

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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Between The Furrows is a monthly publication of the SCoCFB. Members receive a subscription as part of their membership investment.

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Lunching with the Presidents



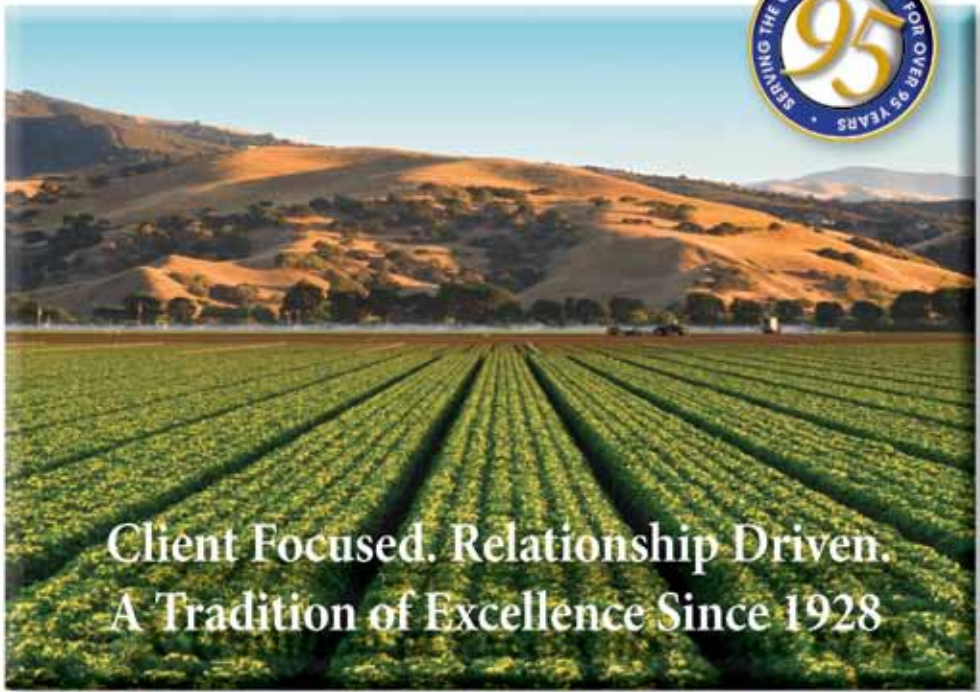
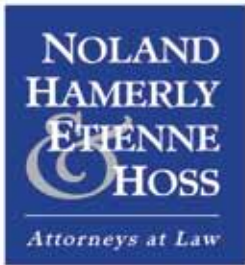
The 2025 Past Presidents' Lunch was held on Thursday, January 30th at Rancho Santa Maria. Pictured above (L-R) are Kirk Schmidt, Clint Miller, Sherry Mehl, Dennis Webb, Ron Peterson - 2nd Vice-President of the California Farm Bureau, Chris Enright, David Van Lennep, Nita Gizdich, Jess Brown, Bruce McPherson, John Pisturino, Cynthia Mathiesen and Steve Bontadelli. ■

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau **CULTURE**

- The SCCFB is firm in its **COMMITMENT** to provide responsive and effective services to its members, and to be a positive and integral part of the broader community through collaboration, education and social interaction.
- The SCCFB grows on a foundation of **TRUST**, bringing expertise, experience and good faith action to bear on topics related to agriculture, which can be relied upon by farmers, the agricultural community, and the community at large.
- The SCCFB honors and keeps its **TRADITION** of service to the diverse people, commodities and production systems that comprise the unique and complex agriculture community in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley.



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ASK MARK

**Mark Bolda, Director & Farm Advisor, UCCE,
Santa Cruz County**

Mechanics of Fruit Formation in the Strawberry

Q. Could you talk a little bit more about the mechanics of fruit formation in strawberry and why this would be important for growers to know about?

A. Yes, the mechanics of fruit formation and critically how they are affected by insects and environmental factors are something that growers should know and understand.

First of all, the strawberry is not a true fruit since the botanical fruits are the small, hardened achenes that everybody refers to as “seeds” distributed on the outside of the ripened receptacle that contains all of the sugars and vitamins that we look forward to eating. Be that as it may, this achene arises from a single ovule in the flower when it is fertilized by pollen most often provided by the same flower, and once pollinated, this ovule starts to not only develop itself, but also contribute to the growth of the fleshy receptacle around it. All of the ovules on a strawberry, very roughly maybe 200 of them, developing and growing the receptacle closely around them are what result in the strawberry fruit.

Where the interest of the in this process to the grower should come about, is when

the ovules on individual flowers fail to be fertilized, for example by weather extremes, the plant being undernourished, or of the activities of insects such as the lygus bug. In these cases, the failure of the ovule to be pollinated means also that the achene also does not form and is also now not contributing to the growth of the fruity and fleshy receptacle around it. Having these spaces missing results in what many refer to as the unsightly cat-facing and twisting of the fruit, which renders it unmarketable since consumers really do want to buy something that not only tastes good, but looks good too.

It is also becoming pretty evident, based on research done in the field, that loss of ovules in a flower and subsequent reduction of achenes doesn't necessarily twist the fruit, but can result in general smaller fruit. This makes sense because smaller fruit always have lower numbers of achenes than do larger fruit.

The about has been a short article about the implications of less than perfect flower pollination in strawberry for growers. For questions and comments on this matter and others, please contact Mark Bolda with UC Cooperative Extension in Santa Cruz County, mpbolda@ucanr.edu. ■

Coming Soon and You're Invited

17th Annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon

Thursday, May 15, 2025

Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos - 11:30 to 1:30

For reservations, call Agri-Culture at (831) 722-6622, visit our website at www.agri-culture.us/events or go to eventbrite and search for the Down to Earth Women Luncheon

THE WATER NANNY

Good News ó Flying Robots

Back in my childhood, in 1930 the U.S. Senate, who then as now is always on the cutting edge of technology, banned the newfangled dial phones in the Senate offices, because the automatic phones were too difficult for Senators to use. It required two hands, and it also replaced women operators during the depression. *"Technological unemployment."* (John Maynard Keynes) After WWII the British press opined that *"workers see 'robot revolution' depriving them of jobs,"* In the 1980s technology was a threat to 5 million jobs due to the imminent Robot Age, and computers: the worker's menace.

In the modern world it turns out that even with AI, TikTok, low skilled high school graduates and deportations, there is a shortage of labor, people who are willing to work. I have good news, robots are here, and they may fill in for the shortage of workers, not replace them. We are in a new age with flying drones, and also field devices named to be compatible with our workforce, as Amiga and Burros. Every one of the manufacturers promises great savings and increased efficiencies, that's what salesmen are for. The reality is interesting, but not as financially rewarding, and will take time to train employees and operators to recover the investment, before bagging the riches foretold by the sales staff.



As produce farmers we have been in awe of GPS driverless tractors tending 1,000 acres of open flat land in Kansas, not much application in a 100 acre strawberry field, or between vineyards. These prairie marvels are too big and specialized to work with our crops. The

Amiga, a Watsonville invention, is a better contender. This is small enough to fit in the back of your truck, so it can drive down a 40-60" bed with electric motors on all four wheels. The base price is \$12,900, the wide range of attachments can easily push this higher, including potential accessories, like a Brain Kit, compost spreader or weeder. This is an interesting robot for greenhouses, propagation and vegetable row crops.

Other robotic entries into precision farming include: ARA, a high precision sprayer for herbicides, and chemicals, with high accuracy. The Stout Smart Cultivator, which "uses AI and

machine vision" to weed and cultivate fields. LaserWeeder, again using AI, computer vision, and lasers to weed. (Let's face it anything even considering itself high tech claims to use AI, even if it's just digging a hole.) Pathfinder, this is interesting as it turns your existing tractors into GPS automated fleets of tractors, so you play more golf this summer. Agtonomy, an electric tractor that can do lots of stuff, even on difficult terrain.



More importantly, and more fun, various universities are creating computer/Ag robotic labs to experiment with cool stuff. Close at hand is the Robotic Systems Lab at Santa Clara University. AgTech at UC Merced develops and tests novel Ag technology. Now a new nonprofit, *Reservoir*, partners with Western Growers, UCCE, UC Merced, Hartnell and a VC firm to create an Ag incubator to focus on robotics, including rovers (small tractors) and drones. Their pitch is that ag tech startups can work directly with growers to create something that is cost effective, labor reducing, and works.

With new inventions, and old ideas dressed with AI in the title, we should proceed, like every farmer, with caution. The reward could be great, or a device rusting in your tool yard. *"Believe only half of what you see and nothing that you hear."* (Edgar Allan Poe) *"A person with a new idea is a crank until the idea succeeds."* (Mark Twain) Cheer up, spring starts on March 20th. ■

Your Smile for the Day!

Two windmills are standing on a wind farm. One asks, "What's your favorite kind of music?" The other replies, "I'm a big metal fan."





FAVORITE RECIPES

More Favorite Recipes

Over the next few months, I will be sharing a few recipes with you that are part of a cookbook published by the Omega Nu Alpha Theta Chapter of Watsonville many years ago. These recipe cards called "More Favorite Recipes" were found at the Miramar Restaurant in downtown Watsonville by a construction crew doing some renovation work in the building. Thank you Frannie Colendich for sharing these recipes with me. I'm sure we will all enjoy them. As a side note, if anyone has a publication date of these recipe cards, please let us know. Thank you!

Shish-Ka-Bob

Make the marinade by combining:

- 4 Tablespoons oil
- 6 Tablespoons soy sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper,
- 1 large grated onion
- 3 Tablespoons lemon juice

Marinate **1 leg of lamb** that has been cut in 1" cubes for 8 hours. (24 hours is even better)

Thread meat on skewers alternating with quartered **onion, cherry tomato, bell pepper chunks and whole mushrooms.**

Barbeque and serve.

Submitted by : Sandy Blanton



Lemon Roasted Cornish Hens

Using **2 lemons**, grate the rind to make 1 teaspoon. Cut 2 Tablespoons of julienne strips of lemon rind. Then squeeze 1/4 cup lemon juice.

Mix grated lemon rind with **3 Tablespoons softened butter or margarine**. Add **1 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper and 2 teaspoons chopped fresh mint (or 1/2 teaspoon crumbled dried mint)**.

Rub this mixture over **4 rock cornish game hens**. Roast in a shallow pan at 375°F for about 50 minutes or until golden.

Meanwhile, prepare the following lemon sauce: LEMON SAUCE FOR CORNISH HENS

Heat **2 Tablespoons vegetable oil** in a sauce pan. Saute **1 small sliced onion** for 5 minutes. Stir in the **lemon peel (2 Tablespoons julienned)** and **1 clove crushed garlic**. Cook and stir for 1 minute.

Add **1 cup chicken broth**. Bring to boil. Mix **2 teaspoons cornstarch in 1 Tablespoon water**. Stir into sauce. Boil another minute or so then stir in the **reserved lemon juice (1/2 cup)**.

Spoon this sauce over each game hen. Sprinkle with additional mint or parsley.

Submitted by: Kelly Velasco



"Agriculture, the Original Green"

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The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau is an important voice for the Santa Cruz County and Pajaro Valley agriculture industry. Everyone is eligible to be a member and receive the many benefits and services available. By joining the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau you help support agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley.

How to Join

Go to www.cfbf.com and click on the "JOIN" button. No need to log in on this page. Go to the bottom of the page and click on NEVER BEEN A MEMBER to set up a new account.

Questions? Contact the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau
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Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
Heritage Hall, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

SCCFB 108th Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 19, 2025
TBD

32nd Annual Golf Tournament

Friday, July 11, 2025
Pajaro Valley Golf Club

California State Fair

Friday, July 11, 2025 to Sunday, July 27, 2025
Cal Expo, Sacramento

Santa Cruz County Fair

Wednesday, September 10 to Sunday, September 14, 2025
Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

Annual Directors' Dinner

Thursday, November 6, 2025
Location to be determined

CFBF Annual Meeting

TBD

Agri-Culture

17th Annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon

Thursday, May 15, 2025
Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos

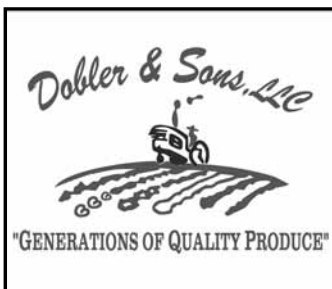
17th Annual Testicle Festival

Saturday, August 23, 2025
Estrada Deer Camp

29th Annual Farm Dinner

Friday, October 10, 2025
Land Trust Little Bee Barn

I am a Farm Bureau member because...

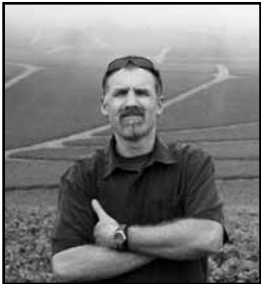


"I am a Farm Bureau member because it allows me to focus on my livelihood of farming knowing that Farm Bureau is looking out for and supporting our industry's interests. It is imperative that agriculture be united to tell our story and stand up to challenges when

needed and Farm Bureau does that for us."

Steven Dobler, Dobler & Sons, LLC

Statewide Ag Pesticide Notification Program Set to Launch



David Sanford

24th.

My office has discussed this pending statewide program at length over the past couple of years with our growers and ag operators, and Santa Cruz County in fact took part in an initial pesticide notification pilot project back in 2022 to get information and feedback from the community and stakeholders. The concept from DPR that led to the development of this system was to enhance transparency by providing the public with timely information about the application of restricted material pesticides on farms. A key point to reiterate is that this notification system – which effectively makes available to the public advance information about planned agricultural pesticide applications – *is limited to California restricted material pesticides*. Restricted material pesticides are agricultural use pesticides that necessitate a restricted material permit (RMP) in order to both purchase and apply and require a site and time specific pre-application notice of intent (NOI) to be submitted to the Agricultural Commissioner.

This month, the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) will officially launch its new online pesticide notification system that has been in the planning and preparation stages for the last three years. Barring any technical issues, the system should go live on March

The notification system is called “SprayDays California” and will have a dedicated website managed by DPR for navigation, information, and frequently asked questions. Some key features of the system are:

Advance notifications – The system can alert residents/businesses that are nearby to commercial agricultural production operations before restricted material are applied. (This is a 24-hour prior notice, with the exception of restricted soil fumigants which will have a 48-hour notice.)

Public access – People will be able to access information online directly through a viewable map or entering an address to see restricted material applications planned within a one-square-mile area. Individuals can also choose to sign up to receive notifications about applications to take place near a specific address (via email or text message).

Links to additional information – The website will also contain links that will allow users to navigate to additional sites for information on agricultural use pesticides as well as resources about California’s pesticide regulatory framework.

As this new pesticide notification system is rolled out by DPR there are sure to be some questions from our growers and the wider public regarding its utility and functionality, and my department is here to assist. Please feel free to contact our office at (831)763-8080 for questions about this or any other matters related to pesticide use and safety in our county. ■

**FOOD FOR
THOUGHT**

**“When you can’t control what’s happening,
challenge yourself to control the way you
respond. That’s where your power is.”**

Unknown



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President's Message

California's Salad Bar



Dennis Webb,
President

My family recently celebrated my daughter's second birthday, and since our kids love all kinds of veggies, we decided to turn our kitchen counter into a salad bar for all the guests.

Salad bars are a perfect example of how California's vast agricultural supply chain feeds the country. Next time you load up your plate with lettuce, tomatoes, artichokes, olives or bell peppers, there's a good chance most of it came from the Golden State.

California is the nation's top producer of fresh fruits and vegetables. Lettuce, for instance, mostly comes from the central coast or the Imperial Valley, depending on the season. Tomatoes? The state grows more than anyone else in the country. Carrots, celery, avocados - California grows them all, and they travel

quickly from farm to distribution centers, then onto salad bars at restaurants (and toddlers' birthday parties) nationwide.

The supply chain behind that seemingly simple bowl of greens is complex. Growers work with distributors who move produce through refrigerated trucking networks to restaurant chains, hotel buffets, and grocery store self-serve stations. Many of Santa Cruz County's growers, shippers and truckers play key roles in this supply chain. Our county grows a mix of greens, root veggies, and specialty crops that often make their way into restaurants across the country.

Despite challenges like droughts and labor shortages, Santa Cruz County farmers continue to innovate, keeping salad bars stocked. So whether you're at the salad bar at the Crow's Nest restaurant or your own kitchen counter, next time you pile on spinach, cucumbers, and carrots, you might just be enjoying a little bit of Santa Cruz County's finest. ■

The Telephone Of The Future?

This is an AP article out of Pasadena published in The Tacoma News Tribune, April 11, 1953:

Mark R. Sullivan, San Francisco, president and director of Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Co., said in an address Thursday night:

"Just what form the future telephone will take is, of course, pure speculation. Here is my prophecy:

In its final development, the telephone will be carried about by the individual, perhaps as we carry a watch today. It probably will require no dial or equivalent, and I think the users will be able to see each other, if they want, as they talk.

Who knows but what it may actually translate from one language to another?"

Distribution Uniformity & CropManage Training



Last month I wrote about irrigation system design and optimization, in that article I briefly reference a term common in the irrigation world, *Distribution Uniformity* or “DU”. You may have heard this term mentioned by irrigation professionals or come across it when planning your farm’s irrigation system. What exactly is DU and why would conducting one of these rigorous system audits benefit overall crop production? Today we’ll take a closer look at this technical term that is becoming ever more discussed in California farming & water circles. Let’s DU!

The Distribution Uniformity of an irrigation system is a measurement of how evenly water is applied across the field or a planted area, usually expressed as a percentage. This can be determined by measuring pressures and discharge volumes (collected with multiple sets of catch cans) at different locations across the field and identifying the lowest quarter ($DU_{1/4}$) from these measured volumes. The DU percentage is calculated by dividing the average application rate of the lowest 25% measured by the total average of all the application rates measured:

$$DU_{1/4} = \frac{\text{average } \% \text{ of lowest } 25\% \text{ application rates measured}}{\text{average } \% \text{ of all application rates measured}}$$

Good maintenance practices and a well-designed system will help increase the overall DU value. With water and fertilizer becoming ever more expensive, even application throughout the field is paramount for maintaining crop uniformity. No one wants uneven plants! Basically, a system with a high DU will require less water to assure all areas of a field receive the desired amount of water. The lower the DU value, the more water the system must put out (or run longer) to meet the desired amount of water needed by the crop. A low DU value can be costly in terms of labor, crop quality, generation of ponding and runoff, and increased pumping costs.

Interested in conducting a DU evaluation at your farm or operation and learning how to increase your system’s DU? There are several technical service providers in our area who can help you, including your local RCD, UC Cooperative Extension and private consultants. At the RCDSCC we have a team of dedicated irrigation professionals ready to assist you

with this process. We can even train your team to conduct these evaluations. Our organization has conducted hundreds of evaluations over the years, we would be happy to share our expertise and lessons learned. Some of the most common recommendations are installing pressure regulators, flushing lines, installing submain lines with an adequate diameter to minimize friction losses, ensuring all sprinkler heads and risers have the same size (discharge flowrate), and improving orientation of rows/tapes.

After determining the DU of your system, this value can be plugged into CropManage, a free online decision support tool, to help inform irrigation scheduling! Want to learn more about CropManage, irrigation and nutrient management? Attend a **Free CropManage Hands-On Workshop** on **March 13th**, 2025 at the Watsonville Public Library, 275 Main St. Suite 100, Watsonville, CA 95076. We will provide hands-on training so that you can learn to use the newest version of CropManage. Spanish translation will be available. Please register at <https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=45676>

To learn more and connect with RCD programs and services contact: Cameron McDonald (cmcdonald@rcdsantacruz.org), Dan Hermstad at (dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org), or Sacha Lozano at (slozano@rcdsantacruz.org). All RCD services and programs are voluntary and non-regulatory. **¡Hablamos Español!** ■

Strange But Impossibly True!

Firefighters use chemicals to make water “wetter”

The wetting agents reduce the surface tension of plain water so it spreads and soaks into objects more easily, which is why what fire crews use is known as “wet water”.

Excerpts from the Readers Digest

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CALENDAR

FRIDAY - MARCH 14
Focus Agriculture
Session 1

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 19
National Agriculture Day
Spring Luncheon

THURSDAY - MARCH 27
Board of Directors' meeting

THURSDAY - APRIL 3
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

FRIDAY - APRIL 11
Focus Agriculture
Session 2

WEDNESDAY - APRIL 16
Agri-Culture Board of
Directors meeting &
Annual Meeting

THURSDAY - APRIL 30
Board of Directors' meeting

THURSDAY - MAY 1
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

FRIDAY - MAY 9
Focus Agriculture
Session 3

SATURDAY - MAY 10
PITCH IN All Santa Cruz
County

THURSDAY - MAY 15
17 Annual Down to Earth
Women Luncheon

MONDAY - MAY 26
Memorial Day Observed
Office Closed

THURSDAY - MAY 29
Board of Directors' meeting

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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