

# 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 3, March 2025.



Over 100 Years Strong

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**Welcome New Members**

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

**BE PROUD, YOU FEED PEOPLE!**

Dear Riverside County Farm Bureau,

On March 18th, our nation will celebrate YOU on National Ag Day! This year's theme, "Together We Grow," perfectly reflects why we are all part of Farm Bureau. While we may farm different crops and have different challenges, we are stronger when we work, learn, and advocate together.

Farmers today have plenty on their minds—bird flu, tariffs, labor instability, and more. As you read this, I hope you will take a moment to reflect and recognize just how vital you and your work are to this country.

We MUST have a safe, healthy, and affordable domestic food supply is not a luxury—it's a necessity. Our nation's strength and independence depend on our ability to feed ourselves. That's why we must keep telling our story—why we need land, water, and workers. These are not just agricultural concerns; they are American concerns. Many don't have to think about it because you keep grocery store shelves stocked, something they became acutely aware of during the pandemic.

You are essential, and you deserve to be celebrated. Farm Bureau is here to fight for you—tackling today's challenges and preparing for what lies ahead. Stay engaged, stay informed, and stay involved. Your voice matters, we need your input so we can be stronger together.

Happy National Ag Day!

Ellen Way  
President



**Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's**

**Office is collecting information for the**

**2024 Annual Crop Report**

This report is the single best source of data which measures and highlights the values of Riverside County agriculture, the information is also utilized by numerous industries, institutions and state agencies. All individual information is confidential, please help show agricultures strength by participating.

Riverside District - Chris Aramouni, [caramouni@rivco.org](mailto:caramouni@rivco.org), 951-534-1588  
(Corona, Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris, Lake Elsinore)

San Jacinto District - Kevin Gallego, [kgallego@rivco.org](mailto:kgallego@rivco.org), 951-654-2050  
(Temecula, Murrieta, Hemet, San Jacinto, Banning, Beaumont)

Coachella Valley and Palo Verde District  
Steven Triplett, [striplett@rivco.org](mailto:striplett@rivco.org), 760-863-7057

**Inside this Issue...**

- Jr. Livestock Auction, Indio ..... 4
- Farm Bureau at Work ..... 5
- Bird Flu's Impact on Egg and Milk Markets Varies ..... 6
- Date Production Workshop set for April 23,2025 in Palm Desert .... 7
- Food and Farm News ..... 8
- Calendar ..... 8

# Newly Appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Brooke Rollins



Brooke Leslie Rollins was sworn in as the 33rd Secretary of Agriculture on February 13th.

Ms. Rollins is originally from Glen Rose, Texas. Most recently, Rollins served as the Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer of the America First Policy Institute (AFPI). During President Trump's first administration, she was the Director of the Domestic Policy Council and Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives in the White House.

She also previously served as Director of the Office of American Innovation. In these roles, she developed and managed the transformational domestic policy agenda of the Trump Administration, leading to historic achievements for the American people.

After speaking with every member of the Senate Agricultural Committee from both parties she stated "It is clear we all agree farmers and ranchers are the cornerstone of our nation's communities; they are stewards of the land – the original conservationists – and they are foundational to American life. Yet, the demands of American agriculture and the stakes our farmers take have never been higher. When farmers prosper, rural America prospers, and I commit to you today, that I will do everything within my ability to make sure our farmers, ranchers and rural communities thrive."

Rollins graduated with honors from Texas A&M University with a degree in agricultural development and was the first female to be elected student body president. After earning her Juris Doctor with honors at the University of Texas School of Law, she served as Governor Rick Perry's policy director before running the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) for 15 years. At TPPF, Rollins elevated a small policy organization to a national force and redefined the possibilities for a state-based think tank — setting the model and aspiration for AFPI. Rollins and her husband, Mark, call Fort Worth, Texas home, and spend a large majority of their free time taxiing their four highly active children to baseball games, cattle shows, piano lessons, and Aggie football games.

## Leadership Farm Bureau class announced for 2025

*Eight agricultural professionals have been chosen for the California Farm Bureau's 2025 Leadership Farm Bureau program.*

Leadership Farm Bureau class members will participate in a yearlong educational and development initiative that prepares them for leadership roles in Farm Bureau and agriculture. The program includes 200 hours of instruction, with seminars on key issues affecting California farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses.

Program participants will learn about government and legislation, media and communications, public speaking and team building. They will also attend lobbying sessions in Sacramento and Washington, D.C., and meet with lawmakers and administrative and regulatory officials.

Members of the Leadership Farm Bureau class are:

- Tharvin Gill of Yuba-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, the membership and marketing manager for the California Farm Labor Contractor Association.
- 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.
- Samantha Piehoff of Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Farm Bureau operations manager and a fourth-generation agriculturist.
- Harley Ramirez of Shasta County, the manager for Sunbelt Rentals, where he helps provide rental equipment to local and regional farmers, ranchers, contractors and others.
- John Tamayo of Imperial County, an outside sales representative for Rain for Rent, working with farmers and ranchers to provide irrigation solutions.



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.

*Leadership Farm Bureau Class of 2025, from left: Alexis Harvey of Solano County; Tharvin Gill of Sutter County; Samantha Piehoff of Sonoma County; David Perry of Glenn County; Harley Ramirez of Shasta County; Alicia Muhr of San Diego County; John Tamayo of Imperial County; and Miranda Jachens of El Dorado County.*

*Leadership Farm Bureau Class of 2025, from left: Alexis Harvey of Solano County; Tharvin Gill of Sutter County; Samantha Piehoff of Sonoma County; David Perry of Glenn County; Harley Ramirez of Shasta County; Alicia Muhr of San Diego County; John Tamayo of Imperial County; and Miranda Jachens of El Dorado County.*

Riverside County Farm Bureau  
Member Highlight

### Thermiculture

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LAND  
STEWARDSHIP.

Thermiculture Farm Management is a third generation custom farming company specializing in citrus and dates since 1967.

Please support those who support RCFB and our community!

# Riverside County Farm Bureau Engages in Bidding 2025 Riverside County Fair, Indio ~ Jr. Livestock Auction

On Saturday, February 22nd, Past President Richard Schmid represented the Riverside County Farm Bureau as an auction buyer at the Riverside County Fair & National Date Festival's Junior Livestock Auction. With four successful bids, \$2724.20 was spent on four market goats, \$350 was allocated for student add-ons, bringing the total investment to \$3,074.20 for the students' projects.



Annually, the Riverside County Farm Bureau participates as an auction buyer to bolster auction prices during the Junior Livestock Auctions at both the Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival in Indio in February, as well as the Southern California Fair in Perris in October. Students from 4-H, FFA, Grange, and Independent Exhibitors raise animals as part of their educational projects, maintaining records and gaining insights into the costs and challenges of food production, along with time management skills. During the fairs, they showcase and sell their market animals to the highest bidder at the Junior Livestock Auctions, allowing them to use their earnings for future animal projects and to save for college. The Riverside County Farm Bureau believes that successful auctions will inspire students to maintain their interest in agriculture and aspire to careers in the agricultural sector.

As in previous years, the Riverside County Farm Bureau relies on donations to our Auction Support Fund from our members to assist with purchasing market animals at these auctions. Without these generous contributions, our ability to participate would be significantly limited.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude for the generous donations and express our heartfelt "Thank You" to everyone for your ongoing support.



Your generosity plays a crucial role in fostering the next generation of agricultural leaders. By investing in these students, you are not only supporting their current projects but also helping to build a foundation for their future endeavors in the world of farming and agriculture. Your contributions make it possible for these young individuals to gain valuable experience, develop essential skills, and cultivate a passion for agriculture that will benefit our communities for years to come.

We are incredibly proud of the students and their dedication to learning and growing within this vital industry. Their hard work and commitment are truly inspiring, and with your support, they are empowered to pursue their dreams with confidence.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support and belief in the potential of these young agriculturists. Together, we are sowing the seeds for a brighter future in agriculture, ensuring that the industry continues to thrive and innovate.

## Junior Livestock Support Fund

Over the course of many years, the Farm Bureau has contributed to the Junior Livestock Auction and a large portion of that comes from members like you.

Your money that is donated to the Auction Support Fund will go directly towards the purchasing of animals at the Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival and the Southern California Fair. These animals are entered into the Junior Livestock Auction by the members of the Future Farmers of America (FFA), 4-H, and Grange students.

With all of the choices children have today, the FFA, 4-H, and Grange are wonderful activities worth supporting. These organizations teach young people important life skills, including time management, financial responsibility, and the importance of caring for others.

FFA, 4-H, and Grange students that profit from these auction sales use the funds to start their next animal project and to start saving for college.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

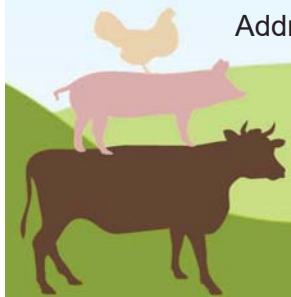
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Any amount that you can contribute will be greatly appreciated.*

Contribution: \$50    \$100    \$1000    Other \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Donations are not tax deductible as charitable contributions but may be deductible as ordinary business expenses. Consult your tax preparer for information.*

Please make check payable to: Riverside County Farm Bureau  
Memo Line: Auction Support Fund  
Riverside County Farm Bureau  
21160 Box Springs Rd, #102, Moreno Valley, CA 92557



# FARM BUREAU AT WORK

State Legislative and Government Affairs Updates

## STATE AFFIARS

### SprayDays California Scheduled for Statewide Rollout on March 24, 2025

We know that many of you have questions about how the new SprayDays California system will impact your operations and privacy. While the intent of the system is to provide public awareness, we recognize the potential risks it could pose to grower security, misinformation, and operational flexibility.

#### What's Changing?

Starting February 24, 2025, all Notices of Intent (NOIs) for restricted materials must be submitted electronically to County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs) via CalAgPermits or approved third-party tools. Key details from NOIs—including pesticide product names, application dates, and 1x1 mile grid locations—will be made publicly available online. We're actively engaged with the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to ensure this system does not put growers at risk of targeted trespassing, vandalism, or activist disruptions. It's crucial that this tool is used responsibly and does not misrepresent safe, legal pesticide use. DPR will be collecting feedback in late 2025 or early 2026 to evaluate the system's impact. If you experience privacy concerns, operational challenges, or misuse of information, we need to hear from you. We'll be working to ensure your voice is heard in this process. Click here for the SprayDays Information Sheet for Growers. Staff Contact: Isabella Quinonez; [iquinonez@cbbf.com](mailto:iquinonez@cbbf.com)

### California Farm Bureau supports AB-411 (Papan). Livestock

**Composting** AB-411 allows for the on-farm composting of a livestock carcass. This environmentally sustainable practice offers a responsible and efficient method of managing livestock mortality, reducing the need for costly and resource-intensive disposal methods such as rendering which might not be feasible or practical for our members who live far from such a facility. On-farm composting not only minimizes transportation costs but also reduces the risk of contamination to groundwater and nearby ecosystems, and according to AB 411, would be done in consultation with best practices from the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery and the State Water Resources Control Board. Furthermore, it provides farmers with a valuable soil amendment that can enhance soil fertility and health, ultimately supporting more resilient agricultural practices. The bill will be heard at the Assembly Agriculture Committee first. Staff Contact: Steven Fenaroli; [sfenaroli@cbbf.com](mailto:sfenaroli@cbbf.com)



**FELS**  
Farm Employers Labor Service  
California Farm Bureau

**FELS Furnishes Employer Resources:** Did you know Farm Employers Labor Service furnishes a range of information and resources exclusively to FELS Newsletter subscribers, including:

- Dealing with Immigration Enforcement Agencies: Suggestions and Courses of Action for Ag Employers
- Labor Stability with FELS + WAFLA (Workers and Farmers Labor Association), one of the largest H-2a service providers in the western U.S.
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) & California Family Rights Act (CFRA)
- Workplace Violence Prevention template plan and supporting documents
- Tailgate Safety Training sheets.

You can learn more about subscribing to the FELS Newsletter at <https://www.fels.net/services/>



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WHEN IT MATTERS.**




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# Bird flu's impact on egg and milk markets varies

*Egg prices soar while dairy prices remain stable, as H5N1 spreads through California*



Consumers have faced reduced egg supplies and high egg prices. A recent article by University of California, Davis agricultural economists explore the reasons for reduced egg supplies and high egg prices and assess what producers and consumers can expect now that the bird flu, or H5N1, has spread through poultry farms and California dairies.

The authors find that California egg production in December 2024 was 30% lower than in January 2022, while national production, which is the source of most of California's retail supply, had declined by much less. California milk production is also decreasing as the virus sweeps through California dairies but has not driven up consumer prices because of major differences in the relevant markets.

"Despite California producing more than 15% of U.S. milk, H5N1 has had little or no impact on milk prices because the disease has not substantially affected national milk production," said co-author Daniel Sumner, a Distinguished Professor with the UC Davis Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. "Most California milk is used for storable, processed products like cheese, milk powders and butter that enter a large global market."

Avian influenza has been around for decades. But in early 2022 a new outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) hit flocks of egg-laying hens across the United States, leading to almost continuous outbreaks across multiple states. These outbreaks, and the subsequent loss of hens due to the disease and the long-standing "depopulation" program intended to eradicate the disease, have led to the loss of more than 60 million U.S. egg-laying hens from 2022 through 2024. In California, the disease led to the destruction of around 10.6 million laying hens, with another 1 million table-egg pullets (young hens about to start laying) also destroyed.

Production decreases coincided with the rising egg prices that jumped in 2022 and again dramatically at the end of 2024, with national wholesale egg prices clearing \$5 per dozen and California egg prices rising above \$7 per dozen. California's regulations state that only cage-free eggs may be produced or sold here, raising average prices in normal times and accounting for higher volatility in egg prices for California consumers.

In August 2024, H5N1 was detected in California dairies and spread rapidly. As of late January 2025, nearly 75% of California herds had been infected. In contrast to its high mortality in birds, H5N1 has mostly produced more mild symptoms in dairy herds. Individual cows are typically asymptomatic after around a month, and milk production, which may fall temporarily by 20% or 30%, takes a few more months to recover. Importantly, even in infected herds, a large share of cows shows no loss of milk production. The authors estimate that California milk production fell by 6.4%, 10.3%, and 8.4% in October, November and December 2024, compared to what would have occurred without the disease.

While consumers may not feel the effects of H5N1 through rising dairy prices, affected dairy producers have experienced major losses in net returns, which will continue as their herds recover in 2025.

To learn more about the effects of bird flu on California farmers and consumers, read the full article by Olena Sambucci, Daniel A. Sumner and Erica A. Van Fleet: "Avian Influenza and the Economics of California Eggs and Milk: Some Early Assessments," *ARE Update* 28(3): 1–4. UC Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics, online at <https://giannini.ucop.edu/filer/file/1740696665/21242/>.

*ARE Update is a bimonthly magazine published by the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics to educate policymakers and agribusiness professionals about new research or analysis of important topics in agricultural and resource economics. Articles are written by Giannini Foundation members, including University of California faculty and Cooperative Extension specialists in agricultural and resource economics, and university graduate students. Learn more about the Giannini Foundation and its publications at <https://giannini.ucop.edu/>.*

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# Date production workshop set for April 23 in Palm Desert

Scientists to present research on irrigation, nutrients, disease, pests and regulations

The 2025 California Date Palm Workshop will be held on April 23 in Palm Desert at the UC Riverside Palm Desert Center. Anyone who is interested in growing dates is welcome to attend.

"This workshop brings together researchers, growers and stakeholders to discuss recent research data on the 'state of the date' crop in California," said workshop organizer Ali Montazar, UC Cooperative Extension irrigation and water management advisor for Imperial, Riverside and San Diego counties.

The international date research workshop runs from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Scientists will share the latest research and information on various aspects of date production, including irrigation and nutrient management, disease and pest management, and laws and regulations.

Abdelouahhab Zaid, secretary general of the Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, will speak about the development of date palm cultivation regionally and internationally.

Ricardo Salomon-Torres, research professor at Universidad Estatal de Sonora San Luis Río Colorado, will discuss the status of the date palm industry in Mexico.

Montazar will discuss irrigation management. Mark Hoddle, UC Cooperative Extension biological control specialist based at UC Riverside, will give a presentation on South American palm weevil in California., Spider mites, date nutrition and the aspergillus species causing black mold of dates are among other topics that will be discussed.

"We also will have a grower panel discussion on the concerns and the needs of the California date industry," Montazar said. "This event is such a great opportunity to showcase how impactful date palm production and agriculture is in the low-desert region."

Participation is free, but registration is requested at <https://ucanr.edu/datepalm2025>. Onsite registration begins at 7:30 a.m. at the UCR Palm Desert Center at 75080 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92211.

For more information, contact Ali Montazar at [amontazar@ucanr.edu](mailto:amontazar@ucanr.edu) or Kristy Kneiding at [kkneiding@datesaregreat.com](mailto:kkneiding@datesaregreat.com).



## 2025 California Date Palm Workshop April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025

Location: UC Riverside Palm Desert Center  
75080 Frank Sinatra Dr, Palm Desert, CA 92211

Registration link: [Link](#)

8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

7:30	Registration
8:00	<b>Overview and Introduction</b> – Ali Montazar, UCCE Irrigation and Water Management Advisor & Gordon Chuchian, Chairman of CA Date Commission
8:10	<b>Opening Remarks</b> – Brent Hales, Associate Vice President, Research and Cooperative Extension, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources
8:20	<b>KIADPAL's Achievements and Active Role in the Development of the Date Palm Cultivation Sector Regionally, and Internationally</b> – Abdelouahhab Zaid, Secretary General, Khalifa International Award for Date Palm and Agricultural Innovation (KIADPAL), Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
8:50	<b>Can Attract and Kill Suppress South American Palm Weevil in California?</b> – Mark Hoddle, Professor of Extension in Biological Control, UC Riverside
9:15	<b>Epidemiology and Management of Aspergillus Species Causing Black Mold of Dates</b> – Philippe Rolshausen, Associate Professor/Extension Specialist, Botany and Plant Sciences Dept, UC Riverside
9:40	<b>Spider Mite Control by Drone Application of Beneficial Predators</b> – Bodil Cass, Assistant Professor/Extension Specialist - Subtropical Fruit IPM Lab, UC Riverside
10:05	<b>Break</b>
10:25	<b>Laws and Regulations: 2025 Updates</b> – Chris Blake, Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's office
10:50	<b>Irrigation Management Strategies in Date Palms</b> – Ali Montazar, UCCE Irrigation and Water Management Advisor in Imperial, Riverside and San Diego Counties
11:10	<b>Current Research on Date Nutrition</b> – Robert Krueger, Horticulturist & Research Leader, USDA-ARS National Clonal Germplasm Repository for Citrus & Dates
11:30	<b>University of Arizona Date Palm Research Update</b> – Glenn Wright, Professor and Extension Tree Fruit Specialist, University of Arizona
11:50	<b>Status and Perspectives of the Date Palm Industry in Mexico</b> – Ricardo Salomón Torres, Research Professor at Universidad Estatal de Sonora San Luis Río Colorado, Mexico
12:10	<b>Lunch (Courtesy of the CA Date Commission)</b>
12:50	<b>Date Palm Growers Panel Discussion: Insights, Concerns, and Needs of California Date Industry</b> - Albert Keck, Hadley Date Gardens; Frank Becerra, Anthony Vineyards; Linden Anderson, HMS Agricultural Corporation
13:50	<b>California Date Commission Update</b> – Gordon Chuchian, Chairman of CA Date Commission
14:00	<b>Adjourn</b>

For additional information on the workshop, please contact Ali Montazar, [amontazar@ucanr.edu](mailto:amontazar@ucanr.edu) or Kristy Kneiding, [kkneiding@datesaregreat.com](mailto:kkneiding@datesaregreat.com)

PENDING CEU CREDITS: CALIFORNIA DPR (), ARIZONA DEPT. OF AG (), CCA ()

To Register: <https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=45393>

# Riverside County AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.



## WHY DO WE FARM?

Why do we farm? So, you may say...  
That is a question that all farmers weigh,  
Will I have water, workers, a market?  
Oh, and a wallet to pay?

## SO, WHY DO WE FARM?

It certainly is not for the weak...  
You've got to be brave, smart, hardheaded, and  
willing to take the heat.  
The plants, animals, trees all need 24-hour care,  
Cold weather, disease, and too much crop give us scare.

## SO, WHY DO WE FARM?

Most of us were born this way, it must be in our DNA?  
It's a calling, a responsibility, we just can't deny.  
So we just never let ourselves wonder why.

It's early to bed, early to rise,  
Our farms always need us, every day's a surprise.

The next time you sit down to a meal in your seat,  
You'll know why we farm, cause we all have to eat.

Written by Ellen Way

*"Farm Bureau Working for You"*

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**April 9, 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.

## Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

### *Investing in healthy soils strengthens farm resilience*

Soil health isn't just a buzzword. It's the foundation of productive farms, resilient crops and long-term sustainability. Farmers face many challenges: unpredictable weather, water restrictions, rising input costs and shifting regulations, all of which make soil management feel like one more hurdle in an already demanding industry. Yet, healthy soil is an investment. It directly impacts yield stability, disease resistance, water efficiency and overall farm resilience. The California Bountiful Foundation, a nonprofit research affiliate of the California Farm Bureau, administers the Healthy Soils Block Grant Program, which helps farmers implement soil health practices.

### *Young farmers fight hunger through Harvest for All*

People facing hunger are being fed, young farmers are honing their skills, and communities throughout the state are engaging with agriculture and learning more about its importance. These accomplishments are made thanks to members of Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers program and its Harvest for All campaign, which began nationally in 2003 in collaboration with local Feeding America affiliates across the country. Last year, members of California Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers logged more than 1,500 volunteer hours, donated 78,839 pounds of food and raised more than \$95,300 in monetary contributions.

### *New legislation aims to boost farmworker pay and support agricultural employers*

A new bill in the California state Legislature aims to improve work opportunities and take-home pay for farm employees. Senate Bill 628, introduced by state Sen. Shannon Grove, R-Bakersfield, would create a tax credit for farmers to offset the cost of paying overtime wages. "Senator Grove's agricultural overtime tax credit bill is a sensible solution that will enable farmers to continue producing food while providing a real and richly deserved boost in take-home pay for farm employees," said Shannon Douglass, president of the California Farm Bureau, which co-sponsored the bill.