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Solutions for a changing world!

World Ag Expo® Presents Valley Children's Healthcare with \$101,457 Donation through Toyota Tundra Giveaway



L to R: Todd Suntrapak (CEO, VCH), Stan Creelman (2024 World Ag Expo Chairman), Wally Roeben (Operations Manager, IAC), Hayley Benigni (Marketing Coordinator, IAC), Juliana Ramirez (Sponsorship and Ag Education Coordinator, IAC), Brittany Brazell (Sponsorship and Ag Education Manager, IAC), Jerry Siniift (CEO, IAC)

The International Agri-Center®, World Ag Expo®, and the Central Valley Toyota Dealers presented a check in the amount of \$101,457.32 to Valley Children's Healthcare during the All Guild Picnic held on May 22nd, in Madera, California. The donation marks another impactful milestone in the ongoing partnership, which began in 2015. Since then, over \$730,000 has been raised to support Valley Children's Healthcare.

The check represented the total funds raised by the Guilds of Valley Children's Healthcare, who participated in World Ag Expo's® Toyota Tundra Giveaway by selling chances to win a new 2024 Tundra. The proceeds from the giveaway will directly benefit the Central California hospital.

"The Guilds of Valley Children's are grateful for 10 years of partnership with World Ag Expo and Central Valley Toyota Dealers to help fulfill our mission," said Marla McClaskey, Chair of the Guild Coordinating Council. "These partner-

ships along with the amazing generosity of our community make possible the continued success of the Toyota Tundra Giveaway benefitting Valley Children's and the patients and families it cares for."

The Tundra truck, won by Javier Colins of Tulare, CA on the final day of World Ag Expo®, was donated by the Central Valley Toyota Dealers, through their role as the Official Truck of World Ag Expo®.

"This program is truly fulfilling—it's one of the highlights of what we do," said Jerry Siniift, Chief Executive Officer, International Agri-Center®. "The Guilds do an amazing job driving this fundraiser. We are happy to be a partner and couldn't do this without the support of the Central Valley Toyota dealers. World Ag Expo attendees and the community continue to show incredible support for the program."

The 2025 World Ag Expo® Toyota Tundra Giveaway will return, benefitting Valley Children's Healthcare, will kick off

American Agri-Women Celebrates Successful 2024 Fly-In!



The 2024 American Agri-Women (AAW) Fly-In, a groundbreaking event that brought together women from across the agricultural and natural resource industries, took place this past week in the nation's capital. The AAW Fly-In was opened to all women in these fields for the first time in its history, offering a unique platform to engage with legislators, agencies, and professionals on critical agricultural issues and policies.

The annual June event, organized by the American Agri-Women Fly-In Committee and the AAW Road to Influence Leadership Program, aimed to amplify women's voices in agriculture and natural resources. Participants had the opportunity to speak directly with their legislators, attend high-level agency roundtables, and explore key historical sites in Washington, D.C.

AAW President Rose Tryon said about the event, "Our annual Fly-In is one of our most important events of the year. For the first time in our history, we opened this event to women outside of our membership because it is important for us to speak with a united voice about issues and policies affecting agriculture."

Event Highlights:

Attendees received valuable insights from speakers on Sunday. The event featured notable speakers, including David R. Legates from the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation, who discussed the impact of climate change on agriculture, highlighting that extremism is not helpful in this arena. Rob Gordon, a conservation expert, spoke on the Endangered Species Act.

A panel moderated by AAW President Rose Tryon, featuring Mindy Patterson of The Cavalry Group LLC, Debbie Bacigalupi, a cattle rancher, and Chrissy Wozniak, host of the North American Ag Spotlight podcast, discussing the real-life implications of agricultural policies.

Insightful speakers made their presentations on Monday during the American Agri-Women's 29th annual Symposium titled, "Climate Change... At What Cost?" Deputy Secretary of

Agriculture Xochitl Torres Small opened the 2024 AAW Symposium with a message of hope and gratitude for the agricultural community. Other influential speakers included AAW Past President Heather Hampton+Knodle, William Hohenstein from the Office of Energy & Environmental Policy, Darci Vetter of PepsiCo, Rebekah Adock from the International Fresh Produce Association, Kelsey Barnes of the Farm Journal Foundation, and Anthony Watts from the Heartland Institute.

Agency, Senate and Congressional Visits:

Attendees met with regulatory agencies and various members of Congress to discuss AAW's priority issues and their concerns.

The EPA roundtable was held on Monday afternoon. Rod Snyder, Senior Advisor for Agriculture, and Venus Welch-White, Acting Deputy Director of the Office of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OARA), welcomed attendees to the EPA. Members also heard from Mae Wu, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water, and Michal Ilana Freedhoff, Assistant Administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention.

The annual USDA Roundtable was held on the final day of Fly-In. It featured discussions with representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Forest Service (USFS), APHIS, Agriculture Future for America (AFA), and NASS. This roundtable emphasized the importance of a united voice in advocating for agricultural interests.

The 2024 AAW Fly-In successfully wrapped up with the annual Congressional Reception, a hallmark of the Fly-In. At this reception, members network with legislators and industry leaders while celebrating the achievements of two Congressmen who have made an exceptional contribution to agriculture with the Champion of Ag Award. The Congressional Reception also gave the women a chance to celebrate a week of impactful discussions, learning, and advocacy. The event underscored the power of uniting women across agriculture and natural resources to influence policy and drive positive change.



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Versatility and Durability – John Deere 6M Tractor Delivers for Farmers and Ranchers

New 6M options provide midsize tractor solutions for any farm

John Deere (NYSE: DE) announced the launch of the new 6M tractor, providing farmers and ranchers numerous options in one of the industry's most versatile and dependable tractors. With 18 different models, engine options with 95 to 250 horsepower and five frame size options, the 6M tractor can be customized to fit the needs of farms and ranches. The 6M tractor gives farmers the opportunity to focus on their work because it is fuel-efficient, configurable for numerous jobs and easy to operate.

"This tractor is the workhorse for many farms and ranches," said Dennis Ogle, marketing manager for the John Deere midsize tractor line. "The new 6M tractor is bigger, smarter, faster and more efficient and customizable, making it the go-to tractor for many farms, including dairy and beef operations."

Standards Remain

The 6M tractor provides numerous ways to configure, giving you just the right tractor for your operation, but still has the standard features that make it the workhorse of any farm or ranch. The 6M tractor has just the right size to perform many tasks on the farm with traditional mechanical transmission options or easy-to-use infinitely variable transmission options. The shortest wheelbase with sloped hood remains, providing excellent visibility and maneuverability. All 6M cabs also offer an exceptional view around the tractor, making loader work, mowing and baling easier to complete. In addition, the 6M tractor still has the high front or rear hitch lift capacity that is important for various jobs. Overall, a definite advantage is the service and support of the extensive John Deere dealer network.

"We know farmers and ranchers love simple and reliable tractors to get the important jobs done," Ogle said. "The 6M tractor delivers with a proven history along with more valuable options to cater to each owner's needs."

Options Abound

The Model Year 2025 6M tractor can be customized to provide farmers the opportunity to have large tractor features on a mid-sized machine. Customers may select the features that meet the requirements of their operation. With five frame sizes and 18 models, farmers can work with their John Deere dealer to build the tractor that's right for their farm. Configurations and options include:

- Horsepower and chassis: 18 models with five chassis options and horsepower ranging from 95 to 250 hp.
 - Intelligent Power Management: Up to 20hp above a model's rated horsepower in transport and nonstationary PTO applications. This allows the operator to conquer hills when transporting, thick windrows when baling, and more.
 - Dual-tire configurations: Rear bar axles and dual-tire configurations are now available for ease of wheel spacing or when needing more flotation and traction.
 - Infinitely variable transmission: Transmission option available across all models that allows for stepless driving.
 - Higher speed with 50K transmission: Available across the full portfolio of 6M tractors, this feature helps transport speeds, leading to increased efficiency.
 - Cab package options: New options available to increase operator comfort to improve productivity.
 - Scalable precision ag technology: More precision ag available on demand with updated cornerpost display and integrated connectivity.
- "If farmers are looking for a tractor to help with multiple tasks around their farm, this is their tractor," Ogle said. "Whether you are putting up hay, moving bales, feeding, mowing roadsides, removing snow or any number of other tasks, the 6M tractor is the workhorse that can help complete the job."
- To learn more about the John Deere 6M tractor, visit JohnDeere.com or contact your local John Deere dealer.

California Farm Equipment

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USDA moves to gain better understanding of forest and grazing conservation practices

This summer, the Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey (CPAMS), a joint project between USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), will be mailed to 43,000 forest and grazing landowners and managers across the nation. The CPAMS gathers information to understand why people choose to use different conservation practices, and whether they continue to use practices over time. The data will help improve voluntary conservation programs. NASS will mail an invitation to respond early online at agcounts.usda.gov starting June 24. NASS will mail questionnaires on July 8 with the option for survey recipients to respond online, by mail, or fax. If NASS does not receive completed questionnaires by July 28, they may reach out to schedule interviews. A data highlights publication is scheduled for October 2024 and will be published at nass.usda.gov.

Four different conservation categories are researched through CPAMS overall: crop practices, confined livestock practices, grazing practices and forestry practices. This year, NASS will survey grazing practices and forestry practices. Crop practices and confined livestock practices were surveyed in 2022. The grazing sample respondents are random-

ly selected from NASS records of operations that meet the grazing land criteria. The forestry sample respondents are determined by the USDA Forest Service area frame determination of wood or forest landowners.

"By responding to CPAMS, you can help shape the future of conservation, agriculture, and forestry," said NASS Administrator Joseph L. Parsons. "With better data to help us understand how conservation fits into existing agriculture and forest management operations, program resources can be focused on where they will be most effective. I encourage everyone who receives a CPAMS questionnaire to respond."

Protected by federal law, responses are confidential and used for statistical purposes only. No single respondent can be identified from the published data.

"Your input will help improve our voluntary conservation programs, including technical and financial assistance," said NRCS Chief Terry Cosby. "By responding to CPAMS, you also help document and give credit to your ongoing stewardship of America's agricultural forest land resources."

Previous CPAMS data are available on the Highlights page of the NASS website. For more information, visit nass.usda.gov/go/CPAMS. For help with the CPAMS questionnaire, call 888-424-7828.

Report: Cover crops benefits may outweigh water-use in California



"Cover crops are a valuable soil health practice that can help ensure the resilience of California farms to climate extremes," said Sarah Light, shown in a cover crop of bell bean, pea and vetch that will be replanted with a tomato crop.

By Pamela S Kan-Rice

Assistant Director, News and Information Outreach

Cover crops are planted to protect and improve the soil between annual crops such as tomatoes or between rows of tree and vine crops, but growers may be concerned about the water use of these plants that don't generate income.

"Cover crops are one of the most popular practices we see farmers employ through our Healthy Soils Program," said Karen Ross, secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. "Cover crops supply a host of benefits, such as helping to protect against soil erosion, improving soil health, crowding out weeds, controlling pests and diseases, and increasing biodiversity; and they can bring increased profitability as the number of other inputs are reduced. They also provide water benefits such as improved infiltration and reduced runoff."

These potential benefits are especially salient in the San Joaquin Valley, where groundwater challenges are more acute. A new report evaluates the water implications of cover cropping practices to lay the groundwork for their adoption in the context of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, or SGMA, which is intended to protect groundwater resources over the long-term.

"Yes, cover crops require a nominal amount of water to establish – and sometimes rainwater is sufficient – but the myriad co-benefits are worth it," Ross said.

Growers, water resource planners and managers, crop consultants, irrigation practitioners and policymakers may find the cover crops report useful.

The report is the product of a convening process jointly developed by the California Association of Resource Con-

servation Districts, CDFA, Natural Resources Conservation Service of California, and University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, and assembled by non-profit Sustainable Conservation.

The multidisciplinary group of more than 30 individuals has published "Cover Cropping in the SGMA Era." The literature review, policy analysis and recommendations pertain to the water impacts of cover crop practices in California's Central Valley under SGMA.

Drone aerial shots of a orchards with and without cover crops.

Cover crops and their potential "Wintertime rain-fed cover cropping does not necessarily significantly increase water losses compared to bare ground in the winter months," said co-author Daniele Zaccaria, associate

professor in agricultural water management for Cooperative Extension at UC Davis. "Cover cropping can significantly improve soil-water dynamics, increasing soil water infiltration and storage and reducing surface runoff"

To reap the benefits of cover crops using minimal water, Zaccaria said growers will need to know how the plants perform under different conditions.

"We need to develop and implement a coordinated research effort to increase understanding of net water impacts of cover crops under various meteorological conditions – dry, wet, average," he said.

Report findings and recommendations

To understand the potential of cover cropping under SGMA, the report's authors came together to answer the following questions:

1. What are the impacts of cover crops on water cycles (both benefits and use)?
2. How does SGMA management account for cover cropping and is it capturing cover crop benefits alongside their water use?
3. How can we ensure that this practice remains available to growers where and when it makes sense?

This report synthesizes the learnings from the collaborative initiative including 100-plus multidisciplinary experts, a policy analysis, interviews with Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) staff and consultants, and the expertise contributed by its 30-plus authors. In light of these findings, the report advances a series of recommendations aimed at bridging critical knowledge gaps, enhancing the integration of cover crops into policies and incentive programs, and bol-

See Cover Crops next page

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Cover Crops

continued from previous page

stering data infrastructure and other mechanisms to support sustainable groundwater management initiatives.

One vital throughline is the need for additional guidance from the state to support local GSAs in facing the complex challenges of developing and implementing groundwater management strategies for their local watersheds. These measures aim to optimize cover crop integration within SGMA frameworks and promote sustainable water management practices crucial for the region's agricultural resilience and environmental health.

"This report is unique because the university collaborated closely with state agencies and private sector partners to ensure that the different perspectives provided both the best science available as well as viable policy options," said Glenda Humiston, University of California vice president for agriculture and natural resources. "By taking a comprehensive view, we can advance recommendations for cover crop policy that help us meet multiple goals, manage our natural resources more effectively, and avoid unintended consequences."

Sarah Light, UC Cooperative Extension agronomy farm advisor, is one of the UC ANR experts who provided science-based information during the convening sessions and co-authored the white paper.

"Cover crops are a valuable soil health practice that can help ensure the resilience of California farms to climate extremes," said Light. "As we balance the complexities of water and soil management, it is important to understand the role that cover crops play in an annual water budget so that they are not disincentivized in certain parts of the state. This paper can provide guidance to GSAs and policymakers who are charged with implementing SGMA in their regions."

The report "Cover Cropping in the SGMA Era" can be downloaded for free at <https://suscon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SC-Cover-Crop-SGMA-Report.pdf>.

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The Right-Size Nest Can Maximize Pollination Capabilities of Solitary Bees



An alfalfa leafcutting bee (*Megachile rotundata*) on an alfalfa flower. This bee species is one of many wild bees called on to help honey bees pollinate the nation's crops. Photo by Peggy Greb

Solitary bees have a shorter lifespan compared to honeybees, usually lasting the spring or summer season. These bees have limited time to perform a lot of pollination work and they can use all the help they can get!

The USDA's Agricultural Research Service (USDA ARS), Insect Genetics and Biochemistry Research, participated in a study led by the North Dakota State University, that aimed to provide insights on how to help solitary bees maximize their pollination performance and to aid pollination management.

The study focused on the alfalfa leafcutting bee (*Megachile rotundata*) to determine how modifying the nesting cavity diameter of solitary bees can enhance bee conservation, performance, and management practices. The pollination work by this species of solitary bee is crucial for alfalfa seed production.

There are more species of solitary bees than honeybees. Like honeybees, solitary bees are essential for pollinating crops and gardens, but unlike honeybees, they do not live in hives. Many solitary bees, like the alfalfa leafcutting bee, are cavity nesters and lay their eggs in natural cavities such as hollow twigs and holes in wood or digging underground tunnels. Before laying their eggs, the mother bee determines the required amount of provisions, gathers the supply of nectar and pollen, and places it in the individual nest cells. Then, eggs are laid on the provisions for the larvae' development. Gardeners and bee managers help increase the number of bees by placing "human-made" nesting holes around gardens to help the bees with nest construction. Another method is the use of "human-made" nesting boxes, which are also commonly used in commercial pollination managers to synchronize the time pollinators emerge with crop bloom.

An interesting fact is that the performance of solitary bees is not solely determined by their genetics but also by their body size. Furthermore, the size of the bee's body is influenced by the diameter of the nesting cavity and the amount of provisions left by the mother bee. Bees that grow larger inside the cavities have been shown to have a greater foraging distance, making them better at spreading pollen. Therefore, the size of the nesting holes can either limit or maximize the pollination performance of the offspring. So, how can we determine the correct size and diameter for bee-nesting to maximize the production capabilities of solitary bee offspring?

Scientists examined the adult body mass and provision size of the alfalfa leafcutting bee. They collected samples from nesting boxes placed in the field. The boxes offered cavities ranging in diameter from four to nine mm in one mm increments. After scientists examined

all the measurements collected from the field nesting boxes, including the body sizes and provision measurements, they found that the size of the pollen provision was positively correlated to the bee's mass. They also observed that bees' body size increased as the diameter of the nesting cavity increased, reaching a maximum size in the bigger nesting cavity diameters, with offspring emerging from 8 and 9 mm having the highest rate of winter survival.

In addition, the study found that various factors, such as gender, wing areas, wing loading, and overwintering, significantly influence the offspring when included in the analysis. The optimal nesting cavity size for the highest yield of offspring is 7 mm, while the best performance was observed in the 8 mm cavity. On the other hand, the 5 mm cavity could be the best option for the conservation of other cavity-nesting bees. As the different nest diameters impact each of these variables differently, pollination managers should carefully choose a cavity size that aligns with their primary management objective.

"This study demonstrates the importance of different nest sizes for solitary bees," said Research Leader Joe P. Rinehart, with the Insect Genetics and Biochemistry Research in Fargo, North Dakota. "While larger nests result in larger bees that may be able to fly further, the medium nests produced more bees overall, and even bees from the smallest nests have the advantage of increased relative flight power, which means that they have the ability to carry relatively heavier loads than their larger counterparts."

What is next? Scientists will continue researching to find answers to additional questions, including more detailed studies on the costs and benefits of being a larger or smaller bee.

CDFA Announces Vacancies On Registered Service Agency Advisory Committee

CDFA is announcing two vacancies on the Registered Service Agency (RSA) Advisory Committee.

The committee is an advisory body to CDFA's Division of Measurement Standards (CDFA-DMS) in all matters concerning the registration of service agencies as authorized by the California Business and Professions Code.

CDFA-DMS' Registered Service Agency (RSA) Program is responsible for registering businesses and their employees who, for hire or payment of any kind, repair commercial weighing and measuring devices in California.

The RSA Advisory Committee consists of seven members. Two (2) positions are currently vacant:

- One member representing an industry client/customer of a service agency
- One member representing the public

Applicants must demonstrate applied knowledge in the field of weights and measures and have either technical expertise with commercial weighing and/or measuring devices or general knowledge of the RSA industry.

The membership term is for three years and members are asked to be available to participate in a minimum of four meetings per fiscal year. The committee may meet more frequently if needed. Committee members receive no compensation but are entitled to payment for necessary travel expenses in accordance with the rules of the California Department of Human Resources.

Individuals interested in being considered for appointment must send a brief letter of interest and a completed Prospective Member Appointment Questionnaire to dms@cdfa.ca.gov.

Visit the RSA Program and the RSA Advisory Committee Meetings web-pages or call CDFA-DMS at (916) 229-3000 for further information.



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Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center for Agricultural Innovation Groundbreaking



CA&ES Dean Helene Dillard, Chancellor Gary S. May, Wonderful Company's Chief Operating Officer of Corporate Social Responsibility Andy Anzaldo and Vice Chancellor for Development and Alumni Relations Shaun Keister at the groundbreaking of the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center for Agricultural Innovation. (José Luis Villegas/ UC Davis)

by Emily C. Dooley

Construction officially began on the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center for Agricultural Innovation with a groundbreaking event celebrating the future \$64.4 million facility at the University of California, Davis.

The 32,000 square-foot building will house classrooms, research spaces, laboratories and an agricultural engineering robotics and sensor fabrication shop. In addition to experiential learning and collaboration spaces, the facility will house a student success hub, including academic and career advising for the Wonderful Scholars Program, a scholarship program established by the Resnicks to support students from the Central Valley.

The new facility was made possible by the Resnicks' historic \$50 million gift to UC Davis in 2022, which directed \$40 million to the center while setting aside \$10 million for annual competitive research grants to investigate new uses for agricultural byproducts from California's iconic specialty crops.

"The Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center for Agricultural Innovation furthers our commitment to excellence in research, learning and public service," Chancellor Gary S. May said during the ceremony. "It paves the way for advancements that benefit us all – from the fields of California to the far reaches of the world."

The center will be home to experts from across UC Davis focused on making crops more sustainable and resilient, developing next-generation technologies, expanding access to nutritious food, maximizing water and energy efficiencies

and identifying beneficial uses for agricultural waste.

A hub for research, learning and innovation

Helene Dillard, dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at UC Davis, said the building represents a commitment to advancing agricultural practices and environmental sustainability efforts through research, innovation and public service.

"The space will serve as a hub where educators, students and industry leaders can come together and foster a shared commitment for impactful research, spark new ideas and usher in a new generation of agriculture – a generation that can leverage technology and innovation across a host of disciplines and research topics, including genetics, phenotyping, bioinformatics, AI and robotics," Dillard said.

The building, which will be located between Hutchinson Drive and Extension Center Drive, was

designed with flexibility in mind so that research can be ramped up quickly to understand which concepts may have commercial viability.

"We are laying the foundation for a brighter, more sustainable future for all," Dillard said.

The Resnicks are philanthropists and owners of The Wonderful Company, which produces a wide range of fruit, nut, flower, water and juice products. Andy Anzaldo, The Wonderful Company's chief operating officer of corporate social responsibility, called the groundbreaking a pivotal moment in the future of sustainability and agriculture.

"Protecting the future of our planet is one of the Resnicks' highest priorities," Anzaldo said. "It's why they've committed to equipping future scientists and leaders with the tools they need to fight the growing climate crisis."

He added that The Wonderful Company's connection with campus dates back four decades.

"It's because of that long history that there is no better partner than UC Davis and we trust no one more to drive long-term transformational innovation in agriculture," he said.

Completion of the building is expected in 2026.

"The ceremony was about planting the seeds of innovation and collaboration that will grow along the way," said Shaun B. Keister, vice chancellor for Development and Alumni Relations. "And when the doors finally open, we will have a new home for scientific discovery that will allow us to continue making positive changes in the world and inspire generations to come."



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A Drying Salton Sea Pollutes Neighboring Communities



Dust from the Salton Sea playa is impacting nearby communities following water diversions to San Diego. (Getty)

by Emily C. Dooley

When desert winds stir up dust from the Salton Sea's exposed lakebed, nearby communities suffer from increased air pollution. The deterioration coincides with reduced flows into California's largest lake, a new research paper in the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* finds.

Disadvantaged communities have been affected more than others in the areas near the Salton Sea, which has been shrinking for years, said the paper's co-leading author Eric Edwards. He is an assistant professor of agricultural economics at University of California, Davis, who did the research while at North Carolina State University.

"We have a dusty area, and any time there is wind, it's going to pick up dust and move it around," Edwards said. "We think this new dust is increasing the amount of pollution faced by disadvantaged communities in the region surrounding the lake."

An overflowing river

The Salton Sea formed in 1905 after the Colorado River overflowed its banks and the floodwaters settled into what was known as the Salton Sink. It was primarily fed by water runoff from agricultural operations for almost a century. As the southern part of California struggled to meet growing water demand, the Imperial Irrigation District agreed to send water to San Diego for urban use.

Imperial, which supplies water to vast desert farms as well as seven towns and two special districts, is the largest user of Colorado River water. The agreement with San Diego required agricultural water users to increase efficiency and reduce their water consumption, which reduced water running into the Salton Sea, Edwards said.

The reductions increased the lake's salt content, which is higher than in the Pacific Ocean. This also harmed wildlife habitats and created localized air pollution. The area is the subject of many environmental restoration projects.

Studying implications

Edwards and others used a particle transport model to study the effects of changing water diversions on particulate pollution.

They found that the paths of fine particulate matter — which can cause asthma, heart and respiratory issues when inhaled — were associated with higher air pollution readings after Imperial began reducing runoff water to the Salton Sea around 2011 in order to transfer it to San Diego, a practice that continues today.

Researchers modeled lakebed exposure by dividing the lake's shoreline into 1-square-kilometer grids and collected air pollution data daily for over 20 years, from 1998 to 2018. They added data about the exposed lakebed, or playa, and used a sophisticated physics model called HYSPLIT to factor in wind levels and particle size to track the movement of dust over time. State health screening information available by ZIP code added more to the story by pinpointing

disadvantaged areas, asthma rates and other vulnerabilities.

Lake levels were higher in 1998 before the transfers, so the change was not evident until later years, when the lakebed became more exposed.

"We show that during that post-2011, there is an increase in particles going through disadvantaged communities relative to non-disadvantaged communities, which are farther away from the sea," Edwards said.

In the paper, the pollution paths are depicted on a map of the state. The Salton Sea is marked with a black dot, and red lines radiate from there to distances of 100 miles or more.

"From every exposed grid cell you have these paths predicting where the particles are going based on physics," Edwards said. "That's the path of emissions."

Prior research suggests that dust particles from newly exposed playa are more susceptible to wind erosion.

"There's lots of evidence that playa is particularly emissive in terms of dust," Edwards said. "If it's dry, those particles get picked up readily by the wind and create dust — and at rates higher than areas that have been exposed to the wind over long periods of time."

Informing decision makers

Edwards said policymakers and regulators should consider the health and environmental impacts of water diversions in their decision making.

"The drying up of the Salton Sea has serious health consequences that have generally fallen on more disadvantaged populations, who may not be well equipped to advocate for policies that improve their health," he said. "Policymakers need to think about how to facilitate the movement of water via market transactions, which are essential, while also accounting for potential negative effects on the environment."

Ryan Abman from San Diego State University and Dana Hernandez-Cortes from Arizona State University contributed equally with Edwards to the research and journal article.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture supported this research.



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West Side REC study: A cradle of California regenerative agriculture

In 20-year study, UCCE specialist Mitchell, colleagues, growers advance no-till and cover cropping practices

In the 1990s, long before “regenerative agriculture” was a buzzword and “soil health” became a cause célèbre, a young graduate student named Jeff Mitchell first learned about similar concepts during an agronomy meeting in the Deep South.

Mitchell was astonished to hear a long list of benefits attributed to practices known internationally as “conservation agriculture” – eliminating or reducing tillage, cover cropping and preserving surface residues (the plant debris left after harvest). Potential positive impacts include decreasing dust in the air, saving farmers money on fuel and equipment maintenance, improving soil vitality and water dynamics and a host of other ecosystem services.

“All of these things start adding up and you kind of scratch your head and say, ‘Well, maybe we ought to try some of this;’” recalled Mitchell, who became a University of California Cooperative Extension cropping systems specialist at UC Davis in 1994.

In 1998, Mitchell launched a long-term study of those practices at the West Side Research and Extension Center (REC) in Five Points, Fresno County. “We started this because, way back when I first began my job, nobody was doing this,” he explained. “This was brand-new, uncharted territory for California.”

For the next 20 years, Mitchell and his colleagues studied changes to the soil and ecosystem, learned from their failures and successes, and shared those hard-won lessons with fellow scientists and farmers across the state. A summary of their findings was recently published in the journal *California Agriculture*.

A man stands amid chest-high cover crops, with mountains in the distance

West Side Research and Extension Center, operated by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, was the site of a 20-year study of conservation agriculture practices. Here, UCCE Specialist Jeff Mitchell stands amid cover crops in the project field in 2010. Photo courtesy of Jeff Mitchell

Conservation agriculture in California: ‘No trivial undertaking’

Mitchell and the Conservation Agriculture Systems Innovation Workgroup – a network established in 1998 comprising farmers, researchers, public agency personnel and members of private entities and environmental groups – started with a virtually blank slate. According to Mitchell, surveys at the beginning of the 21st century found that conservation agriculture practices were used on less than one-half of 1% of annual crop acreage in California.

Although no-till is common in the Midwest and Southeast of the U.S. and across wide swaths of the globe, it was almost unheard of in the Golden State. With the development of irrigation infrastructure in the 1920s, California farmers saw continually phenomenal growth in yield over the last century – and thus had little incentive to deviate from tried-and-true methods that relied on regular tillage.

Nevertheless, intrigued by the potential benefits of conservation agriculture, Mitchell wanted to see which of those practices could be feasibly applied to California cropping systems. During the 20-year study at West Side REC, the researchers grew a



Jeff Mitchell, UC Cooperative Extension cropping systems specialist at UC Davis, and Lauren Hale, USDA Agricultural Research Service scientist, examine soils in the project field at the UC West Side Research and Extension Center in Five Points. Photo courtesy of Jeff Mitchell

rotation of cotton-tomato, followed by a rotation of garbanzo, melons, and sorghum, and finally tomatoes.

But at first, it was a struggle to grow anything at all – as they had to master the basics of how to establish the plants in a no-till, high-residue system.

“This was no trivial undertaking,” Mitchell said. “Early on we struggled – we failed the first couple of years because we didn’t know the planting techniques and we had to learn those. There was an upfront, very steep learning curve that we had to manage and overcome.”

Then there was the long wait to see any measurable improvements to soil health indicators, such as the amount carbon in the soil.

“For the first eight years, we didn’t see any changes whatsoever,” Mitchell said. “But then they became strikingly different, between the no-till cover crop system and the conventional field without cover crops, and the divergence between those two systems became even starker.”

A woman points to a jar filled with water that is less cloudy because the clump of soil in it is holding together

UCCE agronomy farm advisor Sarah Light demonstrates how the soil aggregate from the Five Points study site holds together and the water is thus less murky than the water with the soil from heavily tilled land. Photo by Evett Kilmartin

The two-decade time horizon for the West Side REC study is one major reason why it has been so valuable for growers and scientists alike.

“It’s so hard to capture measurable changes in soil health and soil function metrics through research because those changes are really slow,” said Sarah Light, UCCE agronomy farm advisor for Sutter, Yuba and Colusa counties and a co-author of the recent *California Agriculture* paper. “Often in the course of a three-year grant you don’t actually get statistically significant differences.”



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USDA Announces Enhanced Resources to Support Businesses Interested in Procurement Opportunities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced resource enhancements designed to simplify and streamline access to contracting information for businesses interested in selling their products and services to USDA. These substantial updates include the addition of new and targeted contracting information on [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov), along with improved functionality that makes it easier for businesses and individuals to quickly find and access procurement opportunities, and a portal for businesses to share the scope of their capabilities with USDA more easily.

"Doing business with the U.S. Department of Agriculture should be straightforward, particularly for our nation's small businesses," said Agriculture Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small. "Unfortunately, researching and identifying relevant procurement opportunities can be extremely challenging, confusing, and time-consuming. That's why the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing new tools and resources that will make it easier to contract with the USDA to serve American farmers and all of us who count on the food they grow."

Spearheaded by USDA's Office of Contracting and Procurement (OCP) in collaboration with the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), these improvements include:

The creation of a new "Contracting with USDA" site that offers information, resources, and links for businesses that want to contract with USDA, in a helpful Q&A format. The site addresses commonly asked questions such as "What does USDA typically buy?," "What are the most common ways USDA buys what it needs?" and "How do I find current opportunities to contract with USDA?"

An updated Vendor Capability Submission Portal that allows suppliers and merchants to submit their business capabilities to USDA via a web form. Portal submissions are shared with contracting officers across the Department.

Updates to the previously deployed USDA Procurement Fore-

cast, a tool that assist businesses and individuals with identifying procurement opportunities with USDA. Launched in June 2023, the Procurement Forecast now has a user-friendly way to search and filter procurement opportunities. Currently, the tool includes nearly 6,000 planned contract opportunities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.

"USDA has a long history of contracting with a wide variety of businesses to help us deliver our mission to the American people. In addition, we have an unwavering support for businesses, large, mid-size and small. We hope the deployed contracting resources will help even more businesses navigate the complex process of contracting with the federal government," said Malcom Shorter, USDA Assistant Secretary for Administration.

In FY 2023, USDA obligated more than \$11 billion in 67,000 contract activities spanning a wide variety of industries and contract types. In FY 2024, USDA estimates a comparable obligation amount and contract awards to our industry partners.

USDA purchasing extends well beyond agricultural commodities. Last fiscal year, the Department awarded contracts to nearly 12,000 businesses from a wide range of industries for \$4.9 billion in food, \$4.2 billion in services, \$1.7 billion in Information Technology contracts, a half a billion in goods, and nearly a half billion in construction contracts.

The Department strongly supports procurement initiatives that promote equity and remove barriers to procurement opportunities. To encourage growth, USDA plans to award 57.5% or more of its contract dollars to small businesses this year, including 27.85% to small, disadvantaged businesses. USDA's collective efforts to support small businesses garnered an A+ Rating on the U.S. Small Business Administration's FY2023 Small Business Procurement Scorecard.

Businesses interested in contracting with USDA should visit [Contracting with USDA](https://www.usda.gov/contracting) for access to these and other resources.

New map shows where Californians can find relief during times of poor air quality

The California Air Resources Board announced the launch of an interactive, statewide map that offers a one-stop-shop for information about the location and services available at Clean Air Centers, where communities can seek refuge during times of poor air quality, including periods of intense wildfire smoke.

Built in collaboration with local air quality control districts, the online map makes it possible to see where Clean Air Centers are located and provides easy-to-access information, including operating hours, contact information and on-site resources like free Wi-Fi.

With wildfire season approaching, Clean Air Centers will offer Californians who don't have access to adequate air filtration a safe place to go during periods of heavy smoke.

"Californians need to know where to turn for a safe haven in the event of an emergency that threatens local air quality. The Clean Air Centers map makes that essential information easily accessible to those who need it most," said CARB Chair Liane Randolph.

The California Clean Air Centers Map also highlights the importance of a \$5 million pilot program designed to create a statewide network of Clean Air Centers by funding ventilation system upgrades and providing portable air cleaners to facilities in vulnerable communities. About 200 of the Clean Air Centers on the new map

were created through the pilot program, jointly led by CARB and local air districts.

"Clean Air Centers are a high-value investment that provide direct, immediate health benefits to some of our most at-risk communities," said Tung Le, Executive Director of the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association. "Access to clean air is a fundamental right that becomes a critical need when emergencies and other urgent situations arise. This map empowers individuals and communities with the information they need to stay safe during wildfire smoke and other air pollution events."

Not all centers will appear on the map at the same time, as many of them only open during wildfire smoke events or other air quality emergencies. CARB and California's local air districts will be updating the map with information on new or additional Clean Air Centers as that information becomes available.

CARB is also working on an upgrade to its mobile app, California Smoke Spotter, to include Clean Air Center locations and information. That update is expected to be released in the coming weeks.

Clean Air Center and CARB logos. Map URL: arb.ca.gov/cleanair-centers.



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Shearing students, ranchers flock to livestock advisor Harper

UCCE livestock advisor John Harper retires after 32 years

By Pamela S Kan-Rice

Assistant Director, News and Information Outreach

"If you know how to shear, you'll never be poor," Stephany Wilkes remembers John Harper, University of California Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resources advisor for Mendocino and Lake counties, telling her sheep shearing class in 2013.

"He was speaking to everyone, of course, but he really spoke to me: being poor (again) is one of my greatest fears and I've avoided it at all costs," Wilkes said. Harper's words and a certificate from the course gave her the confidence to leave Silicon Valley for greener pastures.

"Eleven years later, with a successful business and published book about shearing to boot, I can confirm John does not lie to his students," says the former software developer. "More than



John Harper gives sheep shearing pointers. Most of the sheep shearers currently working in California have graduated from his sheep shearing school, which started

that, he is encouraging, calm, respectful, experienced, honest, funny and an excellent storyteller. If not for John, I would not have the life I live today."

Today, Wilkes is a sheep shearers, knitter and author of "Raw Material: Working Wool In the West."

Harper officially retired July 1, 2023, after 32 years in his UC Cooperative Extension advisor role, but returned to serve as interim director of UCCE for Mendocino and Lake

counties until Matthew Barnes was hired on May 1.

For years, UCCE has offered the only five-day sheep shearing school in California, training 15 to 28 students annually, and Harper has been the force behind it.

"Most of the shearers now in the shearing business in California were trained by me and my fellow instructors," said Harper, the state's Ed Sheeran of sheep shearing.

He first offered the sheep shearing school in 1993 at the Paul and Kathy Lewis ranch in Upper Lake, with subsequent schools at the Stanley Johnson ranch in Booneville. In the early days, Harper brought in instructors from New Zealand, before he and Mike McWilliams, a former member of the USA Sheep Shearing Team, began teaching. Later Harper moved the school to UC Hopland Research and Extension Center, where

he has hosted the school for the past 27 years.

With grant funds from the National Sheep Industry Improvement Association, Harper bought shearing equipment and made seven portable shearing pens to offer shearing school at a private ranch in Clear Lake Oaks this year.

"This program is nationally and internationally known and there is a waiting list of over 1,000 people who want to take it," Harper said.

Harper's baa-background in 4-H

Growing up on his family's farm in Yucaipa, just east of San Bernardino, Harper's electrical engineer father gave him a choice between caring for the horses' hooves and shearing sheep. "I chose shearing since I wasn't very big and didn't like horses leaning on me," he said.

From age 9 to 19, he was active in the California 4-H Youth Development Program, achieving the Gold Star rank. "I was in 4-H with sheep, horses, veterinary medicine, tractor, electrical, welding and woodworking projects," said Harper, who won the outstanding junior leader award. "I was a junior leader in sheep and won the state award for my sheep project. I showed registered Hampshire sheep, and my flock grew to 50 ewes before I was done."

"Shearing sheep helped me pay for college," said Harper, who earned a master's degree in range management at the University of Arizona and a bachelor's degree in animal science and agricultural economics at UC Davis.

After college, Harper worked as an assistant manager on the PolyPay breed development at Nicolas Sheep Farms in Sonoma before starting a career in Cooperative Extension in Arizona.

When Harper joined UC Agriculture and Natural Resources in 1991, the internet was in its infancy, but he recognized its potential for sharing information. He learned how to write code and created the university's first websites for livestock and natural resources. He also was an early adopter of blogging, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to extend information, which earned him a silver award in 2011 from the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals.

Beyond shearing, Harper pioneered cutting-edge research

Although sheep are more photogenic on social media, Harper has been flooded with awards and accolades for his water quality research.

Informed by research from Harper, Lake County rancher Russ Rustici created the first rangeland water-quality ranch plan in the state. Rustici was so pleased that he donated research funding for the entire UC Rangeland Watershed Program team and later established two endowed chairs at UC Davis and one at UC Berkeley. The Rustici Endowment now provides research and education grants for rangeland and cattle efforts.

In 1995, Harper and his UCCE colleagues began teaching the Rangeland Water Quality Planning Short Course to help land managers develop water-quality management plans for their ranches to prevent water pollution. By 2015, they had taught more than 80 of these short courses, reaching more

See Harper page 26



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Case IH has introduced new tractor models for specialty crop producers that will integrate seamlessly into orchard operations of any size, delivering improved operator comfort, minimizing crop damage and enhancing productivity. The new products and options include:

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The new Case IH Farmall CL series tractors provide unmatched flexibility and stability. These tractors feature a wider rear axle, guaranteeing stability on hills and enabling seamless navigation through orchards and minimizing crop damage. Farmall CL series tractors also come with versatile options for upgrading hydraulic pumps and optimizing performance with adaptable transmissions, ensuring customizable functionality that can be tailored to any operation.

“Operators spend all day in these machines. We are continuously looking for ways to make them even more comfortable, and more capable of ensuring peak productivity in any operation,” says Teri Zanella, Farmall product manager at Case IH. “We want to provide equipment that protects against loss and increases efficiencies in the operation.”

New Upgrades for Farmall Utility A Tractors

A variety of new upgrade options are now available for Farmall A utility tractors, which will enhance fuel capacity and overall productivity in almond orchards. The benefits of these upgrades include:

- Robust protection: Additional factory-fitted protections, component guards and three rear hydraulic remotes with flow control ensure producers and their equipment are better protected from branches, limbs and tree nuts.
- Longer runtimes: Increased fuel tank capacity provides an 8-12 hour runtime before refueling, resulting in improved productivity.
- Greater stability: A new front ballast provides additional weight for greater balance and a smoother ride.
- Seamless compatibility: A frame configuration designed for orchard landscapes, a variety of tire options, and seamless compatibility with the existing loader.

Cost-Effective Flexibility with Farmall 140A Pro

A high-capacity, rear 3-point hitch is now available on the Farmall 140A Pro. This new option adds flexibility, providing an efficient and cost-effective solution for handling heavy equipment in produce production.

To learn more about these new offerings and more from Case IH, visit www.caseih.com.

New Holland Enhances GENESIS® T8 Series Tractors for 2025



More power, same look and feel. For 2025, New Holland introduced new model additions to its GENESIS® T8 Series with PLM Intelligence™ that boast greater power. The newcomers to the T8 Series deliver a surge in horsepower and refined engine control with the same powerful and reliable engine as current T8 Series models.

Across the T8 Series lineup — T8.325, T8.355, T8.385, T8.415 and T8.440 — customers and operators can expect to see a 5-15-rated horsepower increase, depending on the specific model number.

This update was made to help operators better address strenuous tasks and applications like tillage. Equipped with new hydraulic remote valves and couplers, the new lineup of T8 Series tractors draws power from beyond fittings to boost reliability and quality, while optimizing hydraulic power workflow. Engine software enhancements have also been made to maximize output, granting further operational efficiency and improving fuel economy.

“Our customers continue to seek more power and performance from their tractors without having to change the body or framework. In a sense, get stronger without getting bigger,” says Ken Paul, product marketing manager, high horsepower tractors for New Holland. “The result is a new lineup of our GENESIS T8 Series. These new models are designed to deliver greater engine power and elevate fuel economy without compromising the look and feel customers and operators appreciate from current T8 models.”

The new GENESIS T8 Series tractors order writing began in Q2 2024 with delivery starting in Q4. To learn more, visit your local New Holland dealer or agriculture.newholland.com.

Kubota New RTV520 Crossroads Edition

Factory-Installed Package Creates the Do-It-All Utility Vehicle and the Ultimate People Mover.



Kubota Tractor Corporation recently announced a new, limited edition to its RTV utility vehicle line with the introduction of the RTV520 Crossroads Edition. The RTV520 Crossroads Edition comes with a factory-installed package that includes highly requested accessories such as full cab with tilt out windshield, sliding windows, LED front and rear work lights and a cargo mat. Designed with residential property owners in mind, the RTV520 is ready to move people and get work done; cruising is more comfortable than ever with dynamic braking, a redesigned suspension and comfortable seats. The new RTV520 Crossroads Edition is available at authorized Kubota dealers.

“Since its launch in 2020, the RTV520 has gained a lot of popularity with residential customers because of its nimble stance, ease of operation and VHT transmission which includes dynamic braking,” said Jacob Mandoza, Kubota product manager, utility vehicles. “This is the first time the RTV520 will receive the full factory-installed treatment; the Crossroads Edition adds a package of the most commonly requested options and accessories all in one place and at a value price.”

The Crossroads Edition Package: Factory Installed and Ready to Roll

Kubota’s new RTV520 Crossroads Edition comes with a full package of options and accessories most requested by residential users. Accessories in the package include a full cab with tilt out windshield and sliding windows, LED front and rear work lights and a large glovebox and poly cargo mat to help get work done from dawn to dusk. The doors are easily removed for increased airflow in the hot summer months and this model transports nicely in the back of a pickup. The limited-edition model comes available in Kubota orange with black alloy wheels and has a top speed of 20 mph. With a redesigned suspension and seat, operators can enjoy time outdoors more comfortably, moving passengers and tools, with the new RTV520 Crossroads Edition.

The new RTV520 Crossroads Edition is available in limited quantities at authorized Kubota dealers. For more information or to find an authorized Kubota dealer near you, visit www.KubotaUSA.com.

The New and Improved MT4 Series

LS Tractor has upgraded their MT4 Series introducing two different horsepower options and modernized features inside the cab.



LS Tractor USA launches a new tractor series, the MT4. This new tractor series is a game-changer for farmers, fitting perfectly into the modernized LS Family design. Featuring more horsepower and impressive strength, this tractor series is designed to meet the evolving needs of modern agriculture. The new line also focuses on customer comfort, ensuring operators can work long hours with ease and efficiency.

The new MT4 features an all-new hood design, matching the launch of the new MT2 series and the recently released MT774. The redesigned hood allows for full opening and easier access for engine service. The new MT4 series is offered in both cab and ROPS, available in 63 and 73 horsepower.

Enhanced comfort and visibility

- New cab design with 15% more interior space
- Optimized control layout for user convenience
- Improved seat with more cushion, a higher back, and new armrests

Workability Optimization

- Larger tires and more tire options for 73HP
- One of the best loader lift capacities in its class (up to 3,487 lb.)
- Increased weight by 400 lbs. to enhance tractor stability and operations

LS Tractor’s Product Manager, Robert Cenzone describes, “We’re excited for the release of our new MT4 Series, and in particular the new 73 HP cab and open station offerings. These new 73 HP tractors fill an important need in the utility market segment, and we believe our customers will be thrilled with the added comfort, power, and new functionality we’ve incorporated into the new MT4—like the new EZ-Brake feature which will be a game changer especially in loader applications.”

The enhanced MT4 Series will take the place of LS Tractor’s current MT4 line, adding more comfort and upgrading the line to the latest in tractor technology. The new tractors are available at dealerships.

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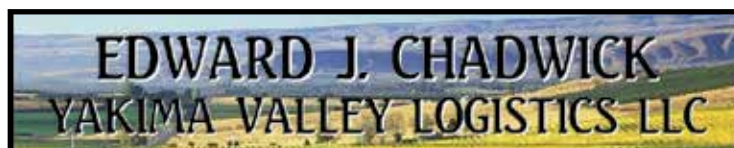
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UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 2024

16-17: Advanced Cheesemaking. This two-day practical, hands-on course will take place at the Dairy Products Technology Center, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Registration: <https://dairy.calpoly.edu/short-course-symposia/>

17: Agricultural Pest Control Advisory Committee (APCAC) 10 a.m.-noon, Bradshaw Regional Office, 3077 Fite Circle, Training Room 107/108, Sacramento, CA.

SEPTEMBER

12: 2nd Annual Innovation Workshop & State of the Industry at Fresno State. Registration: www.cdic.net

OCTOBER 2024

8-9: Hispanic, Italian and Mediterranean Cheeses. This practical course will feature international cheese varieties and will take place at the Dairy Products Technology Center, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Registration: <https://dairy.calpoly.edu/short-course-symposia/>

NOVEMBER 2024

14-17: American Agri-Women 2024 50th National Convention. Come celebrate our 50th anniversary in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin! Details coming soon, stay tuned! For information visit: www.americanagriwomen.org/events

21: CAWG's 50th Anniversary Celebration. A Half-Century of Advocacy and Achievement. We invite you to join us in commemorating this extraordinary milestone. The celebration will begin with a social reception, featuring wines from throughout the Golden State, followed by a plated dinner and program. The evening promises to be filled with camaraderie, reflection, and celebration as we honor the past, revel in the present, and collectively envision a promising future for California winegrape growers. As we gather to celebrate, we extend a special invitation for your thoughtful consideration in sponsoring this landmark event. We deeply appreciate the enduring partnerships that have shaped CAWG's journey, and your presence would undoubtedly enhance its significance. Kimpton Sawyer Hotel, Sacramento, CA. **EVENT CONTACT:** Jenny Devine | jenny@cawg.org | 916.432.0133

DECEMBER 2023

4-6: 108th Annual CCA/CCW Convention. Grand Sierra Resort and Casino 2500 E 2nd St, Reno, NV, United States
More details to be updated in the coming months.

To list your special event in California Farm Equipment send details to CFEM, PO Box 1128, Visalia, CA. 93279. or email to: info@cfemag.com.

CDFA Now Accepting Proposals On New Management Practices For Healthy Soils Program

CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation (OEFI) is now accepting proposals for new conservation management practices for inclusion in its Healthy Soils Program (HSP). The HSP stems from the California Healthy Soils Initiative, a collaboration between state agencies to support the development of healthy soils in California. By providing funds to incentivize implementation of conservation management practices and on-farm demonstration projects, the HSP helps sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs), and enhance soil health.

As part of program development beginning in 2016, CDFA identified specific conservation management practices for initial funding through the HSP. In subsequent years, CDFA expanded the suite of practices supported by the HSP, identifying new practices through a public process. For example, CDFA added Whole Orchard Recycling in 2020, in which orchard trees are chipped and incorporated back into the soil. To be included in HSP and supported by incentive grants, a practice must meet two criteria: achieving net GHG reduction benefits that can be estimated through a quantification methodology, and having established implementation standards.

"As the Healthy Soils Program continues to grow, new and innovative contributions from our stakeholders are critical to ensuring that farmers and ranchers have the diversity of practices they need to produce a wide range of nutritious, affordable and safe food crops, while increasing climate resilience," said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. "Improving soil health in California must be a collaborative effort between CDFA, stakeholder groups, sister agencies and federal partners."

As in previous years, a technical sub-committee of academic experts and state and federal agency subject matter experts will evaluate the proposals, advised by the Environmental Farming Act Science Advisory Panel. CDFA will coordinate further evaluation with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), and then CDFA will select practices that meet the criteria for HSP Incentive grants. As for practices that do not meet the criteria, CDFA may designate them for support by HSP Demonstration research grants.

Proposal requirements, the process for consideration, and other details on submission can be found at: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysouls/>. A list of current HSP practices is available at the program website.

CDFA OEFI staff will conduct two webinars to discuss the process and requirements to submit proposals, and answer questions from interested stakeholders on June 13, 2024 (Thursday) at 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. PT and June 21, 2024 (Friday) at 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. PT. Slides from the webinar presentation will be made available on the program website. Questions can be sent to cdfa.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov during the solicitation period.

Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. PT on August 2, 2024, and are to be submitted via email to cdfa.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov.

Harper

continued from page 20

than 1,000 ranchers in 35 counties, representing over 2 million acres statewide. In one follow-up survey, 68% of the participants said they had implemented practices on their ranches to protect or improve water quality.

In 2012, the Western Extension Directors Association presented Harper with its Award of Excellence for the Rangeland Watershed Program.

Eating between the vines

For one livestock research project, he and UCCE colleagues trained sheep to graze the grass in vineyards and not eat the grapevines. "The results went viral internationally and really brought targeted grazing to the forefront," Harper said. "It also raised sheep number by 2% in our two counties."

In addition to advising ranchers and teaching sheep shearing, Harper has served in several leadership positions, rotating in every few years as UCCE director in Mendocino and Lake counties. From 2014 to 2017, he led UC ANR's Sustainable Natural Ecosystems Strategic Initiative, advocating for the hiring of experts in climate change, economics, small ruminants, forestry and fire.

"I'm especially proud that we were able to recruit a small ruminant extension veterinary specialist – a position that was unfilled for over seven years, despite California being the second-largest sheep-producing state in the nation," Harper said.

The certified rangeland manager and rangeland professional has long been a member of the Society for Range Management and the American Society for Animal Science. In 2008, he served as president of the California-Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management. Currently he is the secretary/treasurer for the Mendocino/Lake Wool Growers Association and is ad hoc director of the Mendocino/Lake County Cattlemen's Association.

In 2015, the Society for Range Management gave him the Outstanding Achievement Award-Stewardship. In 2017, the California Wool Growers Association bestowed on him its Golden Fleece Award for Lifetime Achievement. In 2019, Harper was named Range Manager of the Year by the California-Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management for his contributions to the profession. In 2022, the 12th District Agricultural Association Redwood Empire Fair honored him with their Mendocino County Agriculturalist of the Year Award.

Harper also received UC Agriculture and Natural Resources' prestigious emeritus status. In retirement, he plans to play his banjo and continue offering the sheep shearing school with Gary Vorderbuggen, who has been teaching with him for 18 years. Randy Helms, a former member of the USA Sheep Shearing Team, and Harper's former students Matt Gilbert, Lora Kinkade and Wilkes are among those who have re-ewe-nited with him as sheep shearing instructors.

"John taught the UCCE sheep shearing schools I attended in 2013-2015, and I was deeply honored to teach beside him in 2023 and 2024. It is one of the highlights of my life," said Wilkes, now better known for working with wool than developing software.

"Like so many past students, I am forever in his debt," she added. "We've got to keep this shearing school you started going, John. It is a gift. Thank you."

Scholarships Awarded by California Table Grape Growers

Seven students from the table grape growing regions of California earned scholarships awarded by California table grape growers.

Growers awarded two \$25,000 field worker scholarships to students attending a four-year college or university. Two \$14,500 field worker bridge scholarships were awarded to students attending two years of community college and transferring to a four-year college or university. In order to be eligible for a field worker scholarship, applicants or a parent or guardian must work in the California table grape harvest. Three \$25,000 agriculture scholarships were awarded to students attending a four-year California college or university and planning to pursue an undergraduate degree in a field of study pertinent to the table grape industry.

Since 1985 California table grape growers have awarded more than 200 scholarships to help students in the grape growing regions of California attend college.

Learn more about the 2024 California Table Grape Scholarship recipients below.

\$25,000 Field Worker Scholarships



Ms. Leslie Aquino graduated from East Bakersfield High School with a 4.5 GPA and will attend University of California, Merced to study computer science. Leslie was a member of her school cross-country and track teams, avid church and community volunteer, and was selected to participate

in the Kern High School District Art Show. Leslie is not only the first person in her family to graduate high school, but graduated at the top of her class and will be the first in her family to attend college this fall. Hear Leslie in her own words here: <https://youtu.be/FdoGleQQO0Y>.

Scholarships Awarded by California Table Grape Growers



Mr. Marco Jimenez graduated from Delano High School with a 4.2 GPA and will attend California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo to major in civil engineering. Marco was the captain of the Delano High School Drumline and a founding member of the Delano High

School Gardening Club, which raises and maintains a variety of plants and crops. As a dedicated volunteer in the community, Marco hopes to return to Delano after college to further aid in the city's development as a civil engineer. Hear Marco in his own words here: <https://youtu.be/EBcfcWjobL8>.

\$14,500 Field Worker Bridge Scholarships



Ms. Anali Alcantar graduated from Harmony Magnet Academy with a 3.3 GPA and will attend Porterville College to study education. Anali is an active community member, spending her time as a SCICON camp counselor and volunteering with the Porterville Barn Theater group. Anali

will be the first in her family to attend college and afterwards looks forward to being an elementary school teacher helping young students learn English. Hear Anali in her own words

here: <https://youtu.be/Us-sBDDVTnE>.



Ms. Lizbeth Ramirez Ramos graduated from Harmony Magnet Academy with a 4.0 GPA and will attend Porterville College to study nursing. Lizbeth was a member of the President's List and participated in the Academic Decathlon, winning a gold and bronze medal. Lizbeth was a SCICON camp counselor and also served as an Imagine Arts Intern, assisting K-6th graders with STEM projects. Lizbeth has a passion for healthcare; after finishing her prerequisites in nursing, Lizbeth plans to transfer to a four-year university to specialize in obstetrics. Hear Lizbeth in her own words here: https://youtu.be/_aafGqZ6Ldk.

Scholarships Awarded by California Table Grape Growers \$25,000 Agriculture Scholarships



Ms. Madison Jackson graduated from Liberty High School with a 4.1 GPA and will attend California State University, Chico to study agriculture education and environmental science. Madison was deeply involved in FFA, serving in several FFA leadership positions, attending numerous

FFA conferences, and helping her grapevine pruning team place fifth in the state finals. Madison is passionate about the future of agriculture and plans to become an agriculture teacher after college to help future students understand the importance of agriculture and environmental stewardship. Hear Madison in her own words here: <https://youtu.be/qvy-7wAgrKQg>.



Ms. Olivia Machado graduated from Tulare Western High School with a 4.3 GPA and will attend California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo to study agriculture business. Olivia was an active member of the Tulare FFA, earning several FFA degrees and awards from various FFA

competitions such as first place Ag Issues State Finalist and third place Ag Issues National Finalist. Olivia was also a dedicated athlete as a member of the basketball, track and field, water polo, and swim teams. After college, Olivia plans to attend law school to become an agriculture lawyer to advocate for farmers, ranchers, and the agriculture industry. Hear Olivia in her own words here: <https://youtu.be/dtFs5zE9d34>



Ms. Brenda Monje graduated from Tulare Western High School with a 4.1 GPA and will attend California State University, Fresno to study food technology. Brenda was a member of the Tulare FFA grapevine pruning team, earned a California State FFA degree, and served as the San Joaquin

Regional FFA Vice President. Brenda is interested in the future of agriculture technology and after college desires to contribute to technological innovations in the agriculture industry. Hear Brenda in her own words here: <https://youtu.be/6HgD-PYvSaOI>.

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.....www.klamathbasinequipment.com

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.....quality-mc.com

Quinn Company
.....www.quinncompany.com

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.....www.sanjoaquintractor.com

Sonsray Machinery
.....www.sonsraymachinery.com

South Kern Machinery
.....www.kernmachinery.com

Valley Tractor
.....www.valley-tractor.com

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.....www.WoodlandTractor.com

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.....www.wilkinsoninternational.com

Manufacturers

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.....www.mcilroyequipment.com

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.....www.nstractor.com

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.....www.antiquefarmshow.org

Colusa Farm Show
.....www.colusafarmshow.com

World Ag Expo
.....www.worldagexpo.org

Federal Government

Army Corps of Engineers
.....www.wetland.usace.mil/

Bureau of Land Management
.....www.blm.gov

Farm Service Agency
.....www.fsa.usda.gov

National Weather Service
.....www.nimbo.wrh.noaa.gov

Organizations

Almond Board of California
.....www.almonds.com

California Assn. of Winegrape Growers
.....www.cawg.org

California Cattlemen's Association
.....www.calcattlemen.org

California Dairy Research Foundation
.....www.cdrf.org

California Poultry Federation
.....www.cpfif.org

California Raisins
.....www.calraisins.org

California Rangeland Trust
.....www.rangelandtrust.org

California Strawberries
.....www.californiastrawberries.com

Far West Equipment Dealers Association
.....www.fweda.com

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Schuil & Associates
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Valley Real Estate
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State Government

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Department of Conservation
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Department of Food and Agriculture
.....www.cdfa.ca.gov

Department of Pesticide Regulation
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Department of Water Resources
.....www.dwr.water.ca.gov

Universities

Berkeley Agriculture and Resource Dept.....are.berkeley.edu

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Watermelon Inspires Greater Engagement Among Younger Consumers

Watermelon Board Study Reveals Age Demographic Insights



The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) is excited to share the findings of its latest consumer research study, unveiling insights into the evolving preferences and behaviors of younger watermelon consumers aged 18-34. This study reveals that this demographic is more health-conscious, exhibits creativity in the kitchen and has more adventurous palates, demonstrating an enthusiasm for cooking and exploring new watermelon recipes.

Key highlights from the study show that younger watermelon consumers exhibit:

- **An Emphasis on Health:** Young watermelon consumers prioritize nutritious food choices in their diet. They are also more likely to seek advice and information about watermelon from nutritionists, dietitians, and doctors compared to older demographic groups. Younger consumers also exhibit a heightened awareness of the nutritional benefits associated with watermelon consumption (for example, hydration and blood flow benefits). They view watermelon as a healthy and hydrating snack option, aligning with their wellness-focused lifestyles.

- **Culinary Creativity:** Embracing their love for culinary exploration, this age group finds joy in preparing food and being creative in the kitchen. They are more inclined to experiment with new watermelon recipes, incorporating the fruit into savory dishes, desserts, and beverages like watermelon juice. Nearly 60% of this younger demographic agreed that including watermelon would increase the likelihood of trying a new recipe. In comparison, 28% of the 55+ age group agreed.

- **Adventurous Palates:** The study further reveals that the 18-34 demographic is more adventurous when incorporating watermelon into their meals. They are more open to trying unique watermelon preparations and flavor combinations than their older counterparts. This openness to culinary experimentation highlights their diverse tastes and points to the growing popularity of watermelon as a versatile and cravable ingredient in modern cuisine.

Stephanie Barlow, Senior Director of Communications at NWPB, commented, “Our research shows that younger consumers are using watermelon to drive culinary innovation and are embracing watermelon as a nutritious and enjoyable part of their lifestyles. This age group’s enthusiasm for watermelon presents exciting opportunities for our industry to drive watermelon consumption.”

The NWPB’s consumer research study offers valuable insights into the preferences and behaviors of younger watermelon consumers. Their health-conscious choices, creative culinary endeavors, and willingness to embrace new recipes underscore this demographic’s dynamic and evolving nature. The findings of this study highlight the importance of understanding and catering to the diverse needs of consumers across different age groups. For more information about this study and the NWPB’s consumer research initiatives, please visit watermelon.org/research.

About National Watermelon Promotion Board

The National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB), based in Winter Springs, Florida, was established in 1989 as an agricultural promotion group to promote watermelon in the United States and in various markets abroad. Funded through a self-mandated industry assessment paid by more than 700 watermelon producers, handlers and importers, NWPB mission is to increase consumer demand for watermelon through promotion, research and education programs.

A serving of nutrient-dense watermelon provides an excellent source of Vitamin C (25% DV), a source of Vitamin B6 (8% DV), and a delicious way to stay hydrated (92% water), with only 80 calories per 2-cup serving. Watermelon consumption per capita in the United States was nearly 15.5 pounds in 2022. Watermelon consumption in the United States was nearly 5.2 billion pounds in 2022. The United States exported an additional 328 million pounds of watermelon. For additional information, visit www.watermelon.org.



California Certified Organic Farmers Foundation Launches Endowment

The endowment ensures farmers and producers go and stay organic in perpetuity.

The CCOF Foundation advances organic by supporting the people and communities who care for the land.

Guided by the wisdom of our farming roots, the CCOF Foundation unites the organic community to advance organic agriculture. We offer intentional education, financial support, and growth opportunities for organic professionals. Our vision is a world where organic is the norm.

The CCOF Foundation's work has been rooted in community from the beginning, when in 1973 the founding members united around a kitchen table and a cause: clean healthy food. Our community has grown into a network of thousands of organic producers across North America and dedicated CCOF staff who are passionate about making a difference.

The CCOF Foundation is undertaking a bold \$5 million campaign to raise funds for the CCOF Foundation's programs—which provide scholarships for future organic farmers, disaster relief for organic farmers suffering from hardship, and wrap-around services for farmers transitioning land to organic—as well as unrestricted funds to enhance the CCOF Foundation's ability to support farmers as they go and stay organic.

Becky Blythe, one of the most tenured staff at CCOF, chose to carry forward CCOF's passion in her will when she bequeathed a \$100,000 gift to the CCOF Foundation.

After careful consideration on how to utilize this gift in a way that best honors Becky's legacy while advancing a world where organic is the norm, the CCOF Foundation has launched the CCOF Endowment, of which the Becky Blythe Endowed Fund is the inaugural gift.

An endowed gift helps maintain a steady level of funding for the CCOF

Foundation, ensuring that the Foundation can support organic farmers in perpetuity.

About the CCOF Foundation

The CCOF Foundation is a nonprofit organization with a vision of a world where organic is the norm. CCOF's organic principles promote and enhance biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil fertility, and restore, maintain, and enhance ecological harmony. The CCOF Foundation braids an equity lens into all programming, focusing support on small farming operations, farmers who are socially disadvantaged, and partner organizations. Since its inception, the CCOF Foundation has:

- awarded nearly \$7 million in grants to support future organic farmers, farmers transitioning from conventional to organic agriculture, and farmers experiencing hardship;
- provided nearly 7,000 organic producers with education and training through our Organic Training Institute;
- supported the transition of over 100,000 acres of farmland from conventional to organic;
- been tapped by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program (NOP) to lead the West/Southwest Regional Center for Organic Transition in seven states (California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Texas, New Mexico, and Hawaii); and
- been selected by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) as one lead for their Organic Transition Pilot Program.

Please consider joining the CCOF Foundation in advancing a world where organic is the norm by considering our endowment in your legacy giving or making your contribution to the CCOF Endowment today. Email waray@ccof.org for more information.

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