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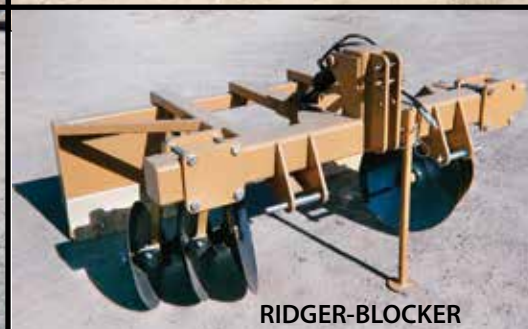
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FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE PAGE 11



Program to Help Growers Save Water

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has launched a \$400 million program aimed at helping farmers, including almond growers, conserve water while maintaining production. Among the 18 irrigation districts chosen are four that serve almond growers in California – Sutter Mutual Water Company, Solano Irrigation District, Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District, and Corcoran Irrigation District.

California's almond growers rely on consistent irrigation to produce their crops, but the prolonged drought has made water conservation a pressing issue. The USDA's new program offers financial support to these irrigation districts, allowing them to implement innovative water-saving technologies and practices. Each district may receive up to \$15 million, with the goal of helping their constituents conserve up to 50,000 acre-feet of water across 250,000 acres.

The success of this program depends on cooperation between the USDA, the selected irrigation districts, and individual growers. Growers who participate will be encouraged to adopt water-saving strategies, such as efficient irrigation systems or changes in crop management. These efforts are voluntary, but those who take part will receive payments as incentives for their conservation efforts.

While the program focuses on reducing water use, it also ensures that almond production continues. This is crucial for maintaining the livelihoods of growers and meeting market demand. The USDA also plans to explore new market opportunities for water-saving commodities, potentially opening up new revenue streams for almond growers.

Almond growers are no stranger to water conservation and efficiency. The Almond Board of California has several tools for growers to help improve water use.

As the program moves forward, almond growers should stay informed. For more information on this program and other incentive programs, visit Almonds.com/Incentives.

Fall and Early Winter Bring Promotable California Grape Volume

With school back in session and fall weather approaching, the California table grape industry is preparing to move the majority of its volume; every year roughly 65% of the crop ships after September 1.

"September through December is an exciting and productive time of year, as nearly 80 different varieties are harvested, promotions expand, and the majority of the crop ships to California grape-loving consumers around the world," said Kathleen Nave, president of the California Table Grape Commission. "A robust global marketing campaign to promote California grapes throughout the fall and early winter tied to an amazing selection of varieties, great quality, and promotable volume creates strong demand," said Nave. She noted that while the U.S. is the largest market and demand is strong from retail partners, there is significantly increased demand this year in export markets, and USDA is buying more grapes this season with deliveries already scheduled until close to Christmas.

In terms of crop size, Nave says the industry comes together three times a year to estimate the crop, and has been doing so with a high degree of accuracy for decades. "Individual viewpoints often circulate in the fall with a frequent favorite being talk of a short California grape crop. Whether coming from inside or outside the California industry, these individual narratives often masquerade as news." Nave suggests being careful about putting too much weight on them.

With a harvest that will continue well into December, Nave said that fall and early winter bring great opportunities for retailers to stock California grapes, offering customers a great-tasting, healthy option for back-to-school lunches or fall and winter celebrations. "With promising weather ahead, great demand, and promotional activities scheduled in the U.S. and 21 export markets through December, the California table grape industry is on the move!"

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CDFA Joins Department of Water Resources in Marking 10 Years of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act; Progress Made to Protect Water Supplies



Today marks the 10th anniversary of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a landmark law that is driving reductions in the overuse of groundwater, protecting drinking water supplies, and making communities, agriculture and ecosystems more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

SGMA was signed into law on September 16, 2014, midway through the historic 2012-2016 drought. Driven by the need to address declining groundwater supplies, the law created a statewide framework to protect this critical resource in California, which provides 41 percent of the state's total supply in a normal year and up to 60 percent during droughts. About 85 percent of Californians rely on groundwater for some portion of their water needs.

In the 10 years since its passage, remarkable accomplishments have been achieved under SGMA:

More than 250 local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have been formed to protect drinking water wells, reduce land sinking and improve groundwater supplies.

These GSAs are implementing over 100 Groundwater Sustainability Plans, using creative solutions like recharging groundwater supplies, limiting usage, and other management actions that will help create a resilient and sustainable water supply for California.

California is now collecting more groundwater data than ever before, providing a better understanding of groundwater conditions and ultimately leading to better management decisions.

SGMA has raised public awareness about the importance of protecting groundwater and has encouraged more cooperative management efforts.

Water supply reliability is improving with efforts to recharge groundwater. In 2023 alone, 4.1 million acre-feet of water were added to underground aquifers through managed efforts.

The State has invested nearly \$1 billion in SGMA in 10 years, including more than \$100 million through the Department of Water Resources for local groundwater recharge projects.

"It has been impressive to see that through the tireless efforts of local groundwater sustainability agencies, every ambitious SGMA milestone has been met so far," said Paul Gosselin, DWR Deputy Director of Sustainable Water Management. "A foundational part of SGMA is that groundwater is best managed locally, by the people that know their groundwater basins and depend on the resource. As a result, over 95 percent of groundwater pumping is subject to a locally adopted, enforceable groundwater sustainability plan."

The State's goal is to help GSAs reach sustainable groundwater conditions in their basins while maintaining local control, for the benefit of sustainable agriculture, drinking water supplies, and healthy ecosystems.

"Improving groundwater management practices to achieve sustainable aquifers is essential for the future of California and the ability of agriculture to continue food production in a hotter, drier future," said Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture. "The State of California has made significant investments to support local authorities with financial investments, policy development to accelerate groundwater recharge, sharing of data and technical assistance to chart a pathway forward to successfully implement this historic law."

"Ten years ago, when SGMA became law, all of us took on the responsibility of bringing about sustainable management of our groundwater basins for the benefit of everyone who relies on them," said Joaquin Esquivel, board chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. "A lot of progress has happened since then to meet this challenge, and we have more work to do to achieve sustainability for California's groundwa-

See Water Resources next page

California Farm Equipment

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Water Resources

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ter basins."

The next 10 years of SGMA will focus on implementing the plans developed so far. Projects and decisions aim to bring California's groundwater basins to sustainable conditions by the early 2040s. Weather extremes, especially drought, make this work even more critical, as the state must store and capture as much water as possible during wet years.

To celebrate this milestone anniversary, DWR will host an event on Nov. 18. Featured speakers and panelists will

include DWR Director Karla Nemeth, and DWR Deputy Director of Sustainable Water Management Paul Gosselin, as well as representatives from GSAs, community organizations, State leaders and others in the SGMA community. This all-day event will be held in person at the California Natural Resources Agency building in Sacramento and online via Zoom. More information will be announced soon. To receive the latest in groundwater news and updates on 10-Year Anniversary events from DWR, visit the DWR email subscription page and select the 'Sustainable Groundwater Management' topic.

Farm Loan Programs Updated to Increase Financial Freedom, Resilience and Profitability for Agricultural Producers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced changes to the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Loan Programs, that became effective Sept. 25, 2024 — changes that are intended to increase opportunities for farmers and ranchers to be financially viable. These improvements, part of the Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule, demonstrate USDA's commitment to improving farm profitability through farm loans designed to provide important financing options used by producers to cover operating expenses and purchase land and equipment.

"USDA recognizes that Farm Service Agency's loan making and servicing activities are critical for producers, especially in tough times. Providing borrowers the financial freedom to increase profits, save for long-term needs and make strategic investments is the best way to ensure the nation's farmers and ranchers can build financial equity and resilience," said Zach Ducheneaux, FSA Administrator. "Implementing these improvements to our Farm Loan Programs is the next step in our ongoing commitment to removing lending barriers that may prevent access to credit for borrowers, especially those who need it most."

Farm loan policy changes outlined in the Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule, are designed to better assist borrowers to make strategic investments in the enhancement or expansion of their agricultural operations.

The three most notable policy changes include:

Establishing a new low-interest installment set-aside program for financially distressed borrowers. Eligible financially distressed borrowers can defer up to one annual loan installment per qualified loan at a reduced interest rate, providing a simpler and expedited option to resolve financial distress in addition to FSA's existing loan servicing programs.

Providing all eligible loan applicants access to flexible repayment terms that can increase profitability and help build working capital reserves and savings. By creating upfront positive cash flow, borrowers can find opportunities in their farm operating plan budgets to include a reasonable margin for increased working capital reserves and savings, including for retirement and education.

Reducing additional loan security requirements to enable borrowers to leverage equity. This reduces the amount of additional security required for direct farm loans, including reducing the frequency borrowers must use their personal residence as additional collateral for a farm loan.

Additional Farm Loan Program Improvements

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA's FSA has embarked on a comprehensive and systemic effort to ensure equitable delivery of Farm Loan Programs and improve access to credit for small and mid-size family farms. FSA has also included additional data in its annual report to Congress to provide information that Congress, stakeholders, and the general public need to hold USDA accountable on the progress that has been made in improving services to underserved producers. This year's report shows FSA direct

and guaranteed loans were made to a greater percentage of young and beginning farmers and ranchers, as well as improvements in the participation rates of minority borrowers. The report also highlights FSA's microloan program's new focus on urban agriculture operations and niche market lending, as well as increased support for producers seeking direct loans for farm ownership in the face of increasing land values across the country.

FSA has a significant initiative underway to streamline and automate the Farm Loan Program customer-facing business process. For the over 26,000 producers who submit a direct loan application annually, FSA has made several impactful improvements including:

The Loan Assistance Tool that provides customers with an interactive online, step-by-step guide to identifying the direct loan products that may be a fit for their business needs and to understanding the application process.

The Online Loan Application, an interactive, guided application that is paperless and provides helpful features including an electronic signature option, the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns, complete a balance sheet, and build a farm operating plan.

An online direct loan repayment feature that relieves borrowers from the necessity of calling, mailing, or visiting a local USDA Service Center to pay a loan installment.

A simplified direct loan paper application, reduced from 29 pages to 13 pages.

USDA encourages producers to reach out to their local FSA farm loan staff to ensure they fully understand the wide range of loan and servicing options available to assist with starting, expanding, or maintaining their agricultural operation. To conduct business with FSA, please contact your local USDA Service Center

FSA helps America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners invest in, improve, protect and expand their agricultural operations through the delivery of agricultural programs for all Americans. FSA implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster recovery and marketing programs through a national network of state and county offices and locally elected county committees. For more information, visit, www.fsa.usda.gov

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.



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Visual ID guide from UC aids in managing new almond pest- Nut orchard hygiene key to control carpophilus beetle, say UCCE, UC Integrated Pest Management experts

By Michael Hsu

Senior Public Information Representative

Since the first reports of a new almond pest – the carpophilus beetle (*Carpophilus truncatus*) – came in during fall 2023, it has become clear that the beetle is widely dispersed across the San Joaquin Valley.

“My lab has identified infestations from every county in the San Joaquin Valley; we have found infestations in both almonds and pistachios, and we will likely find infestations in walnuts this fall,” said Houston Wilson, a University of California Cooperative Extension entomology specialist at UC Riverside. The California Department of Food and Agriculture has confirmed the beetle's presence in Stanislaus, Merced, Madera and Kings counties.

Historically a major threat to almond production in Australia, the beetle – as larvae and adults – feeds directly on the nut kernel. In California, some almond growers have lost 10 to 15% of their yield – a “significant economic loss,” according to Jhalendra Rijal, University of California integrated pest management (IPM) advisor for the region. Given the prominence of almonds as a commodity, even a 1% overall reduction statewide represents an approximately \$70 million loss.

“This year there has been a lot more reports from PCAs [pest control advisers]; they're sending me the pictures of the damage and beetles,” said Rijal, noting that the increase is likely due to greater awareness of the pest.

To help almond growers identify the carpophilus beetle and develop management plans, Rijal, Wilson and their IPM colleagues have put together a visual ID guide for the beetle and the damage it causes, as well as telltale signs of navel orangeworm (*Amyelois transitella*) and ant damage. In particular, the experts would like PCAs and growers to differentiate between the carpophilus beetle and navel orangeworm, another key pest in almonds.

“Even though their way of causing damage looks more or less similar, we're dealing with two different types of insects,” Rijal explained. “One is a Lepidoptera moth [navel orangeworm], and the other one is a beetle – many of the management practices and biological controls would be different for these two different things.”

To control carpophilus beetle, 'sanitize, sanitize, sanitize'

One crucial cultural practice for managing both pests, however, is destroying the remnant “mummy” nuts – the nuts that remain in the orchard postharvest. They serve as overwintering habitat for the carpophilus beetle, as well as its sustenance for the next generation of beetles in spring.

“The best way to manage this pest is to do the orchard hygiene – continuing the winter sanitation, destroying the nuts



A hullsplit almond showing a large number of carpophilus beetles (*Carpophilus truncatus*).

Photo by Jhalendra Rijal

that are on the ground and on the tree and on the berms,” Rijal said.

Based on observations in Australia and locally, carpophilus beetles tend to rely more on mummies on the ground, whereas navel orangeworm generally favors mummies in the tree canopy. Correctly identifying the pest – with help from the new ID guide – enables growers to better target and prioritize their management efforts, Rijal said.

“What we are strongly emphasizing is that growers need to sanitize, sanitize, sanitize to control both pests,” Wilson added.

Correct identification of the pest would also prevent unnecessary application of insecticides, as those used for controlling Lepidoptera such as navel orangeworm would be largely ineffective on the beetle.

Indeed, another insight shared by Australian experts is that the carpophilus beetle cannot be controlled just by insecticide.

“Insecticides are not very efficient, given the cryptic nature of these beetles; exposing these beetles to the insecticide is very hard,” said Rijal, noting that the beetle spends most of its life cycle protected inside the nut.

Reporting carpophilus beetle infestation helps researchers

This harvest season, Rijal advises almond growers to harvest as efficiently as possible, to minimize the number of mummies that need to be cleaned up. And because signs of damage (like damaged hulls and frass) are most obvious during harvest time, Rijal said growers should review the new guide, using the photos and other resources to help identify potential pests.

If the grower or PCA suspects a carpophilus beetle infestation, they should contact the UCCE farm advisor in their area.

Scientists are looking to expand their knowledge about this relatively new pest to California. In the coming weeks, for example, researchers are planning to survey for the carpophilus beetle in the Sacramento Valley.

“Technically it has not been found there, but we suspect that we'll find it this fall when we go looking for it,” Wilson said.

Researchers are also collecting samples from infested orchards to better understand the biology of the species, as well as how it progresses through and responds to seasonal and climactic changes. In addition, they are analyzing data from a trial study of an insecticide that might be used as a supplemental control measure.

“This is our first full season dealing with this insect, and there are still many things we need to understand,” Rijal said. “We are continuing our research efforts on all fronts.”



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California Free of Invasive Fruit Flies Declared USDA and CDFA



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) in collaboration with County Agricultural Commissioners, are proud to announce that after a year of hard work we have eradicated all populations of invasive fruit flies from California. This significant achievement is a testament to the hard work of our agencies and the critical support from the public.

"Invasive fruit flies are among the most destructive and costly pests globally, threatening more than 400 species of fruits and vegetables, including many of California's most valuable crops such as oranges, grapes, mangoes, blueberries, and tomatoes," said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny L. Moffitt. "The eradication of these pests marks a major victory for California's agricultural economy," said Under Secretary Moffitt.

The joint eradication effort addressed infestations from five introduced species: Oriental (*Bactrocera dorsalis*), Tau (*Zeugodacus tau*), Queensland (*Bactrocera tryoni*), Mexican (*Anastrepha ludens*) and Mediterranean (*Ceratitis capitata*) fruit flies. With their successful eradication, quarantines have been lifted across Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernadino, Santa Clara, San Diego, Riverside, and Ventura Counties, freeing thousands of acres of commercial agriculture from restrictions.

The 2023 invasive fruit fly outbreak was unprecedented, marking the worst of its kind in CDFA's 100-year history. The outbreak included first-ever quarantines for Tau and Queensland fruit flies in the United States and Western Hemisphere. In response, USDA Secretary Thomas Vilsack allocated \$103.5 million from the Commodity Credit Corporation to APHIS, enabling swift and effective action against the outbreak.

APHIS deployed hundreds of employees to join forces with CDFA and the agricultural commissioners for trapping, fruit removal, and survey activities. The team leveraged advanced eradication techniques, including the release of sterile Mediterranean and Mexican fruit flies to disrupt the reproduction of these invasive species. The cooperative effort also included the application of an organic treatment called

Spinosad and the development of new regulatory treatments, allowing the safe shipment of commercial citrus out of quarantined areas.

CDFA Secretary Karen Ross emphasized the importance of public cooperation in these efforts. "We are proud of what we have accomplished with the help of California residents. Your support was vital to eradicating these pests and remains essential in protecting our food supply and natural resources from future invasive threats," said Ross.

Secretary Ross also outlined steps that the public can take to help prevent future infestations:

1. Declare agricultural products, including fruits or vegetables, to U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials when returning from overseas.
2. Familiarize yourself with local quarantines via the CDFA website and avoid moving or mailing homegrown fruit within or from quarantine areas.
3. Contact the USDA State Plant Health Director about the legal requirements before shipping agricultural goods interstate or from overseas. Receiving agricultural goods from foreign sources can spread invasive pests.
4. Allow agricultural officials access to your property for fruit fly trap servicing, pest detection, or to remove fruit when necessary.
5. Avoid composting fruit or vegetables within quarantine areas.
6. Report suspicious pests such as maggots inside of your fruit to your local county agricultural commissioner's office or to CDFA's pest hotline at 1-800-491-1899. Please alert either office if a fruit fly trap on your property has been damaged or moved.

For online reporting, visit www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/reportapest/ or email reportapest@cdfa.ca.gov. You may also contact your local county agricultural commissioner's office.

"We are deeply grateful for the public's continued vigilance in keeping California free from invasive species. Together, we have turned one of our greatest challenges into a triumph," said Secretary Ross.

For more information on invasive insects or plant diseases, visit HungryPests.com.

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Diverse Crop Rotations Reduce Risk of Crop Loss Under Poor Growing Conditions

Researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) are responding to the increasingly uncertain climate. The warmer and more unpredictable weather has been a source of instability on U.S. farms. ARS agroecologists turned to history for a solution to this challenge, which inspired them to better understand the benefits of crop rotations.

Growing a sequence of different crops in rotation has been practiced for millennia. Crop rotations can rebuild soil health, fight pests and diseases, and spread-out risk of various pests and crop disease. Crop rotation also increases the sustainability of agricultural systems and reduces risk from increasingly adverse weather. However, widespread adoption of diverse crop rotations is limited by economic uncertainty, lack of incentives, and inadequate information about long-term outcomes.

ARS researchers compiled data from 20 long-term experiments spanning up to six decades to compare outcomes from different crop rotations across North America. Their aim was to assess changes in outcomes under different growing conditions for individual crops, like corn or soybean, in the crop rotations. They also looked at the outcomes of the complete rotation as a whole—

not just the components. By examining both, they could quantify the benefits and trade-offs of crop rotations. Outcomes tended to be better for individual crops when grown in more diverse crop rotations across all growing conditions. Outcomes of complete rotation depended on which crops were grown in the crop rotation. This shows that the composition of crop rotations was a bigger factor than individual crop performance. Diverse rotations improved outcomes of complete rotations under poor growing conditions. This illustrates how diverse rotations can reduce the risk of crop loss in a changing climate.

"Our results add to the growing body of evidence that is essential to removing the barriers that prevent adoption of sustainable farming practices," said ARS Ecologist Dr. Katherine Muller. "To our knowledge, no long-term, multi-site studies have attempted to understand the effect of changing the rotation on the performance of both the complete rotation and its component crops simultaneously."

Many farmers face steep hurdles to diversify their crop rotations. More diverse rotations may make management more complex and may require new equipment. Farmers

See Diverse Crop page 15

Plenty Accelerates World's Largest Vertical Farming Research Center



Plenty Unlimited Inc. has driven many advancements in indoor farming over the past decade in its research and development (R&D) center in Laramie, Wyo., leveraging its proprietary R&D technology platform. Today it's one of the top plant science research centers in the world, attracting expert scientists from all over the world as well as leveraging talent from the nearby University of Wyoming. After receiving the largest economic development grant ever given by the State of Wyoming, Plenty is expanding its R&D footprint and building the world's largest vertical farming research center in Laramie with the support of the Wyoming Business Council, Laramie Chamber Business Alliance and City of Laramie.

Plenty is rooted in the fundamental belief that just about any plant can be successfully grown indoors. Today, the company is focused on growing food indoors, but the flexibility of its vertical growing platform and its clean, controlled growing environment make it possible to grow plants for a variety of uses beyond fresh produce, including food ingredients and pharmaceuticals. Plenty's continued investment in R&D, combined with the increased research space in its new Laramie facility, is enabling the company to explore opportunities to innovate through research partnerships with governments, companies, institutions and more.

"This new advanced plant science research facility is not only the culmination of investing hundreds of millions of dollars into R&D over the past decade, but a blueprint for expanding our research capacity to support projects valuable to our partners, our industry and beyond," said Arama Kukutai, CEO of Plenty. "What we're building in Wyoming is truly unlike anything else in the world – you'd have to go to Wageningen in the Netherlands to come close. We see a significant opportunity to leverage this new platform for R&D and indoor growing to build a global network of research centers to increase our impact on the future of both plant science and indoor farming."

Plenty's R&D platform brings together advanced genetics and breeding; custom hardware and growing environments; and AI and data analytics. This advanced technology supports acceler-

ating Plenty's crop diversity beyond the more than 50 different crops—from berries and tomatoes to peppers and squashes—it has already successfully grown in its vertical growing system. Plenty's scientists can screen new plant varieties for flavor and quality, then leverage Plenty's R&D platform to maximize yield and support profitable farms.

"The next generation of Plenty's R&D platform that we're deploying in Wyoming enables us to develop new crops at a much faster rate and expand the portfolio of plants we can grow in Plenty's patented vertical growing system," said Sasha Preuss, Vice President of Plant Science at Plenty. "We just announced our expansion of Plenty farms to the Middle East and the research capabilities we have here in Wyoming make it possible for us to develop additional crops that can be grown in those farms – increasing regional production and food security despite the very different climates. That's a big advantage to having both research and commercial farm environments that are totally controlled."

Following the selection of MOA Architecture as the project's A&E firm, the design for the research center is now complete. Plenty will break ground next spring and is targeting summer 2026 for the opening of the new facility.

About Plenty - Plenty is rewriting the rules of agriculture through its technology platform that can grow fresh produce almost anywhere in the world, year-round, with peak-season quality and up to 350x more yield per acre than conventional farms. Plenty farms are the world's highest-efficiency system for converting electricity into fresh fruits and vegetables. Plenty's proprietary approach is designed to preserve the world's natural resources, make fresh produce available to all communities and create resilience in our food systems against weather, location, pests and climate impacts. Plenty operates the world's most advanced indoor farm in Compton, California, and is building the world's first vertical farm to grow strawberries indoors at scale near Richmond, Virginia; its first international farm in Abu Dhabi; and the world's largest vertical farming research center in Laramie, Wyoming. For more information, visit www.plenty.ag.



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AGCO Brings Fendt® 600 Vario® Tractor to North America



At a Glance: the Fendt® 600 Vario® Tractor

- Available in four models (614 Vario, 616 Vario, 618 Vario and 620 Vario) ranging from 149 to 209 rated-engine hp.
- Includes the newly developed 4-cylinder, 5-liter AGCO Power™ CORE50 engine featuring the Fendt iD™ low-speed concept for maximum torque at low rpms.
- VarioDrive™, the next generation of Fendt's famous continuously variable transmission (CVT), provides maximum tractive force while increasing ground protection.
- Optional VarioGrip™ automatic tire pressure control system adjusts tire pressure to reduce slippage and maximize ground pressure, leading to optimal efficiency.
- The FendtONE™ operator station provides comfortable, customized operation and integrates office and field data for the most efficient operation on the market.

AGCO Corporation (NYSE:AGCO), a global leader in the design, manufacture and distribution of agricultural machinery and precision ag technology, introduced its AE50 award-winning Fendt® 600 Vario® Series tractor to North America. Offering superior maneuverability and a completely new generation of Fendt's innovative VarioDrive continuously variable transmission (CVT), the naturally superior 600 Vario is an efficient, uncompromising all-rounder, perfect for any task on the farm.

The 600 Vario will come in four models (614 Vario, 616 Vario, 618 Vario and 620 Vario), ranging from 149 to 209 rated-engine hp. With its impressive performance in a compact package, the 600 Vario is ideal for small to medium-sized farms, capable of tackling anything from row crop farming to loader work to transportation.

"With the 600 Vario available in North America, we now have a complete line of machines perfect for any task on farms of any size," said David Soliday, Senior Marketing Manager at Fendt. "The 600 Vario offers everything farmers have come to know and love about Fendt tractors, including our efficient CVT transmission, comfortable FendtONE operator station and best-in-class technology suite for those looking for a nimble, multiuse machine."

Fendt's 600 Vario features the all-new AGCO Power CORE50 4-cylinder, 5-liter engine. Combined with the Fendt iD low-speed concept, the 600 Vario achieves its maximum torque of 950 Nm at a low rpm of between 1,200 and 1,600,

providing impressive performance with remarkable fuel efficiency.

The Fendt 600 also features innovative technologies that make the Vario series outstanding in the industry, including:

- The optional VarioGrip automatic tire pressure control system adjusts tire pressure to reduce slippage and maximize ground pressure.
- The FendtONE operator station enables state-of-the-art smart farming features, bringing machine and agronomic data together in a customizable, updatable technology suite.
- The Fendt cab features a vertically continuous panoramic window for high levels of all-around visibility.
- The new generation of Fendt's VarioDrive CVT ensures stress-free power transmission on any surface, precisely regulating power output to each wheel through continuous measurement.
- Like all Fendt tractors, the Fendt 600 series offers a hydraulic reservoir separate from the transmission to eliminate any cross-contamination.

The Fendt 600 Vario is available for purchase at Fendt dealerships in North America.

All Fendt tractors are covered by Fendt's industry-leading Gold Star Customer Care Program, which comes standard with a 3-year or 3,000-hour full machine warranty, including all scheduled maintenance and a guaranteed machine loan if repairs take longer than 48 hours.

To learn more about the Fendt 600 Vario, visit [Fendt.com](https://www.fendt.com).

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Diverse Crop

continued from page 11

may also need to learn how to grow new crops and develop an understanding of how the crops fit in their operation. Farmers can benefit since more diverse rotations can reduce the amount of fertilizer or pesticides needed to maintain productivity. This is welcome news for farmers facing another source of instability: price swings for nitrogen fertilizer.

Though effective, more diverse rotations may take years to show results, which is why long-term agricultural field experiments are a valuable source of evidence. The DRIVES Network (Diverse Rotations Improve Valuable Ecosystem Services) has combined data from 20 long-term experiments to investigate the impacts of crop diversity across multiple regions and production systems.

The DRIVES Network is expanding the number of experiments in their database, which will help farmers by providing estimates of the benefits and costs of managing more diverse rotations. In addition to economic performance, the DRIVES Network will also provide evidence of how diverse rotations can reduce the vulnerability of cropping systems to adverse weather. By pairing long-term yield data with weather variables, like vapor pressure deficit or heat stress, researchers will be able to show how and when vulnerability is being reduced.

"Long-term field experiments are national treasures for capturing dynamics in slow-moving variables like soil characteristics, or responses under erratic conditions, like droughts. Both of these variables are critical to understanding how agricultural systems can adapt to climate change," said North Carolina State University Agroecology Professor Dr. Ann Bybee-Finley, who began this research while completing her post-doctoral studies at ARS. "The DRIVES Network aims to connect data from long-term experiments with crop rotations across North America and make it available to the public."

This research, highlighted in this month's One Earth journal, will continue within ARS and with research partners at North Carolina State University, University of California Berkeley, Rice University, The International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, University of California Davis, Iowa State University, University of Minnesota, The Pennsylvania State University, The Ohio State University, University of Tennessee, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Michigan State University, and University of Guelph.

The Agricultural Research Service is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific in-house research agency. Daily, ARS focuses on solutions to agricultural problems affecting America. Each dollar invested in U.S. agricultural research results in \$20 of economic impact.



Case IH Introduces Largest Combine Lineup in the Industry with Addition of Single-Rotor AF9 and AF10 - Completing the AF Series

AF series combines maximize productivity through matched capacity and built-in technology

To help farmers harvest more acres with every engine hour, Case IH is launching the new AF9 and AF10 combines, redesigned from the ground up, to maximize capacity and crop flow with efficient horsepower, simplified maintenance and connectivity built-in at base.

The single-rotor AF9 and AF10 combines complete the new AF series, which launched earlier in 2024 with the AF11 – a Class 10+, high-capacity powerhouse. The revolutionary combine series features three models across Class 9 and 10+ to help farmers cover more acres in less time with power, efficiency and throughput.

“We know the harvesting challenges farmers face each year and know how critical it is to make each day as productive as the next,” said Leo Bose, harvesting segment lead at Case IH. “The AF9 and AF10 live up to the challenge.”

The AF9’s 634 horsepower and the AF10’s 775 horsepower provides the power to maximize crop flow while increasing speeds, taxing the machines less. Built upon the legacy of Axial-Flow single-rotor technology, the AFXL rotor of the AF9 and AF10 is 40% longer than the 260 series, offering increased throughput. Grain handling capacity is maximized and matched from header to spreader to harvest more with every engine hour.

“We are hyper-focused on delivering solutions that make our customers’ lives easier and their operations more productive,” said Bose. “That’s why we built the AF series combines with industry-leading matched capacity and why we are delivering more precision technology at base than ever before.”

The AF series offers a full suite of precision technology, including dual Pro 1200 displays, Harvest Command™ combine automation and RowGuide Pro™ technologies. Additionally, the introduction of Connectivity Included* leverages subscription-free connectivity, feeding yield and machine data directly to Case IH FieldOps™ — providing farmers with a comprehensive management solution across their entire operation. These features are purposefully designed to create a customer experience that delivers peace of mind through a simplified harvest season.

“We’ve dubbed 2024 the ‘Year of the Combine’ thanks to the wide range of combines we offer at Case IH, which is now the largest combine lineup in the industry,” said Bose. “From Class 6 to Class 10+, farmers can find the perfect harvesting partner for their operation at Case IH.”

In addition to the launch of the AF9 and AF10, Case IH is offering a new corn head series that pairs with the AF series and late model Axial-Flow combines for the ultimate harvesting package.

The C500 series corn head, which is built on the durability and reliability growers expect from Case IH, ensures peak productivity with independent drive lines for row unit and chopper drives. The series offers options to meet nearly any grower’s needs, including sizes from eight to 18 rows, chopping and non-chopping

options, and narrow or standard-row configurations that boost grain savings and performance with clean and fast picking, even in downed corn.

The Case IH harvesting lineup will be on display at the 2024 Farm Progress Show in Boone, Iowa. Visitors can stop by the Case IH booth, located at booth #102 on North Avenue along First Street and Second Street, visit caseih.com or talk with your local Case IH dealer.

*Connectivity Included will be active for the useful life of the PCM/PCMF modem. If the modem is no longer capable of receiving current cellular services, any modem hardware upgrades are not the responsibility of Case IH. Acceptance of End User License Agreement (EULA) is required.



See & Spray™ Customers See 59% Average Herbicide Savings in 2024

John Deere’s targeted spray technology used on more than 1 million acres this season

John Deere (NYSE: DE) announced its See & Spray™ technology saved farmers an estimated 8 million gallons of herbicide mix* on more than 1 million acres applied during the 2024 growing season, delivering both cost savings and improved sustainability. To put that into perspective, these savings are the equivalent of 12 Olympic-sized swimming pools over an area larger than the state of Rhode Island. The AI-powered weed-sensing technology demonstrated an average herbicide savings of 59%** on corn, soybean and cotton fields across the U.S.

“We’re spraying less chemical, it’s [See & Spray] saving us money, and it’s better for the environment,” said Bill Came, a farmer from Salina, Kansas. “We ran through our herbicide costs we were going to have and dropped them by two-thirds. That is going to make our sprayer payment.”

Introduced by John Deere in 2021, See & Spray technology activates individual spray nozzles when target weeds are “seen” by boom-mounted cameras. The cameras scan over 2,100 square feet of crop per second as the sprayer is in motion, at up to 15 mph. Onboard processors then determine whether an individual plant is a crop or weed and sends commands to individual ExactApply™ nozzles, which deliver a precise dose of herbicide only where the weed is recognized. The technology is currently available for application on corn, soybean, cotton and fallow fields.

Importantly, customers using See & Spray only pay for the acres where it is used. This enables farmers to only pay for what they need, and ensures they continue to see value as the technology improves over time. In 2025, John Deere will also introduce the Application Savings Guarantee, which will give customers added peace of mind by ensuring they only pay for the technology when there is a savings in application.

“We looked at what we were spending on postemergence weed control and felt we could justify this [technology] if we sprayed only 50% of our acres post,”

said Chad Buendorf, a farmer from New Richland, Minnesota. "In the end, we only sprayed 11% of our corn acres with postemergence herbicide and averaged only spraying 20% of our soybeans with both applications."

See & Spray technology gives farmers and custom applicators a powerful tool to maximize cost efficiency and in-field productivity. According to a recent Iowa State University study, See & Spray technology demonstrated an average of 76% product savings across all test fields and an economic savings of \$15.7/ac.*** And by targeting herbicide application only to weeds in the field, farmers can better support land stewardship and sustainability practices as well.

See & Spray™ Ultimate, which includes a 120 ft. carbon fiber boom and dual-tank solution, is available on John Deere sprayers from the factory. See & Spray™ Premium is available on both John Deere and Hagie sprayers from the factory and as a Precision Upgrade on model year 2018 or newer John Deere sprayers with a 120 ft. steel boom with BoomTrac Pro 2, ExactApply™ nozzles and 15" or 20" row spacing.

For more information on See & Spray technology, visit your local John Deere dealer or deere.com.



Productivity reaches new heights with comfort and hydraulic upgrades on new TH Series Telehandlers

From large cattle operations to commercial haymakers, a wide array of features aimed to lift operator productivity to new heights can be found on new TH Series telehandlers from New Holland. The three-model lineup features the TH7.42 PLUS, TH7.42 ELITE and TH9.35 PLUS and provides capacity, comfort, operating and styling updates. These improvements and new features boost the appeal of New Holland's telehandler lineup in a wide variety of agricultural applications with innovation that exceeds other manufacturers.

New best-in-class control layout simplifies operation

Inside the 360° Vision Cab, operators will immediately notice the new 7-inch (178 mm) InfoView™ color LCD display in the right front corner. At a quick glance, key operating information can be viewed, like ground speed, engine RPMs and fuel levels, as well as the optional rearview camera when in reverse. Adjacent to the display, a new LED-based Load Moment Indicator (LMI) with stability risk level alerts the operator if the machine reaches the maximum authorized load condition.

Operators will benefit from a new armrest designed to maximize arm and wrist comfort when using the joystick. This armrest features an encoder that lets operators make machine adjustments and interact with the InfoView display without changing hand position. A new keypad is also found on the armrest and includes controls for a variety of operating modes, engine speed management, hydraulic power management, boom aggressiveness, the rearview camera and more.

A new joystick is mounted to the front of the armrest and integrates control of 3rd-function hydraulics, forward and reverse shuttling, transmission declutch and boom operation. With an enhanced continuous flow function, engine speed and auxiliary flow rate can be precisely adjusted and activated on the joystick button to drive an attachment, like a broom or silage defacer. The engine speed control button

lets the operator set and store an RPM for operating a specific attachment.

Aside from controls, operators will also benefit from improved noise suppression and visibility. Due to several design developments and a quiet engine, in-cab noise levels are just 71 decibels, which is slightly louder than a normal conversation. Another key aim in development was to reduce blind spots over the front of the boom, particularly when raised and fully lowered. By combining a wide and deep front screen with slim 'A'-pillars, operator visibility from the seat is greatly enhanced. In addition, the new hood design not only provides a more modern, dynamic look with New Holland's signature Inspired by Nature styling, it provides more lateral visibility thanks to a more aggressive slope.

A mode to match every job

No two jobs a telehandler handles are alike on a farm. In response, New Holland simplified operation with a selection of tailor-made modes designed to maximize operator productivity based on the job at hand. Whether it's fast operation or precision application, operators can adjust the joystick and boom response to meet high and low sensitivity needs. In Loading Mode, priority is given to fast shuttling and rapid boom movement, perfect for stacking large square bales on a trailer in the field. Handling Mode prioritizes smooth shuttling and boom operation, like when feathering an expensive commodity into a TMR mixer or making short movements in tight spaces. In Transport Mode, boom hydraulics are disabled, smooth power shuttling is enabled and two-wheel steer is engaged to provide maximum safety and peace of mind.

Another innovative feature is the new Forklift Mode, which simplifies stacking objects like bales. When engaged, operators control automatic boom extension and retraction to achieve a vertical pattern, just like a forklift operates.

Active Bucket Shake provides further efficiency in applications surrounding cattle chores. When activated, operators press a button on the joystick and hold the joystick to the left or right. Whether loading a spreader with pen-packed manure or shaking silage out of a bucket into a TMR, operators will benefit from this feature as rapid jiggling of the joystick left and right to release material is eliminated. Across a day, small repeat movements lead to fatigue, which is why innovative solutions like Active Bucket Shake can play a key role in enhancing operator comfort and productivity.

Powering productivity

Under the hood is a Stage V-compliant 4.5-liter, 4-cylinder engine built by FPT Industrial. These exceptionally clean-running engines utilize ECOBlue™ HI-eSCR 2 emission technology and provide an industry-leading 1,000-hour service intervals. On the TH7.42 PLUS and TH9.35 PLUS, 133 maximum horsepower is delivered, while the TH7.42 ELITE packs 145 max horsepower to deliver even more capacity.

Transferring power to the ground is a new 6Fx3R PowerShift™ transmission that is standard on all models. New gears provide smoother shifting and acceleration, plus their ratios improve performance on inclines and towing at higher transport speeds. Directional changes are easy with a column-mounted power shuttle or the joystick. Three adjustment levels of shuttle response let operators adjust to the job at hand.

Hydraulics to maximize efficiency

Another innovative feature is the award-winning electrohydraulic self-leveling attachment system. This system replaces the compensation cylinder, which usually manages self-leveling, with a pair of angle sensors that transmit the boom's position in real time to an electronic module. From there, the tilt cylinder's precise oil flow requirement is instantly calculated, resulting in rapid, accurate self-leveling of an attachment. For operators, this means less material spillage from buckets and less maintenance because of fewer mechanical components.

When pushing into piles of material with high resistance, like at a silage bunker, it's essential to have constant hydraulic power while maximizing pushing power to fill a bucket. To deliver this, the TH Series is equipped with Hydraulic Power Management. With the push of a button on the keypad, engine speed automatically increases when the telehandler recognizes heavy loads.

FarmWise & RDO Equipment Co. Form Exclusive Partnership to Revolutionize Precision Weeding in Specialty Crops

FarmWise and RDO Equipment Co. announce a partnership to sell and support AI-powered weeding technology for U.S. vegetable growers.



FarmWise™, a leader in smart farming implements, and RDO Equipment Co., a dealer of intelligently connected agriculture, construction, environmental, irrigation, positioning, and surveying equipment from leading manufacturers, including John Deere, announce an exclusive partnership to deliver FarmWise's Vulcan precision weeding and cultivation implement to vegetable growers in the Southwest regions of the United States.

FarmWise has established a strong reputation for cutting-edge, AI-powered weeding solutions for vegetable growers. Vulcan, the company's latest product, has proven to be a key resource to combat constrained and increasingly costly hand labor on the farm by combining precision weeding with unmatched productivity. Taylor Farms and Barkley Farms are two of the leading produce companies in the Southwest that have adopted Vulcan as part of their farming operations. With this agreement, RDO will bring Vulcan to more growers within existing and new regions as an exclusive sales and field support partner to FarmWise.

"We are excited to join forces with RDO, a company that embodies the same vision and relentless focus on their customers. This partnership takes FarmWise's commercial and customer support capabilities to the next level and reinforces RDO's leadership in the adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies", says Tjarko Leifer, CEO of FarmWise.

"For Taylor Farms, Vulcan builds on the foundation of success we have experienced working with FarmWise since 2019. We purchased our first Vulcan last December and today run two of them. We have weeded over 2,100 acres already this season. We are seeing strong value in our

fields and expect Vulcan to be a significant part of our operations going forward because it helps address labor challenges in today's agriculture", says Ted Taylor, president of agricultural operations at Taylor Farms.

"When we learned about FarmWise's Vulcan implement and its learning AI that can improve cultivating efficacy for different crops in varying field conditions, our team saw that this product fit perfectly into our commitment to helping growers do more with less without decreasing their longstanding history of quality," says Richard Arias, RDO's vice president of southwest agriculture. "Our product specialists are excited to work alongside growers to mechanize weed management that reduces hand labor and costs to optimize weed control in their fields and improve crop uniformity and yield."

Leveraging RDO's long history of effective customer support and large service network, Vulcan is poised to expand its offerings for current and new specialty crops. FarmWise and RDO are committed to continuing to develop chemical-free weed removal options that provide farmers with real savings.

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CASE IH

New Funding for Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs Announced

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces new funding for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) for fiscal year 2025. Administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the program helps landowners and other eligible entities conserve, restore, and protect wetlands, productive agricultural lands, and grasslands at risk of conversion to non-grassland uses. Healthy wetlands, grasslands, and farmlands sequester carbon and provide many other natural resource benefits. The funding is made possible by the Inflation Reduction Act—the largest investment in climate action in history.

With the Inflation Reduction Act, we have additional resources to help fund Agricultural Conservation Easement Program work to protect lands in conservation easements," said USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Chief Terry Cosby. "ACEP continues to be a valuable and effective conservation tool that provides long-term protection of our nation's farmland and wetland resources."

NRCS accepts applications year-round for ACEP Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE). Interested producers, landowners, and partners should apply by the next two batching dates, Oct. 4, 2024, or Dec. 20, 2024, to be considered for these two state-led funding cycles.

For California, the ACEP-ALE and ACEP-WRE application batching periods are:

- October 4th- ACEP Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Funding
- December 20th- ACEP IRA and ACEP Farm Bill Funding

In fiscal year 2025, the California ACEP priorities for IRA funding are unchanged from last fiscal year. IRA statute prioritizes eligible land that will most reduce, capture, avoid, or sequester carbon dioxide, methane, or nitrous oxide emissions. The following ACEP-IRA program-eligible areas are prioritized in California:

IRA ACEP-WRE

- Highly organic soils that will optimize the soil carbon sequestration potential and prevent increased greenhouse gas emissions through habitat protection, restoration of previously cultivated areas, and natural hydrology to keep the soils saturated and anaerobic.
- Approved localized priorities: a) montane wet meadows and b) vernal pools.

IRA ACEP-ALE

- Program-eligible agricultural lands currently classified as grassland or native vegetation (e.g., California rangelands, sagebrush, vernal pool grasslands, wet meadows) where NRCS has identified a high threat of conversion to a non-grassland use.
- Program-eligible cropland or grassland where NRCS has identified a high threat of conversion to a non-agricultural use.
- Active agricultural rice cultivation on subsiding highly organic soils.

The Inflation Reduction Act included \$1.4 billion in additional funding for ACEP over five years and revised ACEP authority, providing funding for easements that will maximize the reduction, capture, avoidance, or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions. The fiscal year 2025 nationally authorized amount for the Inflation Reduction Act funding for ACEP is \$500 million.

ACEP is also a covered program in the President's Justice40 Initiative, which aims to ensure 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal climate, clean energy and other investment areas flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

For more information on the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), landowners can contact their local NRCS Service Center or visit California | Natural Resources Conservation Service ([usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov)).

CDFA Announces Vacancies On Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has announced three vacancies on the Fertilizer Inspection Advisory Board. The board advises the CDFA secretary on CDFA's Fertilizing Materials Inspection Program (FMIP), which ensures fertilizing materials are safe, effective, and meet quality guarantees.

As part of the program, FMIP inspectors and investigators located throughout the state conduct routine sampling and inspections, respond to consumer complaints, and enforce laws and regulations that govern the manufacturing and distribution of fertilizing materials. FMIP is funded by fertilizing materials licenses, product registration fees, and mill assessments.

There are three board member positions available. The term of office for board members is up to three years. Board members receive no compensation but are entitled to reimbursement of necessary travel expenses in accordance with the

rules of the California Department of Human Resources. Board member applicants must hold a current fertilizing materials license or be a representative of a licensed firm.

Individuals interested in a board appointment must submit a resume and a completed Prospective Member Appointment Questionnaire (PMAQ). The PMAQ is available on the CDFA website at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/pdfs/PMAQ_Fertilizer_IAB.pdf. Both the resume and PMAQ are due by November 25, 2024. Send resume and PMAQ via email to Brittnie.Williams@cdfa.ca.gov or by mail to:

CDFA/Feed, Fertilizer & Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services
Attn: Brittnie Williams
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

For more information, contact Brittnie Williams at (916) 900-5022 or Brittnie.Williams@cdfa.ca.gov.

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Investments in farm-to-school program stabilize farms, expand climate-friendly farming practices

Small and midsize farms, women and BIPOC farmers especially benefit

A new report reveals that California farmers participating in the state's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program are increasing sales of fresh, local and organic produce, meat and dairy products to schools, according to researchers evaluating program impacts. The report found that 57% of the program's farmers made sales to schools between April and September 2023, representing an average of 33% of their total farm revenues. All food producers funded by the Farm to School Grant Program state that they use or plan to use climate-smart agricultural practices in their operations during the grant period.

California has made the largest investment of any state in the country in farm-to-school programs, allocating approximately \$100 million from 2020 through 2022. The report, authored by an independent group of researchers from UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, UC Berkeley, Food Insight Group, Berkeley Food Institute, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, shows those investments are beginning to pay off beyond increasing kids' exposure to food education and California-grown fruits and vegetables.

While existing research shows that kids who engage with farm-to-school programs eat more fruits and vegetables, are more willing to try healthy foods, and even perform better in class, the California farm-to-school evaluation project examines a gap that most farm-to-school research hasn't addressed: how local purchases from schools affect the agricultural sector and the environment.

The report found that the investments are flowing primarily to the farmers the state seeks to support through this program: Of the 50 producer grantees evaluated in this report, 42% are owned by people who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and 62% are owned by women. Nearly all (94%) are small to midsize operations.

Three producer grantees revealed that the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program funding likely prevented them from going out of business. "This grant . . . has and will enable us to do things on the farm that would probably take us a decade to do but we'll be able to do that in one or two seasons. So [it] really moves us forward a lot," noted one farmer.

Beth Katz, a lead researcher and executive director of Food Insight Group, said, "Farmers are expanding their relationships with local school districts, increasing their sales to schools, investing in infrastructure and staff, and forming new relationships with food hubs that can help them with the often complex purchasing requirements unique to school food. While we're still at a very early stage of understanding the impacts of these investments, we're beginning to see patterns emerge."

A Humboldt County farmer noted that food hubs, which are also supported by the grant program, are critical to their success in accessing the school food market: "[The food hub] is really a huge game changer to be able to make that one drop in town, even though it's an hour away, rather than going to [several school sites] and just making all these little drops. That's been one of the ways that it's very . . . appealing to us as a



California farmers participating in the state's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program are increasing sales of fresh, organic produce, meat and dairy products to local schools.

farm to participate."

The report also examines the potential for environmental impacts through direct investments in farmers who use climate-friendly farming practices.

"I'm inspired by the potential for the farm-to-school program to support farmers using environmentally beneficial practices like reducing pesticides, planting cover crops and growing organic — and to help farmers expand or adopt these practices. It's essential these farmers have a market for what they grow to see durable environmental benefits," said Tim Bowles, who is leading the environmental impacts assessment for the evaluation team and is an assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy & Management at UC Berkeley and lead faculty director of the Berkeley Food Institute.

"We're also seeing farms actually expand their acreage in order to sell to schools, suggesting this is a desirable market. We're investigating the environmental impacts from these investments, especially for climate," Bowles said.

As with many new programs aimed at building out long-delayed infrastructure, school food systems improvement demands a deep-rooted approach.

"The challenges around changing a complex school food system are substantial," Gail Feenstra, a pioneer in farm-to-school research and co-lead on the project from UC ANR stated. "Decades of research shows the value to children from fresh, locally sourced food. However, what is becoming more clear from this research is that long-term investments in the full farm to school system are crucial. Without regional-level infrastructure, staffing, aggregation and distribution in place to support getting that locally grown food from farms to the schools and kids, we'll have challenges moving the needle.

"Fortunately, the state's strategic and innovative investments in the entire farm to school supply chain — meaning funding for school districts, farmers and also their regional partners, combined with support from CDFR's regional staff — are beginning to address those long-standing challenges."

By Haven Bourque, haven@havenbmedia.com, (415) 505-3473

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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

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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.

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Hands-on learning, training make irrigation best practices accessible

By Saoimanu Sope

Digital Communications Specialist

Working as an irrigator seems straightforward at first: if you're not watering plants by hand, you're building and managing systems that can do the watering. What could be complex about a job like this?

University of California Cooperative Extension advisors Bruno Pitton and Gerardo "Gerry" Spinelli can tell you – or better yet, show you.

Pitton and Spinelli, members of the UC Nursery and Floriculture Alliance, offer a one-day technical training in irrigation best-management practices for irrigators working with containerized nursery plants. The comprehensive curriculum – developed with input from two focus groups of California nursery and greenhouse managers – aims to improve irrigation efficiency, reduce water consumption and improve plant health.

Thanks to funding from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, nursery and greenhouse managers in California can request this training for free and advisors like Pitton and Spinelli will travel to conduct the training on-site.

The complexities of irrigation incorporate concepts like evapotranspiration, salinity, irrigation uniformity, capillarity, pressure and flow rate. Spinelli, UCCE production horticulture advisor for San Diego County, said that irrigators have a critical role in the industry because of all the things they must consider to do their job well.

"Our goal is to support irrigators and help them become more confident decision-makers and experts in the field," said Pitton, UCCE environmental horticulture advisor for Placer and Nevada counties.

Interactive sessions reveal nuances of irrigation

The training consists of a presentation on fundamental concepts for managing irrigation in container plant production and hands-on demonstrations. "In the nursery industry, where precise irrigation is crucial for the health and productivity of our crops, having access to expert knowledge is invaluable," said Mauricio de Almeida, general manager of Burchell Nursery in Fresno County. "The training's practical demonstrations and real-world examples made the concepts easy to grasp, allowing our team to implement the strategies immediately."

For one of the demonstrations, the advisors used sponges to model soil saturation when water is applied. Ana, an irrigator at Burchell Nursery, appreciated the step-by-step explanations, which helped her better understand how water pressure differs in drip irrigation, sprinklers and watering by hand. Doing this out in the field, as an example of how irrigation audits occur, was extremely helpful for attendees.

Francisco "Frank" Anguiano, production manager of Boething Treeland Farms in Ventura County, observed his team of irrigators as they learned how to measure distribution uniformity with water collected from sprinklers. "This training isn't just about irrigation and plant management. It's also about savings, both water and costs. Who doesn't want to save money and use less water?" Anguiano said.

Reducing the barriers to learning

Many of the irrigators attending these trainings gained their skills and knowledge from life experience rather than a college education, explained Peter van Horenbeeck, vice president of Boething Treeland Farms. "It's important that my irrigators learn from external experts, but it's more important that they can relate to them. And that's what Gerry was able to do," van Horenbeeck

added.

Regarding content and delivery, and referencing what he learned from the focus groups, Pitton wanted the trainings to be easy to understand and engaging. For example, scientists use the term "matric potential" to describe how soil particles hold water against gravity, which is the same as capillary rise. "We demonstrate this concept with a paper towel held vertically and dipped into a beaker of dyed water that it absorbs," said Pitton.

Many of the irrigators in attendance agreed that hands-on activities and visual aids were instrumental to their learning. Charli, another irrigator at Burchell Nursery, shared that the in-field examples and hosting the training in Spanish kept them engaged. To address language barriers, Spinelli has been conducting trainings in Spanish – a common request from many nurseries with eager participants.

Maintaining state regulations and partnerships

Although the technical aspects of irrigation management are key elements of the training, regulatory compliance is also addressed. Recognizing the finite availability of water and the environmental impact of pollution, the advisors highlight irrigation and fertilizer management and runoff prevention as critical components of compliance.

Under Ag Order 4.0 administered by California's Water Resources Control Board, growers must comply with stricter policies regulating nitrogen use. As irrigators learn from the training, better control of irrigation can certainly make a difference.

Deanna van Klaveren, chief operating officer and co-owner of Generation Growers in Stanislaus County, said the most valuable aspect of the training was learning on-site and completing an audit on her own systems. "It is so much more impactful to have trainings like this on-site where our staff can learn and then go out into the nursery and actually put it into practice while the presenters/experts are there," van Klaveren said.

Pitton and Spinelli described the partnership between UC Cooperative Extension and CDFA as "symbiotic" given the technical and educational capacity of UCCE advisors who conduct research and extension.

"It's a great example of how the two institutions can collaborate successfully. Californians are the ones who win because they get a service for free," added Spinelli. "And it's rewarding for us to see so much interest in what we, as advisors, do."

If you are a nursery or greenhouse operator and would like to request the Irrigation Best Management Practices training, please contact the UCCE advisor assigned to the region that corresponds with your nursery location below.

Northern California

- Jessie Godfrey, UCCE environmental horticulture and water resources management advisor, jmgodfrey@ucanr.edu

Central Coast (Santa Cruz County to Ventura County)

- Emma Volk, UCCE production horticulture advisor, evolk@ucanr.edu

San Joaquin Valley

- Chris Shogren, UCCE environmental horticulture advisor, cjshogren@ucanr.edu

Southern California

- Grant Johnson, UCCE urban agriculture technology advisor, gejohnson@ucanr.edu

Spanish Trainings Only

- Gerry Spinelli, UCCE production horticulture advisor, gspinelli@ucanr.edu

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Hardcore Carnivore Jess Pryles to Speak at 2024 California Cattlemen's Convention

The 108th Annual CCA & CCW Convention will occur Dec. 4 – Dec. 6 at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno

Ranching families, producers and allied industry professionals from the Golden State are headed to the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nev., Dec. 4 – Dec. 6 for the 108th Annual California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) and California CattleWomen's (CCW) Convention and California Cattle Industry Tradeshow. Over the course of three days, CCA and CCW members from all over the state will hear from industry professionals, participate in policy discussions, visit with allied companies in the tradeshow and recognize individuals making an impact in California's cattle industry.

In addition to hosting the event at the Grand Sierra Resort for the first time, CCA is pleased to announce that Jess Pryles, founder of Hardcore Carnivore, will speak during one of the Convention's general sessions. Pryles, originally from Australia, now resides in Texas, where she is a food and cooking personality known for her barbecue and smoking techniques. Starting out as the average consumer, Pryles took a deep dive into the world of understanding all things meat, leading her to become a meat scientist, professional chef, cookbook author and TV personality. With her wide range of skills, Pryles

founded the Hardcore Carnivore Brand, producing a line of accessories and meat seasonings that are widely recognized in the grilling community. Most recently, Pryles announced that a new tv show, Hardcore Carnivore, will premiere on the Outdoor Channel. The show will cover all things meat, barbecuing, and grilling in various forms. Pryles' wide knowledge of meat and the grill will bring a unique and educational session to the Convention's attendees, thanks to sponsorship from the California Cattle Council.

The Convention kicks off on Wednesday, Dec. 4 with the Tradeshow Welcome Party that will include music from Western musician Dave Stamey, food and plenty of opportunities for networking.

In addition to Pryles, Colin Woodall, chief executive officer for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and Patrick Linnell, director of cattle market research and analysis for CattleFax, will also be featured speakers in the general sessions.

To register, reserve a room in the room block, view a tentative schedule and for most current updates, visit CCA's website at calcattlemen.org/convention2024.

U.S. Dairy Councils Partner with Tackle Hunger to Provide Dairy Foods to Families in Need

With the continued increase in health disparities directly related to food insecurity in America, regional dairy councils across the nation announce a year-long collaboration with Tackle Hunger, to provide a fundraising opportunity for those who want to help their local food charity gain access to dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt. Milk is one of the most requested yet least donated items in food charities due to its perishability and refrigeration needs, but you can help change that with Tackle Hunger's innovative donation map.

The Tackle Hunger map allows users to see and support their local food charities through monetary donations, which are sent directly to the charity of their choice. This year, through an exciting collaboration with regional dairy councils that cover 21 states, donations in select U.S. regions will be directed to provide nutritious milk, cheese and yogurt to our neighbors in need. Tackle Hunger is excited to partner with regional dairy councils Dairy Management West, Dairy West, Dairy MAX, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, Florida Dairy Farmers, American Dairy Association Mideast and American Dairy Association North East to ensure our neighbors have consistent access to dairy foods that can help support growth and development in children, diseases prevention in older adults and overall health in all age groups.

"Food insecurity is still a major problem in our country, and the health disparities associated with food insecurity continue to make community flourishing difficult. We believe collaborations like this coupled with local communities rallying around their food charities can change the game for

those in need," said Alison Reese, Tackle Hunger executive director. "Food charities want to feed everyone in need healthy foods, but we all know they cost more. We hope programs like this will encourage people to think about the importance of supporting their neighborhood food charity. And if you don't know where it is, visit the Tackle Hunger map to find it."

The coalition of dairy councils and their dairy farm families are committed to building up the communities where they live and work, which is why this partnership is so important to the dairy community. By making dairy foods like milk, cheese and yogurt more accessible through monetary donations in the Tackle Hunger map, you can play a part in creating a healthier, more equitable community.

"We believe that everyone deserves access to nutritious foods, and dairy foods like milk, cheese, and yogurt play a vital role in a healthy diet. Through our partnership with Tackle Hunger, we're committed to supporting local food charities in their efforts to provide these essential nutrients to families in need," said Jennie McDowell, chief strategy officer at Dairy MAX. "By working together, we can help bridge the gap in food insecurity and ensure that our communities thrive."

Food insecurity has reached epidemic levels in America due to continued difficulties families face. At least 13 million children are food insecure, with single parent families more likely to struggle with being able to provide consistent healthy meals to their children.

You can donate dollars for dairy through the Tackle Hunger map at map.tacklehunger.org.

NASS releases 2022 Census of Agriculture Web Maps application



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), launched a collection of interactive maps to allow data users to access key Census of Agriculture information. The newly redesigned Ag Census Web Maps application offers the public access to maps and accompanying data to help visualize, download and analyze Census of Agriculture data down to the county level. The application assembles maps and statistics from the 2022 Census of Agriculture in five broad categories – crops and plants, economics, farms, livestock and animals, and producers – as well as associated subcategories.

"NASS is excited to provide the public with customizable, interactive and accessible ways to work with the vast trove of Census of Agriculture data," said NASS Administrator Joseph Parsons. "The Ag Census Web Maps application allows users to visualize the state of American agriculture in a way no other Census of Agriculture product provides."

An Ag Census Web Maps user can: select a map to display from any of the general categories and associated subcategories; create maps showing the variation in a single data item across the country (for example, average value of agricultural products sold per farm); select a county and view and download the county's data for a general category; download the U.S. county-level dataset of mapped values for all categories and more. The resulting products give producers, agribusinesses, policymakers, community planners and the general public easy access to factors that affect

agriculture and producers in more than 3,000 counties across the country.

NASS has also made available on its website a range of new products related to the 2022 ag census: Market Value of Ag Products Rankings; State and County Profiles; Congressional District Profiles and Rankings; the Race, Ethnicity, and Gender Profiles; the Watersheds report; and the American Indian Reservations Report. In addition, the 2022 Puerto Rico Census of Agriculture data were released July 18 and can be viewed on NASS's ag census web page.

Upcoming ag census releases include the Specialty Crops publication on Oct. 17 and Zip Code Tabulations on Nov. 7. Other products to be released this fall include additional ag census Highlights publications found on the NASS website at nass.usda.gov/Publications/Highlights. Census of Agriculture Highlights cover topics such as producer demographics, commodity specifics, and more.

Spanning more than 6 million data points about America's farms and ranches and the people who operate them, the full ag census report can be accessed at nass.usda.gov/AgCensus. Ag census data can also be found in NASS's searchable online database, Quick Stats.

In preparation for the 2027 Census of Agriculture, NASS is already asking for content change suggestions and for new producers who did not receive a 2022 Census of Agriculture questionnaire last year to sign up to be counted in future censuses and surveys. Both forms can be found at nass.usda.gov

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