</u> increase
2016	BQ141, H8504	58.77	54.59	4.18	7.7%
2017	BP19, H5608	56.81	49.79	7.09	12.5%
2018	N6428, H2401	64.21	50.62	13.59	27.0%
2019	N6428, DRI319	50.26	34.13	16.13	47.0%
2020	N6428, H2401	70.6	56.3	14.3	25.4%
2021	H1662, H1498	59.7	46.4	13.3	28.7%
				AVERAGE	24.7%

Table 1. Yield difference between F3 resistant processing tomatoes and untreated susceptible varieties in a Fusarium wilt race 3 infested field, Merced County 2016 - 2021.

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New Awards for Regional Archives at UC Merced Library

By: Emily Lin, UC Merced Library

In October 2021, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) awarded UC Merced Library a grant from American Rescue Plan funds to support the California Agricultural Resources Archive (CARA) project.

While California’s Central Valley is one of the most productive agricultural regions on the globe, the historical records of the rural center of California are under-represented in the American register. The documents, maps, and photographs preserved in CARA include valuable information on local land development, crop research, and changing agricultural practices. They also shed light on rural domestic

life and civic engagement through the organization of Farm Bureaus, agricultural associations, and 4-H.

The one-year grant has funded the retention of four positions: an archivist, two undergraduate student assistants, and a graduate student specialist. In addition to allowing the library to continue processing collections, this federal support enables the library to continue its outreach and engagement efforts despite the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic and a significantly curtailed budget.

In partnership with Merced County 4-H, the library is conducting a “History Detectives” Summer Science Academy for students in grades 8-12 this coming July. Students will learn

how to conduct hands-on research in the archives and use tools to curate information for an exhibit on agricultural history in Merced. They will have the opportunity to learn techniques that the typical student is not exposed to until college or beyond.

UC Merced Library is taking a place-based approach to developing special research collections that will support the highest levels of educational opportunity for Valley residents. Recognition of the importance of these efforts has resulted in even more substantial support. In April, the NEH announced it would award a \$750,000 Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grant

to UC Merced to fund a renovation project in the library.

The Library, in partnership with UC Merced’s Center for the Humanities, will expand its capacity to house archives and special collections documenting the Sierra Nevada and Central Valley regions. The capital project will create secure storage space as well as spaces where researchers, students, and community members can engage with the collections. The project is expected to be completed in two years and will house over 100,000 items.

For more on the Sierra Nevada-Central Valley Research Archive: <https://ucm.edu/TzrUEg>

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Well Drilling

continued from page 1

which were established under the 2014 law, to weigh in on well permit applications.

Gov. Gavin Newsom in March issued a drought order that similarly prohibits local governments from granting a well-drilling permit if it would be “inconsistent” with the area’s groundwater management plan. Newsom’s order has slowed the drilling of new wells in parts of the San Joaquin Valley.

But the order brings only temporary measures during the drought, and the bill’s proponents argue a similar permanent change is necessary to protect vulnerable communities before more wells run dry.

The legislation would prohibit a local government from approving a well permit unless it obtains written verification from the groundwater sustainability agency that the proposed well is “consistent” with the area’s management plan. Groundwater basins that the state deems high or medium priority would be subject to the requirement.

The bill would require agencies to post a notice of each well permit application online and allow 30 days for the public to comment. There would be an exemption for household wells or wells that supply drinking water.

Bennett said the fundamental problem is that new wells have been approved without an analysis of how the pumping will affect other wells in nearby communities.

“Disadvantaged communities need elected officials to stand up for them,” Bennett said.

Those who spoke in favor during the committee meeting included Ruth Martinez, from the community of Ducor in Tulare County.

Martinez said her community of about 600 people, mostly Latino farmworkers, long suffered with nitrate contamination in their drinking water, which meant they couldn’t safely use the tap water. In 2016, the community received a \$1.8-million state grant and drilled a deeper well, nearly 2,000 feet

deep, which has provided clean water.

But last year, a new agricultural well was drilled across the street from their well, which she said threatens the community’s water supply.

“The county approved this new well without thinking about the impact on our community,” Martinez told the legislators.

If the legislation had been in place, Martinez said, the local groundwater agency would have notified the community, and could have rejected the permit application.

Martinez, a board member of the Ducor Community Services District, said residents are concerned about the pumping.

“I am getting many calls and concerns from families about the decreased pressure and the lack of water coming from our taps,” Martinez said. “Our brand-new water is failing because the county did not protect us.”

The bill’s supporters include the group Community Water Center.

“It’s absolutely imperative that we connect and close the gap between land-use permitting decisions and sustainable groundwater management,” said Kyle Jones, the group’s policy director.

For groundwater management to succeed, he said, the state should stop the proliferation of new agricultural wells next to drinking-water wells.

The legislation is opposed by groups representing the agriculture industry.

Brenda Bass of the California Chamber of Commerce said the bill would “create a new permitting regime for groundwater wells that will negatively impact agricultural businesses” and food production.

A large portion of California’s water, roughly 80% of the supply that is diverted and pumped, goes to agriculture in a typical year, according to state data. The Central Valley’s farmlands produce almonds, pistachios, fruits and vegetables, and also supply large dairies.

Danny Merkley, director of water resources for the California Farm Bureau, said he thinks the bill conflicts with the “locally driven” approach that defined the 2014 groundwater law and is “premature.”

The new requirements under

Newsom’s executive order should be given some time to play out “so we can identify the issues and fine-tune it,” Merkley said, before considering permanent legislation.

The water supplies that farms have long relied on, delivered by canals from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, have been cut back during the drought. Growers have traditionally turned to more groundwater pumping during dry times, and aquifer levels in the Central Valley have been declining for decades.

With climate change bringing hotter temperatures and intensifying droughts, the pressures on the limited supply of groundwater continue to mount.

The 2014 law is expected to eventually bring pumping limits that force growers to leave some farmland dry and unplanted.

Measurements by NASA satellites have documented the depletion of vast quantities of water over the last two decades. So much water has been extracted from aquifers in the San Joaquin Valley that the land is sinking as clay soils collapse, a problem that has damaged canals and cracked roads.

In the Tulare Basin, the ground is sinking at a rate of about a foot per year.

According to statewide data, more than 3,900 dry household wells have been reported since 2013, and the number of dry wells has risen dramatically over the last year. The state received reports of 975 household wells that ran dry in 2021, many in farming areas in the Central Valley.

An additional 162 dry wells have been reported so far this year.

The state Department of Water Resources recently reviewed plans submitted by local groundwater agencies and told agencies in farming areas of the San Joaquin Valley that their plans are “incomplete” and will require changes to address widespread risks of

more wells going dry, as well as other problems.

“We have a real problem in California with the issue of water,” Bennett said. “We have a disconnect between those who are managing the basin for sustainable yield and those who are approving the sinking of the new wells at the same time.”

Bennett said he’s been thinking about the need to address the problem for some time, and he decided to introduce the bill after reading a Los Angeles Times article examining the well-drilling frenzy in the San Joaquin Valley. The analysis by The Times found that more than 6,200 agricultural wells have been drilled in the valley since the groundwater law was passed in 2014.

“I think that tipped the balance for me to say, ‘We’re going to do it this year,’” Bennett said.

He introduced the bill in January, and it has since been amended.

Because the bill faces opposition from agricultural groups, Bennett said he expects a “huge battle” to try to get it passed.

Fran Pavley, a former state senator who helped draft the 2014 law, said the bill is a necessary update.

“Can you allow an unlimited new number of wells to be added?” said Pavley, who is now environmental policy director at the USC Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy.

“There needs to be additional oversight on the local level,” Pavley said. “We’re still in a race to the bottom.”



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Want Alternative Manure Management Information?

By: Deanne Meyer - UC Davis & UC ANR, Jennifer Heguy - UCCE Stanislaus, San Joaquin & Merced Counties & Denise Mullinax - California Dairy Research Foundation

The Alternative Manure Management Program is accepting applications for grants of up to \$750,000. By now, those interested in submitting an application are well on their way with the paperwork. There's much detailed

information needed to complete the process.
It is key to be sure you've done your homework sufficiently. You don't want to end up implementing a practice that does not fit your expectations or needs.
Take a virtual fieldtrip and get information on alternative manure management practices. The California Dairy Quality Assurance Program has a page dedicated to alternative manure management practices. Factsheets,

producer interviews and webinars related to use of vacuums, mechanical separators and compost bedded pack barns are available to help you better understand operational aspects.
<https://cdqap.org/ammp-outreach-project/>
This page was produced through a project funded from the California Department of Agriculture through California Climate Investments (CDFA Agreement # 19-0930-000-SO) and the California Dairy Research Foundation.



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continued from page 3

are even given that.

Difficulty would also arise as to the depth that the individual would like to place the well. The Corcoran Clay layer throughout Merced County varies depending on your location and can even differ among your field or within a field. Should they want to go further than the Corcoran Clay, they would have to go through CEQA to determine the impacts of such action. The only caveat would be if this is a replacement well. If it was already below the clay, then the individual would most likely be granted approval for a like for like well.

Fast forward to 2021 and Merced County began to discuss shifting the process over to the Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs). Merced County has four subbasins with three of them – Delta-Mendota, Chowchilla and Merced – being in the high priority category. The fourth, Turlock Subbasin, is considered medium priority and had to submit their plan in early 2022. Our high priority basins are currently reworking portions of their GSPs as the state found fault with them in one area or another.

From the county's viewpoint, they have served as only a portion of the GSAs and not the entirety, leaving them with full liability should a well not comply with the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). As of May 1, 2022, the county has moved the process to the GSAs. How does the county envision this working? If a well is within a GSA, they have a specific process in which they must proceed. These are:


1. Review by GSA
2. GSA provides consistency determination
3. Applicant files well permit with the county
4. County reviews for construction standards (Department of Environmental Health will inspect the well at this point)
5. GSA regulates well via GSP implementation

For those outside a GSA, they would be subject to the original ordinance and move through the

county for approval or denial of the permit.

From talking with our various agencies and members, opinions vary depending on who you speak with on the topic. Where some view moving this to the GSAs as a step in the right direction, others view it as more troublesome. Questions arise as one considers if more fees could be involved? If a person farms in multiple GSAs, how different will requirements be from the various governing boards? In our case, the county will still review the document and provide their approval, however it will be up to the GSA to ensure that compliance is fully met and within standards for their water allocations.


Some GSAs have developed guidelines for this process, some are still discussing what that would look like and others would prefer to only work within the Governor's rule. For this reason, many questions lie in wait until that time comes. As with most changes, growers are still learning about these changes which will only frustrate and delay their requested actions. Also, keep in mind that many of the GSAs are still reworking their GSPs to comply with the issues found in their last review by the state.






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Senate pitches \$7.5B drought and water plan

By: Brad Hooker, AgriPulse

Senate Democratic leaders on Thursday unveiled a budget plan for spending the state's massive surplus. It would increase drought and water spending 10-fold over Gov. Gavin Newsom's January budget proposal. The "Putting Wealth to Work" plan capitalizes on \$68 billion in estimated tax revenues, up from the \$29 billion in the January forecast by the Legislative Analyst's Office.

The spending includes \$200 in cash rebates for millions of Californians to

stem high inflation and gas prices—and Republicans were quick to point out how it mirrors their proposal. The plan would set aside \$10 billion to reimburse small businesses for added costs from the state's COVID-19 paid sick leave program.

In the \$7.5 billion drought package: \$1.5 billion would support a new California water trust that would buy out senior water rights through land acquisitions. Another \$500 million would scale up a new program for repurposing fallowed farmland, which is currently budgeted for \$50 million. The plan offers \$1.5 billion each for

drinking water, improving watersheds and grants for recycling, stormwater capture and groundwater cleanup. And \$1 billion would support dam safety and flood management.

The overall \$18 billion climate budget would add more than \$6 billion for wildfires, more than \$3 billion for sea level rise and \$1 billion for conserving biodiversity and expanding outdoor access. The report alludes to adding more funding for programs on manure methane reduction as well.

The Senate plan would size up spending on infrastructure,

homelessness and housing—such as adding \$100 million for a farmworker housing program.

Newsom's initial budget proposal followed a wet December and dedicated just \$750 million for drought response, with the option to tap into another \$250 million in May.

With a better estimate of the state's tax revenues in hand, the administration has just two weeks to refine its budget proposal. That will tee up a month of whirlwind negotiations with the Legislature before passing a final budget agreement in mid-June.

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Local solutions central to water forum



California Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth, right, talks to, from left, Danny Merkley, California Farm Bureau director of water resources, California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson and State Water Resources Control Board Chairman E. Joaquin Esquivel, during the Farm Bureau Water Forum last week.

Photo Credits: Christine Souza

By: Christine Souza, AgAlert

May 11, 2022 - Facing a third year of drought, leadership from county Farm Bureaus, spanning all regions of California, gathered in Sacramento last week to engage with state water officials about all things water.

A changing climate, shrinking snowpack, water rights, aging infrastructure, groundwater regulations and solutions to the state's water crisis were among the topics discussed at the California Farm Bureau Water Forum. The event brought together state water officials and county Farm Bureau leaders from the Mountain, North Coast, Central Valley, Central Coast and Southern California regions.

California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson said drought is one of myriad issues facing farmers, along with rising costs, trade impacts and remaining challenges of the pandemic.

"We're seeing a confluence of issues around the globe right now that are just going to compound what we know will be a severe and painful drought session," Johansson said. "It is going to be a very challenging year."

State and county Farm Bureaus, he said, have proposed many solutions to help solve the state's water crisis such as more water storage, conveyance and infrastructure improvements, groundwater recharge, temperature

controls, adaptive management and stormwater capture. "But we have faced roadblocks every step of the way," Johansson said.

"We can have a state that serves the needs of farmers, consumers, as well as the environment," he said. "But farmers have to know that you want agriculture in this state. Know that we want to be part of the solution."

California Department of Water Resources Director Karla Nemeth discussed urgent climate challenges for California, saying, "The world is definitely changing around us, and we've got a

lot of work to do."

Addressing the audience, she said, "It's the people in this room that have the most ingenuity of any sector in California. That gives me a lot of confidence that if we work together and focus on solutions, we'll be able to do that. One thing we need to understand is we are very much in the era of extreme hydrology."

State Water Resources Control Board Chairman E. Joaquin Esquivel discussed California's water rights system, which sets it apart from other Western states that he said curtail water rights more often.

"It is how the water right system was built to make sure that we can manage when things come down to such scarce resources," he said.

To avoid drastic cuts, he said, interest groups for local watersheds are discussing development of cooperative agreements as a more comprehensive approach to managing water during times of scarcity.

Esquivel said "being able to start to really dig into the water right system for the first time ever in an active way" is a key step. He said "just even looking at what's hydrologically available, saying what water rights could support it and actively curtailing to that has been really important."

Imperial County farmer Ronnie Leimgruber said renegotiating water rights is a huge concern for agriculture.

"Senior water rights (holders) gave concessions to allow junior water right holders access to excess flows, and that agreement was negotiated in good faith, and they realized in times of shortage they would be cut off first," Leimgruber said. "Now people want to renegotiate."

Conversation at the forum also focused on California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. Local agencies must adopt plans that show how they intend to achieve groundwater sustainability by the 2040s. Johansson said Farm Bureau opposed SGMA, but once it became law, county Farm Bureaus and farmers participated in the process to form agencies and develop plans.

"What we know now about our local groundwater is light years ahead of where we were in 2015 when this bill passed. We're getting there," Johansson said.

In answering a question about a lack of agricultural representation on SGMA agencies, Nemeth said, "We are hearing this issue crop up in different parts of the state. I would put this in the category of something that's not working, but there are some improvements we need to make, and we can make those as we propagate regulations."

Some county Farm Bureaus weighed in on a plan to improve water quality for salmon and native fish in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Voluntary agreements unveiled in late March by the Newsom administration are an alternative to the regulatory regime of the Bay-Delta water quality control plan by the state water board. Signatories include U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, DWR and water districts in the Sacramento Valley and south of the delta.

Merced County Farm Bureau Executive Director Breanne Vandenberg asked water officials about the status of the effort as it relates to Merced River stakeholders.

Nemeth and Esquivel said their agencies are open to working with Merced Irrigation District.

"We want to continue to work with Merced," Nemeth said. "I do think

there is a solution. VAs (voluntary agreements) always work better when we can include brick and mortar projects that help the system work better. There's water investments, infrastructure investments that the state can partner with Merced to make a more complete package."

In response to questions from Butte, Del Norte and Solano counties about the status of water infrastructure projects such as the proposed Sites Reservoir, Nemeth said, "I share that frustration. Infrastructure is hugely important," adding that the state should take advantage of building water infrastructure during dry periods to have for times of drought.

Representatives from several counties asked for help in streamlining the permitting process to complete groundwater recharge projects and help with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program. San Diego County Farm Bureau President Mary Matava described the order as "really complex" and suggested making it simpler for smaller farms.

Kevin Merrill, a winegrape grower in Santa Barbara County, said complying with various water requirements "is tough. I've spent a lot of time on this and a tremendous amount of money." He asked officials to help with more grant funding, for which they noted there is state and federal grant funding available.

Several county representatives, including Amador County winegrape grower Jim Spinetta, called for improving forest management. Spinetta said practicing better forest management will help conserve water supplies.

In discussing drought and the future, Tulare County dairy farmer Joey Airoso said, "This is everybody's problem including—and I'm part of it—the 40 million people who live in this state."

"We try not to waste water because we're trying to preserve our ground for the next generation," Airoso said. "Most farms have been in our families for a long time and we love this state, but we're getting tired of being kicked, and we need some support."





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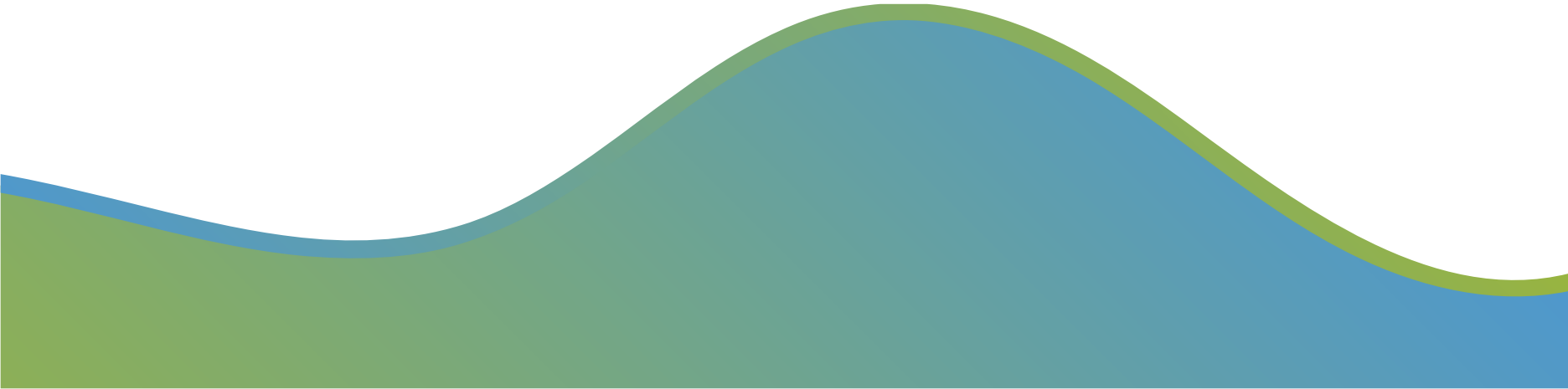
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Ballots mailed out for June 7 primary election in California; here's what to know

By: Nouran Salahieh, KGET

County election officials across California have begun sending out vote-by-mail ballots to registered voters.

Monday marked the last day counties could start mailing out the ballots for California's June 7, 2022 primary election.

Every registered voter is receiving a ballot in the mail because of a law signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, AB 37, that ensures all voters are sent ballots that can be returned by mail, at a secure drop box, or in person.

Early voting sites are set to open between May 9 and June 6, and all counties will open ballot drop-off locations for vote-by-mail ballots. To find a location near you, enter your address here.

On Election Day, June 7, polls will be open around the state from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

To make sure a vote-by-mail ballot

is counted, it has to be postmarked on or before Election Day and received by the county elections office no later than seven days after June 7, election officials said.

Voters can track their vote-by-mail ballot by signing up at WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov to receive status alerts by text, email or voice.

How to check if you're registered to vote

May 23 is the last day to register to vote for the primary election.

To check your voter registration status, visit voterstatus.sos.ca.gov or call the Voter Hotline at 1-800-345-8683.

How to register to vote

Those eligible to vote can register or update their registration online at registertovote.ca.gov. For those who would prefer to fill out a physical form, voter registration applications can be found at post offices and libraries.

Keep in mind that you have to re-register to vote if you've moved,

changed your name, or changed your political party preference.

What if I miss the deadline?

Those who miss the deadline to register to vote 15 days before an election can still go to their county elections office, vote center, or polling place on or before Election Day and complete the conditional voter

registration process, referred to as the "Same Day Voter Registration."

What if I need a replacement ballot?

Those who do not receive their vote-by-mail ballots or end up losing or destroying the one they receive can vote in person.

If they can't vote in person at the polls, they can apply in writing for a late vote-by-mail ballot and provide the application in person to county elections official, either by the person or a representative.

What will be on the ballot for the June 7 primary election?

Gov. Gavin Newsom is up for

reelection for his final term after winning a recall election last year.

The ballot will also include these offices:

- Lieutenant Governor
- Secretary of State
- Controller
- Treasurer
- Attorney General
- Insurance Commissioner
- Member, State Board of Equalization
- State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- U.S. Representative in Congress
- State Senator
- State Assembly Member

The ballot will also have two election contests for U.S. Senate: the regularly scheduled election for the full 6-year term and a special election for the remainder of the current term.

Ballot could also have local contests.

Editor's Note: Section omitted that was relevant to Los Angeles County

California crises abound, but they won't be debated

By: Dan Walters, Calmatters

California voters will receive their mail ballots for the June 7 primary election this week and most will be surprised to learn that there are 25 candidates seeking to unseat Gov. Gavin Newsom.

One of them will place second to Newsom in the primary ballot and, thanks to California's top-two election system, appear on the November ballot as Newsom's official challenger.

Most likely that dubious honor will go to Republican state Sen. Brian Dahle, since he's the only one of the 25 to be known outside their small circles of friends and supporters.

Unless he makes some monumental blunder, Democrat Newsom will coast to re-election in November.

California hasn't had a real two-party contest for governor since 2010, when Republican businesswoman Meg Whitman spent nearly \$150 million in a vain campaign against former Gov. Jerry Brown.

Were California to have a real duel for the governorship, we might have a real debate about the state's most pressing issues, including the nation's highest poverty, its worst homelessness crisis, an immense shortage of housing, medicare — at best — public schools and looming shortfalls in water and electric energy supplies.

None of them is new. All have evolved over decades of inaction or counterproductive policymaking but the latter two — water and power — are biting particularly hard just as Californians decide who will occupy political positions for years to come.

Throughout the state, water agencies are telling Californians that they must seriously curtail lawn watering and other water uses. We can probably scrape through another dry year, but were drought to persist, its impacts would likely be widespread and permanent. And with climate change, longer dry periods are virtually certain.

We'll always have enough water

for ordinary human use, but the future of California's largest-in-the-nation agricultural industry is clearly at risk, since farming consumes the vast majority of developed water supplies. As water allotments to farmers are reduced, in some instances to zero, thousands of acres of farmland are being taken out of production, affecting not only farmers but their workers and support services, such as farm equipment dealers.

It didn't have to be this way. We could have built more storage to capture water during wet years, we could have encouraged more

'California voters' Page 18

California voters

continued from page 17

conservation, we could have more efficiently captured and treated wastewater for re-use and we could have embraced desalination. But we didn't and even with a water crisis upon us we aren't moving decisively on these defensive actions.

Drought also affects our electrical energy supply since depleted reservoirs are less capable of generating hydropower. It's one of the factors in last week's declaration by state energy managers that Californians could see blackouts this summer as supply falls short of demand on hot days when air conditioning units are running at maximum output.

However, reduced hydropower production is a relatively small part

of the problem. The largest factor has been California's rush to phase out nuclear and gas-fired power plants to reduce greenhouse gases without having sufficient renewable energy to replace their output.

While wind and solar generation has increased greatly in recent years, we have not constructed enough storage, such as battery banks, to keep juice flowing when the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow.

Belatedly acknowledging the shortfall, state officials now want to keep some gas-fired plants that had been ticketed for closure on line and perhaps delay the planned decommissioning of the state's only remaining nuclear plant, Diablo Canyon.

Emergency actions, however, only underscore the policy and managerial lapses that allowed the crisis to develop.

Supply chain disruptions cause headaches for local almond growers

By: Christian Galeno, KGET

McFARLAND, Calif. (KGET) – August is when nut growers export their products worldwide, but logistical issues at ports are causing major delays with last year's product.

Growers now race against the clock as cash flow is beginning to slow and they find themselves stuck with a surplus of almonds that has already been sold but not paid for.

"It is this amazing, intimate community with an absolute global footprint," said Aubrey Bettencourt who spearheads advocacy for the 7,600, mostly family-owned almond farms in California. "They produce a stable, plant-based protein that quite honestly the world wants more of."

The world goes nuts for nuts grown in Kern County, close to 80 percent of the world's nuts come from Kern. Over at Famoso Nut Company in McFarland, almonds they produce would head as far as the Middle East and Europe, but they're now getting their slower than usual or not at all.

"Every week there were canceled bookings," said Chad DeRose, CEO of Famoso Nut Co. "You had a booking on one vessel, and it would get moved to a later date or canceled."

DeRose feels the pinch while figuring out ways to export sold products patiently sitting in their large warehouse.

With no American shipping companies in existence, why is one of the largest economic superpowers having a hard time finding boats to export American products?

"Boats coming in from Asia are taking empties and going right back because empty containers are really valuable for the number of imported products," Bettencourt said. "It's causing a major cash flow crisis and it's causing a significant crisis in the trade leverage of the American farmer."

The Port of Los Angeles is about 160 miles south of McFarland, DeRose has now shifted to storing products closer to the port since shipping companies have often reduced the allotted time to get the product onboard.

Getting product aboard a vessel has been easier in the Port of Los Angeles, a blessing as DeRose prefers to ship out of Los Angeles, but for shipments headed to Europe or the Middle East, DeRose said he's worked with shipping companies that require export thru an East Coast port. Getting the product to the east coast requires a trip aboard the train, only to run into similar issues.

"You're not getting paid until the product gets to its destination," said DeRose.

This now pushes growers to mix or 'carry in' last season's product while also taking a financial hit coupled with the possibility of losing future international consumption.


"This past season the industry

carried in about 600-million pounds this season it looks like it's in the neighborhood of 900-million pounds," said DeRose. "Not being able to get the product to the customer, you do have some lost consumption."

The ongoing battle is going into its

third year, and it doesn't seem to be getting any better, and no help in sight.

"You would think the supply chain would catch up to that demand," said Bettencourt. "You would think we would modernize our infrastructure but instead it hasn't."



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NOTICE OF ONE-DAY CLOSURE OFFICE AND OPERATIONS

Thursday, May 19, 2022

The following Community and Economic Development Divisions will be closed for operations at all locations for one day on Thursday, May 19, 2022:

Buildings and Safety Division
Castle Commerce Center
Community and Economic Development
Environmental Health
Planning

Normal office hours and operations will resume on Friday, May 20, 2022.

For emergencies, please contact:

- Buildings and Safety: (209) 628-4008
- Castle Commerce Center: (209) 628-8238
- Community and Economic Development: (209) 628-8238
- Environmental Health:
 - Consumer Protection Unit: (209) 631-1468 or (209) 201-3506
 - Hazardous Materials Unit: (209) 617-1159 or (209) 769-6677
 - Land and Water Unit: (209) 769-3000 or (209) 617-5240
- Planning: (209) 617-6896

Buildings and Safety Division
Robert Lindsey, Deputy

Economic Development Division
Mark Mimms, Deputy

Environmental Health Division
Vicki Jones, Deputy

Planning Division
Steve Maxey, Deputy

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

James L. Farley

February 14, 1944 - March 31, 2022



**Published by Merced Sun Star from
Apr. 15 to Apr. 19, 2022**

Atwater, California - Jim Farley, 78, peacefully passed away on Thursday, March 31, 2022 surrounded by his loving family. He was born in Fresno and lived in Merced County almost all of his life, graduating from El Capitan High School in 1962. He was active in 4-H as a Merced County 4-H All Star. He owned a herd of Hereford cattle and showed some of them at the Merced County and Los

Banos Spring fairs. After high school Jim enrolled at Modesto Junior College where he was president of the Young Farmers organization. He transferred to UC Davis and obtained a bachelor's degree in Animal Husbandry in 1969. He earned his master's degree in Animal Science in 1978. After college he enlisted in the U.S. Army where he had the distinction of having a top secret clearance. He was part of the color guard, with other American military soldiers, in parades in Paris, France. When he returned to Merced, he met the love of his life Louise Schlegel. They married in 1972. He was employed by the Merced County Cooperative Extension and began his 35-year career. He also completed a Master's Degree in Animal Science at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. During his tenure at Cooperative Extension he received the National Association of County Agricultural Agents recognition. He also received recognition from the California State

Association of Farm Advisors. Jim was also president of that organization. Jim also co-authored a book titled "Handbook for the Small-Scale Pork Producer" and also was heavily involved in providing content for the software program "Pork Planner." After his retirement he was employed by Validus Verification in sites across the western United States. Jim was a long-time member of Central Presbyterian Church in Merced. He served as a volunteer at the Salvation Army Breakfast with Sallie's. Jim was very active in his community, volunteering as was a leader in the 4H Swine Project and sharing his knowledge with the 4H youth. He received the 4H Merced County meritorious service award and was twice elected to the McSwain Union Elementary School District Board of Trustees. Jim was a dedicated volunteer and he participated in preparation and follow up of the Atwater Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade. He

worked with the preparation of the Chamber's newsletter. Jim's interests were diverse. He was a NASCAR fan whether watching it on television or live and in-person. He enjoyed working on antique John Deere tractors. He also was a gourmet cook. Jim was a skilled craftsman in oak furniture and designed and made a metal fireplace insert for his family's home. He was preceded in death by his parents Floyd and Pauline Farley, his mother-in-law Margaret Schlegel, grandparents C. L. and Edith Remington, and grandmother Ethel Farley. He is survived by his wife Louise Farley, son Jeff Farley, daughter Laurel Farley Mitchell, son-in-law Kevin Mitchell, brother-in-law John Schlegel and his wife Patty, sister-in-laws Beverly Schlegel and Carolyn Schlegel Botta, sister Jan Fister and her husband Larry, and nieces and nephews. The joy of his life were his grandsons Jacob and Mason Mitchell. *Editor's Note: Service has passed.*

Heat Illness Prevention and Compliance With Cal/OSHA's HIP Standard

By: FELS

Agricultural employers should be prepared to protect outdoor workers and to be in full compliance with the Heat Illness Prevention standard. Some basic points to remember:

- Be sure shade is available on demand when the temperature is below 80 degrees F;
- Shade must be provided at all times when the temperature exceeds 80 degrees F;
- Shade must be easy for employees to reach, and placement of shade should not deter access or use;

- Employees must not be required to encounter obstacles or hazards or unreasonably unpleasant conditions to reach or use shade;
- Shade must be provided to all employees on a rest or meal break, except those who choose to take a meal break elsewhere;
- Fresh, pure, and suitably cool water must be made available in sufficient quantities (replenishment is permissible) to allow each employee to drink one quart per hour;
- Water must be provided as close as practicable to location of work;
- Employees must be trained about heat illness and the Cal/OSHA

- Heat Illness Prevention (HIP) Standard before they work in conditions where they might be exposed to heat (Note: FELS' video Heat Stress Prevention 10% off through July 31; buy the video with a set of FELS' Employment Notifications Posters and get an additional 15% off);
- Supervisors must be additionally trained in HIP compliance procedures, emergency responses, and ensuring effective communication to facilitate emergency response.
 - A written copy of your HIP program in English and the language understood by the

- majority of the employees and be available to employees and Cal/OSHA inspectors on request -- this is the most frequently-cited part of the HIP standard -- and probably the most easily-avoided HIP citation!
- Remember: When temperatures exceed 95 degrees, employers must implement "high heat" procedures, including a mandatory 10 minute break every two hours (meal and rest periods can serve as these breaks, but if employees work beyond eight hours or waive meal or rest periods, you must still ensure the mandatory rest break occurs).



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Stock Your Pantry



from the
**Mariposa
CFB**
Danette Toso

I remember way back when, as a young whipper snapper, being in awe of my great grandmothers’ pantries. The rows, and rows of colorful canned goods we pretty as well as impressive. Many of the canned goods were only brought out and shared for special occasions. They spent countless hours working in their gardens, lovingly and carefully tending to their crops. It was always my job to pick off and smash the unwanted pests that preyed on the plants. It was always exciting to begin harvesting, canning, and finally enjoying the fruits of their labor. I remember asking why they didn’t just go to the grocery store, instead of spending so much time in their gardens and kitchens, canning. They always smiled and told me that I’d understand some day.

I grew up listening to stories about the Great Depression, and how they managed to survive and raise their

children in those catastrophic times. The hardships they endured and overcame were unfathomable, they were very strong indeed. Their stories have stuck with me over the years and I try my best not to waste anything, reuse and repurpose as much as possible, and prepare and stock my pantry and freezers. With that being said, I’ve never been without food to eat in all of my 58 years, I’ve never gone to bed hungry. My generation has actually had it quite easy, we’ve been spoiled for a long time. If we need groceries, we just run to the store or even order online, and poof, it’s delivered to our door.

Well friends, times are changing as they have throughout history. We are seeing delays in our orders, sometimes months of delays. We have skyrocketing inflation, the price of all goods and services have increased exponentially, and we are seeing food

shortages across the country. It’s hard to believe that parents are having a very difficult time finding baby formula for their children. It’s time to step up and learn be self-sufficient once again, we’ve relied on Amazon and EBay for far too long.

It’s time to plant our gardens, stock our pantries and freezers, and develop a plan for these turbulent times. It’s going to be more important than ever to work with and help our family, friends, and neighbors. We will get through this, we always have, we always will, we have the wherewithal. Let’s work together and as always, I encourage farmers, ranchers and conservators to invite friends, neighbors and family members to join the collective voice of the Farm Bureau.

Together, we can make our organization stronger than ever, one member at a time.



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