

Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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

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"Cabbage" Photo by Dan-Cristian Pădureț's on unsplash.com

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Welcome New Members

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



The Riverside County Farm Bureau has secured additional stock of disposable masks, please contact our office for availability and to arrange pick-up.

Call our Office (951) 684-6732

RIVERSIDE SHERIFF NOTES -

Sgt. Bob Epps of the Southwest Sheriff Station reported that the department was informed of fruit thefts from a Hemet citrus grove leading the Sheriff Department to install game cameras in the area. The cameras captured an individual stealing fruit, the vehicle used, and its' license plate number allowing the department to identify the individual.

There are reports of a couple of wineries that have been burglarized in the Temecula area. Someone broke into a tasting room attempting to steal an ATM machine. The department is continuing to follow leads and will be issuing search warrants soon. In addition, there have been reports of vehicles being burglarized in the employee parking lots at several wineries. The department is in the process of locating the suspect.

If you are experiencing theft or other crimes, please do not hesitate to contact Sgt. Bob Epps or any member of the Ag Team. They will be happy to respond and start an investigation. Also, if you would like to have equipment stamped with an Owner Applied Number, please reach out to them. You can reach Sgt. Bob Epps on his desk phone at (951) 696-3184, or by email at repps@riversidesheriff.org.

LEGISLATIVE SPOTLIGHT -

Proposition 19, passed narrowly in November 2020, took away the ability of parents to transfer property to their children without reassessment. Now, with only limited exceptions, property will be reassessed to market value when passed from parents to children, resulting in a massive property tax increase so costly that children may be forced to sell family properties because they can't afford the annual tax bill.



The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association is collecting signatures on official petitions to qualify an initiative for the ballot to Repeal the Death Tax. The initiative will restore the tax benefits that have been lost. They need a million signatures of registered voters to get it on the 2022 ballot.

If you are interested in signing the petition or collecting signatures, the Riverside County Farm Bureau has the petition materials available at our office. You can reach us at (951) 684-6732 to schedule a pickup of materials, or if you are unable to pick up the materials, the Riverside County Farm Bureau can mail them to you.

All signatures MUST be returned NO LATER than April 15, so please mail back all signed petitions to the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

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Sixth graders nurture wheelbarrow garden, grow community connections

After harvesting and cooking their produce, students ask for seconds of kale



The wheelbarrow gardens benefit the entire student population at Villegas by brightening the campus. Photo by Daisy Valdez

How do you get notoriously finicky sixth-graders to eat their leafy greens? Have them grow the vegetables themselves.

Students in Riverside have that unique opportunity through a hands-on gardening and nutrition class at Ysmael Villegas Middle School, with help from CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California Cooperative Extension Riverside County (a part of UC Agriculture and Natural Resources).

"We have middle schoolers asking for seconds and thirds of kale – that's not something that's typical!" said Claudia Carlos, program supervisor for CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Riverside, which implements SNAP-Ed locally (the educational arm of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps).

Growing and tending kale, mint and snap peas in two wheelbarrow gardens on the Villegas campus, the second cohort of students capped their 12-week class with a cooking lesson. A simple recipe combining their kale with tomatoes, onions and coconut milk was a big hit.

"It's one thing to tell youth they should eat healthy, but not until they actually grow the food do they actually take a lot of pride in that food they've grown and harvested," Carlos explained.

By the end of this school year, about 75 students (in three cohorts) will have taken the class, during which they explore career pathways in gardening, agriculture and nutrition – while cultivating new skills and healthy habits such as choosing nutritious snacks and incorporating exercise into their day. Techniques developed by the UC help encourage effective behavior change.

"In this exploratory class, I've learned how to plant, and take care of plants," wrote one student, in evaluating the class. "I can use these skills later on in life most likely, and I also learned how to be more healthy."

Teachers observed that other students also have taken steps to apply their new skills and knowledge.

"They become more confident in themselves and their abilities to make healthy choices for themselves and their families – and to advocate for their parents to buy that kale and actually eat it," said Daisy Valdez, community education specialist for CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Riverside, who is helping teach the class.

Valdez also has been training Villegas teacher Kim Weiss, so that Weiss – a first-year full-time teacher – is empowered to teach future cohorts. Both Valdez and Weiss noticed that nearly all of the youth have been enthusiastic about getting their hands in the soil, watering and weeding regularly – even taking care of the "worm hotel."

"Students are very invested in the plants, how they are doing and their well-being," Weiss said. "They ask if they can come back to the class and help care for the plants and worms; students worry about who will take care of the plants and worms after they leave."

In addition to basic gardening and cooking skills, the class also incorporates lessons about herbs and spices, beneficial insects and pollinators, and cultural dimensions of food. The kale cooking lesson, which recently took place during Black History Month, presented a chance to teach about African food and culinary traditions.

"It allows them to not just connect to the garden but also to connect to their peers and to connect to the world around them," said Valdez, who added that the garden, planted in a pair of cheerful red wheelbarrows, also beautifies the campus and sparks conversations among their schoolmates about food systems.

The Villegas partnership with CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE Riverside also benefits the entire school in other ways, with programs reaching hundreds of students and community members. In spring 2021, under Valdez's supervision, students created a "food access board" that shows how to obtain healthy and affordable food through CalFresh EBT, farmers markets, WIC and other resources.

The board, which has been set up in the library, cafeteria and lobby, is seen and used by students and family members. Valdez also engaged parents and the broader community by hosting gardening and nutrition workshops.

This year, Villegas students will have the opportunity to further deepen their cultural connections through a new Youth Participatory Action Research project, in which they explore their personal and family histories through the lens of a meaningful and healthy food item, practice or tradition. Youth will then share their findings with school peers and administrators.

As Carlos noted, these young people will not forget such engaging and immersive experiences with food any time soon. In their evaluations, many students wrote that they learned valuable lessons about compost, care for plants and insects, and healthy eating.

And, as one sixth grader said: "I also learned that kale and coconut milk is amazing!"

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DPR proposes regulatory restrictions on the use of neonicotinoids to protect bees

In an effort to reduce risks to bees, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) filed an official notice of formal rulemaking as a first step in the regulatory process to limit how and when neonicotinoids can be used in agricultural settings.

Neonicotinoids are a group of insecticides that are widely used as an alternative to chlorpyrifos, which DPR ended virtually all use of in 2020. At certain levels of exposure, neonicotinoids present risks to pollinators. DPR's proposed regulations are based on extensive scientific studies and would create new requirements and restrictions for the use of neonicotinoid products containing any of four active ingredients: imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, clothianidin and dinotefuran. DPR estimates the regulations will impact 57 products currently registered in California and will reduce the amount of neonicotinoids applied across the state by approximately 45%.

The regulations include tiered restrictions based on the chemical used, the type of crop and the time of year the neonicotinoid is applied in order to protect pollinator health. For example, applications to certain flowering plants that are attractive to bees would be prohibited when the plants are in bloom and when bees may be foraging. The regulations also set limits on applications of multiple neonicotinoids and what application methods may be used by growers. They also include an exemption for quarantine pests to provide the option, if necessary, to treat pests that can severely damage crops and food supply chains. The regulations address both risks to bees and ensures the protection of pollinators critical to growers and the agricultural sector.

"DPR `evaluates pesticides on an ongoing basis using the best available science and data to mitigate adverse impacts on ecosystems and the environment," said DPR Director Julie Henderson. "Our neonicotinoid reevaluation led to the significant advance in pollinator protection reflected in our proposed regulation."

The department began re-evaluating imidacloprid and the related neonicotinoids, thiamethoxam, clothianidin and dinotefuran in 2009. DPR completed its scientific review in July 2018, publishing the California Neonicotinoid Risk Determination, and began development of control measures necessary to protect pollinator health. The department's development of draft regulations included a pair of initial public webinars and a public comment period in 2020. The formal rulemaking process initiated by DPR today will include the opportunity for the public to submit written comments on the proposed regulations. For more information, see DPR's Neonicotinoid Reevaluation webpage.

"Our continuous evaluation of pesticides plays a critical role in accelerating a transition to safer, more sustainable pest management that protects the health of our communities, our pollinators and the environment as a whole," said Henderson.

As part of its regulatory mandate, DPR evaluates pesticide products for potential human health and environmental effects before they can be registered for legal sale and use in California. Prior to DPR review, pesticide products are evaluated and registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). U.S. EPA's and DPR's registration review and required pesticide label instructions – including application instructions and personal protective equipment requirements – are designed to mitigate potential risks to human health and the environment.

DPR's registration process includes the review of extensive scientific studies on human health and environmental impacts, safety and efficacy. After pesticide products have gone through this process and are registered, DPR also carries out a continuous evaluation process for pesticides following registration to take into account evolving scientific understanding. This continuous evaluation process can include formal reevaluation of pesticides and mitigation measures, as in the case of the neonicotinoids that are the subject of the department's proposed regulation, conducting exposure studies, conducting human health risk assessments, monitoring air and water for pesticides, and investigating information that indicates a pesticide may have caused an adverse effect on human health or the environment. Pesticides currently undergoing DPR's re-evaluation process are listed on the department's website and the results inform state-specific restrictions, mitigation measures or conditions for use.

2022 South American Palm Weevil Desert Symposium Webinar

March 30, 2022 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Hosted by Sonia Rios, sirios@ucanr.edu

Sponsor: UC Riverside, UC ANR, and Western IPM Center

In this webinar, various speakers will present on the current status of the South American Palm Weevil, including information on its biology and ecology, landscape treatment options, review of pesticide evaluation trials, and palm removal options.

3.0 DPR CE units (2.5 other, 0.5 laws and regs), 3.0 AZ Dept. of Ag, 3.0 CCA and 3.0 WC-ISA were requested.

Just as a reminder, here are the requirements for receiving the CEUs:

- register separately with your own name and email address and log in from your own device
- participate in the entire session
- complete and pass a final test with 70% or higher; if not passed, the test can be retaken

If you are not familiar with Zoom, log in a few minutes early to familiarize yourself with the Zoom interface.

To Register: https://ucanr.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_DcDVwoEzSHePXoUG2AvIKQ

NATIONWIDE TRAININGS: HEALTH AND SAFETY ON THE FARM AND RANCH

California Farm Bureau is pleased to offer this year-long program of training sessions presented by Nationwide in 2022. Select topics will be presented in both English and Spanish. Access to these trainings is FREE to Farm Bureau members. Trainings will be presented via Zoom.

The Hazardous Agricultural Materials (HAM) training must be watched via Zoom at a local County Farm Bureau office or at the California Farm Bureau office in Sacramento. Click the link below for a list of County Farm Bureau offices that will host the HAM training. The training concludes with a test that must be completed in person with the class proctor. Class size is limited to 15 people per location, so register early to ensure your spot.

Go to <https://www.cfbf.com> and click on Health and Safety on the Farm and Ranch, trainings presented by Nationwide button then select all of the training sessions you want to attend when you register.



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You will receive the Zoom link for each training you select two days before the training date.



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More detail, key updates in new edition of pesticide safety manual

Publication in English, Spanish prepares private applicators for state exam

Expanded from four chapters in the previous edition to 12, the third edition of Pesticide Safety: A Study Manual for Private Applicators aims to be more than just a study guide.

The manual, available for purchase in English and Spanish, provides much more detail on essential processes and procedures that will help keep applicators safe while using pesticides – as well as reduce environmental impacts from misapplication.

Published by University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources in collaboration with the state's Department of Pesticide Regulation, the manual – intended for members of the agricultural community who own, manage or work on farms that use restricted-use pesticides – also includes substantial updates.

"The information in the book they were using was way out of date," said writer/editor Shannah Whithaus, senior editor for pesticide safety education with UC ANR's Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program. "Also, the book was much, much shorter than it needed to be, because it wasn't providing enough information for people to safely apply pesticides, given the complexity of the regulatory environment we're in now."

The new manual reflects important changes to federal and state regulations since the publication of the previous edition in 2006.

"There are significant regulatory updates which help you stay up-to-date with safety rules and standards – and protect your workers from overexposure to pesticides," said Lisa Blecker, technical editor of the publication, and currently a pesticide safety educator at Colorado State University.

In addition to emphasizing the broader ecological ramifications of improper pesticide use, the manual includes information on subjects that might get short shrift in other manuals, such as the correct calibration of equipment to ensure accuracy of application.

"All of that is now in the book and fully fleshed out," Whithaus said. "[Applicators] are going to be able to do that much more effectively using the new book, compared to the old one – it was really hard to be thorough in 80-some pages."

The new edition – totaling more than 200 substantive pages – also features a more streamlined and user-friendly layout modeled after a sister publication, *The Safe and Effective Use of Pesticides*, written for commercial applicators.

"A significant update is a layout that is not only beautiful, but helps you identify key information you need to know in order to make safe and effective pesticide applications," Blecker explained.

She highlighted the "knowledge expectations" listed at the beginning of each chapter and in the margins of the book, next to the relevant passages. The statements serve as "visual cues" to help readers learn and retain the material they need to pass California DPR's certification exam for private applicators.

And while the manual functions as an improved study aid for owners, managers and workers who apply pesticides, it doubles as a reference that they can turn to for years to come.

"It's going to be able to serve as a reference manual, as opposed to just a study guide," Whithaus said. "You really will be able to use this book as a tool to help you do better in managing your land."

The manual, listed at \$29, is available for purchase in English at <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=3383> and in Spanish at <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/Details.aspx?itemNo=3394>.

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GROW RIVERSIDE

Spring 2022 Growers Forum

Join us for the Spring 2022 Growers Forum. This is a half day workshop for growers, farmers, and other interested parties.

Thursday, April 7, 2022, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. PDT

Ecological Agriculture Training and Cultural Center
3945 Old Hamner Road, Norco, CA 92860

Price: \$25 (Includes refreshments and lunch)

Agenda:

8:00 AM - Check-in

8:15 AM - Welcome and Introductions

8:30 AM - Small Farm Marketing and Sales

9:30 AM - Establishing an Inland Empire Farmers' Guild

10:30 AM - Transitioning to Organic

11:30 AM - Lunch and Beginning Farmer Training Update

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-2022-growers-forum-tickets-290919015607>

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. More details will be announced at a later date.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

2022 avocado harvest expected to top 300 million pounds

California avocado growers are expected to harvest more than 300 million pounds this season. That supply is augmented during the year by imported avocados from Mexico. Last week, those imports were briefly suspended after threats in that country against a U.S. agricultural official. The California Avocado Commission urged Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to maintain strict import standards but said state growers “have no interest in disrupting the supply of avocados from Mexico.”

State grape growers reaping higher prices from 2021 harvest

California’s 2021 grape crush produced a yield of 3.86 million tons, according to a preliminary report from the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Winegrapes accounted for 3.6 million tons, with table and raisin grapes making up the remainder. California produced more than 4 million tons of grapes annually between 2016 and 2019. But those years created an oversupply of bulk wine, negatively impacting prices. In 2021, grape prices went up by more than 20%.

UC Davis researchers discover gene that may increase wheat yields

Researchers at the University California, Davis, have discovered a new gene variant in wheat that they say can increase grain yields for the essential global staple. According to research published in the journal PLOS Genetics, the gene controls the number of grains in a wheat spike and breeding it can make wheat varieties more productive. That could allow more farmers to grow more wheat without increasing land use.

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