

Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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

Our 79th Year of Publication: Volume LXXIX, Number 1, January 2025.

Happy
New
Year
2025



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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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Welcome New Members

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

**City of Indio Celebrates
100th Anniversary of Shields
Date Garden**



The city held a special celebration honoring the 100-year anniversary of Shields Date Garden, a cornerstone of Indio's history and culture.

The event took place on Thursday, Dec. 19, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Shields Date Garden, located at 80225 Highway 111.

This momentous occasion featured a special ceremony, refreshments, and the opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate the legacy of this iconic establishment. Shields Date Garden is known for its world-famous dates and "Romance and Sex Life of the Date" film, which has been an integral part of Indio's identity since 1924.

"Shields Date Garden is not only a symbol of our city's agricultural roots but also a beloved gathering place for residents and visitors alike," Mayor Glenn Miller said. "This celebration was a tribute to their lasting impact on Indio and the Coachella Valley. We were honored to host this milestone event."

Founded in 1924, Shields is a cherished destination for date enthusiasts and tourists from around the globe. Offering a unique blend of history, agriculture, and culinary delights, it is a key landmark in Indio.

The current building, with its sign depicting a knight in armor pointing toward the main entrance off Highway 111, has been in use since 1953. Skyrocketing land values in the area threatened the continued existence of Shields Date Gardens when the property was placed on the market. It was purchased by The Jewel Date Company in nearby Thermal, California, which is carrying on the traditions of the Shields at the same location with no intention of moving the Ranch Store.

CDFA Bans Poultry and Dairy at Fairs

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) State Veterinarian-Director, Dr. Annette Jones, has implemented a ban on all California Poultry and Dairy Exhibitions at Fairs and Shows effective January 7, 2025, until further notice. This action aims to minimize the danger of exposing people and non-infected birds and cows to disease. Please refer to the attachment for details of the ban. Dairy cattle are defined as follows in (3 CCR §830) (9): "Dairy cattle" means all cattle, regardless of age or sex or current use, that are of a breed(s) or offspring of a breed used to produce milk or other dairy products for human consumption, including, but not limited to, Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey, Milking Shorthorn, and Red and Whites. In positive news, 100 dairies have recovered and been released from quarantine. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; sfenaroli@cdfa.com

For more information, please visit: CDFA website at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/AHFSS/Animal_Health/HPAI.html. To report an unusual number of sick livestock, or if you suspect Bird Flu in your livestock, call: 1-866-922-2473

Inside this Issue...

- Celebrating Ag Education 5
- A Landmark Regulation to Expand Insurance 6
- Two New National Monuments.. 6
- Free Webinar on Bird Flu..... 7
- IRS Increases Mileage Rate 7
- Agricultural Pass Program..... 8
- Calendar 8

CDFA AWARDS FUNDING FOR 2024 CALAGPLATE GRANT PROGRAM



The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has awarded \$180,000 for organizations to enhance agricultural education and leadership opportunities under the 2024 California Agriculture License Plate (CalAgPlate) grant program.

The CalAgPlate program is funded with proceeds generated through the sale of special interest, agriculture-themed license plates through the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Since inception of the CalAgPlate grant program, CDFA has awarded more than \$2.3 million to support agricultural education and leadership development. Current grant recipients include:

1. California Association, Future Farmers of America(FFA): \$153,000

This project will support student leadership and program development for California's statewide Future Farmers of America (FFA) program, which has 366 school chapters throughout the state that provide integral leadership instruction through the FFA student organization to 104,470 student members. This program will increase student access to information about career, leadership, and programmatic opportunities.

2. El Dorado County Ag in the Classroom: \$7,480

Fields of Learning pairs a school, focused on 2nd to 8th grades with a local farm to enhance students' education by providing hands-on agricultural experiences. The project will work with local high school FFA programs to allow students to present lessons at field trips and develop leadership skills. By exploring the items grown on the farm, its environment, its changes and impacts, the program allows students to delve into all the disciplinary core ideas of life science with an agricultural focus. Connecting FFA members to agricultural professionals to attain career opportunities and internships is a goal.

3. California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom: \$10,000

The project team will offer students an exciting Ag-Venture through two specialized Virtual Farm Days; one for pre-K to 5th grade and another for 6th to 12th grade where they will focus on careers in agriculture, taking students on virtual field trips to explore various career paths, from farmers and veterinarians to grocers, researchers, and more. The Farm Days will include video and live interactions with agricultural experts, culminating in a live question and answer session with three industry professionals, giving students direct access to industry leaders. These tools ensure students gain a deeper understanding of the agriculture industry and its exciting opportunities.

4. Hurst Ranch Historical Center: \$9,520

Harvesting Healthy Habits at Hurst Ranch is a decade-long partnership between the Hurst Ranch Historical Center and the West Covina Unified School District to provide five hands-on gardening and nutrition lessons at Hurst Ranch to every 4th grader. The project will allow for a pipeline to be built, from which the "next generation" of horticulturists can be recruited to maintain the fields and support gardening instruction. This project launches a paid internship program for local horticulture students to be trained in field maintenance and gardening instruction at Hurst Ranch.

Please support agricultural education and the CalAgPlate program by purchasing a special interest license plate from the DMV. More information is available at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/egov/calagplate/>

2024-25 Agricultural Vehicle, Equipment, and Infrastructure Survey

The Air Resources Board (CARB) and California Energy Commission are working along with California Farm Bureau on 2025 Agricultural Vehicle, Equipment, and Infrastructure Survey. This survey will continue to support incentive programs, air quality planning efforts at CARB, and can help inform energy and infrastructure planning at CEC and CPUC for future electrification needs across the state.

The 2025 agricultural survey covers all on-road vehicles and off-road (mobile) agricultural equipment of all fuel types, including electric equipment, used by producers in the field, custom operators, and first processing facilities.

Receiving accurate and representative data across the state and from different commodities is incredibly critical to painting the right picture for CARB and others about energy needs. The data will be modeled by the Energy Commission and then used by utilities for future planning around grid upgrades.

Be prepared the survey will take approximately 30 minutes and requires input of your equipment, etc. Results from the previous survey informed the distribution of hundreds of millions of dollars of subsequent incentive funding across California, including state, federal and regional incentive programs.

As before, all of the data is anonymous and confidential, and identifying information will never be seen by a government body. A Spanish version of the survey will be available in January. The survey will be open until February 21, 2025. Go to www.cfbf.com



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Celebrating Ag Education

California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom

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Commissioner Lara Issues Landmark Regulation to Expand Insurance Access for Californians Amid Growing Climate Risks

Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara announced the final major step in his Sustainable Insurance Strategy, issuing a historic regulation aimed at restoring stability to California's insurance market while addressing the growing risks of wildfires and climate change. The new Net Cost of Reinsurance in Ratemaking Regulation requires insurance companies -- for the first time -- to increase coverage in high-risk areas, ensuring more options for Californians while limiting the costs passed on to consumers. The regulation works hand-in-hand with other reforms that Commissioner Lara has spearheaded that will have the effect of increasing insurance coverage options for Californians across the state. Reinsurance is a financial tool that is part of how insurance companies manage their risk portfolios associated with the policies they write to homeowners and business owners. Its roots date back to the 14th century, when merchants and traders sought ways to spread the risks of perilous ocean voyages, often relying on multiple insurers to cover their ventures. Today, as climate risks escalate across the nation, reinsurance has become an even more imperative component of insurance companies operating in high-risk and distressed areas, including California. Modernizing regulations around reinsurance will enable insurance companies to expand coverage and write more policies in communities across the state facing greater risk, ensuring stability and resilience in our insurance market. All other states except California allow for costs of reinsurance in rates and, in 2023, the first systematic review of climate risk strategies by Ceres and the California Department of Insurance revealed that reinsurance is the primary strategy most insurance companies use to continue to write and expand coverage in higher risk parts of California and across the country.

President Signs Proclamations on Two New National Monuments in CA

On January 7th, President Biden's administration announced they would be designating two California areas for conservation protection through national monument proclamations. The designated areas are the Chuckwalla National Monument in the northern part of the state and the Sáttítla National Monument in Eastern Coachella Valley. Together, the proclamations will cover nearly 850,000 acres. Chuckwalla will be managed by the Department of the Interior, while Sáttítla will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service. While hailed by conservation groups, these designations can make it substantially harder to conduct wildfire mitigation, grazing, and other activities critical to forest and public lands management. Staff Contact: Matthew Viohl; mviohl@cfbf.com



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Cal/OSHA Consultation Services will present a FREE Interactive Webinar on Bird Flu (H5N1) and available resources — Jan. 29, 10 AM

Bryan Little, Farm Employers Labor Service

Cal/OSHA Consultation Services will share valuable insights and practical guidance regarding employee safety related to bird flu.

Learn about bird flu, also known as avian influenza, which is an illness that infects birds and many other animals, including poultry and dairy cattle. Bird flu can also infect people with a mild sickness or a more serious illness.

Employers who have or work with animals, including dairy cows, poultry, other animals, and their waste are at risk of exposing employees to bird flu (H5N1).

To register go to <https://www.fels.net/>

IRS increases the standard mileage rate for business use in 2025; key rate increases 3 cents to 70 cents per mile

The Internal Revenue Service announced that the optional standard mileage rate for automobiles driven for business will increase by 3 cents in 2025, while the mileage rates for vehicles used for other purposes will remain unchanged from 2024.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car, van, pickup or panel truck will be:

- 70 cents per mile driven for business use, up 3 cents from 2024.
- 21 cents per mile driven for medical purposes, the same as in 2024.
- 21 cents per mile driven for moving purposes for qualified active-duty members of the Armed Forces, unchanged from last year.
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations, equal to the rate in 2024.

The rates apply to fully-electric and hybrid automobiles, as well as gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles.

California Farm Bureau responds to state budget plan

California Farm Bureau President Shannon Douglass commented on the budget plan announced by Gov. Gavin Newsom:

“Fees, taxes and increasing labor costs continue to negatively impact California food producers. The latest data shows that the state lost more than 7,000 farms and fallowed nearly 1.5 million acres of productive lands in the past five years, all while costs increased more than \$150,000 per farm in the same timeframe. These are family farms and businesses disappearing from California at an alarming pace, preventing opportunities for beginning farmers and underserved populations from any pathway to launch agricultural businesses.

“We’ve heard promises from legislative leaders about focusing on California’s affordability, and we hope that every regulation and law that the governor and Legislature propose keeps affordability top of mind. It’s clear that any action on key issues such as Cap-and-Trade reauthorization, the insurance crisis and agricultural overtime laws must work for farmers and ranchers and, importantly, the employees who put food on our tables. Only with agriculture as a partner will the governor’s goals to advance economic development in rural communities find success. The future of California’s rural economies depends on it.”

The California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of more than 26,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of 5.8 million Farm Bureau members.

Regenerative Agriculture

After an over two year-long public process, the California State Board of Food and Agriculture unanimously approved a definition for 'Regenerative Agriculture' for use by State of California policies and programs. CDFA set out to define the term as the concept of regenerative agriculture has been increasingly referenced in legislation and has fostered a funding focus in government programs. Throughout the process, Farm Bureau staff provided several comments and recommendations to the State Board to ensure the effort best served the entire agricultural community and Farm Bureau members in this state and that the definition not include specific terms and references in the event of a future legislative interest in codifying the definition. Ultimately, the adopted definition centers around the concept that regenerative agriculture is an integrated approach to farming and ranching rooted in principles of soil health, biodiversity and ecosystem resiliency, leading to improved target outcomes. The definition also reflects that this practice is not an endpoint but rather a continuous implementation of practices that over time minimize inputs and environmental impacts. The finalized definition will be available on the State Board of Food and Agriculture's website in the coming weeks. Staff contact: Richard Filgas; rfilgas@cfbf.com



The process of manually tracking labor, piece rate production and ever-changing compliance regulations in California exposes farmers to a wide range of costly errors and litigation. With FieldClock, you have the power to manage your farm labor in real time and access that data from anywhere!

In addition to saving time and money with FieldClock on your side, current California Farm Bureau members save an additional \$10 off their monthly bill! Get started today, and explore all FieldClock has to offer. Don't wait – visit our website <https://www.fieldclock.com/california-farm-bureau> for more information today to get started!

Details and Restrictions

- Must be a valid member of the California Farm Bureau.
- A valid member email address and member ID# is required for eligibility

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Riverside County Sheriff's Office is pleased to announce the launch of the county's Agricultural Pass Program

A county wide program with the purpose of issuing identification documents granting any qualifying agricultural producer, qualifying livestock producer, qualified equestrian partners, or a managerial employee of the qualifying agricultural producer or qualifying livestock producer, access to the qualifying agricultural producers or qualifying livestock producers farm or ranch property during or following a flood, storm, fire, earthquake, or other disaster (AB 1141).

All applicants should be familiar with CA Assembly Bill 1141 which gives specific details about qualifications for the Ag Pass.

The following links will take you to the application for the Ag Pass and to the Assembly Bill (AB 1141):

Ag Pass Program Information and Application: <https://www.riversidesheriff.org/798/Agricultural-Pass-Rural-Crime-Team>

AB 1141: Bill Text - <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov> - Type into Bill Search AB-1141.

Agricultural lands: agricultural and livestock producers:
agricultural pass program: disaster access to farm lands.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



🗓️ February 12, 2025 ~ 5:30 PM, Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting. In person at the Date Commission Office, Palm Desert and via Zoom Conference. Please call our office at (951) 684-6732 for more information.

Owner Applied Number

Why mark equipment?

Marking leads to recovery of stolen property.



The Riverside County Sheriff's Rural Crime Team emphasizes the importance of marking agricultural equipment with an Owner Applied Number (OAN) to aid in the recovery of stolen property due to rising thefts.

OAN Details:

- Unique 10-digit number assigned to each agricultural business.
- Helps identify and protect valuable items like machinery and tools.

Support:

- Backed by organizations such as the California Rural Crime Prevention Task Force and the California Highway Patrol.

Prevention:

- Visible markings deter thieves, as identifiable items are less likely to be stolen.

Free Program:

- The Sheriff's Rural Crime Team offers OAN assignment and stamping at no cost.

Contact the Rural Crime Team:

- **Southwest Riverside County** ~ Sergeant Kory Murphy at (951) 217-4560 or email kmurphy@riversidesheriff.org
- **East Riverside County** ~ Sergeant Tina Contreras at (760) 574-7692 or email tcontrer@riversidesheriff.org