



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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AND
YOUR FAMILY

A
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING AND BECOMING PART OF THE FARM BUREAU FAMILY.

County leaders talk achievements at 2025 'State of the County' event at Acrisure Arena



Riverside County held its 2025 State of the County event on December 11 at Acrisure Arena, attracting more than 1,000 attendees. Among them were Riverside County Farm Bureau President Ellen Way and Vice President Alex Sanchez.

County leaders reviewed the year's achievements and shared priorities for 2026. The five County Supervisors presented updates from their districts.

Fourth District Supervisor and Board Chair V. Manuel Perez spoke about Coachella Valley development, including Lake Cahuilla improvements and new power substations, and noted a countywide decrease in homelessness.

The presentation also covered rising population numbers and RivCoOne, an effort to improve public service delivery.

Perez said upcoming priorities include the Salton Sea, CV Rail and College of the Desert expansions.



Agriculture leaders honored with Young Farmers & Ranchers awards

A program manager, a farm manager and a specialty crop grower have been awarded top prizes for their commitment to the California Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers program. The YF&R Excellence in Agriculture, Achievement and Discussion Meet awards were announced at the 107th California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Anaheim in conjunction with the California YF&R State Conference.

YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award

Leah Groves, a program manager in Trinity Center, in Trinity County, is the winner of the California YF&R Excellence in Agriculture Award. She currently serves as a board member and secretary of the Trinity County Farm Bureau.

YF&R Achievement Award

Ben Abatti, a farm manager in Holtville, in Imperial County, is the winner of the California YF&R Achievement Award. He serves as a board member and is a past YF&R chair for Imperial County Farm Bureau.

YF&R Discussion Meet Award

J.P. Beall, a farmer-owner of a specialty crop company in Redlands, in San Bernardino County, earned top honors in the California YF&R Open Discussion Meet. During the contest, Beall spoke about the impacts of urban sprawl on farmland, how digital engagement can improve member-policy maker communication, how to enhance access to succession-planning resources, and strategies to help members better understand and utilize Farm Bureau benefits. Beall emerged as the winner of the \$6,000 first prize in the competition held Dec. 8. He will represent California in the national contest during the American Farm Bureau Federation annual conference Jan. 9-14 in Anaheim.

The Open Discussion Meet featured YF&R participants from across the state. They advanced to the final competition from earlier rounds in which they were challenged to demonstrate their abilities in exchanging ideas and offering detailed opinions on important issues for agriculture.

Jynel Gularte, from Gonzales in Monterey County, is controller and compliance officer for Rincon Farms Inc. She was first runner-up in the meet, receiving \$2,000. The other finalists were Brendan Black of Clovis, in Fresno County, and John Tamayo of Holtville, in Imperial County, winning \$1,000 each. Black is an agriculture teacher at Clovis East High School. Tamayo is relationship manager at AgWest Farm Credit.

A significant investment by El Dorado County farmers Jim and Normita Spinetta supports the Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet through a fund established by the California Farm Bureau. Kubota awards the Achievement Award winner a one-year lease on a tractor of their choice. The Farm Credit Alliance also sponsors YF&R awards.

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Riverside County Farm Bureau Sends Delegates and Alternates to CA Farm Bureau Annual Meeting Conference

"Strong Roots, Bright Future,"

Celebrating the foundation of California agriculture and the path forward for the next generation of Farm Bureau leaders.



The Riverside County Farm Bureau made a significant impact at this year's California Farm Bureau Annual Conference. Leading the delegation was President Ellen Way, accompanied by Vice President Paul Cramer, Past President and CAFB District II Director Richard Schmid, Directors Richard Zapien, Marlene Salazar-Pongs, Brad Scott, Director and YF&R District II Representative Dalton Abrams, and Executive Director Rachael Johnson. Their participation underscored the county's commitment to engaging in broader agricultural issues and fostering community among farmers and ranchers throughout the state.

Engaging with Key Farming Topics

During the conference, held in Anaheim, the delegates from Riverside County interacted with members from other counties, attended insightful sessions, and explored key topics affecting California's agricultural landscape. This collaborative environment provided a platform for sharing invaluable insights, identifying new opportunities, and building relationships that will strengthen the agricultural community across the state.

Celebrating Achievements and Unity

California Farm Bureau President Shannon Douglass praised the organization's work this year during her address at the 107th Annual Meeting in Anaheim. A farmer and rancher from Glenn County, Douglass acknowledged challenges across agriculture while expressing confidence that the Farm Bureau's advocacy will drive meaningful progress. "Despite the challenges we face in our world and in agriculture, our future remains bright," she said. "Because of Farm Bureau, the future of California agriculture looks bright." She highlighted key wins from the year, including efforts to ease utility costs and shape state laws on farmland conservation and livestock protection.



Strengthening the Agricultural Community

The Riverside County Farm Bureau delegates and alternates showed strong commitment to keeping agriculture in California thriving and ready for the future. Through new relationships and fresh ideas, they reinforced their dedication to supporting farmers and ranchers in Riverside County and beyond. This gathering honored past progress while opening the door to new opportunities for the years ahead.

Seven graduate from Leadership Farm Bureau program

An intensive, monthslong training program concluded today for seven Farm Bureau members from California who participated in the Leadership Farm Bureau program. The LFB Class of 2025 graduated during the 107th California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Anaheim.

The class learned about communication, team building, advocacy and the Farm Bureau organization during 10 months of instruction. They participated in training on governmental policy, personal development and key issues affecting California farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses. They also advocated on behalf of Farm Bureau with lawmakers in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

"As a Leadership Farm Bureau alumna, I know firsthand how transformative this program is," said Shannon Douglass, president of the California Farm Bureau, which represents more than 23,000 farmers and ranchers statewide. "The members we grow through LFB today are the future leaders of agriculture in California. I look forward to seeing what they will accomplish in the years ahead."

Graduates of the 2025 Leadership Farm Bureau class are:

- Tharvin Gill of Sutter County, the Western region vice president relationship manager for Conterra Ag Capital.
- Alexis Harvey of Solano County, a crop consultant for Grow West, an account manager for Dixon Bee Co., a pollination consultant for Beewise and the manager of Bedoya Orchards.
- Miranda Jachens of El Dorado County, executive director for Solano County Farm Bureau.
- Alicia Muhr of San Diego County, the office manager at San Diego County Farm Bureau.
- David Perry of Glenn County, a fourth-generation rice farmer and owner of a trucking company that hauls rice, nuts, fruit, aggregate and cement powder.
- Harley Ramirez of Shasta County, the regional business manager for Joseph Cyril Bamford Excavators Ltd.
- John Tamayo of Imperial County, a relationship manager at AgWest Farm Credit.



The class represented the 25th group to graduate from the Leadership Farm Bureau program since its inception in 2000.

California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches as part of a nationwide network representing more than 5 million Farm Bureau members. Learn more at www.cfbf.com or follow @cafarmbureau on Instagram, LinkedIn, X or Facebook.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

📅 January 14, 2026 ~ 3:00 PM, Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting. In person at the CA Date Commission office, Palm Desert and via Zoom Conference. Please call our office at (951) 684-6732 for more information.

Hemet-San Jacinto Watermaster Board Member (HSJWM)

The HSJWM is seeking one Private Pumper as a representative and one alternate selected by Class A and Class B Private Pumpers to serve as Board Members. The ideal candidate must be from the Hemet or San Jacinto area. The main purpose of having a local groundwater producer on the Watermaster Board as a voting member of the Board is to protect the rights of the local owners.

The Hemet-San Jacinto Watermaster is an entity created by a 2013 court judgment to manage groundwater in the San Jacinto Valley, ensuring sustainable use for Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD), Lake Hemet Municipal Water District (LHMWD), cities of Hemet & San Jacinto, and private pumpers, handling water rights and planning under SGMA.

What the Watermaster Does:

- Manages groundwater resources in the Hemet-San Jacinto groundwater basin.
- Enforces the management plan established by a Stipulated Judgment from the Riverside County Superior Court.
- Ensures sustainable water supply, including protecting rights for public agencies and private users.

Who's Involved:

- Public Agencies: EMWD, Lake Hemet MWD, City of Hemet, City of San Jacinto.
- Private Pumpers: Represented by a board member.
- Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians: Their water rights are protected through this system.

For more information, please contact: Advisor to Watermaster Behrooz Mortazavi, PhD., P.E. at Phone: (714) 794-5520 or Email: behrooz@h2oengineers.com.



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