



Merced County Farm News



Water allocation and rate set for 2022 season

By: Merced Irrigation District

In the midst of ongoing dry winter conditions, the Merced Irrigation District Board of Directors set an allocation today of 1.1 acre feet per acre for Lake McClure surface water for in-District Class 1 growers.

The surface-water rate was set at a price of \$100 per acre foot. Water orders can be made beginning today

and the District will immediately begin diverting water from Lake McClure into its local canals in the coming days.

The District will also provide its supplemental conjunctive groundwater supply program this year. Each year, MID diverts more than 120,000 acre feet of Lake McClure water into the local groundwater for future use.

MID expects to deliver approximately 25,000 acre feet of its supply.

Those wishing to voluntarily

subscribe to the supplemental supply program will be charged at a rate of \$161 per acre foot. Decisions related to wheeling and other water management activities will be discussed at a future Board meeting.

District growers will receive their information packets in the coming week. Options for ordering water include:

- Orders may be placed anytime using MID's automated water ordering

system at (866) 825-2475.

- During weekday business hours, orders may be placed by calling MID Customer Service at (209) 722-2720 or toll-free at (800) 750-2720.

- To place an order online, growers must first register at www.mercedid.org and then place their first water order by calling Customer Service.

After that, orders can be made through the website.

California must move forward with water projects

By: Bill Diedrich, Special to CalMatters

Prior to Gov. Gavin Newsom's State of the State speech, there is one item to examine that serves as a building block for all the issues the governor will address – water.

Despite unexpected storms in late 2021, California is braced for another year of drought.

The water we do have must move throughout the state by way of a complicated system of reservoirs, dams, canals, pipes and treatment plants. That movement is managed by an equally complicated network of federal, state and local officials.

We can't improve our water supply or get it to its destination without storage, conveyance and the management system functioning. And the success of all requires

collaboration among water users and the state of California.

California's water infrastructure is old and failing. Both the lack of infrastructure and failing infrastructure are major reasons hundreds of thousands of Californians, most in rural and disadvantaged communities, lack access to clean drinking water. Infrastructure improvements would help struggling fish populations. And infrastructure repairs are necessary to prevent structural failures such as the Oroville Dam spillway.

Infrastructure not only moves water, it allows us to store more water in the face of climate change.

In 2021 Congress passed an historic bi-partisan infrastructure bill allocating funds for a wide range of infrastructure projects. The governor has also included water infrastructure spending in the state budget.

But a line item in a piece of legislation or budget doesn't save, create or move one drop of water.

Our governments must move forward now on both short- and long-term projects. We're delighted to hear that Sites Reservoir will soon break ground, but other, smaller projects can be operational sooner. The highly respected Legislative Analyst's Office released a report in February, also urging the state to move quickly, focusing on projects that would make a difference now.

In addition, water must be managed in a way that takes a holistic approach to our environmental health, utilizes the most current science, and has the flexibility to adjust as situations change and new information becomes available.

See 'Water Projects' Page 3

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from the
**President's
 Corner**
Eric Harcksen

Hello Merced County Farm Bureau members. I hope this time of year is being kind to you and your family. This is my last article as your Merced County Farm Bureau President. As I step down from being in this role for the last two years, I will continue to be a big part of the Farm Bureau and continue to advocate for farmers and ranchers. I enjoyed serving Merced County and representing our great farmers at our meetings. My grandfather always said that, "We need to leave things in as good or better shape than we found them in." I feel as though I have accomplished that during my tenure as

president. I am very excited to pass the office on to Joe Sansoni at our Annual Meeting. I hope to be able to see you all at our Annual Meeting on March 25, 2022.

I would like to thank the board for this opportunity to serve in this capacity and help advocate for agriculture in our county and state. First and foremost, I could not have done it without the help and support of my wife and my family! To each of them I would like to say thank you. I also would like to give a great big thank you to our exceptional staff at the Merced County Farm Bureau

office. Without them we would not be where we are today! This organization is one of the best things that agriculture has going for it. There are so many ways the Farm Bureau has advocated for ag on many different levels. There are also many different ways for our members to serve and volunteer to make a difference. I would encourage everyone to take advantage of it and get involved.

Again, I hope to see you all at our Annual Meeting on March 25, 2022! We are hoping for a good turnout to support the Merced County Farm Bureau.

After two long years, I am happy to state that our Annual Dinner is upon us and taking place in person on Friday, March 25 at the Half Dome Hall of the Merced Fairgrounds. We are so very excited to bring this event back and have a great lineup of speakers, auction items and more. As is routine, we will be retiring two presidents (thanks, COVID), installing our board for the coming year, recognizing our scholarship recipients, and hearing from California Farm Bureau's 1st Vice President, Shannon Douglass. This year's keynote speaker is former US Army Black Hawk Pilot Elizabeth McCormick. Tickets are still on sale and can be purchased at our office for \$50 for an individual or \$400 for a table.

As I mentioned, we will be retiring several directors. We want to extend a very appreciative thank you to Pat Borrelli, Rich Ford, Chad Crivelli, Seth Rossow, Joe Brown, Wiebren Jonkman and Joe Maiorino Jr. for their time and service. We know we ask a lot from our directors, and we appreciate you answering the call.

A larger ask is made of those that step into our presidential roles. They are the ones that get the calls for proceeding on immediate legislation, the numerous invitations to represent

our membership far and wide and the calls informing them that expensive has broken at the office. It is never an easy job, but it is one where we have been very fortunate for those that have worn the title. This year, unlike any year before, we will be retiring two past presidents of Merced County Farm Bureau. While we made the change internally to continue with procedure, we never had the opportunity to do it correctly. For that reason, both Eric Harcksen and Gino Pedretti III will be celebrated. We thank both men extensively for their work in our board room and out. We would not be the organization today without their support.

As was mentioned in past newsletters, we are excited to acknowledge our scholarship recipients from this past year. We are proud of where this program has come and continue to see the growth through the local students who continue their education in agriculture. Along with the scholarship, our board has elected to provide each student with a MCFB Collegiate Membership. This has been taking place since the start of the pandemic and we hope all our recipients join our Young Farmers & Ranchers Program or their local chapter wherever they are studying.

Leaning on the education theme,

please check out pages 8, 14 and 16 of your Merced County Farm News. In these pages you'll find our Rooted in Ag Program, Agribee, and FARM2U Day. Our Rooted in Ag Program is for classrooms that capture students executing an ag related lesson plan. Teachers can submit the lesson plan and photos after completion. In turn, one will be awarded a \$500 reward for their classroom. They can use the reward however they see fit.

Our FARM2U Day is typically held at the Merced Fairgrounds and caters to approximately 2,500-3,000 teachers, parents, and county third grade students. As it still seems too difficult with COVID protocols, we opted to bring the program back at a smaller scale, partnering with Kids Discovery Station for their STEM center. The event will be taking place on Saturday, April 23 with free admission for all. We do ask that you sign up ahead of time for the ease of logistics.

Lastly, we somehow managed to start a new program adapted from Butte County Farm Bureau called Agribee. This is a spelling bee contest with a few twists. All words are agriculturally related, and students must spell and define the words. Students in 4th and 5th grades are eligible to participate. We do ask that you sign students up by filling out the



from the
**Director's
 Desk**
Breanne Vandenberg

various paperwork and submitting to our office. The event will be held on Friday, April 8 on the stage of the Mainzer! Big thank you to their team for partnering with us on this project.

That's all for now and we hope to see you at one of our events, a meeting or you drop by our office to say hello!

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.

Water Projects continued from page 1

The third element critical to a secure water future is cooperation among water users. Squabbling in the public domain tries to pit farmers against environmentalists, seeking to determine a winner and a loser. What that outlook ignores is that both benefit from the other. Farms don't need to lose for the environment to win or vice versa.

Much of California's most important wildlife areas exist alongside some of the state's most productive farmland and farmers are a key part of preserving this valuable habitat.

Farms also provide greenspace in an era of widespread population growth as well as plants and trees that capture carbon, helping offset the impact of climate change.

California farms are the best, most efficient in the world at growing food, and they can't just be moved elsewhere. Without them, we will be

forced to import more food, which could mean higher prices, a less safe food supply, job losses, particularly in disadvantaged communities, and continuing supply chain problems as we've seen with COVID-19. And with unfolding world events, there is no better time to be thinking about food security and the inextricable connection between reliable water resources and our food supply.

There have been recent discussions among academics suggesting that upending our system of water rights will solve our problems, which is simply not true. Layering more bureaucracy on top of California's already-complex water laws will not fix anything.

Californians need both productive farms and a healthy environment, and we should be focused on projects that enhance the water supply for all, not get sidetracked by issues that will not add one drop of water to our supply.

We have the tools to secure our water future, now is the time to use them.

Merced County Farm News

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Trainings presented by Nationwide



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California Farm Bureau is pleased to offer these risk management trainings to members.

To register and for more information visit cfbf.com

Calendar of Events

March 25
MCFB Annual Meeting (pg. 24)

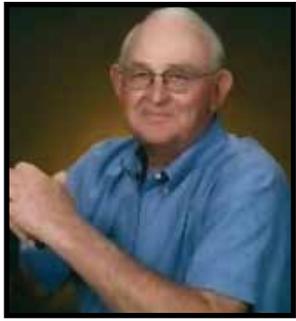
April 8
Agribee (pg. 18)

April 23
FARM2U Day (pg. 16)

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

Duane Wickstrom

April 14, 1934 - December 5, 2021



Hilmar, California - On December 5, 2021 Duane "Wick" Norman

Wickstrom passed away at Doctors Medical Center surrounded by his immediate family. He was 87 years old.

On April 14, 1934 in Hilmar, CA, Duane was born into a life filled with cows, world travel, sports, and a passion for his community, his family, and his friends. He grew up on a Jersey dairy where his love for the industry began, leading him to Cal Poly State University for a degree in Dairy Science. During his college years, Duane played both football

and baseball, leading to a career of almost 80 years as a sportsman. He played senior softball until he was 80 years old, finally retiring his glove just seven years ago. In 1955, Duane and Pat were married to join each other in the pursuit of raising a family and eventually building a family business. They moved back to Hilmar in 1956 to begin their life's work.

When he was not with the cows, Duane was heavily involved in the community having served on many state and national boards, assisted with community building projects, served as a member of the Merced County Volunteer Fire Department and as President of the Turlock Sunrise Rotary Club. Among his most notable honors, Duane was named Hilmar Citizen of the Year in 1999 and received the AJCA Master Breeder Award in 2002.

Duane and Pat spent much of

their adult life traveling the world, beginning with Duane's tenure as a council member of the World Jersey Cattle Bureau during which they visited Jersey herds and friends throughout the world. Duane's favorite destination was Australia, but he was always most content at home on the dairy.

Duane is survived by his spouse of 66 years, Pat Wickstrom; his three children and their spouses, Scott (Vicki) Wickstrom, Susan Vierra, and Michael (Margaret) Wickstrom; his three siblings, Vernon (Mary) Wickstrom, Valerie (Don) Sorenson, and Dale (Marta) Wickstrom; his 7 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents Oliver and Vera Wickstrom, and his sisters Eunice (Bill) Pace and Marlys Wickstrom.

His funeral service was held at 11am on December 16, 2021 at

Hilmar Covenant Church in Hilmar, CA followed by a reception at Pageo Lavender Farm in Turlock, CA. In lieu of flowers please donate on Duane's behalf to the Hemophilia Foundation of Northern California - Website: www.hemofoundation.org. Make checks payable to: Hemophilia Foundation of Northern California, Memo: Duane Wickstrom Memorial. Mailing Address: Hemophilia Foundation of Northern California, 1155-C Arnold Drive, #236, Martinez, CA 94553. Or the Cal Poly Dairy Science Program - Email: neinfalt@calpoly.edu. Make checks payable to: Cal Poly Animal Science Department, Memo: Duane Wickstrom Memorial. Mailing Address: Animal Science Department, Care of: Nicole Einfalt, 1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0255.

Editor's note: correction made to reflect the past service date

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From the Mariposa County, UC Cooperative Extension Collection: The 1988 Beef Checkoff

By: Rebecca Gourevitch, UC Merced Library

Last month, the California Agricultural Resources Archive (CARA) team digitized and placed online over one hundred items from the Mariposa County, UC Cooperative Extension collection found in the California Agricultural Resources Archive. The records come from the office of Dr. Fadzayi Elizabeth Mashiri, current County director and Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor for Mariposa and Merced Counties.

One series in this collection contains materials related to livestock activities both locally and statewide. A particular set of documents were created to organize and promote the 1988 Beef Checkoff Program. This program, an outcome of the Beef Promotion and Research Act of the 1985 Farm Bill, authorizes the charge of "\$1 per head on the sale of live domestic and imported cattle, in addition to a comparable assessment on imported beef and beef products... the Checkoff program was designed to stimulate restaurants and grocery stores to sell more beef and encourage consumers to buy more beef. This is accomplished through initiatives such as consumer advertising, marketing partnerships, public relations, education, research and new-product development." (1) While the Checkoff Program was already active by 1988, the USDA, alongside statewide beef councils, organized a referendum to make this funding stream permanent. The California Beef Council created materials for beef producers (potential referendum voters), but also for UC Cooperative Extension offices around the state, as UCCE was delegated to handle logistics and to host voting sites.

A Beef Crisis Report, produced by the UC Cooperative Extension Beef Crisis Committee details the state of the industry in the eighties using information collected from interviews with fifty ranchers and other industry personnel. One issue detailed in the report concerns "consumer acceptance." Ranchers reported that

many consumers were turned off by the potential harmful effects of eating beef, like the presence of hormones and antibiotics. Another concern identified was that "production and financial records are often inadequate because of insufficient business management skills." These are only just of a couple of challenges faced by the industry at this time.

Found in another document from the Beef Crisis Farm Advisors Group are succinct summaries of the various problems alongside potential solutions.

Registering to vote for the referendum and voting occurred on the same day (May 10th, 1988) but eligible voters could apply for an absentee ballot up to a month prior to the election. In this letter from the California Beef Referendum Information Committee, Cooperative Extension County Directors are reminded that they are "pushing very hard the use of absentee ballots to generate a large voter turnout in California."

Using information shared by the California Beef Council, UC Cooperative Extension created materials for eligible voters to communicate key dates and requirements:

Brochures assured ranchers and beef producers that their money was going to good use.

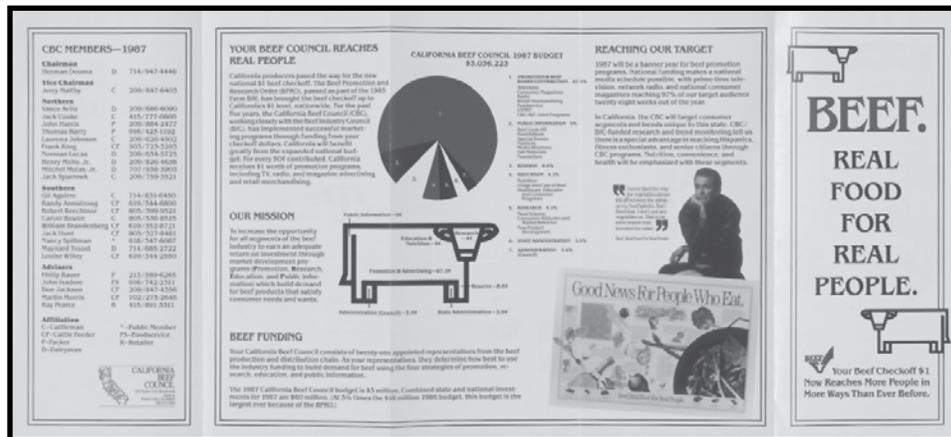
The 1988 Beef Checkoff passed with 78% of voters voting yes on the referendum, ensuring that money for research and marketing would be available on the statewide and national levels. Funds went to a range of advertising campaigns including the familiar "Beef. It's What's for Dinner." commercials that permeated TV screens across the country in the nineties.

To view all of the digitized materials in the Mariposa County, UC Cooperative Extension archive use this QR code:



We continue to process these records, including a large collection of photographs depicting 4-H youth development program activities in

Mariposa County and will soon make these digitized items available on Calisphere.



"Brochures assured ranchers and beef producers that their money was going to good use." Beef. Real Food for Real People



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New exhibit showcases tractors in Merced's farming and agriculture community

By: Sarah Lim, Merced Sun-Star

While dirt is not a dirty word, it is usually something we sweep, scrub, or wash away, but to farmers, dirt is soil — the fountain of life.

To turn soil into productive land, farmers use farm implements and machinery to channel the energy flow of the soil organisms. From walking plows to smart tractors, the Merced County Courthouse Museum's newest exhibit examines how the evolution of tractors shaped farming in the Central Valley.

"Tractor Dealerships in Merced County" will open at the Courthouse Museum on March 12 with a community celebration in the Courthouse Park, featuring the exhibit, history talk, tractor show, and hot dog barbecue. Please bring your lawn chairs and picnic blankets.

The exhibit begins in 1837 when John Deere invented his famous saw blade and developed the steel walking plow. When settlers came to Merced County shortly in 1855, they engaged predominantly in farming and used draft animal-drawn plows to get the fields ready for planting.

The productivity of walking plowing was low since a farmer could till about one and a half acres a day. Then came the riding cultivators in 1863 — a farmer could now plow five and a half acres with a team of horses or mules. Merced County had its own inventor of farm implements, a man named Robert Baxter.

Baxter, a grain farmer, had a 4,000-acre ranch about ten miles east of Plainsburg. With a sizable farming operation, Baxter realized that he needed to increase the capacity of farming machinery for sowing and harvesting to manage the large crops successfully. Thus, he invented a traveling thresher in 1863, produced the improved gang plow in 1864 and developed a header in 1866. His inventions made his ranch one of the most productive farms in the county.

The invention of the first steam tractor in 1868 by Henry G. Stone of Grand Rapids, Michigan was the next milestone in farming. Steam

tractors quickly replaced horse teams to become a powerful force in the Merced County fields until the arrival of gasoline-powered tractors. The first gasoline-powered Case tractor was built in 1892, but it did not come to market until 1904. The first Case gas tractors were shipped to California in the fall of 1912, and Merced County received its first shipment in 1913.

The first mass-produced, highly popular tractor was the Fordson tractor developed by Henry Ford in 1917. Merced's first Ford tractor dealership was started by Charles Edward Lounsbury and Richard Shaffer, Jr. at 1731 M Street next to the El Capitan Hotel. E. Lounsbury & Co. Garage & Machine Works began with selling Model T's and other Ford cars in 1913 and added the tractor line in 1918. Edward H.

In early 1923, the partnership of Lounsbury and Shaffer was dissolved. Shaffer took over the Ford dealership and opened a store at 636 W. 16th Street. In 1928, Shaffer terminated his automobile business, and Joseph Gaestel, who came to Merced from San Francisco, took over the Ford agency. Gaestel did not add the tractor division until 1941. To fill the vacuum left by Shaffer, Bedesen and McNamara Hardware became the new agent for Fordson tractors in the early 1930s.

The next major improvement in the tractor was rubber tires. Before 1935, tractors were hard to operate in the rugged terrain due to their steel wheels. The Allis-Chalmers Model U tractor was the first of its kind to include rubber tires as standard equipment, and Firestone Tire and Rubber Company was a driving force behind the effort to put rubber tires on tractors. In Merced County, Bohn and Shipley Firestone would travel to different farms and provide tire services.

1954 was another turning point in the evolution of tractors because, for the first time in history, there were more tractors than horses and mules. It was true in our community that the decade of the 1950s was considered the golden age of tractor dealerships in Merced County.

There were dealerships for just about every major maker in Merced

alone: Shannon Tractor and Pump (Allis-Chalmers), N&S Tractor (Case), Gaestel (Ford), Halton Tractor (John Deere/Caterpillar), Scarborough Implement (McCormick-Deering/International Harvester), Bohn and Shipley (Ferguson), Kirby Implement (Minneapolis-Moline), Polzine Farm Equipment (Oliver), and Laird Welding and Manufacturing (Wagner).

On the West Side of Merced County, Edmund Murto's Ford Tractor was a fixture of the Los Banos community in the 1950s. In Gustine, there was Azevedo Hardware which sold Case tractors. Nylander and Sorenson in Dos Palos was the dealer for McCormick-Deering and International Harvester.

The Atwater and Livingston area also had several tractor dealerships,

including Passadori Hardware, Atwater Mercantile Co., and Joseph Brothers of Livingston.

These early dealerships were more than just businesses, they were community hubs where farmers, dealers, salesmen, and mechanics formed close bonds. Their common goal was to ensure that the healthy soil would provide bountiful crops to feed the world. So, please join us on March 12 at 11:30 a.m. in the Courthouse Park to celebrate the legacy of these dealerships and the contributions of our farmers and farmworkers.

In addition, the Merced County Historical Society will hold its annual membership meeting during the exhibit opening at noon. For more information, please contact the Courthouse Museum at 209-723-2401.

New Museum Exhibit

Tractor Dealerships in Merced County

Merced County Courthouse Museum
21st and N Streets
Saturday, Mar. 12, 2022, 11:30-4:00



Tractor Show, BBQ, History Talk
Awards Ceremony in the Courthouse Park

FREE ADMISSION

Exhibit will run through June 5, 2022.
Info: 723-2401 or www.mercedmuseum.org or [facebook.com/mercedmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/mercedmuseum)

Gustine FFA Members Took Part in Multiple Leadership Conferences During the Month of February!

By: Garret Gomes, Gustine FFA Reporter

Made For Excellence Conference/Advanced Leadership Academy

This month multiple Gustine FFA students attended a variety of leadership development conferences. These conferences included Made For Excellence (MFE), Advanced Leadership Academy (ALA), and the Sacramento Leadership Experience (SLE).

From February 11th through the 12th five Gustine FFA students attended the leadership events in Modesto, California. Three students attended the ALA conference and the two others took part in the MFE event.

MFE is a leadership conference targeted to better sophomore FFA members through their personal leadership skills. Members who attended this conference included Grant Hazan and Mikayla Silveira.

ALA is an event for junior FFA members to better their chapters through learning to host and plan FFA events. Members who took part in ALA include Christina Moitozo, Austin Bell, and Garret Gomes.

On Friday night students got the opportunity to meet new members from across the state and have some fun at the dance hosted by the California State Officers.

Sophomore, Grant Hazan, shared “MFE was a great conference where we were able to meet people from across the state, mingle with the state officers, and enhance our leadership skills. I had a great time and am looking forward to attending State Convention in March!”

Sacramento Leadership Conference

Each year the California FFA Organization hosts the Sacramento Leadership Experience Conference in Sacramento, California. During this Conference 75 seniors throughout

the state of California are selected to attend. This year, Gustine FFA member Daniel Gomes was chosen to attend the conference which took place February 22-25.

Daniel Gomes, our chapter President, filled out an application earlier this year answering questions about how the agriculture industry plays an important role in California politics. From hundreds of applications, 75 seniors from across the state were selected.

The Sacramento Leadership experience is a conference that teaches FFA members all about our government, agriculture advocacy, and agriculture policy. This event is hosted each year by the California FFA Organization, and is an event that the select members will never forget.

Daniel Gomes traveled to our state's Capital where he spent 4 days learning more about our government and the processes in which a bill is passed. Each member who attended the conference was designated to serve as a senator or assemblyman from our

state. They worked together advocating for mock legislative bills, and had the chance to vote for these mock bills.

Daniel also got the chance to meet many people including Assemblyman Mr. Frank Bigelow. Daniel and his team spoke with Mr. Bigelow and they were given a tour around the state capital.

Chapter President, Daniel Gomes, shared with me “It was amazing being

able to meet new people all across the state of California. It was also very nice meeting the congressmen and assemblymen who represent us.”

We would like to thank the California State FFA Organization for hosting these leadership development conferences. We also would like to thank all members who attended and hope that they can make an impact in our own chapter and community.



Pictured above is Daniel Gomes, who attended the Sacramento Leadership Experience.



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Biden administration walks tightrope over gas prices

By: Andrew Freedman, Axios Generate

The Biden administration is walking a tightrope when it comes to addressing the climbing price of gas in ways that square with the administration's climate policies.

Driving the news: The White House is caught between the need to address the high price of gas, which Tuesday hit a national record, and its ambitious climate agenda.

- For the short term, this is leading the administration to engage governments it had shunned, such as Venezuela, or criticized, like Saudi Arabia, to secure additional supplies.
- At the same time, top officials

are adamant their policies are not impeding the domestic production of oil and gas, but that the clean energy transition is the only way to truly become energy independent in the long run.

Why it matters: Whether the public blames the Biden administration's energy policies for the high price of gas could have steep political costs for Democrats.

Zoom in: The energy industry has been emphasizing the need for policy changes in order to increase the amount of oil and gas drilling at home.

- This is a position the White House, and its environmental allies reject, noting that oil production has already increased under Biden and is projected to hit a record high in 2023.

- But to a typical customer filling up their SUV at a gas station, incredulous at the cost, it may make intuitive sense that policies like canceling the Keystone Pipeline, a move Biden took early in his presidency, is a culprit.
- White House officials have taken to Twitter to defend Biden's energy agenda and the need for a clean transition.
- "The suggestion that we are not allowing companies to drill is inaccurate," press secretary Jen Psaki said during Monday's press briefing. "The suggestion that that is what is hindering or preventing gas prices to come down is inaccurate."

Between the lines: Nikos Tsafos, an energy and climate specialist at the

Center for Strategic and International Studies, told Axios the White House and Republicans are locked in a political argument when they should be focused on squaring off against Russia.

- "I think we're tying ourselves in a knot with the talking points," Tsafos said. "You know, I don't understand why it's so difficult for the White House to say, we need more U.S. oil produced right now."
- This would still be consistent with its climate agenda, he told Axios.

Total imports of crude oil and oil products. Data: IEA;

- Heavy demand for those barrels helps explain the reluctance to cut off or directly sanction Russian oil, though the response to the crisis is already crimping supplies.



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How War in Ukraine Drives Up Inflation at U.S. Farms, Supermarkets, Retailers

By: Patrick Thomas and Alistair MacDonald, The Wall Street Journal

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has set the stage for faster-rising consumer prices, with the mayhem of war driving up manufacturing costs for food, consumer goods and machinery in places far from the battlefield.

The conflict is stressing an already strained global supply chain, and its economic impact will likely be felt in households world-wide, at supermarkets, retailers and the gas pump. While higher costs will take time to work their way from producers to consumers, executives and analysts expect the war's fallout to worsen inflation already stoked by shortages of goods and workers.

"It seems to be overshadowing everything now and reversing the improvement that we were seeing," said Kathy Bostjancic, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics.

The short-term consequences have been serious. Grain markets recently hit a 14-year high in anticipation of a diminished harvest in Ukraine, which would raise costs to feed the world's cattle and poultry.

Aluminum prices rose in anticipation of sanctions on Russia, a major supplier of the metal used in soda cans, aircraft and construction, as well as on fears that Moscow could halt exports.

Crude oil prices rose 25% last week, to more than \$118 a barrel, the highest level since 2013. Gas prices have gone up an average of 43.7 cents a gallon in the U.S., according to data from price tracker GasBuddy. On Sunday, the national average was \$4.02 a gallon, according to GasBuddy.

On Friday, Russia, one of the world's largest suppliers of fertilizers such as potash and nitrogen, said it could suspend exports. Farmers and consumers will bear the cost of any prolonged shortage.

Ingka Group, which owns and operates furniture giant IKEA's stores, said Thursday that prices would rise more than expected this year after it warned the war in Ukraine was causing serious supply chain

disruptions. IKEA said its global prices would rise about 12%, up from earlier estimates of 9%.

Some analysts and company officials caution that it is too early to know exactly what the long-term effects of the war will have on the global economy, and not all think the conflict in Ukraine will have a major impact on supply chains. Businesses have rebounded from global conflicts in the past and can mitigate the effects by finding alternative suppliers elsewhere.

But the invasion of Ukraine has already slowed the journey of goods traveling by various means. Many Western shipping companies are steering clear of Russian ports, an important Asia-to-Europe rail line is used less, much of the Black Sea remains out of bounds and many air cargo flights are either banned from or are avoiding Russian airspace, a key route for goods moving between Europe and Asia. Shipping and airfreight rates have moved higher.

Rising energy and food prices are only the most obvious pressure points for consumers. "Now that we are seeing increases across other commodities, like aluminum, palladium, copper," Ms. Bostjancic said, "that is going to feed through to some degree to consumer prices as well."

Ukraine industries, including car-part manufacturers, breweries and an alumina refinery, have halted production. A giant steel mill owned by ArcelorMittal SA, one of the country's largest industrial enterprises, closed Thursday. That and other plant closures in the country, along with Russia's difficulty in getting some of its steel out, are expected to accelerate already rising steel prices.

Companies that use stainless steel and other heat and corrosion-resistant steel alloys containing nickel say they're bracing for higher prices and the potential for disrupted nickel shipments from Russia, a large exporter.

Nickel also is used in lithium-ion batteries that power consumer electronics and electric vehicles. The price of nickel rose to \$29,800 a metric ton, a 14-year high, up about 19% on

the London Metal Exchange since the outbreak of fighting in Ukraine.

Small car-parts plants in Ukraine that supply the broader automotive industry have closed, while sanctions and severed trade routes are hindering auto-related shipments to and from Russia.

Farm to table

Ukrainian farmers are supposed to plant their spring crops soon. Yet even if the fighting were to stop, they may not have enough fertilizer and pesticides. Agriculture industry executives are warning of smaller yields in Ukraine, which normally has some of the world's most productive fields.

"Depending on what crop you're looking at, it could have rather severe impacts already in the first growing season," said Svein Tore Holsether, chief executive officer of Norway-based Yara International AS A, one of the world's largest fertilizer makers. "Yields could drop by 50%."

Ukraine accounts for 8% and 13%, respectively, of global wheat and corn exports, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data. "For certain parts of the world it means more expensive food," Mr. Holsether said. "For other parts of the world, it means access to food, and it's a matter of life and death."

In the past month, wheat futures climbed to a 14-year high and rose more than 40% over the past week. Corn and soybean prices over the past month were up roughly 21% and 15%, respectively.

Higher commodity costs stand to further inflate prices of such pantry staples as cereal and cooking oil, as well as beef and other meat, because producers rely heavily on grain to feed livestock and poultry.

Rising grain and corn costs eliminate some of the hope that inflation could plateau in the second half of the year. Such agricultural commodities are used in nearly all food products, said Ben Bienvenu, a food and agribusiness research analyst at Stephens Inc.

Hormel Foods Corp., the owner of food brands including Spam canned meat and Skippy peanut butter, said it expected higher raw material prices

from the war in Ukraine. "There will be some disruption now and further down the road," the company's Chief Financial Officer Jacinth Smiley said.

James Halverson, a rancher in Beulah, Wyo., and executive director of the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association, said feed costs have jumped in the past week, making it more expensive for ranchers, himself included, to hold on to cattle and negotiate better prices from meatpackers.

If grain costs stay high over the coming months, it will cut into his bottom line, he said, and customers will pay more for meat at the grocery store.

"We've seen grain come up," he said. "That's the number one cost of feeding cattle."

Soil supplements

Higher food prices are related to the rising cost of natural gas, one of the main ingredients for nitrogen fertilizers. Ken Seitz, interim chief executive of fertilizer giant Nutrien Ltd., said higher gas prices could lead to plant closures in Europe.

The transport of fertilizers, largely on trains and ships, has been difficult since the invasion of Ukraine. Several large shipping companies have temporarily suspended services to Russian ports.

Fertilizer supplies were already tight, and prices have reached record highs. That adds to the pressure on farmers, who are paying significantly more for fuel, weed-killing chemicals, crop seeds and seasonal labor.

If fertilizer supplies run short—or get too expensive—some farmers may shift acres toward less fertilizer-intensive crops such as soybeans. Others could cut back on fertilizers, potentially slimming harvests, analysts said.

Nutrien, the Canada-based company, could produce more potash fertilizer if the global supply problems persist, Mr. Seitz said. But his company could be stuck with unsold quantities should Belarusian and Russian suppliers return to the market.

Farmers are wringing their hands

Inflation

continued from page 11

over supplies they will need for spring planting, said Chris Edgington, president of the National Corn Growers Association and an Iowa farmer. “The American farmer is going to get a crop in the ground,” he said. “What it will look like, I can’t tell you.”

Randy Stephens, chief executive of SureGrow Agricultural Products Inc., has a plan to fill orders from his roughly 3,000 customers in Texas. The CEO of the chemical and fertilizer business in Comanche, Texas, says that over the next three months he will be making stops at as many as 15 ports from Houston to Corpus Christi, seeking needed shipments.

Even if he finds enough supply, he said, “I think we can run out really quickly.”



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Regenerative Almond Field Day at Burroughs Family Orchards

By: Denelle Flake, Farm News Editor

On Thursday, February 17th, growers, industry members, and researchers gathered at Burroughs Family Farms to learn about the benefits of regenerative agricultural practices. The weather was beautiful, the bees were busy and the birds were chirping, making it a perfect day to be in the fields.

The day started with presentations by researchers on a variety of topics, ranging from healthy soils to animal integration, cover cropping, composting, and more. In summary, their findings have shown that these regenerative practices increase soil respiration, water infiltration, and microbial activity.

Attendees then took hayrides to the orchards to watch demonstrations that compared the differences between conventional and regenerative practices. A variety of topics were

covered from carbon in the soil to bird habitats. One hands-on activity included placing a larva somewhere on the orchard floor and returning after 30-minutes to see if it had been eaten. The purpose of this activity was to show the greater biological activity regenerative orchards have. Attendees also compared a conventional and regenerative soil probe, showing that the regenerative soil was much darker and had more activity than the conventional soil. The speaker stated that the regenerative soil was richer in carbon, giving the plants more energy.

Dr. Cindy Daly from CSU Chico's Center for Regenerative Agriculture compared water infiltration rates of a bare soil (tilled and no cover crop) versus regenerative soil (no till and cover cropped). They poured water over the tops of the two soil types to mimic the ground receiving one inch of rain. The conventional, bare soil had a large amount of run-off and was much slower rate of water infiltration.

While the regenerative soil had much greater water infiltration, and little to no run-off. Dr. Daly stated, "You need to make a sponge, so you don't lose the water you have", and this can be done through regenerative practices like cover cropping. Her research has found that regenerative soils have a water infiltration rate of 2-22 times faster than conventional.

Lastly, attendees heard from researchers from the Ecdysis Foundation about the importance of providing a healthy habitat for birds, as it helps with rodent maintenance, therefore reducing the cost of rodent mitigation. They shared birds are more likely to reside in a regenerative orchard, because they are cooler and provide more insects (protein).

The day ended with a delicious lunch prepared by Chef Melissa Rasmussen, which featured regenerative products from Burroughs Family Farms. Overall, the event provided attendees with

a great overview of the benefits to regenerative agriculture and how they could start incorporating these practices into their own farms.



Animal integration in Burroughs Family Orchards







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Water infiltration rates comparison

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Commentary: Valley farm produce must be shipped by carriers to overseas customers

By: Ted Gaines, Fresno Bee

On Jan. 25, 2021, President Joe Biden signed “Made in America” Executive Order 14005, designed to increase the amount of federal spending on products made by American companies. A few months later, members of Congress introduced bipartisan legislation addressing ship carriers delaying and refusing to transport American-made goods, which customers around the world ordered and are waiting for.

U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) stated, “The bill would level the playing field for American exporters by making it harder for ocean carriers to unreasonably refuse goods ready to export at ports ... and producers across America are paying the price.”

“Companies looking to offload

foreign-made products at West Coast ports must provide opportunities for American exports. Even during a global pandemic, trade must be mutually beneficial, and that is exactly what our bipartisan bill ensures,” said Rep. John Garamendi (D-Fairfield).

With more than 100 congressional co-sponsors, all stakeholders and elected officials from President Biden down to the neighborhood dog catcher should get involved and demand action now.

CNBC reported that shipping carriers last year rejected 178,000 U.S. agricultural export containers from the ports of Long Beach, Los Angeles, New Jersey, and New York during October and November. The shipping carriers refused American exports, but instead sent empty containers to China to be filled with Chinese exports. The estimated worth of the 178,000 containers was \$632 million from just those four ports. In addition to these

four ports, I would note reports of similar problems in Charleston, South Carolina, and Houston.

American leaders, business groups, elected officials, and organizations need to stand up for American workers, farmers, and businesses and hold accountable foreign carriers to accept our American goods.

American businesses found customers. American workers grew or made products. American truckers and railroads transported those goods to ports, and American longshoremen unloaded those goods. Now they sit on a dock while ships travel with empty containers instead of with American goods. American farmers don’t get paid to plant, pick, process, or transport to a shipping port in Oakland, Los Angeles, or Long Beach. They only get paid when those products are delivered to the customer.

Over a year has now passed since the Made in American order. I can

respect and comprehend the enormous amount of pressure President Biden, his administration, and Congress is under with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But we can’t sit idle and allow this import-export imbalance to continue hurting our economy and reputation. It’s time for other elected leaders on the federal and local levels to get involved and demand action now.

If this isn’t corrected this year, American workers, farms, and businesses will lose, and we will lose our global market share.

The White House and Congress need to force the issue, and our state governors should use their economic and political weight. California has the fifth-largest economy in the world. That should mean something when many of our businesses are mistreated, disrespected, and set up to fail by foreign companies profiting through this import-export imbalance.

Committee fails to advance Nielsen water bill

By: Robert Summa, Appeal-Democrat, Marysville, Calif.

Mar. 9—A bill that was introduced in February that would have had a significant impact on the Sites Reservoir project in Colusa County failed to pass a state Senate committee on Tuesday, effectively killing the proposed legislation.

The bill, Senate Bill 890, was intended to ensure millions of acre-feet of water are stored during wet years instead of being flushed out to sea, a statement from California Senate Republicans previously said. It was rejected by the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on Tuesday.

Sites Reservoir is an off-stream facility proposed north of the

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta that captures storm water flows from the Sacramento River for release primarily in dry and critical years, the Appeal previously reported. Sites Reservoir officials have said that the project will increase California's existing water supply by providing 1.5 million acre-feet of additional storage capacity during times of drought to benefit the environment, agriculture and communities.

State Sen. Jim Nielsen, R-Red Bluff, said he authored the bill to help secure funding to build and repair critical water infrastructure.

"Another historic drought, billions in extra funding and legislative Democrats turn their backs on investing in critical water projects that affect the lives of all Californians? It's absurd and irresponsible," Nielsen said in a statement on Tuesday.

Nielsen said SB 890, which was jointly authored with Sen. Andreas Borgeas, R-Fresno, would have advanced the goals of Proposition 1 by making significant investments in California's aboveground water storage and conveyance infrastructure. Specifically, he said, SB 890 would have established the Water Storage and Conveyance Fund to provide the following benefits: — \$2.6 billion to complete the funding of Sites Reservoir in Colusa County — \$685 million to repair the Friant-Kern/Delta-Mendota Canals and the San Luis Field/San Joaquin Divisions of the California Aqueduct

Nielsen said existing canal diversion and conveyance capacity in the state has degraded due to substantial land subsidence caused by regional groundwater overdraft. He said with the bill, the Legislature

had the opportunity to fund critical water infrastructure projects using taxpayer revenue that has already been collected.

Nielsen said under state law, infrastructure projects may be financed using revenue from the General Fund when it exceeds the State Appropriations Limit, or Gann limit.

"California's water storage and conveyance challenges transcend partisan divides and have been exacerbated due to the recent drought," Borgeas, who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, previously said in a statement. "Clean, reliable water in California is not only critical to our country's economy and food supply, but also our national security. Without proper storage and conveyance investments, California cannot continue to lead the nation in food production."

Merced County's primary election is approaching. Who's running, and what you need to know

By: Madeline Shannon, Merced Sun-Star

Deadlines are approaching quickly for Merced County's June 7 primary election -- and many important local seats are on the ballot, including district attorney, sheriff, representatives for Sacramento and others local elected offices.

The upcoming primary will be the second time Merced County has conducted elections under the California Voter's Choice Act, which allows voters more flexibility when casting ballots. Under the act, traditional polling places are replaced with Voting Assistance Centers. Voters can register to vote and cast their ballot at these centers, vote with an accessible voting machine, drop off a ballot mailed to them and get help voting, as well as get voting materials in multiple languages.

More than 104,000 voters turned out for the last primary election in March 2020, according to final certified results. That increased to 117,413 voters for the November 2020 presidential election. There are currently 124,206 registered voters in the county, according to Darlene Ingersoll, the Merced County Registrar of Voters.

"The Voter's Choice Act allows voters to choose how, when and where to cast their ballot by mailing every active registered voter a ballot, expanding in-person early voting and allowing voters to cast a ballot at any Voting Assistance Center in Merced County," Ingersoll said.

Voters can return their ballot by mail, official secure county ballot drop box or at any Voting Assistance Center in the county, Ingersoll added.

The deadline to file candidate paperwork for local and state races is March 11.

Voters already registered to vote will get their ballots in the mail 28 days before the election. Merced County is one of 16 counties in the state to conduct elections under Voter's Choice Act rules.

On March 31, the Merced County Registrar of Voters will release a certified list of local candidates, while the California Secretary of State's office will release a certified list of

state and federal candidates.

May 23 is the last day to register to vote to be eligible to vote in the June 7 election, although conditional voter registration is still open until the day of the election.

Vote by mail ballot requests will be accepted for overseas and military voters only from April 8-23, and all vote-by-mail ballots will be accepted starting May 9. The last day to request a vote by mail ballot by mail is May 23. Vote by mail ballots must be postmarked by June 7 to be accepted by the day of the election.

Voter information guides will be mailed by the California Secretary of State's office on April 28, the same day the county starts mailing its voter information guides.

Here's a list of local offices on the June 7 ballot, and candidates who filed to run so far.

Merced County District Attorney

One of the highest profile races to watch this election season will be the race for Merced County District Attorney, as incumbent Kimberly Helms Lewis is running for re-election. Thus far she has one challenger, Supervising Deputy District Attorney Nicole Silveira, who also running for the position.

Merced County Superior Court

This year's ballot this year will see several current judges running for their seats: Judge Carol Ash, Paul Lo, Donald Proietti and David Moranda. No challengers for any of the four seats have filed so far.

Merced County Superintendent of Schools

Incumbent Steven Tietjen is running for re-election as Merced County Superintendent of Schools against challenger Alberto Perfrio Lopez Velarde, who currently works as the principal of Heritage Elementary School, a public elementary school in the Lodi Unified School District in Stanislaus County.

Merced County Board of Supervisors

Daron McDaniel, an Atwater resident, is running for re-election for his current seat on the Merced County Board of Supervisors for District 3.

Another incumbent, Scott Silveira, is running for the District 5 seat on the board.

McDaniel's district takes up a small but populous chunk in the middle of Merced County that encompasses the City of Atwater.

District 5, Silveira's current district, takes up a much larger territory in the southernmost end of Merced County, including Los Banos, Dos Palos, the Los Banos Reservoir and the San Luis Reservoir.

State Senate, Assembly, Congress

The only candidate to file paperwork for the newly-drawn 14th District State Senate race is incumbent Anna Caballero, who was first elected to what is currently the 12th District in 2018. The 14th District, the district in which she is running for State Senate, will take effect with the June primary. She filed a declaration of intent to run on March 3. The current District 14 Senator, Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger), announced her intention run for re-election for the District 14 seat, but last month announced a change in her campaign to run for the District 16 seat instead. The new District 16 boundaries includes Hurtado's hometown of Sanger.

The new District 14 boundaries include parts of Fresno to the south, and go west almost to San Benito and includes parts of Madera County and goes all the way up to Merced County. It also includes parts of Modesto to the north.

The 27th Assembly District race, so far, has candidates in Fresno City Council member Esmeralda Soria and Mark Pazin (former Merced County Sheriff and former chief of California's Office of Emergency Services).

Fresno Councilmember Mike Karbassi, who is a moderate Democrat, said he's also exploring a run for the 27th Assembly seat. The new 27th Assembly District seat includes portions of Fresno, Madera, and Merced counties.

The incumbent, Democrat Adam Gray, is running for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives representing the 13th Congressional District. California's new 13th Congressional District, which stretches through parts of Modesto and Turlock past Coalinga

and captures all of Merced County. He is facing Democratic challengers Phil Arballo and infectious disease expert Angelina Sigala.

Running for the 13th District seat on Republican side tech executive Elizabeth Heng, Matt Stoll, a former fighter pilot who also is running in the special election to replace Devin Nunes (who left Congress in January), and Diego Martinez, a businessman who ran in the recall election against California Gov. Gavin Newsom, and businessman David Giglio.

The state Assembly 22nd District race only has one candidate, Chad Condit, so far. Condit is the son of former Congressman Gary Condit and worked for Assemblymember Dennis Cardoza as chief of staff. He also worked as an assistant to former Gov. Gray Davis.

Incumbent Kevin Mullin, who is also the speaker pro tempore of the state Assembly and has represented the 22nd District since 2014, is running for the 15th District seat in the U.S. Congress.

Other races on the ballot

Other county incumbents running for reelection include Matt May, the current Assessor-Recorder, Auditor-Controller Lisa Cardella-Presto, Merced County Sheriff Vernon Warnke and Treasurer-Tax Collector Karen Adams. No one has filed paperwork to challenge these incumbents in any of these races so far.

Two Merced Irrigation District board members are running for their current seats. Robert Weimer, the Division 5 representative and president of the board, and Mario Bandoni, the Division 2 representative, are running for reelection.

The only other seat up for grabs on the MID board is the Division 4 spot. The only candidate to file paperwork for that seat so far is a candidate named Eric Cabral, who is vying for Suzy Hultgren's current seat.

With one week left until the deadline for candidates to file paperwork to run for elected office in the June election, the number of candidates for any of these offices could change before the candidate filing nomination extension period ends.

Golden State Dairy Management Conference is March 23rd in Modesto!

By: Jennifer Heguy, UC ANR

Don't miss out! Join us on March 23rd in Modesto for the latest in California dairy research. Held in even years, this is the University of California's fourth research conference. We've designed the conference with the producer in mind, delivering information in a "news you can use" format. Our speaker line-up includes University of California Farm Advisors, Specialists, and Dairy Faculty on topics relevant to California dairying. Most importantly, the research presented is derived from

California data.

The meeting starts at 9 a.m. with a conversation with California Dairy Research Foundation's Denise Mullinax and the California Almond Board's Josette Lewis. Denise and Josette will highlight their organizations' research outlook for the next five years and how producers' dollars are being put to work to reach environmental stewardship and production goals.

Breakout sessions start at 10am. With six different sessions and 12-minute talks, there's surely

something for everyone. Room one will focus on nutrition and herd health, while room two has manure/nutrient management and agronomy. Both rooms will have "hot topics" sessions covering a variety of up-and-coming research topics.

For more information, check out the program: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/CA Dairyconference/> or contact Jennifer Heguy (contact info below). See page five of this newsletter for the full agenda.

We hope to see you in Modesto on March 23rd!



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U.S. News: EPA Targets Trucks, Buses

By: Katy Stech Ferek, The Wall Street Journal

WASHINGTON -- The Biden administration is proposing stricter rules to reduce air pollution from commercial trucks and buses, an effort it says will combat smog in major cities and the resulting respiratory problems.

The Environmental Protection Agency on Monday proposed new standards for engine manufacturers to lower nitrogen-oxide emissions from tractor-trailer-sized trucks, as well as other delivery trucks, cement mixers and trash trucks. The standards would take effect starting in model year 2027 and require manufacturers to create gasoline and diesel-engine models with better exhaust systems. Industry officials say they could significantly raise the cost of new vehicles, which could lead older vehicles to stay on the roads longer -- running counter to the administration's public-health goals.

EPA officials said the proposed rules are ambitious but feasible, and would benefit the public by reducing asthma and other health problems.

"These new standards will drastically cut dangerous pollution by harnessing recent advancements in vehicle technologies from across the trucking industry as it advances toward a zero-emissions transportation future," EPA Administrator Michael Regan said.

The rules would reduce nitrogen-oxide emissions from the country's fleet of heavy-duty trucks by as much as 60% in 2045, EPA officials said.

Regulators last called on truck and engine manufacturers to reduce nitrogen-oxide gases from vehicle exhaust in 2001. Those regulations, which were fully phased in for vehicles made in model year 2010, prompted engine manufacturers to install devices that reduced emissions of the toxic gases that form when fuel is burned.

Following those rules, air-quality officials recorded a nationwide 40% drop in emissions, the EPA said. Still, the agency said in 2019 that more than 128 million people lived in counties that failed to meet smog-related air-quality standards. Americans who live along truck-freight routes are more likely to be people of color and earn lower-than-average incomes, Mr. Regan said.

The EPA proposal calls for engines

to reduce nitrogen-oxide emissions from 0.2 gram per brake horsepower-hour, a measure of engine output, to 0.02 gram per brake horsepower-hour for heavy-duty vehicles. Under two options the agency laid out, the standard could fully take effect in 2027 or phase in by 2031.

The rules would also expand the time period that manufacturers must certify that the vehicle engine will meet air-pollution standards and the warranty period where they are liable for fixing broken emissions-control devices. EPA officials have previously said that existing warranty periods are too short given the high annual mileage accumulation for many trucks.

The proposed federal rules are similar to what California officials put in place last year.

Jay Grimes, director of federal affairs at the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, said that the cost of new technology for existing trucks to comply with the California rule could amount to between \$5,000 and \$7,000 to meet the 2027 standards.

For new trucks, industry officials have projected that a federal standard that matches California's would increase the cost by between \$8,600 and \$21,200 for model year 2027.

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Rib BBQ



Saturday, April 16th

4 – 7pm at the Stagg Hall in Hornitos

Tickets: \$25.00

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Racks of ribs will be available as well



Merced County Farm Bureau has an exciting opportunity
for fourth and fifth graders in Merced County!

In an effort to provide agricultural education, we will be hosting an agricultural spelling bee, called Agribee.

When: Friday, April 8, 2022

Where: Mainzer Theatre, Merced

Who: 4th & 5th graders in Merced County



The winner of the Agribee will take home an iPad!



A defiant pep talk, a gas rebate: What Gov. Newsom offered in State of the State

By: Alexei Koseff, CalMatters

Even as the coronavirus pandemic finally appears to be receding, Californians are in a funk.

They are nearly evenly split on whether the state is headed in the right direction, according to a survey released last month by the Public Policy Institute of California, and gave poor marks to Gov. Gavin Newsom on almost every policy issue, from wildfires to crime to homelessness, in another poll published a few weeks later by the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies.

So on Tuesday evening, Newsom turned his annual State of the State address into a defiant pep talk, assuring wary residents that, in a world unmoored by autocratic leaders and attacks on voting and abortion rights, the “California way” is still a beacon.

“People have always looked to California for inspiration,” he said. “Now, in the midst of so much turmoil, with the stacking of stresses and dramatic social and economic change, California is doing what we have done for generations: lighting out the territory ahead of the rest, expanding the horizon of what’s possible.”

Newsom touted better job creation and lower coronavirus death rates than other states, an ongoing expansion of pre-kindergarten to all four-year-olds and billions of dollars in additional funding for homelessness services during his administration.

But there’s only so much comfort to be found in troubled times.

In an 18-minute speech — uncharacteristically brief for Newsom — the governor could not entirely ignore the unfolding war in Ukraine, which he noted at the top of his remarks mattered far more to most people than anything he had to say, or looming challenges such as rising public anxiety over crime.

The only new policy announcement came during an acknowledgment of spiraling gas prices, which have recently surpassed an average of \$5 per gallon in California.

After previously calling in January to pause the annual increase to the state gas tax scheduled for July, Newsom pledged to work with legislative leadership on a plan for a tax rebate for drivers.

“Now it’s clear we have to go farther,” he said, though he rejected calls from the oil industry and some lawmakers to ramp up oil drilling in the state.

The governor provided no further details about who would receive financial relief or how much. At a post-event press conference, Dee Dee Myers, the governor’s top economic adviser, said the plan, which is not yet complete, would likely distribute billions of dollars to California residents who had registered their cars with the state.

“We want to make sure that the money gets into the hands and pockets of the people who are paying these gas prices, and not into the hands of companies who might take advantage of a moment to increase profits,” she said.

The speech in the auditorium of the California Natural Resources Agency, where Newsom unveiled his budget proposal in January, was a far cry from last year’s slickly-produced kickoff of his recall defense at Dodger Stadium — or even the usual pomp and circumstance of an annual event that is typically held in the majestic Assembly chamber at the state Capitol.

A bipartisan phalanx of legislators and other state officials filled the auditorium, which had been lightly decorated for the occasion with live plants onstage — native California species, naturally. Attendees were required to show proof of vaccination and test negative for COVID, but with a statewide indoor mask requirement recently dropped, face coverings were sparse.

Republicans, before and after the event, put out a series of videos and statements on the “real state of the state,” slamming Newsom and fellow Democrats for policies that they said had made California unsafe and unaffordable.

Seeming to anticipate those criticisms, Newsom nodded a handful of times to the issues that voters have consistently ranked as the most pressing in the state, including homelessness and public safety. He touted his commitment to violence-prevention programs and a recent proposal to establish county mental health courts, among other solutions that he said would not repeat the

failures of the past.

But his focus was largely on the grander scheme. He repeatedly presented California as an alternative to the anger and fear dividing not just the country, but the planet.

“California does democracy like nowhere else in the world. No other place offers opportunity to so many from so many different backgrounds,” Newsom said. “The California way means rejecting old binaries and finding new solutions to big problems.”

His best hope at overcoming those “binaries” in the near future may be his rebate proposal, which follows weeks of loud pleas by Republican legislators to suspend the state gas tax.

Their early reaction was muted, however. GOP leaders said they were willing to work with the governor on the policy while also dismissing it as another half-baked plan from a man with lots of ideas and not enough follow-through.

Senate Republican Leader Scott Wilk of Santa Clarita said it was “humorous” to hear Newsom speak loftily of democracy and inclusiveness during the State of the State.

“He just completely forged all the

realities of what’s happening in this state,” Wilk said. “He is not addressing the needs of everyday Californians.”

Democrats, who hold a supermajority in both houses of the Legislature and could act without any Republican votes, were more receptive to Newsom’s proposal on relief for gas prices, applauding loudly when he announced it during his speech.

Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins of San Diego and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon of Lakewood, who have been cold on the governor’s pitch to suspend the gas tax increase, released a joint statement after the event promising to “put the state’s robust revenue growth to work by returning substantial tax relief to families and small businesses as fast as possible.”

In an election year where the sour mood could be a significant liability for Newsom and fellow Democrats across the ballot, the rebate is potentially a major political gift. For all of Newsom’s attempts to cheer up gloomy Californians on Tuesday evening, the biggest serotonin boost was likely experienced by members of his own party.

SJV RCPP Workshops
2 dates: March 9th and March 21st, 9:00 - 9:45 am
Via Zoom (Registration Info below)

Funding is available for Best Management Practices, farm conservation plans, conservation easements and land re-purposing. This new program is through the San Joaquin Valley Land & Water Conservation Collaborative. These 2 workshops will cover information on the RCPP and how to apply.

What is the RCPP?
Over the next 5 years, The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) will work to assist farmers in the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) to receive financial assistance for 15 different land and water conservation practices recognized by the NRCS.

Partners
The RCPP promotes coordination of NRCS conservation activities with partners to increase ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns. The technical assistance partners who help with applications together with American Farmland Trust (AFT) and NRCS offices include 4 local Resource Conservation Districts: East Merced RCD, East Stanislaus RCD, Madera-Chowchilla RCD, Sierra RCD.

Who can apply to the RCPP?
The program applies to farmers who need assistance in 5 counties: Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Tulare. Particular attention is given to land and water that meets priority conservation needs. Applications are submitted through the NRCS.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP
Dates: March 9th and March 21st, 2022
Time: 9:00-9:45am
Where: Zoom
To register: <https://www.eastmercedrcd.org/training-and-education> or email programs@eastmercedrcd.org
Topics covered:
• Trina Welley w/ East Stan RCD: What are RCDs and RCD-RCPP partnership.
• Paul Lum and Stacy Shotts w/ AFT: background and information on RCPP, including practices and processes.
• Matt Bahm with Merced NRCS: How to apply to the RCPP and differences between RCPP and EQIP applications.

** RCPP App Deadline for 2022: April 1st, 2022



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 California Farmland Trust(916) 544-2712
 California Sweet Potato Council385-7403
 California Women for Agriculture723-5878
 Central CA Irrigation District.....826-1421
 Cortez Growers Association.....632-3118
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 Gustine Drainage District854-6782
 Hilltop Ranch Inc.874-1875
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 321-0884
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 Rico, Pfitzer, Pires and Associates ..854-2000
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from the
Mariposa CFB
Danette Toso

Each year the Mariposa County Farm Bureau, along with the Merced/Mariposa Cattlemen's Association, sponsor the Bud Swift Memorial Carcass Contest. This competition is open to Mariposa County 4-H, Independent 4-H and FFA members with market beef projects. Have you ever wondered what that pretty, shiny, fitted steer looks like

under all that hair and hide? This highly educational and informative completion does just that!

The animals must be owned by the member for at least 120 days before the county fair. The initial weigh-in is held in the beginning of May at the Mariposa County Fairgrounds and the final weigh-in is held when the animal is checked in at the fair for the Jr. Livestock show and auction Labor Day weekend. There are two equally weighted components of this contest that are evaluated for the final placings. The carcass portion of the contest centers on the industry standard for processing beef. The carcasses are evaluated on fat thickness, intramuscular fat, and muscling in determining the quality and yield grade. The second component is rate of gain which is calculated on how much the animal has gained from the first to second weigh-in. The overall winners through 4th place is determined by taking 50% from the carcass results and 50% from the rate of gain results. Trophy jackets and vests along with monies are awarded to the first and second place winners, and monies are paid to 4th place.

The Mariposa County Farm Bureau

works hard to continue this and other youth programs for our community. If you would like to support the youth of Mariposa County, I encourage you to attend the upcoming rib dinner April 16th held in Hornitos at the Stagg Hall. As we all know, Covid has hit all of the non-profit organizations extremely hard. We would really appreciate your support this year as we kick off the first fundraiser of 2022.

We would like to thank you in advance for your support in our fundraising efforts. 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 and the Mariposa community stronger than ever, one member at a time.



2021 Carcass Contest Winners: Pictured left to right, Khily Brower - 4th Place, Elona Brocchini - 1st Place, Jack Bertram - 2nd Place, Emmett Wise - Tie 3rd Place, Not pictured is Cali Butler - Tie 3rd Place.



Mariposa County Business Member Directory

Businesses Supporting the Farm Bureau

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- Mariposa County Farm Advisor966-2417
- Mariposa County Farm Bureau742-5875

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- Tobey Guenthart Construction374-3334

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- Happy Burger Diner966-2719
- Mariposa Friends of the Fairgrounds Foundation.....742-4680
- Hugh A. Yamshon Ranch
- Mariposa Gun Works742-5444
- Miners Roadhouse 14966-2444
- Pony Expresso966-5053

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WINERIES

- Mount Bullion Vineyard.....377-8450
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Support Farm Bureau Member Businesses

2022 water year looks dismal as snowpack melts

By: **Christine Souza, AgAlert**

An aerial view of Shasta Dam on Oct. 28 revealed a stark water picture. Reservoir levels recovered briefly after December storms, only to shrink after an exceptionally dry start to 2022.

The optimism spurred by heavy snowstorms in December has melted away, and the 2022 water year is now looking bleak.

After facing the driest recorded January and February in state history, California Department of Water Resources reported that statewide, the snowpack stood at 63% of average for the date last week after conducting the agency's third manual snow survey of the year.

"That is not enough to fill up our reservoirs," said Sean de Guzman, manager of the DWR Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit.

He said, "It's safe to say we'll end this year dry and extend this drought a third year."

With only one month left in California's wet season, DWR Director Karla Nemeth said in a statement, "Californians should plan for a third year of drought conditions."

"A significantly below-average snowpack, combined with already low reservoir levels," Nemeth said, "make it critical that all Californians step up and conserve water every day to help the state meet the challenges of severe drought."

A third consecutive drought year means farmers, water managers and state officials must figure out how to move forward and plan for the state's water future.

Those themes were amplified last week at a Sacramento conference—"Water for a Sustainable California." It was held by the California Irrigation Institute to focus attention on agricultural and urban water management.

"This year is probably going to be the worst year ever," said conference speaker Thad Bettner, general manager of Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District. "It's been a brutal year for California all around."

Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District, a Sacramento River settlement contractor with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, received an initial water

allocation of 75%.

Bettner said, "There are conversations happening right now about what this year will shape up like, but it's going to be pretty tough."

As part of a conference panel discussion on water sustainability, Bettner described how farmers and the district have partnered with others to help fish populations and stretch water use.

State Water Resources Control Board Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel talked about broad water issues facing the state, including water rights, storage and balancing groundwater supplies as required by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

In a summary of his remarks, provided by the state water board, Esquivel discussed imposing water curtailments in critical watersheds to preserve supplies for cities and limiting the amount that water-rights holders may be able to divert this year.

Last year, the state board adopted emergency curtailments for several watersheds, including the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, due to severe drought conditions. That action halted 2021 water diversions for 10,300 water rights on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and denied surface-water deliveries for some 4,500 farms.

California Irrigation Institute President Chase Hurley said Esquivel's remarks signaled potential emergency actions again this water year. He said water rights will also be a topic of discussion for the board.

"You can tell that water rights is something that Joaquin and the board are really thinking about," said Hurley, managing partner of Water & Land Solutions and former general manager of San Luis Canal Company in Dos Palos.

Hurley expressed added concern about how the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan would require diversion flows for fish in three San Joaquin River tributaries. "It (altering water rights) is a scary proposition, especially if the state board is able to pull 40-50% of your water and leave it in the river," he said.

A look at water rights may stem from recommendations released last month by water law and policy leaders that form the Planning and Conservation League.

Citing hotter summers and the disappearing rain and snowpack, the league released recommendations to update California water laws to address drought and climate change. In its report, the group said California's current system of water laws is "ill-equipped to respond to modern water shortages."

It said the water picture must be reassessed to safeguard the health, safety and livelihoods of the state's 40 million residents, support the economy and protect imperiled ecosystems.

Bettner, meanwhile, called for protecting existing water rights.

"We strongly support our water-rights system and that our infrastructure, agreements, operations, etc., are built on that system."

"While some may want to change it or toss it out, our water-rights system and water code provide for flexibility to manage, in changing hydrologic conditions, environment and infrastructure. What we need is our water-rights system to be implemented to its fullest extent versus cherry picking sections we agree or disagree with."

To achieve a more sustainable water supply in the state, Dorene D'Adamo, vice chair of the state water board, suggested that there be more collaboration and partnerships to turn problems into solutions.

"There is concern throughout the valley of seeing as much as 800,000 acres potentially going out of production as a result of implementation of SGMA," D'Adamo said. "There is tremendous concern wherever you go in the valley of what this is going to mean for the transfer market, what's it going to mean if you have ongoing surface water challenges, so really looking for partnerships there, expanding groundwater recharge and being more creative with rescheduling water deliveries."

Fourth-generation Kern County farmer Bret Sill grows almonds, walnuts, row crops, alfalfa and wheat. He said, "We've been trying to work sustainably for many generations."

Over the years, his family added recycled water to irrigate some crops and employed new technology such as moisture probes to reduce water use.

He has also worked with a company to automate irrigation among other investments in new technology.

"We are looking at what we can do to be more sustainable in our practices not only by increasing soil fertility, but by increasing water retention and carbon sequestration," Sill said. "My goal is to reduce our reliance on synthetic inputs. We are conserving water, we are conserving energy and trying to be more sustainable for the future."



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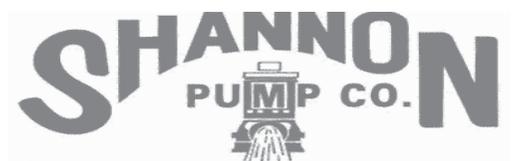
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Merced County Farm Bureau 104th Annual Meeting

Friday, March 25, 2022



Keynote Speaker

Former U.S. Army
Black Hawk Pilot
Elizabeth McCormick

Merced Fairgrounds
900 MLK Jr. Way, Merced, CA

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: _____

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

info@mercedfarmbureau.org