



# Merced County Farm News



## Assemblyman Adam Gray Announces Run for Congress

**By: Assemblyman Adam Gray's Office**

**M**erced— Assemblymember Adam C. Gray (D-Merced) today announced he will campaign to represent the newly created 13th Congressional District representing all of Merced County, and portions of the counties of Stanislaus, Madera, and Fresno. Gray has represented approximately half of the residents of the 13th Congressional District in the 21st Assembly District over the last decade.

“Today I am incredibly proud to

announce my candidacy for the U.S. House of Representatives,” said Gray. “For nearly a decade, I have had the distinct privilege of representing my hometown and the communities I love in the State Assembly. Together we fought to protect our water from the State Water Grab, increase access to health care for our underserved communities, and improve our quality of life by reducing crime and creating jobs. Those fights were not always easy, but I am proud to say that we won a lot more often than we lost.

Now I am asking for the opportunity to

bring that fight to Washington.

A lot of great people with good intentions go to DC and quickly fall prey to the partisanship that has infected our nation’s capital. Anyone who knows me will tell you I have never wavered in my commitment to my constituents over my party. Partisanship will never dictate my vote. That’s not an empty promise. It’s something I have proven every day I have been in office.

In Congress, my priorities will not be set by the leaders of my political party. They will instead come from

the people I represent. I will fight to bring resources back to the San Joaquin Valley to support agriculture and jobs, build new water storage, and mitigate the effects of flooding and drought. I will work to improve access to health care including by addressing our regional doctor shortage through the establishment of the UC Merced/UCSF-Fresno medical school. I will support efforts to clamp down on the property and violent crimes that have plagued our communities during the

*See 'Adam Gray' Page 3*

## California Farm Bureau President Comments on Gov. Newsom’s Budget Plan

**By: CAFB**

January 10, 2022 -

**J**anuary 10, 2022 - California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson offered the following comments today on the \$286.4 billion budget plan announced by Gov. Gavin Newsom:

“California’s farmers are facing unprecedented challenges beyond their control. The Farm Bureau represents over 30,000 of these farmers in every corner of the state—including over 20,000 small farms. We need water, inputs and markets to feed people and provide the jobs that are the backbone

of the California economy.

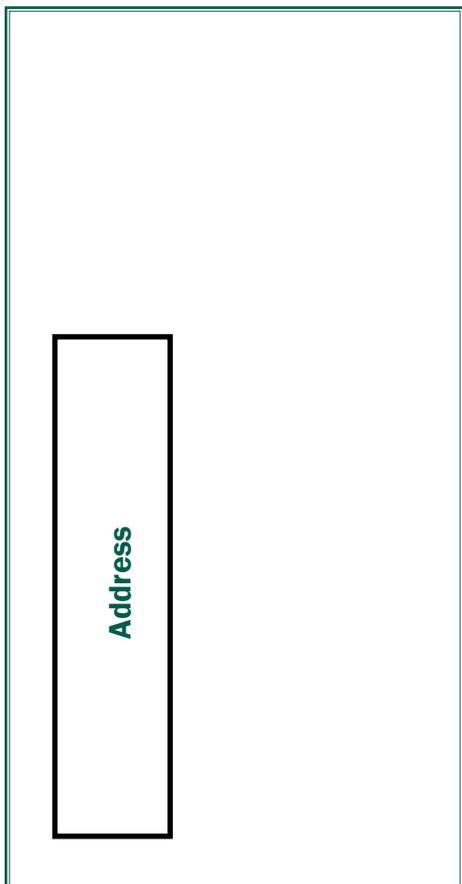
“Governor Newsom’s budget is a good framework for this year’s budget discussions in that it proposes to fund more water storage and conveyance, opportunity for California-grown products in schools, funds for both implementation of and research on climate smart ag practices and begins to relieve the massive burden on employers on costs associated with COVID-19.

“At a time when food prices are soaring and inflation and shortages are no longer speculative, it is critical that we shore up the farm economy. As they say though, the devil is the details, and we need to ensure that the

farmers who are supposed to benefit from these programs have a voice in the enactment of them.

“Despite many years of programs and slogans to ‘save the farm,’ we continue to see less and less every year – and almost all those lost are small farms. As the one California group that has more small, diverse, family-owned farms than anybody else, we look forward to partnering on solutions that can help reverse these trends.”

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 31,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of nearly 6 million Farm Bureau members.



### INSIDE:

**4** Supreme Court Blocks Biden Vaccine Rules for Large Employers

**6** California Farm Bureau Legislative Update

**13** Hydropower Draws Bipartisan Support as Renewable Energy Source



*from the*  
**President's  
Corner**

**Eric Harcksen**

**H**appy New Year, from your president. It has been a very good start to the new year with record snow and rainfall for us. Now if we could just keep that pace up for the rest of the year, we might stay on track for a normal year.

With the new year come new laws, such as an increase in minimum wage and increase in living costs. Prop 12: requires adequate space for breeding sows, laying hens and veal calves. It will have a detrimental effect on our way of farming. California's laws are not only affecting California farmers, but other farmers across the US as well. It will also cause job loss, along with increased prices and product

shortages at the grocery store. It will ban the sale of products from those who fail to meet these new confinement standards.

Newsom has signed new executive orders, including one that will go into effect in 2024 that will ban small engines 25 HP or less designed for off-road use. Then you have CARB planning to phase out all agricultural burning by 2025. It just seems to me that this state's government is not business friendly. Let's stick together and try to turn our government and voters' ideas of farming around. Our food and farming system confronts new challenges today that were not around in years past. It has always

been difficult to keep farming alive, but the mentality of consumers today is being influenced to go against the farmer. California produces more than 400 different commodities and two-thirds of the nation's fruits and nuts. We are the fifth largest supplier of food, cotton, and fiber, not to mention other important crops. The regulations that Newsom is implementing on us make it almost impossible to keep up our family farms and make a future for our children to one day take it over.

Your Merced County Farm Bureau staff is always working hard to make a difference. We are in this together and appreciate every one of our farmers.

**I**t's only mid-January but feels like we should be farther along in the year. It is shaping up to be another intriguing election year, but when are they not? Due to redistricting, some major shuffles have happened including the one you found on the front page.

The retirement of Congressman McNerney, the move in location for Congressman Harder, the redistricting of boundaries taking Congressman Costa to a Fresno centric district and

the jump from Assemblymember Gray into our Congressional race are all big news. Due to Gray's move to run for the US House seat, his Assembly seat is left vacant. In addition, our state Senate seat has also changed and will no longer include the Salinas Valley and San Benito County. There has been speculation of people running for all the above, however nothing that has been set in stone aside from Gray. Notable county elections that will also be taking place are Supervisorial

Districts 3 and 5, Merced County Sheriff, District Attorney and Assessor-Controller among others. Our cities will also be impacted by their routine election cycle; however, those races will not start to heat up until August when filing takes place.

We have also been busy in our office with routine meetings and planning for this year. You may have noticed

our Save the Date for our Annual Meeting taking place on March 25, 2022. Everything that we booked in 2020 – our speaker, location, etc. – is the event you will be a part of this year. We will be sending out a message to all ticketholders from the original event. If you purchased tickets at that time and asked us to hold them for you, we will honor that request. If you would like to purchase tickets, please reach out at your convenience and we can make that happen.

We have also scheduled an in-person FARM2U Day for the end of April. This event is our largest educational event for children, taking place since 2012. Typically, we hold this event at the Merced Fairgrounds but due to the pandemic and each school district approaching precautions differently, we have partnered with the Kids Discovery Station in Merced for a Saturday event. This would be open to the public at no cost. We are currently working on requesting the support of sponsors and presenters. If you are interested in either, please reach out to Denelle in our office by emailing [dflake@mercedfarmbureau.org](mailto:dflake@mercedfarmbureau.org).

Lastly, look for our upcoming events as they hit the newspaper and our e-news. We are scheduled to host an Ag Haz Mat course on Monday, February 7. Following this,



*from the*  
**Director's  
Desk**

**Breanne Vandenberg**

we are working on some exciting events including CE units, coffee talks and more. In recent weeks you will also receive more information on our upcoming events along with sponsorship opportunities so please be on the lookout! Hope to see you in 2022!

## 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.

## Adam Gray

continued from page 1

pandemic. Importantly, I will always support good ideas regardless of if they come from Democrats, Republicans, or independents.”

In conjunction with the announcement of his bid for Congress, Assemblyman Gray also announced he has received the following endorsements from community leaders:

- US Representative Jim Costa
- Former US Representative Tony Coehlo
- Former US Representative Gary Condit Sr.
- Former US Representative Dennis Cardoza
- State Treasurer Fiona Ma
- State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond
- Former Secretary of CDFR Bill Lyons, Jr.
- State Senator Melissa Hurtado
- State Senator Bob Hertzberg
- Former State Senator Anthony Cannella
- Former State Senator Cathleen Galgiani
- Assemblymember Carlos Villapadua
- Assemblymember Akilah Weber
- Assemblymember Evan Low
- Assemblymember Phil Ting
- Assemblymember Blanca Rubio
- Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
- Former Assemblymember Rusty Areias
- Former Assemblymember Kristin Olsen
- Former Assemblymember Henry T. Perea Jr.
- Former Assemblymember Nicole Parra
- Merced County Superintendent of Schools Steve Tietjen
- Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke
- Merced County Supervisor Lloyd Pareira
- Merced County Supervisor Josh Pedrozo

- Merced County Supervisor Daron McDaniel
- Merced County Supervisor Scott Silveira
- Merced Mayor Matt Serratto
- Merced City Councilmember Kevin Blake
- Merced City Councilmember Delray Shelton
- Merced City Councilmember Bertha Perez
- Merced City Councilmember Fernando Echeverria
- Merced Irrigation District Director Robert Weimer
- Merced Irrigation District Director Dave Long
- Merced Irrigation District Director Jeff Marchini
- Merced Community College District Trustee Carmen Ramirez
- Merced City School District Trustee Allen Brooks
- Mayor of Los Banos Tom Faria
- Mayor of Dos Palos April Hogue
- Mayor of Gustine Pat Nagy
- Atwater City Councilmember Brian Raymond
- Atwater City Councilmember John Cale
- Planada Superintendent of Schools Jose Gonzalez
- Mayor of Livingston Juan Aguilar Jr.
- Stanislaus County Supervisor Mani Grewal
- Stanislaus County Supervisor Vito Chiesa
- Mayor of Modesto Sue Zwahlen
- Modesto City Councilmember Rosa Escutia-Braaton
- Modesto City Councilmember Jenny Kenoyer
- Modesto Irrigation District Board Member Larry Bird
- Former Vice Mayor of Ceres Ken Lane
- Ceres City School Board Trustee Faye Lane
- Former Ceres City Councilmember Bret Durossette
- Ceres City School Board Trustee Mike Welsh
- Calaveras County Supervisor Jack Garamendi Jr.

## Merced County Farm News

Published monthly by  
Merced County Farm Bureau  
**Phone (209) 723-3001**  
**Fax (209) 722-3814**

646 S. Hwy 59, Merced CA 95341  
**Email: [dflake@mercedfarmbureau.org](mailto:dflake@mercedfarmbureau.org)**  
(USPS 339-500)

Entered as Second Class matter, Jan. 20, 1948 at the US Post Office in Merced, CA. Subscription is included in membership. Singles issues are 50 cents. Merced County Farm News is printed by 209 Multimedia, 1021 Fresno Street, Newman, CA 95360, (209) 862-2222.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Merced County Farm Bureau, P.O. Box 1232, Merced, CA 95341; telephone (209) 723-3001; FAX (209) 722-3814. Merced County Farm Bureau does not assume responsibility for statements by advertisers or for products advertised in Merced County Farm News, nor does Farm Bureau assume responsibility for statements or expressions of opinion other than in editorials or in articles showing authorship by an officer, director or employee of the Merced County Farm Bureau or its affiliates.

### Merced County Farm Bureau Staff

Breanne Vandenberg  
**Executive Director**  
Lorraine Passadori  
**Program Director**

Denelle Flake  
**Farm News Editor/Project Specialist**

Alexis Rudich  
**Project Assistant/ESJ Grower Relations**

### Board of Directors

Pres: Eric Harcksen ..... 620-1953  
1st VP: Joe Sansoni..... 761-9284  
2nd VP: Alan Sano.....559-905-1240  
Sec/Treas: David Barroso.....652-6437  
Past Pres: Gino Pedretti III..... 756-1612

#### District 1

Sean Davis ..... 769-1804  
Joe Maiorino.....564-6791

#### District 2

Bob Vandenberg.....704-5568

#### District 3

Mike Martin.....675-1907  
Chad Perry.....675-4474

#### District 4

Jean Okuye.....756-2421  
Galen Miyamoto.....761-5366

#### District 5

Brent Chipponeri.....652-3473  
John Van Ruler.....648-3877

#### District 6

Dante Migliazzo .....769-9525  
Bill Arnold.....761-0542

#### District 7

Wiebren Jonkman.....564-0870  
Tom Roduner.....769-9353

#### District 8

Julie Giampaoli.....201-8434  
Joe Scoto .....761-0489

#### Directors at Large

Jim Johnston .....564-7551  
Jeff Marchini .....769-9116  
Tim Lohman .....988-3545  
Bob Giampaoli .....769-4973  
Dan Dewees.....658-4343  
Louie Bandoni.....761-0625  
Michael Serrano .....485-1935

### Mariposa County Farm Bureau Staff

Danette Toso  
**Executive Director**

### Board of Directors

Pres: Kelly Williams ..... 376-2408  
1st VP: Elnora George .....376-2419  
2nd VP: Carla Kelly ..... 742-6862

#### Directors

Abel Lopez.....376-2208  
James Palmer .....374-3470  
Walter Palmer Jr.....374-3470  
Trevor Lee Smith.....769-9969  
Danette Toso .....376-2304  
Tony Toso .....376-2304

Tom Rogers

**CFBF Director - District 9**

Andrew Genasci  
**CFBF Field Representative**

Kim Mesa  
**Merced County YF&R Chair**

Sarah Baskins  
**YF&R State Committee - District 9**

## Stay Connected with MCFB

Follow us on Instagram  
[@merced\\_farm\\_bureau](https://www.instagram.com/merced_farm_bureau)

Like us on Facebook  
**Merced County Farm Bureau**

Join our mailing list by emailing  
[info@mercedfarmbureau.org](mailto:info@mercedfarmbureau.org)

## Calendar of Events

**February 7**  
**Ag HazMat Training (pg. 16)**

**February 14**  
**Labor Laws Workshop (pg. 7)**

**March 25**  
**MCFB Annual Meeting (pg. 24)**

# Supreme Court Blocks Biden Vaccine Rules for Large Employers

By: Brent Kendall and Jess Barvin

January 14, 2022  
 WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court on Thursday blocked the Biden administration's Covid-19 vaccine-or-testing rules for large private employers, upending the government's most aggressive effort to combat the pandemic via the workplace.

The high court, however, did give the administration more latitude in the healthcare industry, allowing it to impose a vaccine mandate for more than 10 million healthcare workers whose facilities participate in Medicare and Medicaid, a holding that leaves one part of the president's Covid-19 playbook in place.

The private-employer requirements, for businesses with 100 or more employees, would have applied to an estimated 84 million workers. The court's conservative majority, in an unsigned opinion, said the Biden administration likely didn't have the unilateral power to impose a mandate that employers ensure their workers were vaccinated or tested every week for Covid-19. Three liberal justices dissented.

President Biden in a written statement said the high court's decision to allow the healthcare vaccine mandate "will save lives," but he expressed disappointment that the court blocked "common-sense life-saving requirements for employees at large businesses that were grounded squarely in both science and the law."

The court's decision on the requirements for large employers was a relief for some businesses, especially those that have said imposing a mandate would make it harder for them to compete for and keep workers. Other businesses already have adopted mandates for their workers on their own or because of local rules, for example in New York City.

Thursday's ruling in favor of employers reflected the Supreme Court majority's skepticism of federal regulatory power exercised without specific and explicit congressional authorization. Conservative justices, much as they did when they lifted the federal eviction moratorium last year, said the Biden administration couldn't combat the coronavirus pandemic by

asserting emergency health-and-safety powers Congress approved under different conditions decades ago.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued the private-employer rules in November. Several parts of the regulations, including a requirement for mask-wearing in the workplace by unvaccinated individuals, were set to take effect this week, though the testing requirements weren't scheduled to be enforced until next month.

The majority's unsigned opinion said the vaccinate-or-test rule appeared to well exceed the authority Congress granted OSHA when it established the agency in 1970.

"The Act empowers the Secretary [of labor] to set workplace safety standards, not broad public health measures," the court said. But while Covid-19 is transmitted in the workplace, it also spreads "at home, in schools, during sporting events, and everywhere else that people gather. That kind of universal risk is no different from the day-to-day dangers that all face from crime, air pollution, or any number of communicable diseases," the court said, and like those other hazards is beyond OSHA's power to address.

The court added, however, that the agency retains power to act in workplaces especially susceptible to the contagion, such as those with "particularly crowded or cramped environments" or where researchers deal with infectious agents.

In a joint opinion, dissenting Justices Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan said the pandemic was precisely the kind of emergency Congress intended OSHA to mitigate.

"If OSHA's Standard is far-reaching—applying to many millions of American workers—it no more than reflects the scope of the crisis," they wrote. The virus

spreads most easily "in the shared indoor spaces that are the hallmark of American working life," they wrote. "The proof is all around us: Since the disease's onset, most Americans have seen their workplaces transformed."

The dissenters called it perverse to prevent OSHA from addressing a workplace hazard simply because the danger also exists off the job.

In allowing the vaccine mandate for healthcare workers, conservatives Chief Justice John Roberts and

Justice Brett Kavanaugh joined the three liberals to form a 5-4 majority, allowing that requirement to take effect nationwide.

That mandate, which doesn't include a testing alternative, was issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which said facilities that accept money from those programs must comply. Because of

See 'Vaccine Rules' Page 5

**YOSEMITE  
 FARM  
 CREDIT**

**HELPING OUR  
 MEMBERS PROSPER**

LOCAL AGRICULTURE FINANCING

**MODESTO  
 TURLOCK  
 PATTERSON** | **MERCED  
 LOS BANOS  
 OAKDALE**

Dairy Loans • Orchard Development • Land Purchases • Crop Loans • Equipment Loans

yosemitfarmcredit.com   

# Vaccine Rules

continued from page 4

conflicting lower court rulings, that mandate had been in effect in only half of the states.

The high court, again in an unsigned opinion, said the secretary of health and human services held broad authority to ensure that the healthcare providers who care for Medicare and Medicaid patients protect their patients' health and safety.

"COVID-19 is a highly contagious, dangerous, and—especially for Medicare and Medicaid patients—deadly disease," the majority wrote, noting that healthcare workers and public-health organizations overwhelmingly supported the mandate.

"Indeed, their support suggests that a vaccination requirement under these circumstances is a straightforward and predictable example of the health and safety regulations that Congress has

authorized the Secretary to impose," the court said.

Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett dissented. Justice Thomas, writing for that bloc, said the Biden administration hadn't made a strong showing that the "hodgepodge of provisions" it relied upon gave it legal support for a national vaccine requirement.

In a second dissent, Justice Alito said that even if the administration had the power to require vaccinations for healthcare workers, this mandate had legal problems because the government didn't seek public comment before putting "more than 10 million healthcare workers to the choice of their jobs or an irreversible medical treatment."

In his statement after the ruling Mr. Biden said: "It is now up to states and individual employers to determine whether to make their workplaces as safe as possible for employees," calling on "business leaders to immediately join those who have already stepped up—including one-

third of Fortune 100 companies—and institute vaccination requirements to protect their workers, customers, and communities."

"Employers are responsible for the safety of their workers on the job," said Labor Secretary Marty Walsh. "OSHA will be evaluating all options to ensure workers are protected from this deadly virus."

"Today's ruling protects our individual rights and states' rights to pursue the solutions that work best for their citizens," said Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, who led a coalition of Republican-leaning states that challenged the OSHA rule.

"As small businesses try to recover after almost two years of significant business disruptions, the last thing they need is a mandate that would cause more business challenges," said Karen Harned, who heads the litigation arm of the National Association of Independent Business, an advocacy group that brought the companion case.

The court's actions come as Covid-19 has been spreading at record

rates in the U.S. Republican-led states and business groups sued to block the federal requirements, arguing the Biden administration was engaged in unlawful overreach that wasn't rendered permissible by the public-health crisis.

The court has been more accepting of Covid-19 mitigation measures adopted at the state and local levels, including mandates requiring healthcare workers and college students to be vaccinated.

In a concurring opinion, Justice Gorsuch said that Covid-19 presents "challenges for every American." But a greater danger was permitting the federal government to exceed its authority, he wrote, joined by Justices Thomas and Alito.

"State and local authorities possess considerable power to regulate public health," he wrote, but federal powers are "limited and divided." Unless the court enforced those boundaries, he wrote, "emergencies would never end and the liberties our Constitution's separation of powers seeks to preserve would amount to little."



**FREE**

**N-95 MASKS**

Call the MCFB office  
at 209-723-3001  
for more information  
on how to obtain masks.



**RICO, PFITZER, PIRES & ASSOCIATES**  
INSURANCE AGENCY, INC. Lic 0499798

*"Proudly celebrating over 50 years of excellence in our industry"*

			
<b>Bobby Rosa</b> (209) 856-8820 brosa@rppins.com	<b>Lucia Farao</b> (209) 856-8846 lfarao@rppins.com	<b>Leroy Rocha</b> (209) 856-8839 lrocha@rppins.com	
			
<b>Jeff Wolf</b> (209) 856-8821 jwolf@rppins.com	<b>Leslie Machado</b> (209) 856-8814 lmachado@rppins.com	<b>Zach Withrow</b> (209) 856-8843 zwithrow@rppins.com	<b>Rosie DeLaCruz</b> (209) 856-8840 rdelacruz@rppins.com

**Call us today for a personalized Insurance Consultation!**  
**(800) 399-7473 • (209) 854-2000 • www.rppins.com**



**BENEFITS DIVISION**  
OF RICO, PFITZER, PIRES & ASSOCIATES  
INSURANCE AGENCY, INC. Lic. 0L81506

# California Farm Bureau Legislative Update

By: **CAFB**

January 14, 2022

## BUDGET 2022-2023 State Budget Proposal

Governor Gavin Newsom has released his proposed State Budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This \$286.4 billion budget is the State's largest budget to date and includes a \$46.7 billion surplus (\$20.6 billion of which is discretionary). In his press conference on Monday, Governor Newsom outlined his top priorities: COVID response, Climate, Homelessness, Cost of Living and Public Safety. Below is a truncated list of funding proposals that are of most relevance to agriculture:

### AGRICULTURE, GENERALLY

- \$50 million to four CSU University Farms (Cal Poly SLO and Pomona, Chico and Fresno)
- \$287,000 for animal mortality management considering rendering disruptions
- \$537,000 for education/outreach by the State Organic Program

### COVID RESPONSE

- \$2.7 billion for testing, vaccine distribution, hospital support and public health education

### CLEAN ENERGY and TRANSPORTATION

- \$6.1 billion for zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) and charging infrastructure
- \$3.9 billion heavy-duty truck conversion
- \$102 billion passenger vehicle
- 1 billion ZEV infrastructure and charging stations
- \$100 million green hydro-electric
- \$4 million offshore wind projects
- \$210 million industrial decarbonization
- \$85 million for the Food Processor Investment Program (FPIP)

### CLIMATE CHANGE

- \$150 million Funding Agricultural Replacement Measures for Emission Reductions Program (FARMER)
- \$85 million Healthy Soils Program
- \$48 million livestock methane reduction (includes dairy digesters and alternative manure management)
- \$5 million for research into

- livestock methane reduction strategies and projects
- \$22 million for technical assistance grants for conservation management plans (i.e. conservation plans, carbon sequestration plans, and transition to organic plans to focus on carbon and water actions).
- \$15 million Pollinator Habitat Program
- \$25 million Climate Catalyst Fund—a revolving loan program to support climate smart agriculture practices
- \$85 million for UC applied climate research, regional hubs and workforce development

### DROUGHT

- \$750 million aligned with the Water Resilience Portfolio Update/Progress Report:
- \$1 million to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) for water conservation grants
- \$120 million to DWR for drought resilience
- \$25 million to the State Water Resources Control Board's Drinking Water Program
- \$75 million to replace turf
- \$20 million to the Department of Food and Agriculture for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP)
- \$5 million for small farm drought relief
- \$75 million to the Department of Fish and Wildlife
- \$250 million is held in contingency for future drought-related budget action
- \$5.2 billion over 3 years, \$1 billion in 2022 for updates to the state's water infrastructure to handle the big swings in precipitation

### ECONOMIC and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- \$500 million for climate-based workforce investments
- \$1.5 billion in career pathways
- Including an additional \$2 million for agricultural career technical education
- \$2.3 billion for port assistance and goods movement
- \$1.2 billion to support supply chain infrastructure at ports
- \$1.1 billion for zero emission equipment at ports,
- \$110 million for a goods

- movement training campus
- \$40 million for increased truck driver capacity
- \$30 million to goods movement process improvements

### HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

- \$2 billion for affordable housing (including rental assistance)
- \$2 billion for homeless assistance
- \$1.5 billion for behavioral health responses to mentally ill homeless populations
- \$500 million for homeless encampments
- \$10 million for "return home well"

### NUTRITION

- \$30 million for the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program
- \$596m for universal school meals for K-12 students
- \$3 million to develop the California Regional Farm to School Network
- \$450 million for school kitchen infrastructure and equipment

### TAXATION and BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Climate Tax Credits
- \$250 million per year for three years to the Franchise Tax Board for climate change mitigation technologies by private companies
- \$100 million per year for three years to GO-Biz for green energy technology (electric vehicle manufacturing and infrastructure; geothermal, lithium extraction, and battery manufacturing; long-duration storage; addressing methane emissions; and hydrogen technologies to reduce the use of natural gas)
- \$5.5 billion to restore Net Operating Loss Carryover which was temporarily limited in 2020-2022
- \$150 million for the Small Business Covid Relief Grant program for unfunded applicants from 2021
- \$20 million reallocated from undersubscribed cultural institution grants
- \$523 million to offset consumer costs for increased excise gas tax increases set to increase on July 1st

### WILDFIRE

- \$1.2 billion over two years

- for forest health activities and decreased fire risk
- \$482 million resilient forests and landscapes (forest thinning, replanting, expanding grazing, and prescribed burns)
- \$100 million reforestation
- \$382 million for CAL FIRE and the California Conservation Corps for wildfire fuel breaks
- \$44 million to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), CAL FIRE, and the UC Fire Advisors on community and home hardening
- \$110 million for regional investments
- \$38 million for monitoring (remote sensing) and research on long-term forest health and restoration
- \$44 million for forest sector economic stimulus (expanded wood product supply chain and workforce preparedness)
- \$284 million new firefighting equipment
- \$400 million to CalFire
- \$62 million for emergency response
- \$12 million for Southern California emergency response center

### Commodities

AB 1620 (Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, D-Winters) has been recently introduced in the State Assembly. This bill would establish the broomrape control board at the Department of Food and Agriculture to advise the Department on noxious weed management. Broomrape is a parasitic weed that has recently re-emerged in California affecting tomato fields. This bill would also authorize the Department to assess a fee on impacted producers and handlers to pay for detection, surveillance, and treatment activities.

### Land Use

AB 1001 (Cristina Garcia, D-Bell Gardens), a Farm Bureau opposed bill passed the Assembly Natural Resources Committee this week. This bill expands CEQA requirements to incorporate the issue of discriminatory land use policies. Specifically, the bill creates two new legal standards: (1) it forces all public agencies when complying with CEQA to

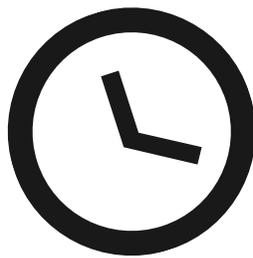
### Legislative Update continued from page 6

“act consistently with the principles of environmental justice,” and (2) requires all air and water quality impacts be mitigated directly in the affected disadvantaged community. Both requirements are already incorporated in planning and zoning laws and CEQA requirements and present ambiguities, legal challenges and liabilities for lead agencies and project applicants. The bill is set to be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

#### Natural Resources

The 30x30 Advisory Committee hosted a virtual meeting on January 12th from 3-5pm to discuss opportunities for public feedback and member input on recommendations and the implementation plan. The state will also be hosting another public feedback session for oral comment on Tuesday, February 1st from 3-6pm.

*Editor's Note: Appointments section omitted*



# LABOR LAWS & REGULATIONS WORKSHOP

**February 14, 2022  
10:00 AM**

**Merced County Farm Bureau Office  
or Zoom**

**Topics Include  
New Ag Employment  
Requirements for 2022**



**RSVP to MCFB, 209-732-3001  
Cost? FREE!**



### Reminder!

Your 2021 INMP reports are due by March 1, 2022. If you need assistance completing your 2021 INMP reports, please contact the MCFB office at (209) 723-3001 to schedule an appointment.

Thank you!



**CROPS FARMS RANCHES DAIRIES**



*A Family Tradition Since 1912*

**725 W 18th St Merced, CA, 95340      209-722-1541  
fandb1912.com**

LIC # 0358327

# In-row cultivators for vegetable crops in the San Joaquin Valley



## from the Farm Advisor

**Scott Stoddard**  
UC Cooperative Extension,  
Merced County

There aren't a lot of herbicides registered in tomatoes, or any vegetable crop in California. Herbicides are developed with vegetables in mind, rather, they are designed to work in the big acreage crops wheat, corn, soybeans, or cotton, then they trickle down to the vegetables many years later. Conventional processing tomato weed management often includes pre-plant herbicides Treflan (trifluralin) and/or Dual Magnum (metolachlor). Matrix (rimsulfuron) is sometimes also used post plant. Regardless, cultivation and hand hoeing are still needed, especially

for weeds that grow in the plant row.

Hand weeding labor is one of the biggest costs to vegetable farmers, but new technologies are available with the promise to control in-row weeds. New robotic weeders use cameras and computers to distinguish crops from weeds. They are equipped with either spray nozzles or cultivators to remove weeds within the crop row. Also available is the finger weeder, a simple mechanical cultivator that uses interlocking rubber fingers to remove small weeds in the plant row once transplants are established. Finger weeders can also be adapted to and added to existing cultivators and modified for individual grower needs.

Research in Monterey County by UCCE Farm Advisor Richard Smith has shown that in-row cultivators significantly reduce the cost on hand weeding in lettuce, spinach, and broccoli. While crews still need to go into the field, the time they spend removing weeds is reduced about 50%. My goal of repeating this work was to see how well these tools would work on vegetable crops grown in Merced.

In 2020, Amber Vinchesi-Vahl, Farm Advisor in Sutter-Butte Counties, and I began a project to evaluate a robotic cultivator (a Robovator) and a finger weeder for control in-row weeds in processing tomatoes.

These two systems were compared to standard cultivation and post-plant Matrix herbicide. My results were great: hand weeding cost was reduced 88% for the finger weeder and 37% for the Robovator as compared to the untreated control. For Amber, the Robovator provided better weed control. But one major drawback for the Robovator was impact on plant stand – the Robovator would occasionally cut the plants at the stem.

In 2021, I evaluated these tools in processing tomatoes again, as well as fresh market tomatoes, peppers, sweetpotatoes, pumpkins, cabbage, and melons. In fresh market tomatoes and sweetpotatoes, the Robovator again caused a slight stand reduction. In melons and peppers, the unit worked perfectly, though there were so few weeds in the melon field a weeding crew wasn't needed, and an economic comparison couldn't be done (Figure 1). In pumpkins, the plants were too large, and the finger weeder caused a lot of damage to the crop.

For either machine, the window of opportunity when they are effective is very important. Finger weeders are only effective on very small weeds. For pigweeds, a delay of just a day or two after germination and the plants will already be too big to effectively control using this tool. The Robovator

has a longer working window, but there needs to be a clear size difference between weeds and crop. Medium size transplants and small weeds are the ideal situation.

In-row cultivators have real potential to reduce hand weeding costs and reliance on herbicides on warm season vegetable crops typically grown in this area. More trials are planned for 2022.



**Figure 1. Finger weeders work by overlapping in the plant row to remove very small weeds.**

## Eight Gustine FFA Students Participated in the Local Job Interview Competition

**By: Garret Gomes, Gustine FFA Reporter**

The Gustine FFA Chapter is in full swing again with speaking competitions beginning to start. As the new year begins students within the Gustine FFA Chapter continue to prepare for upcoming public speaking competitions.

On Thursday January 6th eight Gustine FFA students competed in the

local Job Interview Public Speaking Competition. Students participated in a mock job interview where they were asked a variety of questions pertaining to a job within the agriculture industry. They also had to create a resume and cover letter to be submitted to the judges.

The students that participated were Grant Hazan, Tyler Borba, Daniel Gomes, Garret Gomes, Christina Moitozo, Savanna Barcellos, Kailyn Mederios, and Darian Nunes. The four

students that will be moving on to the sectional competition later this month will be Savanna Barcellos, Garret Gomes, Christina Moitozo, and Tyler Borba.

Kailyn Medeiros shared "Though I wasn't able to continue further in the competition, I've left the experience with valuable skills and more confidence."

The Gustine FFA Chapter looks forward to hearing the results of all speaking competitions on Super

Saturday which will be held on January 22nd at Merced College.

"I am excited to be a part of the four FFA members who will be attending Super Saturday! I know everyone's hard work will pay off. I am looking forward to my interview on January 22, 2022!" Christina shared.

Our chapter is proud of all participants who competed in the local Job Interview competition and wishes the four students that will be moving on the best of luck!

# Merced County Farm Bureau Heritage Members

## Platinum Heritage Members



## Gold Heritage Members

Grimbleby Coleman CPAs

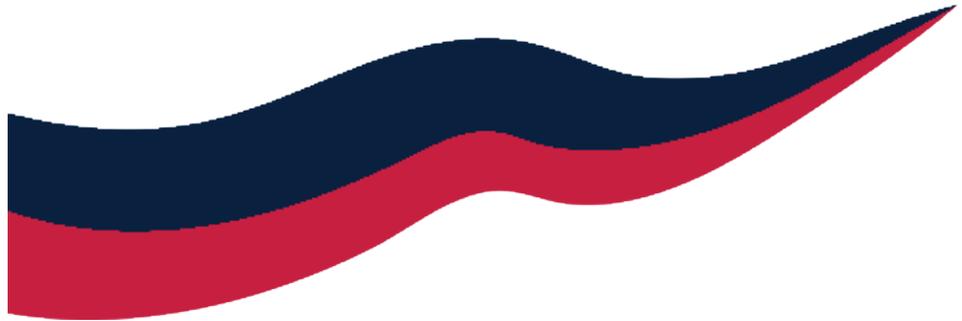
Holt Ag Solutions

Minturn Nut Company

Turlock Irrigation District

Valley Pacific Petroleum Services Inc.

# VALLEY PACIFIC



Delivered Fuels | Lubricants | CFN Cardlock



Visit our Merced Cardlock Location:  
385 S Hwy 59, Merced, CA 95341

We proudly sell products from these brands and more!



# We Fuel California

Family Owned & Locally Managed Since 1947

(800)266-3782 | [www.vpps.net](http://www.vpps.net)



## BUILT FOR AGRICULTURE

Our mission is to improve the lives of farmers and ranchers while serving all segments of agriculture. Whether you're looking to buy land, invest in equipment or refinance an existing loan to save money, we have the financial solutions and expertise to help you get the job done.



Call 800.800.4865 today  
or visit [AgLoan.com/Built-for-Ag](http://AgLoan.com/Built-for-Ag)

A part of the Farm Credit System. Equal Opportunity Lender.



# Processing of Modoc County's UC Cooperative Extension archival collection underway

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

In a previous post, we shared the California Agricultural Resources Archive (CARA) team's effort to digitize annual reports found in the Modoc County, UC Cooperative Extension records at the UC Merced Library. These reports contain information that offer insight into the day-to-day operations of UC Cooperative Extension work from the early 1900s. Now that those reports are available online and the collection has a finding aid in the Online Archive of California, we are processing the remaining documents from Modoc County's collection. Most of these materials date from the mid-twentieth century through the early twenty-first century and are organized into three series: Administrative Files, Ranch and Range Management, and Watershed Projects. This arrangement reflects the original order in which the materials were received. Doing so assists researchers using the collection to understand how farm advisors and specialists conducted their work and organized their notes and records. The materials are then placed in new archival quality folders and boxes (acid and lignin free) to protect the materials from deterioration. The folders are then organized alphabetically and labeled with a title, date range, series

and subseries, and the box and folder number.

Processing archival collections, however, requires archivists to make decisions when materials appear out of place with their surroundings. In this collection, dispersed throughout were documents related to administrative and directorial activities. For example, there are three folders of speeches written by former farm advisor and county director Cecil Pierce. His speeches reveal Cooperative Extension outreach events and relationships with associated organizations such as schools, Rotary Clubs, and the Cattlemen's Association. These materials were placed in the Administrative Files series.

Also in this series are agriculture and crop reports produced by farm advisors during the 1940s-1980s.

Frequently, archivists find duplicates of documents and generally retain 2-3 copies of an individual item; extra copies are disposed or returned.

The core subjects found in the collection, however, relate to ranch and rangeland management and watershed projects. Modoc County comprises the northeastern-most area of California, sharing a border with both Oregon and Nevada, and much of the material reflects the extensive livestock operations present there, including livestock grazing on public lands managed by the Bureau

of Land Management (BLM) and other governmental organizations. Predominant in the collection are documents pertaining to the Modoc-Washoe Experimental Stewardship Program (ESP). Crafted by Congress as part of the Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978, ESP areas were established across the country to help ease conflicts amongst the various private and public land users and to strategize around restorative projects. The Modoc-Washoe Experimental Stewardship Program is still in operation today.

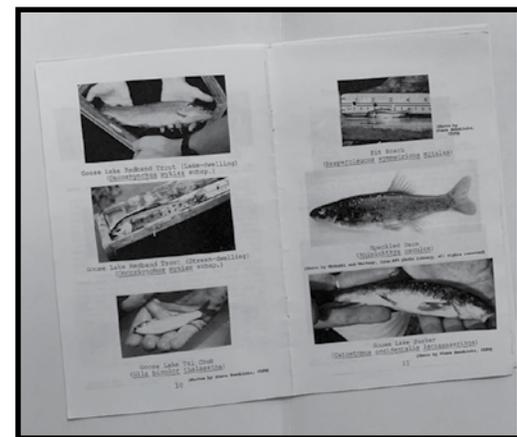
In the Watershed Projects series are documents created by the Goose Lake Fishes Working Group (GLFWG) which serves as another example of a public and private partnership to restore and conserve the environment in Modoc County. The GLFWG functions to protect the endangered fish in Goose Lake (located in both California and Oregon) and its surrounding tributaries. Information about Goose Lake redband trout, Goose Lake sucker, Goose Lake lamprey, and Goose Lake tui chubs

are found in these documents as well as projects to reinforce riparian landscapes and to improve drainage and water flow.

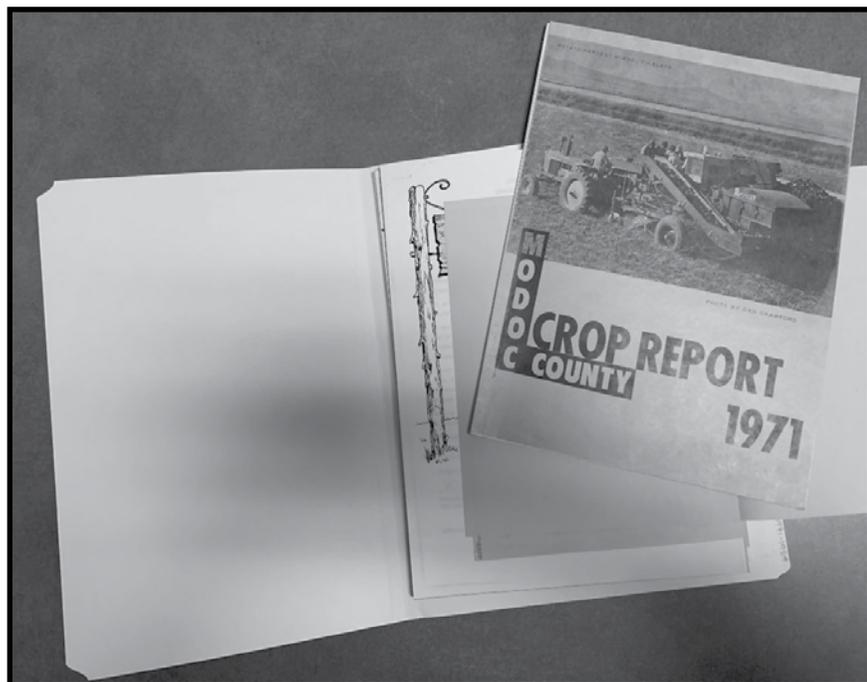
Be on the lookout for many of these items to be digitized and place in the Modoc County, UC Cooperative Extension's online digital collection. Other topics found in the collection include beef production and costs, livestock diseases, newsletters, selenium and Vitamin E cattle trials, western juniper control and management, and 4-H youth development program materials.

The Modoc County, UC Cooperative Extension digital collection is accessible by using this QR code below:

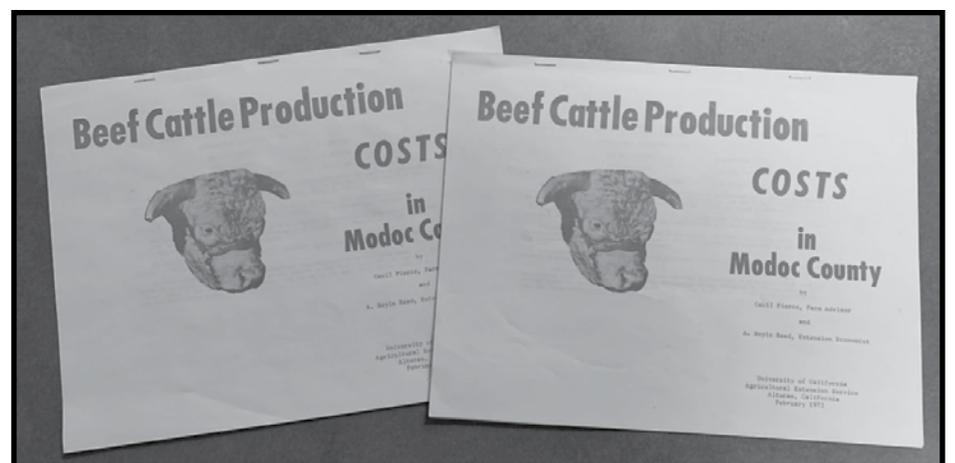
Stay tuned for when these new documents are published online!



Watershed Projects series



Modoc County Crop Report 1971



Modoc County Crop Beef Cattle Production Costs

# California is now out of the worst drought category; here's where conditions stand

**By: Tracy Bloom, KTLA 5**

For the first time in more than a year, all of California is out of the worst drought category as the state's overall outlook shows major improvement since the start of the water year.

As of Tuesday, when the U.S. Drought Monitor released its latest map, 0% of the Golden State was experiencing "exceptional" drought — something that hasn't happened since Dec. 8, 2020.

Additionally, only approximately 1.4% is in the second-worst "extreme" drought category, data from the the federal monitor shows.

But while California may be largely out of the worst conditions, virtually all of the state continues to be mired in moderate to severe drought, according to the latest map.

Below, you can see the difference

between how California looked at the end of the 2020-2021 water year versus latest conditions measured on Jan. 11.

When that first map was released, California was still in the midst of one of its driest years on record, according to the state's Department of Water Resources.

The result was more than 45% of the state was in the monitor's worst drought category when the water year began, with over 87% mired in at least severe drought.

But a barrage of storms last month brought record-breaking rain and snow to parts of the state, wiping out the worst of the drought conditions and significantly bolstering the Sierra snowpack, which helps replenish critical source of California's water supply.

"We could not have asked for a better December in terms of Sierra

snow and rain," DWR Director Karla Nemeth said in a news release. "But Californians need to be aware that even these big storms may not refill our major reservoirs during the next few months. We need more storms and average temperatures this winter and spring, and we can't be sure it's coming."

To make up for the last two years — which each ranked among the five driest on record — the state needs "significant January and February precipitation," according to the release.

As California water officials recently noted, the state has gotten off to fast starts precipitation-wise in December before, only to see bone dry conditions for the rest of winter and beyond.

The bad news for California: This winter already wasn't expected to be a wet one.

In fact, according to the seasonal

outlook from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center, the probability favors it to be drier-than-normal for most of California because of a La Niña event.

This is the second winter in as many years that La Niña conditions have emerged. For Southern California, that typically translates to drier weather, as was the case in 2021.

NOAA's seasonal outlook also predicted that the drought will likely continue to persist for most of California, with only the northernmost part of the state showing any improvement.

As of mid-January, La Niña conditions are near their peak, according to NOAA. However, the event it expected to stick around for another few months, with ENSO neutral conditions favored to return sometime in spring, experts say.

### Increases in Minimum Wage<sup>1</sup> Increases in Minimum Monthly Salary of Exempt Managers/Supervisors<sup>2</sup> Phase In of Overtime Thresholds for Non-Exempt Agricultural Employees<sup>3</sup>

Year	Employers with 26 or more employees at any time during a pay period ("large employers")				Employers with 25 or fewer employees at all times during a pay period ("small employers")			
	Minimum Wage (\$/hour)	Maximum hours/workday at regular rate	Maximum hours/workweek at regular rate	Minimum Exempt Employee Salary (\$/month)	Minimum Wage (\$/hour)	Maximum hours/workday at regular rate	Maximum hours/workweek at regular rate	Minimum Exempt Employee Salary (\$/month)
2017	10.50	10	N/A	3,640	10	10	N/A	3,467
2018	11	10	N/A	3,814	10.50	10	N/A	3,640
2019	12	9.5	55	4,160	11	10	N/A	3,814
2020	13	9	50	4,507	12	10	N/A	4,160
2021	14	8.5	45	4,854	13	10	N/A	4,507
2022	15	8*	40	5,200	14	9.5	55	4,854
2023	15	8*	40	5,200	15	9.0	50	5,200
2024	15 ↑	8*	40	5,200 ↑	15 ↑	8.5	45	5,200 ↑
2025	15 ↑	8*	40	5,200 ↑	15 ↑	8*	40	5,200 ↑

\*Double time after 12 hours

↑Starting on 1/1/24, the minimum wage will be adjusted annually for increases (capped at 3.5%) in the U.S. Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers.

**Premium Pay Rates:** The overtime premium rate is 1½ times an employee's regular rate of pay, except it is double an employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked beyond 12 in a workday starting on 1/1/22 for employees of large employers and 1/1/25 for employees of small employers.

**7<sup>th</sup>-Day Overtime:** A nonexempt employee must be compensated at a rate that is not less than

- 1½ times the employee's regular rate of pay for the first 8 hours worked on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of work in a workweek.
- Double the employee's regular rate of pay for hours worked over 8 on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of work in a workweek.

**Exemptions:** Irrigators, shepherders, and commercial fishing vessel crew members lose their overtime-exempt status and are entitled to be compensated for overtime work as shown above starting on 1/1/19 if employed by a large employer and 1/1/22 if employed by a small employer.

<sup>1</sup> Cal. Labor Code § 1182.12.

<sup>2</sup> Cal. Labor Code § 515.

<sup>3</sup> Cal. Labor Code §§ 860-862; draft update of Industrial Welfare Commission Order No. 14-2001.

# Merced FFA Hosts Greenhand Bonding

**By: Preslee Hunter, Madyson Wilhelm, Corrina Sanchez, and Laura Mendez; Greenhand Officers**

Over the winter break the Greenhand Officer Team Preslee Hunter (President), Madyson Wilhelm (Vice President), Corrina Sanchez (Secretary), Christian SantaMaria (Treasurer), Naomi Stagno (Reporter), Brenna Escobar (Sentinel), and Laura Mendez (Historian) got together for a team bonding meeting and photoshoot. They did different team bonding activities, and got to know each other a lot better. They discussed many topics including what a successful officer team looks like to how they can all keep an open mind to each other's ideas. Along with this, they had a team photoshoot to help promote the new officer team, and give everyone updated headshots for their future applications. The officers also had the opportunity to speak with some very important guests who gave them great and meaningful advice that can later be used throughout their FFA career and further on.

Alumni Michael Sanchez, Lauren Palumbo, and Debbie Miller set up

many different activities and projects for the team to participate in. One of them was decorating paper bags with each other, which will hold notes for one another as the second semester continues. The notes entailed anywhere from giving each other support, compliments, and thanking each other. These will be used as positive encouragement if anyone experiences a rut within the year, giving them a place to receive positive thoughts as needed. Along with this, being first year members, the team talked about their goals and aspirations for this year and what they want to accomplish together. This gave them an opportunity to get to know each other more in ways of wanting the same things for the chapter members and things they were excited for as the year continues.

One of the team bonding exercises the greenhand officers got to do was a gingerbread house decorating contest. Officers were put into pairs to build and decorate their houses in 25 minutes. This activity sparked communication and teamwork among the pairs as they were able to bounce ideas off one another to create an outstanding end product. To their



Merced FFA Greenhand Bonding Event

surprise, each pair had to improv and describe their houses to be judged by the California FFA State President, Marc Cabeliza. Before he judged their houses he spoke to the team about the FFA organization and the amazing opportunities and experience he got from FFA. He encouraged them to take advantage of all types of experiences they are given within the organization

to find their passions. Marc gave them a lot of meaningful advice that they will be able to carry out throughout their years in FFA. After the meeting he states, "I haven't laughed over soom like that before, and it was refreshing to meet a younger group of students who didn't necessarily know what FFA is all about. I can't wait to meet them in person and see what they accomplish in the future!" After his talk came the judging of their houses. Each pair got to present their gingerbread houses and why they should win. Although everyone took their own creative spin on this project, he determined the winners of the contest were Madyson and Laura. Overall, the team had a great time making the gingerbread house and meeting the State President, Marc, and we wish him luck as he and his team host the California FFA State Leadership Conference in March

In conclusion, our Greenhand team had a lot of fun and are more than ready for the second semester to begin so they can put their plans and goals into action! Thank you to the guest speakers and California FFA State President, Marc Cabeliza for joining this event, as quoted by the Greenhand team, "Meeting State President, Marc Cabeliza was better than meeting Santa Claus!" This was truly a great experience for the team through meeting influential guests and learning more about each other. We cannot wait to see the impact they have on our chapter throughout their FFA career!

**Agriculture • Health • Home • Auto • Commercial**

**WESTERN VALLEY INSURANCE**

Offices in Turlock & Los Banos • 209.634.9031

Lic#0649647

[www.westernvalley.com](http://www.westernvalley.com)

# Hydropower Draws Bipartisan Support as Renewable Energy Source

By: **Kellie Lunney, Bloomberg Government**

**D**rought, expensive facility upgrades, and a slow permitting process threaten the country's ability to harness and expand hydropower to generate electricity, witnesses and lawmakers agreed at a Senate hearing that sought solutions to overcome the challenges.

Democrats and Republicans both view hydropower as a unique and valuable renewable energy because it provides baseload electricity and can repower grids that collapse—an increasing concern after last winter's devastating power outage in Texas. Hydropower provided 7.3% of total U.S. electricity generation in 2020, most of it generated at federal dams operated by the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. It's a critical complement to other forms of renewable energy, but advocates say it lacks significant federal incentives for investors and industry that alternative sources like wind and solar enjoy.

"I think we have taken it for granted for far too long on hydropower, and really paying attention to it and developing it the way it should be developed," said Senate Energy and Natural Resources Chairman Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) during Tuesday's hearing.

The bipartisan infrastructure law (Public Law 117-58) invests more than \$750 million for new and existing incentives—including tax credits—for hydropower production and improvements. It also provides \$8.2 billion to the Bureau of Reclamation for western water infrastructure, including upgrades.

## Bipartisan Appeal

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle want to do more to make the energy source more attractive to investors and operators through greater incentives and a less burdensome licensing process.

Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) are co-sponsoring legislation (S. 2306) that would create new federal tax

incentives to promote environmental grid resiliency upgrades for hydropower dams. Murkowski on Tuesday said she hopes the bill will move this Congress. "I think that will be a big step forward."

Montana Sens. Steve Daines (R) and Jon Tester (D) along with Rep. Matt Rosendale (R-Mont.) on Monday introduced legislation (S. 3450) to authorize hydropower for the Sun River Project, including the Gibson Dam, in the state. Hydropower provides nearly half of all the electricity in Montana, Daines said.

Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) on Tuesday told Cantwell he is interested in working with her on streamlining the federal re-licensing process. Hydropower has been "a good source of power" in Oklahoma, which has 10 facilities, but the re-licensing process has been a challenge, he said. Other federal agencies don't always follow permitting and re-licensing guidelines by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, drawing out the process, Lankford said.

Maintenance upgrades and retrofits at non-federally operated facilities, necessary to remain in line with FERC, are expensive. Nearly 300 facilities are up for federal re-licensing before 2030, which requires them to meet certain federal standards that cost money to implement. "There's a real possibility that many of these plants could face closure," said Manchin.

Industry interest is high in hydropower, said Malcolm Woolf, president and chief executive officer of the National Hydropower Association,

but the "crazy" permitting process is a deterrent. He said there needs to be greater "process discipline" to make sure agencies honor FERC deadlines and rein in "agency overrun" related to non-germane projects that get tacked onto hydropower initiatives. Woolf said NHA and other groups would submit to Congress next month recommended reforms to the Federal Power Act.

Just 3% of the country's 80,000 dams currently generate electricity, meaning there's an untapped opportunity to get non-powered dams, including Montana's Gibson Dam, to produce energy, said Woolf.

Sen. Angus King (I-Maine) said expediting the permitting and licensing processes for those dams that don't involve environmental issues could be one way of expanding hydropower. One of the major environmental concerns related to dams, which are essential to hydropower, is how they impact fisheries because they disrupt the natural flow of water.

## Drought Concerns

The record low water levels in the Colorado River as well as Lake Mead has "immediate impacts on hydropower production," said Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton during the hearing.

A multi-state partnership in the West, known as the 500+ plan, would conserve and store water to Lake Mead across the Lower Colorado River Basin. That plan, which received funding in the infrastructure law, ultimately will benefit hydropower production, Touton said.

Touton told Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) that all the partners and users agree on the plan's water conservation goals, and "we are ready to work."

She added that the federal government and the participating states have committed significant financial resources. "The Bureau of Reclamation has already found the \$50 million of \$100 million of the cost-share that we have with the states and the states have gone to their boards and brought those monies to bear as well."



**From the Farm to the Table,  
We'll Keep You in the Green.**

Always willing to come to the table—our locally grown firm has helped ag companies keep their accounting operations in the green since 1973.



209-527-4220 or GCCPAS.NET



Contact us today!

# Spaceship-sized detection system could help determine future of CA water supply, where to store it

By: **Spencer Christian and Tim Didion,**  
**ABC 7**

**S**AN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- If it looks like something that could transport you into the future, in a sense it is. A spaceship-sized hoop suspended from a helicopter is actually part of an advanced water detection system. The information it's gathering, could help determine the future of California's water supply - and where we store it.

"I've seen similar studies that say, 'Hey, let's not even think of building more above ground reservoirs. Let's use all the empty space below,'" says Rosemary Knight, Ph.D., a professor of Geophysics and senior fellow at the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University.

For several years, Knight has been conducting aerial surveys using an electromagnetic sensing system. She says the technology is able to penetrate the ground, yielding vital data on the geology of natural groundwater basins. 3D maps pinpoint attractive sites, made up of materials marked in red, like sand and gravel, that allow water to sink in.

"Where if I put the water on the ground surface, hey, here's a connected pathway that will get me down to the water table, get this water down where it's going to be useful," Knight explains.

Felicia Marcus, a visiting fellow at the Woods Institute, sees the potential for an historic opportunity.

"Our groundwater basins are a gift. They're bigger than any above ground reservoir capacity," says Marcus.

While they're not visible like our above ground reservoirs, some studies estimate the state's groundwater basins can hold many times as much water when they're replenished. And with climate change, and extended droughts threatening to disrupt California's normal snowpack and river melt cycle, some believe they could be critical for capturing and keeping the water we do get. In fact, identifying and

potentially maximizing the capacity of California's groundwater system is part of an aggressive statewide effort. Recent flights over the North Bay this past November are just the latest example.

Katherine Dlubac, Ph.D., directs the aerial survey program for the California Department of Water Resources. She says the data can help accelerate projects designed to recharge groundwater basins. Using technologies like direct underground pumping or creating saturation ponds.

"And so we can choose locations on the surface, where we know the top is connected to the aquifer. And we can sight our recharge pond there so that we can know and be sure that we're getting the groundwater into the aquifer where we want it to be," explains Dlubac.

While recharge efforts have been going on for years, experts say there's new momentum building since the passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 2014. The focus is on emerging strategies, like diverting floodwaters to farms or orchards, where the underground conditions are right for saturation -- Or, connecting dams and reservoirs to underground systems, to capture water from a heavy runoff that might otherwise need to be released.

"Because we are seeing that that runoff curve is getting more extreme to where a lot of water shows up all at one time, as opposed to when it snows. And then the snow nicely releases that water steadily through the spring and summer. We are seeing more and more flashy discharge. And so a lot of these new concepts that people are working on at the local state and federal level, are really trying to put that water to most use, to best use," adds Steven Springhorn, technical manager for the Department of Water Resources' sustainable groundwater program.

It's a melding of Innovation and technology, and perhaps a second act, for a State built on major water projects launched more than a century

ago, now facing the urgent challenges of climate change.

Multiple counties and water agencies are teaming up with the State on this project. The recent survey flights covered areas stretching from Ukiah, through Lake County and the

Napa-Sonoma area.

To learn more, you can check out this page from Stanford University, or the Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Surveys page provided by the California Department of Water Resources.



**Awesome Ag Show Specials!**  
**30% off**

- ALL machines in stock!
- Free Sprayer with purchase of VitalOxide\*\*

<p><b>Vital Oxide</b> Eliminates SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) <b>FREE!</b> EsseMicrobuster Sprayer with purchase*</p>	<p>230v Motor Diesel Burner 3.5 GPM 2000 PSI Mod#79555 <b>SAVE!</b> <b>\$1,917</b></p>	<p>Gas Engine Diesel Burner 4.0 GPM 3500 PSI Mod#10755SE <b>SAVE!</b> <b>\$2,544</b></p>
--	--	--

**KEEP YOUR FACILITY CLEAN & SAFE!**

**Vital Oxide: The proven 5-log kill disinfectant for ag production facilities.**

Eliminates SARS-Cov (COVID-19)

- ✓ Food-grade contact sanitizer / NSF registered (D2) sanitizer
- ✓ CDC-approved / EPA-registered disinfectant
- ✓ Works on ALL surfaces!
- ✓ Available in Wipes, 1, 5, 15 & 55 gallon containers

Ready-to-use with no mixing required



**SENTINEL CHECKPOINTS**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT**  
Hotsy Pacific's industry-leading microbial defense solutions!

Your indoor air quality can be 10x worse than outdoor air. Contact us for a **no-cost no-obligation** consultation to help you assess the 5 Critical Checkpoints and determine the best anti-microbial options for your business so you can create a safer, healthier work environment.

**Can you afford downtime?**  
You need the experts! We fix all brands!

- ✓ Tank and barrel cleaning devices
- ✓ Steam generators and cleaners
- ✓ Custom solutions
- ✓ Water recycle systems
- ✓ Detergents/sanitizers
- ✓ Custom trailer units
- ✓ Pressure washers
- ✓ Floor scrubbers
- ✓ Rentals
- ✓ Parts & Accessories

Serving Northern CA for over 35 years  
**800.640.1227 | HotsyPacific.com**

\*25% off if machine needs to be ordered. Offers good until 2/28/22.  
\*\*ESSEMICROBUSTER, 18 Volt Rechargeable, Handheld sprayer/fogger.

**NorthBay EQUIPMENT SERVICE & SALES**  
**hotsy PACIFIC**

# Former Fresno councilmember appointed by Biden to fill key USDA position

By: Bryant-Jon Anteola, The Fresno Bee

**A** Fresno community leader has been appointed by President Joe Biden to serve in a key regional leadership role at the United States Department of Agriculture.

Blong Xiong, a former Fresno City councilmember who has been leading the Fresno Asian Business Institute & Resource Center, was named the USDA state executive director. Xiong, 51, has spent more than 20 years doing community service, often helping southeast Asian farmers and small Asian businesses in the central San Joaquin Valley.

He served two terms as a

councilmember for the City of Fresno (2007-2014), where Xiong was the first Asian councilmember in Fresno history and the first elected Hmong councilmember throughout California.

As a USDA state executive director, Xiong will oversee the work conducted by the USDA's Farm Service Agency to ensure that USDA resources are distributed equitably and fairly in California.

The USDA Farm Service Agency is responsible for implementing agricultural policy, administering credit and loan programs, and managing conservation, commodity, disaster, and farm marketing programs in each state.

Xiong, along with eight others

appointed to a regional role with the USDA or the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), are tasked with helping in the president's efforts to rebuild communities most impacted by the pandemic and economic recovery, as well as climate change.

The White House said selections were made based on each individual's expertise in their issue areas as well as critical relationships with federal, state, tribal, and local leaders.

And, consistent with Biden's commitment to building an administration that looks like America, these regional appointees represent the diversity of America and the communities they serve.

Other regional appointees are: Matt Gellings, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, Idaho; Whitney Place, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, Minnesota; Heidi Secord, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, Pennsylvania; Ronald Howell, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, Virginia; Lakeisha Hood, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Florida & U.S. Virgin Islands; Rudy Soto, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Idaho; Helen Price Johnson, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Washington; Margaret Salazar, HUD Regional Administrator, Region 10

# Biden's third nominee is confirmed to Ninth Circuit

By: Bob Egelko, The San Francisco Chronicle

**G**abriel Sanchez, a state appeals court justice in San Francisco, was confirmed to the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on a near party-line Senate vote Wednesday, becoming President Biden's third appointee to the nation's largest federal appellate court.

Sanchez won confirmation on a 52-47 vote, with Republicans Susan Collins of Maine, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska joining 49 Democrats in supporting him, with one absence. He succeeds Judge Marsha Berzon of San Francisco, who is transferring to senior status with a reduced caseload.

Sanchez, 45, spent six years as deputy legal affairs secretary for Gov.

Jerry Brown, a fellow Yale Law School alumnus, before Brown appointed him to the First District Court of Appeal in 2018.

During Senate confirmation hearings on his federal nomination, some Republicans criticized Sanchez for his role in helping to draft Proposition 57, an initiative sponsored by Brown and approved by voters in 2016. It made thousands of California prisoners eligible for earlier parole consideration if they had been sentenced to felonies the law classified as nonviolent, and also allowed judges, instead of prosecutors, to decide whether youths ages 14 to 18 should be charged as adults for serious crimes.

Sanchez told the senators he had simply been doing his job carrying out Brown's policies.

"When I took the role of a judge on the appellate court, I left all that behind," he said at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, according to coverage by the National Law Journal.

Rakim H.D. Brooks, president of the civil rights organization Alliance for Justice, praised Wednesday's confirmation vote. Sanchez "has spent his career advocating on behalf of people who need access to equal justice under the law the most," he said.

Another Ninth Circuit judge, M. Margaret McKeown, appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1998, announced Tuesday that she will take senior status when her successor is confirmed, creating another vacancy for Biden to fill.

The San Francisco-based Ninth

Circuit, which hears appeals of federal cases in nine Western states, has 29 judges, 16 of them appointed by Democratic presidents.

All four of Biden's nominees to the court -- Sanchez, Lucy Koh, Jennifer Sung and Holly Thomas -- have been racial minorities.

Koh, a federal judge in San Jose, and Sung, a labor lawyer and state regulatory official in Oregon, were confirmed on close Senate votes.

Thomas, a Los Angeles Superior Court judge and a former NAACP attorney, kept her nomination alive on an evenly split Judiciary Committee vote last month and could come up for Senate confirmation early next week, said Carl Tobias, a University of Richmond law professor who monitors judicial nominations.

# Court upholds state's COVID workplace protection rules

By: Bob Egelko, The San Francisco Chronicle

**A** state appeals court has upheld California's emergency workplace rules for

COVID-19, which require employers to have prevention programs, provide protective equipment and provide paid leave to employees who have been exposed to the virus.

The regulations, issued in

November 2020 by the state Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board, were challenged by the Western Growers Association, other farming organizations and the California Business Roundtable, which

argued they were unnecessary and overly burdensome for employers. San Francisco Superior Court Judge Ethan Schulman refused to block

See 'Workplace' Page 17



# ATTENTION

**Farmers and Farm Employees  
who need to renew their DL-267 Endorsement  
or acquire their initial endorsement.**



The Agricultural Hazardous Materials Transportation Program is being offered by the Farm Bureau and Nationwide Insurance. This class is for persons 21 years or older and have a current California Class C drivers license.

Due to new requirements, once a person completes the course, they must:

- Submit completed training record along with a completed CHP application
- Await paperwork return from CHP
- Pay any applicable DMV fees
- With returned CHP paperwork apply for DL-267 certificate from the DMV

**February 7, 2022**  
**9:00 AM – 10:30 AM English**  
**10:45 AM – 12:15 PM Spanish**

**Merced County Farm Bureau  
Conference Room  
646 South Highway 59  
Merced, CA 95341**

**\$25.00 for Farm Bureau Members**  
**\$45.00 for Non Members**

**TO REGISTER: Please call the MCFB Office at (209) 723-3001  
or email [info@mercedfarmbureau.org](mailto:info@mercedfarmbureau.org)**

**NOTE: Instructor will be via webinar, but attendance at the above site is  
required for testing purposes.**  
**Please pay by cash, check or credit card in advance.**

## Workplace

continued from page 15

the regulations last February, saying, "Lives are at stake." Upholding his ruling, the First District Court of Appeal in San Francisco said the state had ample reasons for protecting workers from exposure to the coronavirus.

By late 2020, the disease was spreading through workplaces, endangering employees as well as the general public, and demonstrating "the need for immediate action," Justice Sandra Margulies said in the 3-0 ruling. She said the board found a particularly high risk of transmission among migrant farmworkers, living in dormitory-like facilities provided by

their employers.

Margulies said the state's previous workplace rules, in effect during the first eight months of the pandemic, did not require employers to issue protective equipment or provide essential hygiene. She said the board, appointed by the governor, acted within "its area of expertise" in determining that the protections were inadequate.

The ruling was issued Dec. 21 and certified by the court on Wednesday as a precedent binding on lower courts in California. Opponents could seek review in the state Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court moved in the opposite direction Thursday, voting 6-3 to block the Biden administration's nationwide regulations ordering businesses with 100 or more employees to require their workers to be vaccinated against

the coronavirus or wear masks and be tested weekly. The court said federal law did not authorize the administration to impose such requirements on companies with a total of 84 million employees.

In a separate 5-4 ruling, the justices allowed the government to enforce a vaccination requirement for most health care workers.

The California regulations, currently scheduled to stay in effect until mid-April, apply to all employees except those who were already covered by special protective rules for particularly vulnerable worksites such as hospitals, prisons and homeless shelters, and those working from home.

The board required every employer to have a written coronavirus prevention program, including training, identification of hazards,

social distancing, and provision of masks and other protective equipment. Employees who have been exposed to the virus at work must be given at least 10 days off, with pay and benefits.

Upholding the paid-leave requirement, the court said it encourages employees to report any exposures they have had to the disease rather than keeping silent, "thus allowing employers to minimize possible additional exposures to other workers."

The ruling was praised by Stacey Leyton, a lawyer for labor unions who filed arguments in support of the state's regulations.

"As we continue to face new phases of this public health crisis, preventing workplace spread is critical to protecting workers, their family members and the community at large," she said.

# With its agenda stuck, WH puts focus back on infrastructure

By: Josh Boak, Associated Press News

President Joe Biden on Friday tried to put behind recent setbacks on voting rights and his economic agenda by outlining progress made in implementing his \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package.

"When we invest in infrastructure, we're really investing in opportunity," Biden said. "These are investments that will build a better America. It sounds like hyperbole, but it's real."

Sixty days after the infrastructure package became law in November, the Transportation Department is launching a \$27 billion program to repair and upgrade roughly 15,000 bridges. Under the five-year program, the federal government will release nearly \$5.5 billion this fiscal year to states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia and tribes.

The president is trying to regain a sense of optimism after his administration has endured a rough week. His economic and voting rights agenda has been stymied in the Senate, while the Supreme Court halted his administration's vaccine-or-testing mandate for businesses with more than 100 employees.

Biden said he's determined to

show that construction tied to the infrastructure package can better people's lives.

"There's a lot of talk about disappointments of things we haven't gotten done — we're gonna get a lot of them done, I might add," he said. "But this is something we did get done and it's of enormous consequence to the country."

The White House issued a fact sheet in advance of Biden's remarks that details how the administration is preparing to distribute infrastructure funds. There are plans to build out 500,000 charging stations for electric vehicles. The Transportation Department has announced the distribution of roughly \$56 billion to improve highways, airports and shipping ports.

The Environmental Protection Agency has announced plans to disburse \$7.4 billion to upgrade water and sewer systems. Steps are also being taken to build out broadband internet, among other initiatives.

Former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu is tasked with managing the implementation of the infrastructure spending. He appeared with Biden on Friday and pledged to "deliver results on time, on task and on budget."

## DAIRY LINES CLEARED

### NO PORTAL TO PORTAL FEES





# DUTCHMAN<sup>SM</sup>

## DRAINS & PLUMBING INC.

24/7 Call Us (209) 355-5717

[www.dutchmandrains.com](http://www.dutchmandrains.com)

*\*Ask about our dairy guarantee, exclusions apply.*

# Tulare Ag Expo to go live again

**By: Eric Gill, The Sentinel**

The World Ag Expo is back in action as a live event in Tulare. The International Agri-Center is hosting the three-day event from Feb. 8–10, 2022.

Last year's digital exhibition was conducted online due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"We're ready to host a live event for an essential industry," Jerry Sinift, International Agri-Center CEO, stated in a press release. "We made the right decision to move to a digital show, but ag never stopped and it's important to get back to safe gatherings for ag professionals."

With 1,230 committed exhibitors ranging from heavy equipment and water pump manufacturers to seed distributors and fertilizer companies, the 55th annual event is currently booked by vendors at 94% capacity, according to the press release.

In addition, nearly 100 special events, education seminars and product demonstrations are scheduled for the three-day show.

The Expo kicks off at 8 a.m., February 8, with an awards ceremony honoring the Top 10 new products selected for their innovations and contributions to the industry.

Top 10 New Products:

- All Electric Class-8 Truck: Hummingbird EV
- New Smart Autonomous Robot: Naio Technologies
- Clip Plugs: Rain Bird
- E70N Electric Tractor: Solectrac
- TJ Hoof Hub: TJ Hoof Care
- Burro Collaborative Robot: Burro
- mini GUSS: GUSS Automation
- IT Rover: InsightTRAC
- Teatwand Parallel: OnFarm Solutions
- Tule Vision: Tule Technologies

## Toyota Giveaway

Toyota is giving away a Tundra pickup truck, with proceeds benefiting Valley Children's Healthcare and the Guilds Center for Community Health. Tickets are \$5 each or \$20 for five. They can be purchased in advance of the drawing, at the Toyota Exhibit or at Gate 2 on February 10. For information about the Toyota Giveaway call 559-

353-7145.

## Seminars

Fresno State, Women in Ag for Mentoring and Empowerment and numerous additional groups are hosting more than 100 seminars throughout the three-day Ag Expo. Learning sessions cover every topic imaginable — from "Rural Ag Issues" to a "Cattle Handling Demonstration" to growing "Hemp Across America."

Seminars take place from morning to late afternoon at various expo venues on Feb. 8, Feb. 9 and Feb. 10. Visit World Ag Expo's website for a complete list of educational sessions and demonstrations.

## Ride and Drive

With increased demand for outdoor learning experiences among attendees and exhibitors, Ride & Drives will be available at the east and west ends of the grounds. In addition, Fendt will make its debut on the northeast side, while at least two electric tractor companies are scheduled to offer demos on the south end of the fairgrounds.

## Safety First

Although this year's World Ag Expo is a live extravaganza this year, event organizers are "focused on keeping all guests safe" and will follow state-recommended COVID requirements. These include:

Discouraging anyone from attending the Expo if they are experiencing symptoms such as fever, chills or shortness of breath;

Requiring masks for passengers using vehicles for Park & Ride transport and Ag Tours;

Recommending the wearing of face masks at indoor events, and making masks available at all gates and entries to buildings and pavilions;

Offering hand-sanitizing and hand-washing stations throughout the expo grounds;

In keeping with ever-present innovations and safety precautions of the 21-century agriculture industry, Agri-Center CEO Sinift reiterated the importance of returning to safe gatherings in the Central Valley.

"Driving innovations and solutions happen when we meet and learn from each other," Sinift stated.

# The Postal Service is now taking orders for free COVID-19 test kits

*Editor's Note: Merced County Farm Bureau no longer has COVID-19 test kits to distribute.*

**By: Brian Naylor, NPR**

The U.S. Postal Service has begun taking orders for free at-home coronavirus test kits.

The website COVIDtests.gov was originally slated to begin taking orders on Wednesday. White House press secretary Jen Psaki says the site is in the "beta testing" stage and "will be launched formally tomorrow morning [Wednesday]."

Each household order will contain four rapid tests, which the Postal Service says will be shipped for free "in late January." The White House says it will prioritize shipments to Americans from ZIP codes that have experienced high rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths, with the first 20% of each day's orders going to those areas.

There will also be a phone number so those without access to computers or high-speed internet can place orders.

Some 700,000 people were on the test kit website at one point Tuesday afternoon.

Some on Twitter reported problems with orders from residents of apartment buildings with multiple units being told that someone from that household had already ordered the tests. According to the Associated Press:

President Biden last week announced that the administration plans to buy 1 billion at-home tests for Americans and also said the White House will make high-quality masks available for free, with details coming out this week.

# US plans \$50B wildfire fight where forests meet civilization

By: **Matthew Brown and Jonathan J. Cooper, Associated Press News**

**B**ILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Biden administration said Tuesday it will significantly expand efforts to stave off catastrophic wildfires that have torched areas of the U.S. West by more aggressively thinning forests around “hot spots” where nature and neighborhoods collide.

As climate change heats up and dries out the West, administration officials said they have crafted a \$50 billion plan to more than double the use of controlled fires and logging to reduce trees and other vegetation that serves as tinder in the most at-risk areas. Only some of the work has funding so far.

Projects will begin this year, and the plan will focus on regions where out-of-control blazes have wiped out neighborhoods and sometimes entire communities — including California’s Sierra Nevada mountains, the east side of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, and portions of Arizona, Oregon and Washington state. Homes keep getting built in fire-prone areas, even as conditions that stoke blazes get worse.

“You’re going to have forest fires. The question is how catastrophic do those fires have to be,” Agriculture Sec. Tom Vilsack told the Associated Press in an interview. “The time to act is now if we want to ultimately over time change the trajectory of these fires.”

Specific projects weren’t immediately released, and it’s not clear who would pay for the full scope of work envisioned across almost 80,000 square miles (200,000 square kilometers) — an area almost as large as Idaho. Much of that area is controlled by states, tribes or is privately owned.

Reaching that goal would require an estimated \$20 billion over 10 years for work on national forests and \$30 billion for work on other federal, state, tribal and private lands, said Vilsack spokesperson Kate Waters.

Vilsack acknowledged that the new effort will also require a “paradigm shift” within the U.S. Forest Service, from an agency devoted to stamping out fires, into one that uses what some Native Americans call “good fire” on

forests and rangeland to prevent even larger blazes.

Forest Service planning documents indicate the work will focus on “hotspots” that make up only 10% of the fire-prone areas across the U.S. but account for 80% of risk to communities because of their population densities and locations.

The recently-passed federal infrastructure bill put a down payment on the initiative — about \$3 billion over five years that Vilsack said will get work going quickly.

Wildfire expert John Abatzoglou said lessening fire dangers on the amount of land envisioned under the administration’s plan is a “lofty goal” that represents even more acreage than burned over the past 10 years across the West. But Abatzoglou, a University of California Merced engineering professor, said the focus on wildfire hazards closest to communities makes sense.

“Our scorecard for fire should be about lives saved rather than acres that didn’t burn,” he said.

Vilsack joined Forest Service Chief Randy Moore to announce the plan during an event in Phoenix where he defended its scope as realistic.

“We know from a scientific standpoint precisely where this action has to take place in many of these forests in order to protect communities, in order to protect people,” Vilsack said following the announcement at the Desert Botanical Garden, a popular showcase for cactuses, desert trees and other dry-weather plants.

Dealing with western wildfires is becoming increasingly urgent as they get more destructive and intense. There have been rare winter blazes in recent weeks, including infernos in Montana and Colorado, where a wildfire on Dec. 30 tore through a suburban area and destroyed more than 1,000 buildings, leaving one person dead and a second still missing.

And there’s no signs of a let-up in conditions that keep the risk of wildfires extremely high. A long-term “megadrought” is gripping the region and scientists forecast temperatures will keep rising as more climate-changing carbon emissions are pumped into the atmosphere.

The impact stretches far beyond the western U.S. because massive smoke

plumes at the height of wildfire season in the U.S. and Canada spread the health effects across North America — sending unhealthy pollution last summer to major cities from San Francisco to Philadelphia and Toronto.

For decades the primary approach to containing and extinguishing forest fires was to try to stamp them out. The efforts have been similar to massive, military-like campaigns, including planes, fleets of heavy equipment and thousands of firefighting personnel and support workers dispatched to the fire zones.

However, fires are a part of the natural cycle for most forests, so putting them out leaves stands of trees that don’t burn surrounded by dead wood, underbrush and other highly flammable fuels — a worst-case scenario when blazes ignite.

Critics say the government’s plan to use logging to reduce fire damages will hurt both forests and the wildlife and water supplies that depend on them. In South Dakota’s Black Hills, for example, government biologists have said that too many trees dying from a combination of insects, fire and logging have made current timber harvest levels unsustainable.

“The U.S. Forest Service simply cannot log its way out of the climate crisis,” said Adam Rissien with the environmental group WildEarth Guardians.

But Vilsack said a combination of tree thinning and intentionally set fires to clear undergrowth that are called prescribed burns will make the forests healthier in the long run while reducing the threat to public safety.

Forests thinned near Lake Tahoe and its tourism gateway community of South Lake Tahoe were credited with slowing the advance of the massive Caldor Fire last summer that destroyed almost 800 homes and prompted evacuations of tens of thousands of residents and tourists.

A similar phenomenon played out during Oregon’s Bootleg fire last July, which burned more than 600 square miles (1,500 square kilometers) but did less damage in forest that was thinned over the past decade.

“We know this works,” Vilsack said. “It’s removing some of the timber, in a very scientific and thoughtful way, so that at the end of the day fires don’t continue to hop from tree top to tree top, but eventually come to ground where we can put them out.”

## FUNDING AVAILABLE

*For Soil Health Management in Orchards*

### ONLY 10 SLOTS AVAILABLE EACH SEASON

*What you'll get:*

Upfront payments and technical assistance to implement conservation practices such as:

- Cover Crops
- Irrigation Water Management
- Nutrient Management
- Compost/Soil Amendments
- Mulching and More!



*Orchard Qualifications*

- Approximately 100 acres or more
- Must be located in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, or Kern counties
- Must have initial site visit from ESRCD
- Preference points for orchards who would like to try these practices for the first time.

*To apply please contact:*  
**Andrea Brophy - East Stan RCD**  
[andrea@eaststancrd.org](mailto:andrea@eaststancrd.org)  
 (925) 408-2047  
[www.eaststancrd.org/funding](http://www.eaststancrd.org/funding)





# Merced County Business Member Directory

*Businesses Supporting the Farm Bureau*

To be included in the directory, join Merced County Farm Bureau as a business member by calling 723-3001.

## **REPAIRS & SERVICES**

AC King.....	722-3552
Atwater Radiator & Muffler, Inc. ....	358-2638
Car Plus.....	722-3552
SS Blue .....	722-2583

## **CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS**

Allison Sierra, Inc. ....	966-4082
Dias Construction, Inc.....	634-9601
M-Mig Construction, Inc.....	631-6017

## **FARM EQUIPMENT**

Garton Tractor, Inc.....	726-4600
Holt Ag Solutions .....	723-2021
J M Equipment Co Inc .....	386-1797
Kirby Manufacturing .....	723-0778
Laird Mfg LLC.....	722-4145
N&S Tractor .....	383-5888

## **REAL ESTATE**

Flanagan Realty.....	723-4337 (Merced)
Flanagan Realty. (559) 665-1313 (Chowchilla)	
Property Team .....	769-4698
Dick Templeton Property Team .....	761-4441
Valley Real Estate Sales, Inc. ....	854-1000

## **GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS**

Blue Diamond Growers.....	(559) 474-2996
California Farmland Trust .....	(916) 544-2712
California Sweet Potato Council .....	385-7403
California Women for Agriculture .....	723-5878
Central CA Irrigation District.....	826-1421
Cortez Growers Association.....	632-3118
Dos Palos Co-op Gin.....	387-4151
Farmers Rice Cooperative .....	(916) 923-5100
Gustine Drainage District .....	854-6782
Hilltop Ranch Inc. ....	874-1875
Livingston Farmers Assoc.....	394-7941
Merced Boosters .....	761-0815
Merced Irrigation District.....	722-5761
Merced College Ag Division .....	384-6250
Turlock Irrigation District.....	883-8205
UCCE Merced.....	385-7403

## **FARM SERVICES**

A-Bar Ag Enterprises .....	826-2636
Agri-Valley Consulting .....	769-2357
Caddy Shack Rodent Servc.....(559)	363-3315
Cal Ag Safety.....	351-0321
Cal Corn Growers Inc.....(559)	665-5775
Chipponeri Electric.....	634-4616
Dutch Door Dairy.....	648-2166

Farm Management Inc. ....	667-1011
Guerrero Farm Labor .....	492-0408
Horizon Farms, Inc. ....	383-5225
J & F Fertilizer.....	854-6325
La Follette Enterprises, Inc.....	632-1385
Mass Energy Works.....(530)	710-8545
Machado Feed Company.....	658-5943
Maciel & Co .....	777-0911
Mid Valley Ag Service .....	394-7981
Modern Dairy.....	722-7452
Modesto Dairy Supply.....	669-6200
Silva & Sons Custom Spreading.....	667-2566
Stone Family Spreading.....	756-1491
The Pollination Connection.....(877)	970-BEES (2337)

## **FOOD PROCESSING**

A V Thomas Produce .....	394-7514
Dallas Distributing Co .....	394-2803
Del Rio Nut Company.....	394-7945
Minturn Huller Co-op.....(559)	665-1185
Parreira Almond Processing Co.....	826-1262
Sensient Natural Ingredients (800)	558-9892
Yosemite Farms.....	383-3411

## **HARVESTING & HAULING**

Baldes Hay Co .....	(559) 718-9714
Bertuccio Hay .....	761-6247
Castillo Brothers Hay.....	392-3817
Diamond J Farms .....	564-0870
Minturn Huller Co-op.....(559)	665-1185
Northern Merced Hauling.....	667-2308
Wallace & Son .....	382-0131

## **IRRIGATION, WELLS, & SEPTIC**

Allison Sierra, Inc. ....	966-4082
Agri-Valley Irrigation .....	384-8494
Dickey's Pump Service .....	394-3112
Irrigation Design & Construction, LLC.....	387-4500
Pacific Southwest Irrigation .....	460-0450
Precision Aqua.....	756-2025
Quality Well Drillers .....	357-0675
Rain for Rent/Westside Pump(559)	693-4315
Robal Inc.....	826-4540
San Luis Pump Company.....	383-0464
Shannon Pump Company .....	723-3904

## **INSECT & WEED CONTROL**

Environmental Spraying Service .....	667-1038
Malm Ag Pest Management .....	392-6905
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
Unwired Broadband .....	(559) 336-4157

## **BUSSINESS SUPPORT FARMERS**

DCB Farming LLC
J&J O'Banion Ranch, LLC
Live Oak Farms
Jorgensen Ranch

# Coming Into Focus



from the  
**Mariposa CFB**  
Danette Toso

“Making money isn't hard in itself... What's hard is to earn it doing something worth devoting one's life to.”

— Carlos Ruiz Zafón

Ranchers are by nature, deeply devoted to their land, livestock and lifestyle. The consumers that we work

so hard to supply a superior product to, rarely understand the complicated process of putting dinner on their tables. The misconception that the inflated meat prices at the grocery store are a reflection of profits for the producer are rampant and wide spread. The heart of the issue has been cussed and discussed by producers and packers for decades and is finally coming into focus in Washington.

The Biden administration is dedicating \$1 billion from the American Rescue Plan, a bill signed into law last year, specifically for the purpose of expanding independent meat processing capacity. That includes \$375 million in grants for independent meat producers, \$275 million in additional financing available for processors, \$100 million to address inspection costs for smaller processing plants and \$100 million in training for workers in the meat and poultry industry.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin work on three proposed rules to support enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act, the 100-year old law that was originally designed to protect poultry and hog farmers and cattle ranchers from unfair, deceptive, and anti-competitive

practices in the meat markets.

The USDA plans to take three actions related to rulemaking in the months ahead. First, USDA intends to propose a new rule that will provide greater clarity to strengthen enforcement of unfair and deceptive practices, undue preferences, and unjust prejudices. Second, USDA will propose a new poultry grower tournament system rule, with the current inactive proposal to be withdrawn. Third, USDA will re-propose a rule to clarify that parties do not need to demonstrate harm to competition in order to bring an action.

Personally, as a producer, I would like to see less restrictions and

regulations on our industry. If we had less hoops to jump through, and less taxes to pay, we could be much more efficient. We've learned over the years that when the government throws money at a problem, the underlying issue is rarely if ever resolved. Conversely, the topic has been addressed, and is finally coming into focus by the powers that be.

In this new year 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.

WALTER MORTENSEN INSURANCE

**INSURICA** INSURANCE MANAGEMENT NETWORK

From small farms to large commercial operations, the INSURICA Agriculture Experts have grown up in agricultural communities.

We've designed insurance programs to provide broad and flexible coverage for both your personal and business needs.

Tom Murphy | 209.353.2700 | tmurphy@INSURICA.com | INSURICA.com



## 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.

### AGRICULTURAL SUPPLIES

- Gallaway Feed and Supply.....374-3331
- Mariposa Feed & Supply.....966-3326
- Bootjack Equipment Rental & Feed.966-3545

### ASSOCIATIONS

- 35-A District Agriculture Assn.....966-2432
- Mariposa Chamber of Commerce....966-2456
- Mariposa County Farm Advisor .....966-2417
- Mariposa County Farm Bureau .....742-5875

### CONSTRUCTION

- 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 Hardware .....966-2692

### MEDICAL

- Mariposa Physical Therapy.....742-7242

### MISCELLANEOUS

- Allison Sierra Inc .....966-4082
- Happy Burger Diner .....966-2719
- Mariposa Friends of the Fairgrounds Foundation.....742-4680
- Hugh A. Yamshon Ranch
- Mariposa Gun Works .....742-5444
- Miners Roadhouse 14 .....966-2444
- Pony Expresso .....966-5053

### REAL ESTATE

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

### SERVICES

- Chases Foothill Petroleum.....966-3314
- Edward Lien & Toso Ag Appraisers...634-9484
- Palmer Tractor .....374-3470
- Ranch Fence, Inc.....966-5914
- Valley Pacific Petroleum.....948-9412
- Yosemite Glass & Window Inc.....966-3292

### WINERIES

- Mount Bullion Vineyard.....377-8450
- Rauch Ranch Vineyard & Winery .....742-7162

*Support Farm Bureau Member Businesses*

# Gov. Newsom doubles down on high-speed rail funding, pledges \$4.2 billion to finish Central Valley segment

By: Eliyahu Kamisher, Mercury News

Gov. Gavin Newsom's latest budget proposal doubles down on billions of dollars in contentious funding for the San Joaquin Valley segment of the high-speed rail project and expands the state's initiative to replace gas-powered vehicles with zero-emission.

The latest figures are part of the governor's \$286.4-billion spending proposal released earlier this week – with \$9.1 billion going towards transportation infrastructure – which the governor says is part of the state's concerted effort to reduce California's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. The budget proposal functions as a wish list as the governor enters into negotiations with lawmakers ahead of a June deadline for the 2022-2023 budget.

But the proposed \$4.2 billion in high-speed rail funding has been mired in controversy. It is the final tranche of \$9.9 billion in bond funds for the high-speed rail, which voters approved in 2008's Proposition 1A on the promise that they would see a bullet train connecting Los Angeles to San Francisco in two hours and 40 minutes. At the moment, that's not what voters are getting.

Instead, Newsom is seeking to secure the \$4.2 billion to finish a 119-mile segment in Fresno, Kern, Madera, and Kings counties, even as some Democrats say the funding should be used for projects aimed at urban

centers in the Bay Area and Southern California, not a less-populated stretch of the Central Valley.

"Let's get the job done. Let's finish the Central Valley component," Newsom said Thursday during a news conference at the Santa Clara rail depot. "The voters set aside the money for this purpose, I want to get those dollars out from Prop 1A and finish that job. Doing it in a fast and judicious way."

Last year Newsom failed to secure the funding for the Central Valley project as it met strong headwinds from Democratic leaders, including Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, who represents areas in southern Los Angeles County.

"The fact that the state currently has high revenues does not relieve us of the responsibility to target those revenues – both to the people who need it most and to the places where it will do the most good," Rendon said in a statement on Thursday, adding that he "looks forward to more discussions" on the matter.

According to Boris Lipkin the Northern California regional director at California High-Speed Rail Authority, the high-speed rail project is currently coasting on revenue from the state's cap-and-trade program, but the delay in bond revenue will have "a big domino effect with the rest of the state."

The funding "was important last year and has already led to some delays," Lipkin said. "But it's critical

this year."

Ethan Elkind, director of the climate program at UC Berkeley's Center for Law, Energy & the Environment, said the funding dispute comes down to a conflict between the Newsom administration and Southern California legislators who "want to see a permanently neutered system and essentially a failed project."

"They basically don't have any confidence that the system is going to get finished," Elkind said. "With Newsom, his vision is that the project can get done if you don't kneecap it now."

The governor is also adding \$6.1 billion over five years to support the adoption of zero-emission vehicles

and build infrastructure to support the state's goal of ending the sale of new gas-powered cars by 2035. With the new funding, the state will be putting \$10 billion towards clean energy vehicles over the next five years.

The proposed money will be funneled towards low-income consumer purchases of zero-emission passenger vehicles and nearly a billion dollars towards adding 1,000 zero-emission transportation trucks and 1,700 zero-emission transit buses.

"If you're going to get serious about decarbonizing and radically changing the way we produce and consume energy," Newsom said, "you can't do it without radically transforming your transportation sector."

**Pazin & Myers, Inc.**  
**129 West 15th Street**  
**Merced, Ca 95340**

*Serving Merced and Mariposa Counties for over 35 years!*



**(209)725-2050**



*Meeting all of your residential, farming, commercial, and retail needs...*

**GASOLINE - DIESEL - QUALITY LUBRICANTS**



**COMPLETE AUTO BODY COLLISION SERVICE**  
Domestic and Foreign

**COMPLETE UPHOLSTERY SERVICE**  
Vinyl Tops, Convertible Tops  
Tonneau Covers

723 Martin Luther King Jr. Way • Merced, CA  
**Leonard Rich • (209) 723-1022**

# ► MCFB Farm & Ranch Connection



Since 1986

- State of the Art Equipment
- 80' Truck Scale
- Maximized Returns
- Owner Operated

**New for 2012**

- Inshell line complete with Satake color sorter
- High Capacity dryer for bin or bulk loads

Peter Verdegaal      Office  
209-628-1008      209-356-0210

8016 Winton Way, Winton  
*Serving Stanislaus & Merced Counties*

**A Tradition in Trust Since 1919**



CALIFORNIA'S LEADING FARM & RANCH SPECIALISTS

For a free consultation please contact:

**JIM WATSON**

Pearson Realty, Ag Division  
Over 15 Years Experience & Service

**Specializing in:**  
Agricultural Land  
Transitional Land  
1031 Exchanges  
Cattle Ranches  
Recreational/Hunting



Office: 209.378.2300 | Mobile: 209.349.2225 | [jwatson@pearsonrealty.com](mailto:jwatson@pearsonrealty.com)



est. 1973

**WEED CONTROL**

"We Use Environmentally Safe Proven Methods." Problem Weed Specialist

**RESIDENTIAL  
AGRICULTURAL  
COMMERCIAL  
INDUSTRIAL**



**Discing & Clean-up - Pre-Asphalt Application**  
Call Us First! 209 723-2161



IRRIGATING THE VALLEY SINCE 1967  
Madera, CA - 559.673.4261



**Sales & Service**

Vertical turbines Domestic pumps  
End suction booster pumps Sewage & stormwater pumps  
Multi-stage pumps prefabricated booster systems for domestic, process & landscape requirements.  
Special metallurgy for all types of fluids.  
In-house machine shop

All popular brands - HazMat 40HR Certified Techs  
**LICENSED, INSURED AND BONDED**  
**SERVING THE INDUSTRY FOR OVER 50 YEARS**  
(209) 723-3904



**ACKING**  
YOU CALL, WE COME.

**209.722.3558**  
[ackingmerced.com](http://ackingmerced.com)

**We carry Bergstrom & RedDot**  
**Fully stocked parts department**  
**AC Hoses built on site**

**AG**      209-445-8503  
**Towing**

- Towing Services
- Roadside Assistance
- Flat Tire Changes
- Lockouts & Jumpstarts
- Fuel Transferring
- Winching
- Car Wreck Towing
- Residential Transportation

**24/7 Towing Services**

**Ray's Gardening**  
678-3189

**M-MIG CONSTRUCTION INC.**

*Serving Merced & Surrounding Counties*

**Specializing in Dairy Construction**  
**Steel Buildings**

Locally Owned & Operated  
Matthew Mgliazzo-Owner

Contractors Lic. #870007

291 Business Park Way, Atwater

[www.mmigconstruction.com](http://www.mmigconstruction.com)

**209-724-9488**



**RONALD MARTELLA FARMS, INC.**

**MARTELLA'S WALNUT HULLER & DRYER**  
2100 Geer Road, Hughson  
(209) 883-4819 Fax (209) 883-0819

- \*For Your Convenience\*
- Full Service Available
  - From Field to Buyer
  - 80' Truck Scale
  - Almond Drying Available

Owner/Operators  
Aaron Martella, Kevin Chiesa, Ron Martella

# Merced County Farm Bureau 104th Annual Meeting

Friday, March 25, 2022



## Keynote Speaker

Former U.S. Army  
Black Hawk Pilot  
Elizabeth McCormick

**Merced Fairgrounds**

**900 MLK Jr. Way, Merced, CA**

**Prime Rib Dinner**

**No-Host Social - 5:30 p.m.**

**Dinner & Program - 6:45 p.m.**

**\$50 Per Person**

**Table of 8 can be reserved for \$400**




---

## Reservation Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for me at \$50 per person.

Please reserve a table of 8 at \$400 per table for: \_\_\_\_\_

Please RSVP BY March 4, 2022

Call the Merced Farm Bureau office at 209.723.3001 for more information.

[info@mercedfarmbureau.org](mailto:info@mercedfarmbureau.org)