

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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Agri-Culture's Farm Dinner



Celebrating Focus Agriculture was the theme of this year's Annual Agri-Culture Farm Dinner. Tom Am Rhein, one of the founders of Agri-Culture, provided a history of Focus Agriculture, a nationally recognized program. His presentation will be re-printed in the December issue of this newsletter. The event also included a wine table with many local wineries represented, live music, lots of socializing, a delicious dinner and money was raised during the evening to support Focus Agriculture.



Each year, Agri-Culture's guests go home with a plethora of fresh, local commodities provided through the generosity of our local farmers and businesses.



Be sure you make your reservations to attend next year's event. It is an opportunity to have an evening of fun with friends and neighbors in our community.

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.



President's Message

An Interview with California Giant Berry Farms President, Joe Barsi



Dennis Webb, President

A few months ago, I shared with readers how much my kids (ages one and four) love to eat berries. We're still going through more berries than ever at my house! I am proud that my kids love to eat their fruits and veggies. I am also proud that so much of the produce they eat is grown right here in Santa Cruz County. And even when the seasons change, the produce we eat still bears the labels of growers based in the Pajaro Valley. I recently interviewed California Giant Berry Farms President Joe Barsi about what it means to be a global food producer based right here in Watsonville:

Dennis: California Giant Berry Farms has its roots in Watsonville, but I understand that you have a global footprint. Where are your berries being picked in the fall and winter months?

Joe: California Giant Berry Farms

is proud to have our roots in Watsonville, but our commitment to providing fresh, delicious berries year-round has taken us around the globe.

We supplement our Watsonville/Salinas supply during the fall and winter months with berries from other growing regions. Our winter strawberries come from Santa Maria, CA, Florida, and Mexico, ensuring a continuous supply of this beloved fruit.

Additionally, we offer conventional and organic raspberries and blackberries grown in Mexico year-round, as well as blueberries grown in Mexico, Peru, Argentina, and Chile. This ensures a continuous supply of fresh berries for our customers. **Continued on Page 5**



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ASK MARK

Dylan Beal, Entomology Advisor, UCCE,
Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito County

Introducing the New UC IPM Entomology Advisor

Hello everyone, I'm the new UC IPM Entomology Advisor serving the communities of Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties. My name is Dylan Beal. Born and raised in the Santa Clarita Valley, I'm excited to return to my home state of California.

Inspired by a lifelong passion for insects, I pursued bachelor of science in degrees in Entomology and Plant Pathology at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. At Cornell, I was first exposed to the world of cooperative extension, working in a lab to study and support natural enemies of spider mites, aphids, thrips, fungus gnats, and whiteflies in greenhouses.

In partnership with Montpellier SupAgro and the Università degli Studi di Torino, I received a Master of Science degree in Viticulture and Enology. For my master's thesis, I worked with Italian grape growers on understanding the ecology and management of leafhopper vectors of the pathogen responsible for European grapevine yellows (Flavescence dorée phytoplasma).

For my PhD, I studied Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California, Berkeley. At Berkeley, I worked with grape growers and cooperative extension advisors in Napa and Sonoma county to understand the role of spittlebug insect vectors in spreading *Xylella fastidiosa*, the bacteria responsible for Pierce's disease of grapevine.

After Berkeley, I have worked as a postdoc at Washington State University with cherry and blueberry growers to adapt and adopt innovative and internationally recognized practices for sustainable management

of Spotted-Wing Drosophila (SWD). As part of that work, I have closely partnered with growers, pest control advisors, USDA scientists, cooperative extension advisors, and industry representatives on SWD projects related to biological control, cultural control, behavioral control, and pesticide resistance screening and management. Additionally, I was part of a team that worked to coordinate SWD management with the management of the leafhopper vectors of X-Disease phytoplasma in cherry.

With 15 years of experience in New York, California, Washington State, France, and Italy, I'm excited to collaborate with you all to support the development and adoption of innovative, cost-effective, and sustainable insect pest management practices. I aim to develop partnerships, lifelong relationships, and projects that center and elevate grower voices, experiences, and leadership. Currently I am reaching out to growers and other community members about the pests they face as I work on my Needs Assessment. Already, I recognize and am working to understand address the threats of western flower thrips/INSV, diamondback moth, spotted-wing drosophila, and lygus bug pose to the agricultural commodities of the three counties.

Together, I hope that we can not only address the threat that these agricultural insect pests pose to our three counties but also help to support the many communities and ecosystems that interface with our agricultural livelihoods. Please feel free to reach out to me at 831-759-7359 or djbeal@ucanr.edu. The Bug Doctor is in to look at any insects you may find! ■

THE WATER NANNY

Blessings Be Upon Us All

Thanksgiving is celebrated everywhere in America. It is a great time for families to gather, alone or with extended relatives. In 1621 the pilgrims celebrated the earliest thanksgiving, following their first successful harvest, with the local natives, a three day long celebration. The Pilgrims were very thankful for just surviving, as so many had died the previous winter including most of the women. Maybe a low threshold, but cause for celebration.

Now we have our own Thanksgiving following a divisive election, acrimony, and mistrust. We should at least be thankful that, with the election over, we will not be besieged by excessive emails extolling candidates. This may by itself cause a recession, with all those political hacks on unemployment until 2026. Capitalism at its cruelest, too much supply, no demand, just like farming. As farmers we are price takers, and are truly thankful when we are profitable at the end of the year.

If there is a shortage of strawberries the price increases, too many grapes, the obverse is true. Locally we have so many strawberry farms, profitability is easily visible, a rainy winter means a late spring crop, a real hit to cash flow. This year there where a great number of full field trucks in September and October, as demand was high with a late Mexico crop and no backfill from Santa Maria. Indeed, a thankful season.



Grapes and almonds are at the other end of the spectrum. Fine wine grapes, like Calistoga Cabernet grapes, last year sold for \$9,500/ton now sells for \$2,500/ton, when there is a buyer at all. Bulk wine grapes in Modesto may not even be harvested, leaving them on the vines for a drunken bird feast. This is no seasonal issue here, wine grapes are vastly overproduced, younger generations are drinking White Claw, a large, well-aged inventory remains to be sold, and wineries are also closing, too. This does not even bode well for a thankful 2024.

Almonds are in a similar boat, somewhat of their own making. It takes years between tree planting and first harvest. In California there are 1,350,000 bearing acres and

280,000 non-bearing trees, not ready for harvest, a 14% increase in bearing trees since just 2019. Not only is demand down, SGMA groundwater pumping restrictions in the Central Valley can cut off water. Then there is the myth of the cost of an almond in gallons of water, but this really doesn't dent demand. Almonds and grapes, crops with decades of useful lives are being pulled out. Be thankful we grow lettuce. Since my Thanksgiving missive has veered off into a crop report, let's look at our local apple growers who are having a problem, mainly due to no seasonal labor. Never a good thing to see grandma out on a harvest ladder in a desperate attempt to bring in part of their crop.



Thanksgiving, is after all a mixed bag, I am simply grateful for what I have. Mark Twain penned two dinner blessings: *"Thanksgiving Day. Let us all give humble, hearty, and sincere thanks now, but the turkeys."* and *"Let us be thankful for the fools, if not for them the rest of us could not succeed."* ■

Strange But Impossibly True!

The CIA has a top secret coffee shop. Yes, it's called Starbucks, but the branch in the CIA's Langley, Virginia headquarters is unlike any you might have visited. The baristas have to pass extensive background checks and can't write customers' names on the cups, since some of them are undercover agents. The store's name on the receipt isn't even Starbucks, but "Store Number 1."

Excerpts from the Readers Digest



FAVORITE RECIPES

No-Knead Refrigerator Rolls

Soroptimist Kathy Mantha submitted this recipe to "A Taste of the Pajaro Valley", a cookbook published by Soroptimist International of Watsonville in 2003. She also published the recipe in the Register Pajaronian before she moved to Canada. A variation of this recipe also creates Cinnamon buns. Just the right way to start Thanksgiving morning festivities!

3/4 cup hot water

1/2 cup sugar

1 Tablespoon salt

3 Tablespoons shortening

1 cup warm water

2 packages active dry yeast or compressed yeast cakes

6 cups flour

1 egg

Mix hot water, sugar, salt and shortening together in mixing bowl. Set aside.. Dissolve yeast in warm water for about five minutes. Add 2 cups flour to the first water, sugar, shortening and salt mixture. Add egg and dissolved yeast. Beat until well blended. Stir in remaining flour one cup at a time. Place dough in a greased bowl, brush top with soft shortening or margarine. Cover tightly and store in refrigerator until doubled in bulk. (May be kept in refrigerator for up to a week.) When ready to use, punch down and cut off dough in manageable chunks. Roll out or shape into rolls. Place on cookie sheet or in greased pan. Bake at 400°F for 15-20 minutes.

Cinnamon Bun Variation: Divide dough in half and roll out on floured board into a rectangle shape. Spread with butter and sprinkle with a brown sugar and cinnamon mixture. Roll up and cut into 12 pieces. Drizzle honey in bottom of 12 muffin tins. Place rolls in tins and let rise until double. Bake at 400°F for 15 to 20 minutes. Yields 12 servings. ■

President's Message - Continued from Page 2

Dennis: Even though berries are grown all over the world, can you speak to Watsonville's continued relevance in the industry?

Joe: While berries are grown globally, Watsonville continues to maintain a significant presence and influence in the industry. The local climate provides optimal growing conditions for berries and the berry industry maintains a long history, dating back decades. Watsonville is best known for its strawberry production, which represents 31% of all California strawberries grown. Approximately 90% of the strawberries grown in the U.S. originate in California.

Dennis: How does growing berries elsewhere benefit California Giant's local operations?

Joe: By growing berries year-round in various regions, California Giant is able to maintain a consistent supply of nutritious, high-quality berries to meet consumer demand. This not only benefits our local operations by ensuring a steady flow of products but also allows us to offer our customers a wider variety of berries throughout the year,

regardless of seasonal fluctuations.

Dennis: What are you most proud of when it comes to California Giant Berry Farms?

Joe: California Giant's mission is to deliver high quality berries and nourish our communities. We continue to pride ourselves on delivering the best quality berries while giving back to our communities. An area that our founder, Bill Moncovich helped shape from his own generosity and one that we are particularly proud of is the company's formalized its 501(c)3 nonprofit, The California Giant Foundation. Today, the nonprofit has invested over 1 million dollars to the communities that we grow in, and Bill's generosity has inspired employees to host fundraisers throughout the year. On top of that, the company separately donates both monetarily and in-kind to community initiatives, fundraisers and more.

If you are interested in sharing your farm's story with the community, please reach out to Dennis at sccfb@sbcglobal.net ■

"Agriculture, the Original Green"

BECOME A FARM BUREAU MEMBER

Join the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau



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

Annual Directors' Dinner

Thursday, November 7, 2024
Mission West Bar

CFBF Annual Meeting

Saturday, December 7 to Tuesday, December 10, 2024
Monterey Conference Center & Monterey Marriott



I support the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau because:

"The Farm Bureau is essential to California's basic economy and our local economy as well. We have had wonderful leadership with our Executive Director, Jess Brown, and the board of directors for many years."

Michael McClellan
Businessman and Artist



"Peace is not when everyone agrees. It is when we can respect our disagreements and still play in the sandbox together."

From Be Happy Enjoy Life

Remembering (and Taking Time) To Give Thanks



David Sanford

Heading into the fall season and approaching the end of 2024, I'm reminded of all the things that I am thankful for this past year. Among them, I am thankful for the good rainfall we had to start the year, which helped recharge our groundwater aquifers in this time of unpredictability in our weather and climate. Food grows where water flows, so additions to our region's water reserves help Santa Cruz County farmers and ranchers produce some of the best berries, vegetables, apples, winegrapes and multiple other crops found in the nation. I am also thankful for partnerships our growers have with various agencies, such as U.C. Cooperative Extension and the Resource Conservation District, as they continue to pursue innovative solutions to the many challenges facing local agriculture. These collaborations demonstrate our

growers' commitment to sustainable agriculture through improved irrigation methods, new precision ag technologies, and continuing to implement and expand integrated pest management practices in the field. I am thankful to all our growers farming in the Pajaro Valley and on the North Coast of Santa Cruz County and to our farmworkers for their constant effort and commitment to bring the highest quality bounty of fruits and vegetables to our stores, restaurants, farmers' markets, and tables every day. Our farmworkers and growers not only feed our county and state of California, but they also feed the nation. It's thanks to them to that the freshest salads and most delicious fruits can be enjoyed all summer long and late into the fall. And last but certainly never least, I am thankful for the amazing staff here at the Agricultural Commissioner's Office for the hard work they do in supporting our growers, our local agricultural industry and the community to continue to make Santa Cruz County one of the most productive agricultural areas worldwide. Thank you and have a wonderful holiday season. ■

Focus Agriculture Class 34 Applications
will be available in December.

Watch for details in the December issue of
Between the Furrows!



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*The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau &
Agri-Culture offices will be closed for
the Thanksgiving holidays on
November 28th and 29th.*

*We hope you all enjoy Thanksgiving with
your family and friends and give thanks for
all of the blessings we have here
in Santa Cruz County!*

CLOUDS (ON TITLE): SEEN FROM BOTH SIDES



You may have heard the term “cloud on title.” If you ever bought or sold real estate. If your transaction was completed, the “cloud” was either removed, explained away, indemnified, or accepted. But what does it mean for there to be a cloud on title?

A cloud on title” is a claim which the title company or another party or a lender was unwilling to insure against or the buyer or lender to accept. A cloud on title can be a defect in a deed (legal description, incorrect name, unclear name or more). A cloud on title should cause concern because the cloud may make the property undesirable or –less-- desirable to a future owner or lender.

Clouds on most often discovered in the title search. Title searches can result from the results of a preliminary report from a reputable title company or by a title archeologist or researcher. Recorded documents are examined which might identify the property or a person in the “chain of title.” A title search might include a review of grant, easement, trust and/or trustee’s sale deeds, water well agreements, road maintenance agreements, county, state and federal tax liens, recoded maps or records of survey, covenants, conditions and restrictions on title and similar documents of record. Clouds on title sometimes arise from seller disclosures in the sales transaction documents.

A cloud on title may cause uncertainty about who owns the property due to a past or present dispute,

Sometimes a special type of lawsuit called a “quiet title action,” or suit in reformation, or cancellation is necessary to remove the cloud. These types of lawsuits are available to ask the court clear title against almost any kind of interest or adverse claim to real estate if the facts support such an outcome.

A cloud may occur after a person on title passes on, but their name was either incorrect or the capacity was wrong when they died: was the decedent on title in their own name or as a beneficiary or trustee of a trust? Or was a dead person’s name on the still on title. This may require probate or

administration of a trust. Even something like the misspelling of a name on a deed could cause an improperly recorded sale resulting in a cloud on title.

If the property has been foreclosed on, even that foreclosure may cloud title unless it was done properly. What liens, if any, were “wipe out” by the foreclosure? Does a foreclosure lawsuit which accompanied a non-judicial foreclosure need to be re-opened to clarify the amount owed or to obtain a final judgment in foreclosure.

Trade work done on property may cause a cloud such as mechanic’s liens. Previous owners’ use or claimed use of the property may also create a cloud on title if the prior owner failed to comply with valid easements, well agreements, road maintenance agreements, or similar.

Property owners can reduce the likelihood and make resolution easier and faster and cheaper with clear contracts. Title insurance policies insure or indemnify owners from title defects to the extent provided in the title policy, and as provided in any extra cost endorsements such as mechanics lien endorsements to the policy. Lesser amounts of protection may be available in the form of title guaranties, for example “chain of title reports” and condition of title reports. Title insurance lasts for the duration of ownership by the original insured/buyer/grantee. But the policy does not succeed to a later owner unless there is agreement from the title company in advance.

Clouds on title delays close of escrow and loan closing. Clouds on title discourage purchasers and delay future legal ownership. The seller usually learns of a cloud when they get a preliminary report when they list the property for sale or when they accept an offer. A cloud of title should be discussed with your real estate agent, escrow or title officer, and the other parties to the transaction as soon as practicable. ■



Written by Cameron McDonald, Agriculture Program Specialist
Resource Conservation District, Santa Cruz County

Off-Season Soil Stewardship Practices

With peak production in our county beginning to wind down, we find ourselves in the height of the fall season. Now begins the wait for annual rains, with growers anticipating when to disc fields and how long to keep harvesting, with one eye on the forecast. Now is a great time to start making plans to capitalize on the unique opportunities that the cool season presents. It is a time outside of the hectic summer season when full focus is on maximizing production and keeping up with the busy harvest schedule.

Now that growers are listing beds, one such opportunity is working with your local RCD to conduct a **row alignment** assessment. Proper row alignment on sloped fields can lessen the impacts of erosion, mitigate ponding, and help with soil structure. A row alignment implemented with site specific considerations such as soil type and slope aspect, will have many trickle-down benefits for your farm. These include a better working environment for field workers and equipment operators, as well as water conservation and water quality protection.

Are you planting a **cover crop** this year? Cover cropping is another soil health management practice that can be

implemented in the off season with many positive benefits. Cover crops both protect and improve soil health, reduce sediment runoff, augment water infiltration and storage capacity, and provide valuable carbon and nitrogen inputs to your cash crops. This can help save money in the long run and increase yield. Planting a non-legume cover crop can also help you to achieve compliance with increasingly stringent water quality regulatory targets (Ag Order 4.0) as this type of cover crops can recover (scavenge) residual nitrogen, reduce nitrate leaching and improve water quality.

We can currently offer a limited supply of non-legume cover crop seed (organic Merced Rye). Please call us if you are interested, and don't hesitate to contact your local RCD for technical assistance and to explore further opportunities. Reach out to us directly at the RCD of Santa Cruz County for technical assistance with any of these "off season practices". Contact Cameron McDonald cmcdonald@rcdsantacruz.org, Dan Hermstad at dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org, or Sacha Lozano at slozano@rcdsantacruz.org. ■

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STRONGER TOGETHER

2024 Annual Meeting and YF&R State Conference

December 7-10, 2024

Monterey Conference Center and Monterey Marriott

Registration opens in September! Stay tuned for more details

We invite you to join us in beautiful Monterey for the 2024 California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting and YF&R State Conference. This year, we celebrate our theme of "Stronger Together," highlighting the enduring value of the Farm Bureau in shaping a prosperous future for agriculture.

At this pivotal gathering, we unite to explore new opportunities, share invaluable insights, and forge lasting connections that strengthen our agricultural community. Together, we'll chart a course towards ensuring your best farm and ranch future, empowered by knowledge, collaboration, and unwavering support.

Join us as we celebrate our successes, champion our shared goals, and embark on new chapters of growth and resilience. Together, we are stronger, and together, we will continue to build a brighter future for California agriculture. ■

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CALENDAR

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 7
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 7
Annual Directors' Dinner

THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 28
Thanksgiving Observed
Office Closed

FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 29
Thanksgiving Holiday
Office Closed

THURSDAY - DECEMBER 5
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

DECEMBER 7 - 10
California Farm Bureau
Annual Meeting
Monterey, CA

WEDNESDAY - DECEMBER 25
Christmas Day Observed
Office Closed

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