

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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Welcome New Members

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

Card Check Webinar Recording & Presentation Slides Posted at FELS.net

Presentation slides and a video recording of **Card Check and Ag Employers, One Year Later: What Does It Mean for You? What Have We Learned from the First Year of Card Check?** from February 23, 2024 have been posted at the FELS Webinars & Trainings page, under "ICYMI: In Case You Missed It."

Governor Newsom signed the UFW's "card check" legislation (AB 2183) in September 2022 and signed a budget trailer bill with further revisions (AB 113) in May 2023; together, these two bills totally upended the election process under the Agricultural Labor Relations Act.

Seth Mehrten of FELS' Group Legal Services Program partner firm Barsamian & Moody reviewed the early actions of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board, including proposed regulations implementing AB 2183/AB 113 and the Board's handling of early card check petitions to help you make sense of this sweeping change in California's agricultural labor relations law and understand how it may impact your farming or ranching business.

If you missed this webinar, or you want to review the video and slides, you can find that at www.fels.nets.

Questions and comments are welcome: info@fels.net, or 800-753-9073.

ALRB Proposes Card Check Regs

The Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) has published a regulatory proposal to implement card check/majority support petition legislation passed by the California Legislature in 2022. These proposed regulations deal with the handling of card check/majority support petition petitions, the ALRB's practices in handing petitions and employer objections to petitions and ALRB findings, and with imposition of civil money penalties for unfair labor practices.

Initially, it appears the draft regulations fail to provide a procedure for an employee to withdraw a signed authorization card or a signature on a petition for union recognition, a basic protection to ensure agricultural employees' actual current wishes concerning union representation can be determined. It also is not clear that the proposed regulations require the ALRB to implement procedures to verify the cards or petition signatures represented by a petitioning union as indicative of employees' wishes actually are authentic and represent the current preference of those employees.

FELS' parent organization, California Farm Bureau, will review these proposed regulations and comment if necessary. Comments are due April 22. You can find more information at www.alrb.ca.gov/rulemaking/

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Riverside County Sheriff's Rural Crime Team Owner Applied Number

Marking your equipment

Why mark equipment? Marking leads to recovery of stolen property.



With the recent increase in Agricultural thefts, it is important that you get your farm machinery, equipment and even household goods stamped with an Owner Applied Number (OAN). If you mark it the sheriffs have a better chance to recover it if it gets stolen.

The OAN is a unique number used to protect and identify equipment, tools, vehicles and other valuable items from a ranch, farm, dairy, winery, or any other agriculture related business. It is a 10-digit number that represents an individual agriculture business. Each business will be assigned their own unique OAN that can be imprinted on their equipment.

The program is supported by numerous organizations and agencies including: the California Rural Crime Prevention Task Force, the California Highway Patrol, California Farm Bureau, United Agri-Business League, and California State Grange.

This FBI established system allows state and county to be assigned a number, which is recorded in the NCIC (National Crime Information Center). A directory containing these numbers is available to each law enforcement agency for use in identifying the various state and counties.

It has been proven that thieves are hesitant to take items that can be readily identified. Placing signs, decals, and other visible information warning potential thieves that this equipment has been marked and registered with the local law enforcement officials my help to prevent a possible theft.



The Sheriff's Rural Crime Team is happy to facilitate getting your OAN assigned to you and they are currently able to stamp it on a wide range of materials.

This program is free to help combat agricultural theft. If you are interested in getting your own OAN, please contact Western Riverside County Sheriff Sergeant Kory Murphy at (951) 217-4560, kmurphy@riversidesheriff.org or Eastern Riverside County Deputy Aaron Pasch at (760) 308-8465, apasch@riversidesheriff.org.

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Spotlight on Healthy Soils Program for Citrus Growers

This month, we are excited to announce a \$5 million initiative funded by a Healthy Soils Block Grant Program from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to the California Farm Bureau. In partnership with the California Citrus Quality Council (CCQC) and the Xerces Society, this program aims to advance conservation management practices that facilitate carbon sequestration within the citrus sector, focusing on soil health improvement and the planting of pollinator-friendly hedgerows in citrus orchards.



Participants will benefit from comprehensive support from the California Farm Bureau and its nonprofit science and research organization, the California Bountiful Foundation, including translation services and on-demand assistance throughout the implementation and verification process of the on-farm projects-at no cost.

Aiming to fund 20-45 on-farm projects over the next three years, the program encourages practices such as establishing pollinator-friendly hedgerows, cover cropping, compost application, mulching, whole orchard recycling, and creating windbreaks.

The Healthy Soils Block Grant Program's enrollment is open on March 25, 2024, and the program involves a two-tier application process that operates on a first-come, first-served basis.

You may also learn about the program by visiting the program webpage through the California Bountiful Foundation website: <https://www.californiabountifulfoundation.com/>

BEGINNING FARMERS & RANCHERS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Enroll in a New Program Aimed at Preserving California's Agricultural Heritage.

Beginning farmers and ranchers in California face many challenges in sustaining their agricultural operations. This program provides no-cost mentoring services from experienced farmers and ranchers to facilitate knowledge transfer.



EXPANDING OUR ROOTS



Who can become a mentor?

Farmers (including specialty crop growers) and ranchers with more than 10 years of experience operating a production agriculture business in California can become mentors.

Who can become a mentee?

Farmers (including specialty crop growers) and ranchers with one to 10 years of experience operating a production agriculture business in California can become mentees.



Scan the QR code to enroll.

To enroll as a mentor or mentee, complete an online application at cfbf.com/EOR. Information from the online application will be used to match mentors and mentees.



Updates to HLB Bulk Citrus Quarantine Requirements

Effective March 12, 2024, the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division (CPDPD) has updated the requirements for moving bulk citrus fruit from an Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) quarantine zone to a packer/processor in an Huanglongbing (HLB) quarantine area. Citrus fruit may now be moved from any ACP quarantine zone to an HLB quarantine area for packing or processing without a mitigation, such as a preharvest treatment or field cleaning. One mitigation was previously required. Listed below are examples of movement now allowed without mitigation:

- Tulare County to HLB in Riverside County.
- Imperial County to HLB in Ventura County.
- Kern County to HLB in San Diego County.

Please note that safeguarding fruit in transit is still required for all bulk citrus ACP/HLB quarantine movement and all other quarantine requirements, such as those for invasive fruit fly quarantines, still apply.

This allowance may be revisited and revised if HLB is detected in new areas. More complete information regarding the mitigations required for fruit movement may be found on the Citrus Grower/Grove Manager Information page: <https://phpps.cdfa.ca.gov/PE/InteriorExclusion/pdf/acpgrowerinformation.pdf>.

For questions regarding citrus fruit movement requirements, please contact your local County Agricultural Commissioner (951) 955-3045 or call 916.274.6300.

ACP/HLB Update For Riverside County

As of February 23, a total of 254 citrus trees have been confirmed positive for HLB in Riverside Co. with a total of 7,415 residential citrus trees statewide. HLB quarantine maps can be found in the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) website. When moving citrus from, to, or within an HLB quarantine, please follow the updated HLB Bulk Citrus Quarantine Requirements and continue to submit the required mitigations to the Riverside Co. Agriculture/Weights and Measures. If you need a pest control or tree removal referral, please contact me, Sandra Zwaal szwaal2@gmail.com.



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7:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

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TSC 'DIG-IT' School Garden Grant Program

2024 NAITCO Classroom Resource Grant

Application process is now open

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO), with funding from USDA-NIFA, is pleased to provide a grant opportunity to provide pre-K to 12th grade general education teachers access to resources and materials to increase the ag literacy efforts within their classrooms.

This year's grant will provide up to \$500 to purchase materials and resources to supplement the ag literacy education efforts within preK-12th grade classrooms. For the purpose of incorporating agriculture into their core content areas, grant funds may be used to purchase resources and materials, including ag-accurate books, from one, or both, of the following sources:
National Agriculture in the Classroom Store ~ American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture Store

Grant Qualifications: • State-certified classroom teacher • PreK-12th grade teacher • Currently employed by a public or private school

The 2024 NAITCO Classroom Resource Grant applications are now open. The application deadline is **April 15, 2024**. Applicants will be notified by late April/early May, with final reports due no later than December 31, 2024.

Please visit <https://agclassroom.org/teacher/grants> for Grant Guidelines and Classroom Resource Grant Budget Form.

Learn About Ag.org ~ School Garden Webinar

This two-hour webinar is an excellent opportunity for educators, parents, and volunteers to learn more about school gardens and how to connect them to local agriculture. Go to <https://learnaboutag.org/programs/schoolgarden/> to watch this webinar.

During the webinar, you will have the chance to hear from an experienced UC Master Gardener who will share tips and tricks for getting the most out of your school garden. Additionally, you will learn about free educational resources to help you incorporate your school garden into your curriculum, as well as get ideas for bringing the garden into your classroom. The event will culminate with a virtual tour of a school garden, followed by a Q&A session.

Join us in celebrating
California Ag In
The Classroom

April 11, 2024

Cal State Fullerton Arboretum
& Botanical Garden



You are cordially invited to attend this year's Southern National Ag Week luncheon, hosted at the beautiful Cal State Fullerton Arboretum & Botanical Garden.



Enjoy the beauty of the gardens with a guided tour, followed by a lunch with hosted wine and a silent auction.

11 am to 3 pm \$125 Individual Tickets

Sponsorship opportunities available



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Push for Permanent Agriculture Disaster Relief in Farm Bill

Amidst the mounting concerns over the vulnerability of ag communities to natural disasters, members of our California delegation urged the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry to incorporate permanent disaster assistance for agricultural producers and communities in the forthcoming Farm Bill. Their letter emphasizes the necessity to incorporate Senator Alex Padilla, Rep. Mike Thompson (D-04), Ken Calvert (R-41), and Doug LaMalfa's (R-1) Agricultural Emergency Relief Act into the legislation, which seeks to establish a lasting framework at the Department of Agriculture for offering aid to farmers affected by natural disasters. With the state's ag industry facing a total loss of \$2.4 billion in 2023 alone, the reinstatement of a permanent disaster assistance is deemed critical.

In addition to advocating for permanent disaster relief, Senator Padilla has been actively involved in legislative measures to enhance access to federal agriculture disaster programs. Among these efforts is the Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act, co-led by Senator Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), which aims to waive income restrictions that currently prevent certain producers from receiving USDA disaster relief. Full text of the letter is available at <https://mikethompson.house.gov/newsroom/press-releases>

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



The next Board meeting will be held in person at Farm Bureau office and via Zoom Conference on Wednesday, April 10, 2024. Please call our office at (951) 684-6732 for more information.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

USDA approves use of phosphine gas on citrus in quarantine areas

California citrus growers and packers within the Redlands Oriental fruit fly quarantine area of San Bernardino and Riverside counties now have a new postharvest treatment option. The U.S. Department of Agriculture earlier this month approved the use of phosphine fumigation in combination with five days of cold treatment as a postharvest treatment. That will allow growers to move fresh fruit from noncore areas of the quarantine to areas outside the quarantine. USDA said it approved phosphine fumigation because existing postharvest treatment options are not “economically viable.”

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