

Riverside County AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.
A private, nonprofit organization serving farmers throughout Riverside County since 1917

Our 75th Year of Publication: Volume LXXV, Number 5, May 2021.



Over 100 Years Strong

Photo by Mike Perry on Unsplash.com

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(USPS 466-900) Published monthly by Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc., a non-profit organization serving farmers and ranchers at 21160 Box Springs Road, #102, Moreno Valley, California 92557, Telephone 951/684-6732. Subscriptions: \$1 per year of membership dues. Periodicals postage paid at Riverside, California 92507, under act of March 3, 1887. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RIVERSIDE COUNTY FARM BUREAU, 21160 Box Springs Rd., #102, Moreno Valley, CA 92557. For advertising information, Telephone (951)684-6732 - Printed by Layton Printing, La Verne, California.

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Inside this Issue...

BeeWhere Program.....	3
CDHP Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated Individuals.....	4
Johansson Urges Flexibility.....	5
Employers' Right to Refuse Property Access.....	6
CAFB's 401(k) MEP.....	6
Food and Farm News.....	8
Calendar.....	8

Welcome New Members

We would like to "Thank You" for becoming part of the Farm Bureau Family.



NEW DATES ADDED!

FREE REMOTE DELIVERY

Produce Safety Training



Food Safety Training Partnership is pleased to offer FREE Produce Safety Training (required by the Produce Safety Rule) offered through Web-based live remote delivery by Produce Safety Alliance-approved instructors from the Food Safety Training Partnership's Safe Food Alliance!

June 8 - 9, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions June 8 @ 10am - June 9 @ 3:30pm (PST)

June 23 - 24, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions June 23 @ 10am - June 24 @ 3:30pm (PST)

July 27 - 28, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions July 27 @ 10am - July 28 @ 3:30pm (PST)

August 24 - 25, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions August 24 @ 10am - August 25 @ 3:30pm (PST)

September 14 - 15, 2021

Two Half Day Sessions September 14 @ 10am - September 15 @ 3:30pm (PST)

Space is limited!

A high-speed internet connection and confirmed attendance for the full course will be required.

Register Today!

Register at Food Safety Training Partnership; visit <http://foodsafetytrainingpartnership.org> For more information or call 916-561-5672.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information

Riverside County continues to release appointments for the COVID-19 vaccines as they become available. The demand for the COVID-19 vaccine throughout our community continues to exceed the limited supply available. Community members are encouraged to check Riverside County's Vaccine Dashboard on a regular basis to make sure they are informed of new vaccine clinics as appointments become available.

- Visit Riverside County's new Vaccine Dashboard, at <https://www.rivcoph.org/COVID-19-Vaccine>
- Email your questions about Riverside County vaccinations to rivco.vaccines@ruhealth.org.
- For information on Riverside County's COVID-19 Response, visit www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus.
- Please visit the CDC Essential Worker COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit to help educate your workers about important prevention tools and why vaccines are important. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/toolkits/essential-workers.html>
- Follow Riverside University Health System – Public Health on Social Media for the latest updates
 - Facebook: www.facebook.com/countyriversidedepartmentofpublichealth
 - Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RivCoDoc>

BeeWhere Program Receiving Important Industry Support

By Brian German, Journalist for AgNet West

The BeeWhere program is being supported by a variety of regulatory bodies in California. Debuted at the California Association of Pest Control Advisors annual conference back in 2018, the program is continuing to be more widely used. The program brings beekeepers and pesticide applicators together for better tracking of hive locations.



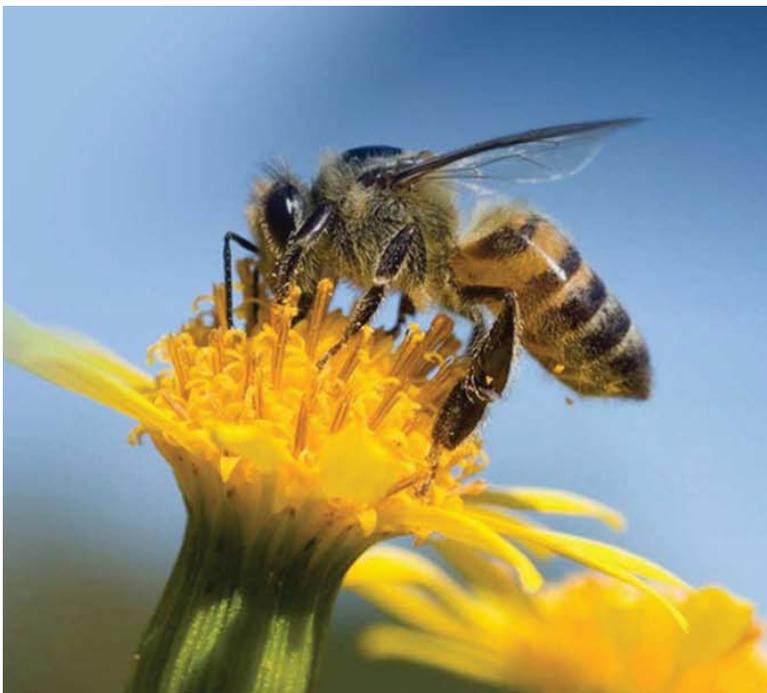
Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner Ruben Arroyo talking with AgNet West's Taylor Hillman about the BeeWhere program at the 2018 California Association of Pest Control Advisors (CAPCA) Conference.

“The California Department of Pesticide Regulation, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Commissioner system, the California Association of Pest Control Advisors, and the Beekeepers Association were all in favor and supported this program,” said Ruben Arroyo, Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner. “As of recent, there’s been some media out there and support of BeeWhere from the Beekeepers Association.”

The rollout of the BeeWhere program has not been without its share of complications. Arroyo explained that they are continually working to make the program more user-friendly. The program itself is designed to provide for more direct communication between applicators and beekeepers. Better communication helps applicators comply with state regulations intended to protect pollinators. “We’re trying to ensure that people are following the laws and regulations set up to protect bees. So, this was a method that we decided could help with that communication line and that’s where all this really started,” Arroyo noted.

The more people who use the program provides more data points to help improve how it functions. Information that is provided to BeeWhere is kept confidential. Applicators can look on the program to see if there are hives in the area where a pesticide is going to be applied. The program provides a conduit for applicators to alert beekeepers about an upcoming application. Applicators will still need to reach out and contact the beekeeper on their own accord.

“Using the system alone doesn’t meet the requirement, you still have to do your part. That’s partly what we’re trying to accomplish as of recent in our outreach, is to ensure that the applicator and the beekeeper are talking,” said Arroyo. “This is where the outreach and these efforts letting the industry know where we are and how the program works and that their obligation to contact the beekeeper is still in the regulation.”



California Law Requires Beekeepers to Register Bees.

BeeWhere is a real-time mapping system where users can mark hives with a simple pin drop in the field.

[LEARN MORE AT BEEWHERECALIFORNIA.COM](http://BEEWHERECALIFORNIA.COM)



California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated Individuals

Alexis Silveira, Citrus Mutual

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) updated its recommendations for individuals who are fully vaccinated. Key points from this guidance are below.

Fully vaccinated people can:

- Spend time with other fully vaccinated people, including indoors, without wearing masks or physical distancing (outside a workplace setting).
- Spend time with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
- Refrain from wearing face coverings outdoors except when attending crowded outdoor events, such as live performances, parades, fairs, festivals, sports events, or other similar settings.
- Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic.
- Following a known exposure at work, fully vaccinated workers do not need to quarantine if asymptomatic.
- In the workplace, employers subject to the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) must ensure that employees are following the current ETS face covering and testing requirements.

Fully vaccinated people should continue to:

- Take precautions in public including wearing a well-fitted mask indoors, and when attending crowded outdoor events, as described above.
- Check CDPH guidance for face coverings for updates.
- Follow CDPH's Guidance for Gatherings when gathering with people who are not vaccinated, groups with both vaccinated and unvaccinated people, and persons of unknown status. Maintain physical distancing and adhere to other prevention measures when visiting with unvaccinated people who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease or who have an unvaccinated household member who is at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease.
- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- If fully vaccinated people test positive for SARS-CoV-2, they should follow CDPH and local health department guidance regarding isolation and/or exclusion from high-risk settings.
- For workplace settings, employers should follow the exclusion provisions of the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards.*
- Follow CDC, local and state health department travel requirements and recommendations.

Individuals are considered fully vaccinated when it has been two weeks or more after they have received either their second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) or their single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen). Individuals may refer to Addendum to Blueprint Activity & Business Tiers Chart – Tested and Fully Vaccinated Individuals and Sections for further industry and venue guidance related to tested negative and fully vaccinated individuals.

**The Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS) applies to all employers, employees, and to all places of employment with three exceptions:*

Workplaces where there is only one employee who does not have contact with other people.

Employees who are working from home.

Employees who are covered by the Aerosol Transmissible Diseases

In contrast with this CDPH update, the Cal/OSHA ETS states that “all prevention measures must continue to be implemented,” including the requirement for face coverings, physical distancing, and the exclusion of workers who have been exposed to persons with COVID-19. Though the impact of vaccines is said to likely be addressed in future revisions of the ETS, this has yet to occur.

For questions regarding CDPH recommendations, please reach out to Rebecca Baskins at rbaskins@kscsacramento.com. For questions regarding the Cal/OSHA ETS, please reach out to Louie Brown at lbrown@kscsacramento.com.

Farm Bureau President urges additional flexibility in Conservation Programs

Land that produces food and farm products also provides crucial conservation and climate benefits—and federal conservation programs must focus on keeping working lands working, according to California Farm Bureau testimony before a congressional subcommittee on May 12, 2021.



California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson testified virtually before the U.S. House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry.

Johansson said the California Farm Bureau supports participation by farmers, ranchers and foresters in voluntary, climate-smart practices that sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience.

“Our farmers and ranchers have a proven track record of doing more with less,” he said, noting farmer investments in water recharge, irrigation efficiency, energy conservation, cleaner-running farm equipment and numerous other on-farm conservation practices.

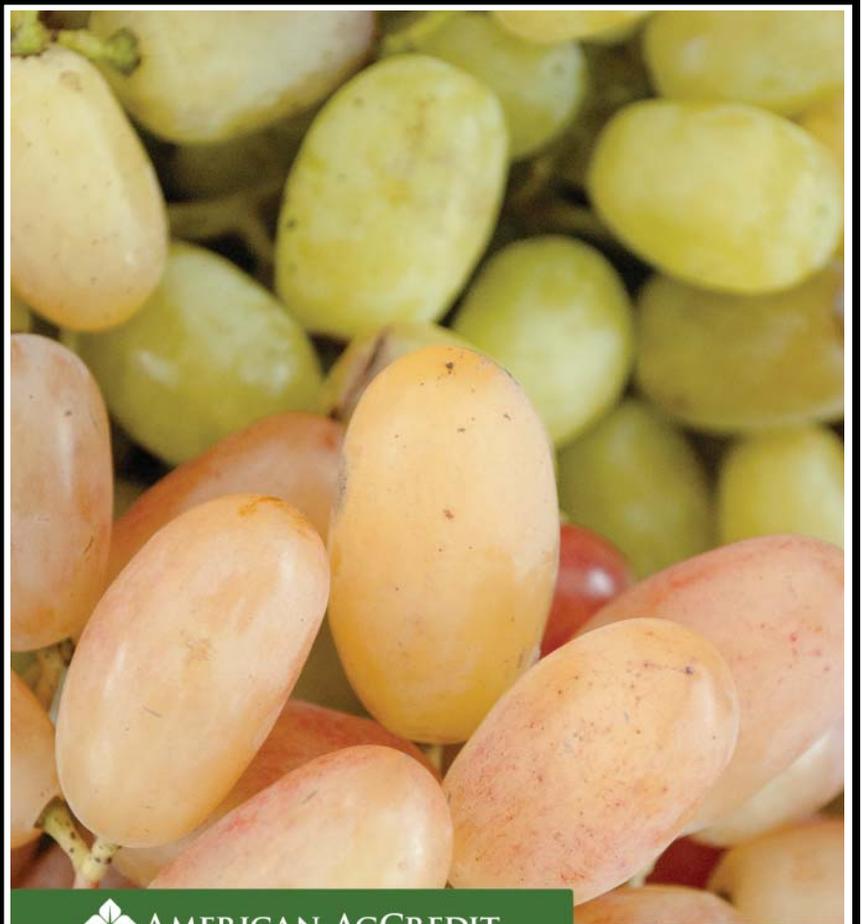
“With so much already happening at the field level, it is important to consider how new federal policies and programs will overlay with existing state climate programs and grower-led initiatives,” Johansson said.

To achieve the best results, he said, federal conservation programs must retain and enhance their flexibility to incorporate all crop types and farm sizes. Practices encouraged by the programs must be “broad and outcome-based,” Johansson said, “emphasizing a list of options as opposed to a prescriptive checklist.”

Noting that he and his family have been forced to evacuate due to wildfires on three separate occasions, Johansson urged the subcommittee to include forestry and grazing practices as strategies to restore forest and rangeland health, and to ensure sufficient disaster assistance for farmers and ranchers.

In encouraging long-term adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices, financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers must be “consistent, sustainable and long term,” he said.

“To further the adoption of on-farm climate-smart practices, we must not only compensate early adopters but also consider the economics of the farm and assist those being expected to do more,” Johansson concluded. “Only in working together can we achieve solutions that make agriculture more climate resilient while remaining viable.”



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Employers' Right to Refuse Property Access

Barsamian & Moody

The State Labor Commissioner's Office has announced that, working in conjunction with Cal/OSHA and the Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB), it intends to contact farmworkers this week by attempting to take access to growers' properties, including agricultural fields and worker housing. According to Secretary of Labor Julie Su's recent Twitter posting, a team of Labor Commissioner, Cal/OSHA, and ALRB representatives will be starting a 4-day mobile caravan to talk to farmworkers about their right to paid COVID sick leave and freedom from retaliation for exercising their rights. Ms. Su went on to add a comment thanking their partners in this effort: Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE), California Rural Legal Assistance (CLRA), and Lideres Campesinas.

You need to know your rights in regard to this group's ability to take access to your property, so that you can respond properly if you are targeted. Generally, employers may prohibit private non-governmental organizations (NGO) and private individuals from entering or being on their land. NGO's include organizations like MICOP, CAUSE, CLRA and Lideres Campesinas. This means that if any of the "partners" referenced in Ms. Su's Tweet show up at your worksite, you have every right to refuse to allow them to have access to your property.

Under State and Federal law, certain agencies have limited access to your property under specific circumstances. Under State labor laws, the Office of the Labor Commissioner (or "Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE)"); Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH or Cal/OSHA); Employment Development Department (EDD); Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH); and Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) all have limited rights to access your agricultural property. Under California law, these government agencies have authority to enter your property when (1) given employer consent; (2) subject to an administrative subpoena; or (3) subject to a search warrant. Employer consent will be pivotal to the Labor Commissioner's "mobile caravan." You do NOT have to give consent.

What This Means for Employers:

Employers should immediately meet with their field supervisors, including foreman and crew leads, to make them aware of the company policy to enforce its legal rights to refuse access. Remind supervisory employees to immediately contact management and to stop individuals at the gate when seeking access. Employers should also remind management and supervisory employees not to engage in physical violence or threats with these agency groups. Rather, supervisory and management employees should get business cards, names, and license plate numbers if possible and record the date, time, and place of contact. Management should call legal counsel immediately and then meet the individual at the gate, do not allow agency representatives to come to you. Upon meeting the agency representative, ask if any of the representatives have a valid search warrant or administrative subpoena. Let them know you have contacted your legal counsel and require reasonable time (generally up to 30 minutes) for your legal counsel to contact the agency. Be cordial, but do not consent to giving them access.

If you are subject to a visit from the Labor Commissioner's team, contact Barsamian & Moody immediately so that we can work to protect your legal rights.

The goal of this article is to provide employers with current labor and employment law information. The contents should neither be interpreted as, nor construed as legal advice or opinion. The reader should consult with Barsamian & Moody at (559) 248-2360 for individual responses to questions or concerns regarding any given situation.

FELS.net editor's Note: Barsamian & Moody is FELS' partner firm in providing group legal services for FELS Newsletter subscribers and FELS Labor Management Consultant service agreement clients. You can learn more about FELS Group Legal Service Program here; you can learn more about subscribing to the FELS Newsletter.

CAFB's 401(k) MEP Is Available

Are you ready for the new state retirement plan mandate that may apply to you as soon as June 30, 2021? If not, Nationwide may be able to help.

Nationwide partnered with the California Farm Bureau (CAFB) to support their creation of a new multiple employer retirement plan, or MEP, that is available to all CAFB Agricultural members with employees, even those that already sponsor a retirement plan. This MEP is a 401(k) plan that provides a cost-efficient method to comply with the law. The first registration deadline under this new mandate was September 30, 2020, and it applied to employers with more than 100 employees. The law will expand and apply to smaller employers during the next two years so that by 2022, all California employers with five or more employees will be required to either:

- 1) Sponsor their own retirement plan, (e.g., a SIMPLE IRA, SEP IRA, or 401(k)), or
- 2) Facilitate automatic payroll deduction to enroll their employees in the CalSavers retirement program.

Those employers who do not comply will be subject to significant penalties, based on their employee headcount.

Please note: Employers with 51 or more employees, the deadline to comply with the new state retirement plan mandate is June 30, 2021. We encourage you to take action right away to ensure adequate time to set up the plan prior to this deadline.

Joining the CAFB 401(k) MEP

For those CAFB members that are interested in joining the 401(k) MEP to meet this new state mandate, be aware that setting up a new employer in this MEP is not instantaneous, and in some circumstances can take up to 60 days to complete. For details on the process for joining, you may contact the following Nationwide Financial representatives in Private Sector Retirement Plans:

- Paul Yossem, Regional Vice President, 858-997-8863; Yossemp@nationwide.com.
- Aaron Barton, Regional Internal Consultant, 614-435-4705; bartoa6@nationwide.com



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



📅 June 9, 2021 ~ 5:30 PM, Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Hybrid meeting, Russo's Italian Kitchen in Banning and to be held by a Zoom Conference. If you are interested in participating, please call our office at (951) 684-6732.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

Drought could prompt more demand for queen bees

This is the busiest time of year for beekeepers who breed and sell queen bees to help replenish honeybee colonies—and the breeders say the drought may lead to additional demand. Dry weather reduces the amount of forage available to bees, meaning beekeepers could need to buy more queens to restock hives. Bee breeders say demand for new queens has been so intense that they have had to turn away prospective customers.

Thieves employ drones to scout rural property

Potential thieves in rural California have been using drones to locate equipment and tools they want to steal. The drones can scout property not visible from a public road. Authorities in Solano County report arresting two suspects in drone-related thefts, and other rural-crime deputies describe similar situations. Deputies have warned farmers to keep valuable equipment out of sight from the air if possible, as well as locking it after use.

Driver shortages worry agricultural truckers

As the California harvest season gains momentum, transportation companies worry there may not be enough truck drivers to move crops to market. People in the trucking and food businesses report they're already short of drivers to haul carrots and onions from Southern California fields. They say the shortages could worsen as harvests move north. Driver shortages have been a chronic problem that firms say has been amplified by the pandemic.

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