Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

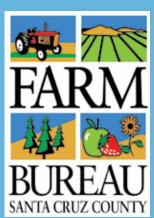
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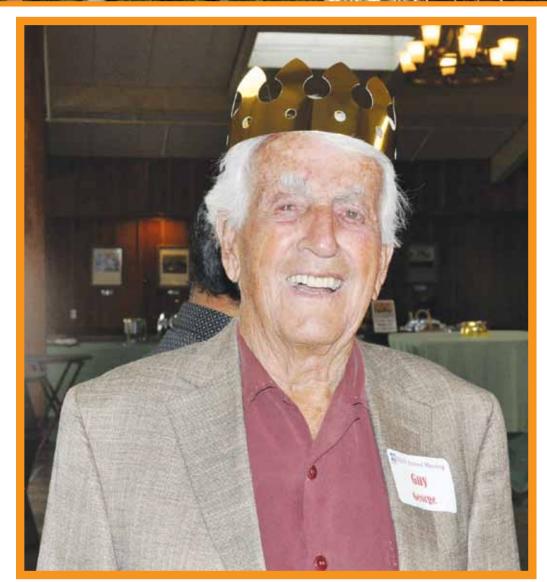




Between The Furrows is a monthly publication of the SCCFB. Members receive a subscription as part of their membership investment.

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Who will wear the crown in 2023?

he **Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau 106th Annual Dinner Meeting** will take place on Thursday, **June 22, 2023** on the **Rodgers House Patio** at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. It is always an exciting event as this is the time we announce the "Farmer of the Year" award to the farmer(s) who have contributed beyond their normal farming duties to help the community. Last year's award went to Guy George (pictured above).

Are you wondering who will wear the crown in 2023? We are giving you an opportunity to be a part of choosing the next recipient. If you know a farmer who you believe has gone beyond the call of duty, please submit the name and a short statement of what makes you think that person should be named the "Farmer of the Year". The Board of Directors look forward to hearing from you and will consider all suggestions received.

Please send your email to **sccfb@sbcglobal.net** or text **(831) 818-1193** before the **April 27th** Board of Directors meeting for consideration. Thank you!

President's Message



Dennis Webb, President

Another Chapter In The Movie "Groundhog Day"

mudslides, fallen looding, trees, extended power outages, and widespread damage to public and private infrastructure. If every day this winter has seemed to you like another chapter in the movie "Groundhog Day," you are not alone. This winter has been far from comical though - it has been downright relentless. The latest and most damaging havoc has been flooding in the community of Pajaro.

What made the damage to Pajaro so difficult to see? This is the most vulnerable part of the Pajaro Valley for reasons other than flood risk. Further, flood control agencies have known, for what seems like forever, that this outcome was inevitable. It has happened before, and short of an ambitious overhaul of the levee

system, it will happen again. The levees in the Pajaro Valley were constructed in 1949. They quickly overtopped in 1955 and 1958, and were deemed inadequate by the

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Army Corp. of Engineers in 1963. In 1995 and 1998 there was flooding again. Were it not for emergency repairs, the levees would have broken in 2017. In January of this year, County and local private construction crews undertook emergency work to plug new boils and seepage. In March the levee finally gave way, flooding thousands of homes, dozens of businesses and many acres of farmland.

While foreseeable, the disaster didn't happen from a lack of effort by local government. Local elected officials have been seeking community support for a major push to overhaul the levee system for over a decade, and a broad base of the community has supported their work. Thanks to the work of several local leaders, the levee overhaul

President's Message - Continued on Page 7





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Hope to see you all at the National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon!

Rescheduled for April 26, 2023

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Mark Bolda, Farm Advisor, UCCE

Game Plan for Agriculture

What's the game plan up ahead for Pajaro Valley agriculture this year given all of the rain and flooding?

I think it is currently hard to say what is ahead for our agriculture here in the Pajaro Valley, but will break it down into three parts to try and explain it better.

The extent of the damage is not yet fully calculated: While there has been some commentary in the local and national news concerning the extent of the losses to agriculture here, it is still difficult to figure out and say which fields are going to be ok and which are not. A field which has been flooded may still be salvageable in some areas, or it may not because it simply was silted over too much or was underwater for too long. Time will tell.

Expect delays in production: For strawberries, fruiting will be delayed by at least a month. Some farms at this time last year were already harvesting, while this

year we are just starting to see flowers, if that. Likewise, fields of other commodities are going to be delayed simply because field preparation and planting have simply been impossible because of the immense amounts of moisture we have received.

Keep your eye on soil disease: Beyond the tremendous amount of damage realized in our area because of the flooding and resulting silting, the soil disease Phytophthora, which is after all a water mold, is going to be a big issue for many crops this year. Is already seen several soil samples come up positive for this pathogen, and since the water movement of the flooding, fields which were previously not contaminated with this pathogen now will be.

The above has been a brief commentary on the effect of the recent flooding on agriculture in the Pajaro Valley. For questions about this issue and others relating to agriculture in our area, please contact Mark Bolda mpbolda@ucanr.edu.

Interesting California Trivia

urnace Creek, CA holds the record for the highest recorded air temperature on Earth at 134 °F (56.7 °C) on July 10, 1913. Furnace Creek also holds the record for the highest recorded natural ground surface temperature on Earth at 201 °F (93.9 °C) on July 15, 1972, and also holds some other temperature records. The majority of people who work and live in the national park are located in Furnace Creek, where the record temperature was recorded. The town is situated in a long and narrow basin around 280 feet below sea level.

THE WATER NANNY

Forces of Nature

n the March issue of Between the Furrows I opined about the struggles to deal with post flooding of farm fields.

I figured after President Biden flew into Watsonville the storm was over. But not so quick, while the article was prescient, it did not prophesize the magnitude of flooding which inundated the north end of Monterey County.

So, in March Governor Newsom stood overlooking the Great Pajaro Flood of 2023 with some relief, and the prospect of a town protected from future flooding by 2029. Repeatedly over the past 20 years your Nanny has discussed the need for flood control and the demands of the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for local financial commitment and, in several cases, fantastical designs for flood protection. Unfortunately, this long delay in flood protection is caused by two opposing forces; those who think that a levee should protect us from a 100-year flood and the Army Corps bean counters who will not fund levee protection without a clear economic benefit of the property, not lives, protected when built.

The standard for flood protection is to withstand this, not so imaginary, 100-year flood. It is uncertain what criteria was used in 1949 when the present levee was built, but it only lasted until 1955 when Watsonville suffered a Christmas flood, and the levee was overtopped or destroyed several times since. So then build a levee to protect us all to this standard, seems fair. The Pajaro river is divided into several sections for new levee construction: 1) Right bank, the Watsonville side, east of the 1 bridge to Salsipuedes Creek. 2) Salsipuedes and Corralitos Creeks to Green Valley Rd., and 3) the left bank (such a romantic phrase) consisting of Pajaro from 1 to a new levee connection the river to the hillside south of the river, which levee will cross San Juan Rd two miles east of Porter Dr. There would be no construction west of 1 or east of Salsipuedes on the Santa Cruz side. Also no new construction south of the Pajaro east of the new levee,

where the breach in 2023 and 1995 actually occurred.

This is not a bad solution, not great, but it took decades for this result. Prior various proposals did nothing to protect the Watsonville neighborhood along Bridge St., Salsipuedes, or much of Pajaro. There was a laughable ring levee proposed for Pajaro, which would have raised the railroad bridge and Main St bridge causing elevated roads on either side, with all farmland omitted. Then again there was the OCMZ, an optimized channel meander zone, placing levee setbacks way onto farmland to allow the river to naturally wander, and slowly fill in, its channel.



After the life threatening flood of 1995 why did it take so long to cut a deal, and funding? As the 2019 final USACE report stated, a cost/benefit evaluation was necessary. This scored affluent urban areas well to the detriment of rural towns and disadvantaged communities. For example, the embankment along the Carmel River within 2/3 mile above Highway 1 (the Crossroads) had a population of 633, 111 buildings and property value of \$258M, or \$390M/mile. Pajaro from 1, over 9.22 miles, has 3,597 people, 811 buildings and a value of \$481M, or \$52M/mile. Watsonville side is about \$193M/mile. The area east of Salsiquedes, all highly productive farm land, is \$5M/mile, thus no levee work here.

Prior to 1995 the flooding discussion with the Army Corps was academic, and combined with their economic analysis, futile. After that flood, the USACE stepped up their game, through various permutations came up with today's plan in 2019, at a cost of \$434,210,000, financed only in part by the Feds. This was a take it or leave it offer. Fortunately, some of our politicians stepped up to both argue for its acceptance, but also to seek funding from California to cover the amount to be paid by Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. Zach Friend helped galvanize support to accept this gift from the Army Corps, and Senator Laird and Congressman Panetta, among many others, scored with funding. "Life is not a matter of holding good cards, but sometimes, playing a poor hand well." (Jack London)



FAVORITE RECIPES

Hot Cross Buns

'm sure we are all hoping that by Easter, Spring will have sprung and we can move forward with family gatherings, Easter egg hunts and warmer/dryer weather. In my family, hot cross buns were always synonymous with Easter morning celebrations. Not to say they would not be great anytime of the year, so give them a try.

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup whole milk

1/2 cup sugar

4 1/2 teaspoons active dry yeast (2 (1/4 ounce packages)

1/3 cup unsalted butter, melted, plus as needed

1 large egg yolk

1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

3 cups all purpose flour

3/4 teaspoon fine salt

1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg

- 1. Combine the water and milk in a medium saucepan and warm over low heat until about 100°F (but no more than 110°F). Remove from heat and sprinkle the yeast and a pinch of sugar and flour over the surface of the liquid. Set aside without stirring, until foamy and rising up the sides of the pan, about 30 minutes.
- 2. Whisk the butter, egg yolk and vanilla into the yeast mixture.
- 3. Whisk the flour, the remaining sugar, salt, nutmeg, cinnamon and ginger in a large bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and stir in the yeast mixture with a wooden spoon to make a thick, shaggy, and slightly sticky dough. Stir in currants. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until soft and elastic, about 8 minutes. Shape into a ball.
- 4. Brush the inside of a large bowl with butter. Put dough in bowl, turning to coat lightly with butter. Cover with plastic wrap. Let rise at room temperature until doubled in size, about 1 hour 30 minutes. (If you have a marker, trace a circle the size of the dough on the plastic, and note the time to help you keep track.)
- 5. To form the rolls: Butter a 9 x 14 inch baking pan. Turn the dough out of the bowl and pat into a rectangle about 16 x 8 inches. Divide the dough into 12 equal

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 cup currants, plumped in the microwave and cooled

1 egg beaten, for brushing

For the icing/glaze:

2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

2 tablespoons milk

1/4 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

- portions, about 2 ounces each, with a pizza wheel or bench scraper. (If you don't have a scale, divide the dough in half lengthwise, then in half crosswise. Cut each of those four sections into 3 equal-sized rolls.)
- 6. Tuck the edges of the dough under to make round rolls and place them seam-side down in the prepared pan, leaving a little space in between each roll. Cover the pan with buttered plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place until the rolls rise almost to the rim of the pan and have more than doubled in size, about 45 minutes.
- 7. Meanwhile, position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 375°F.
- 8. Remove the plastic wrap and brush the tops of the buns with beaten egg. Bake rolls until golden brown and puffy, and an instant read thermometer inserted into the center of the rolls registers 190°, about 25 minutes.
- 9. For the glaze: Stir together confectioners' sugar, milk, lemon zest and vanilla until smooth. Transfer icing to a zip bag or pastry bag, and make a small cut in the corner of the bag. Ice buns in a thick cross shape over the top of the warm buns. ■



Join the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau



The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau is a vital part of our community, providing an important voice for the Santa Cruz County and Pajaro Valley agriculture industry. Everyone is eligible to apply for Farm Bureau membership 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 141 Monte Vista Avenue Watsonville, CA 95076 sccfb@sbcglobal.net (831) 724-1356

I'm a Farm Bureau Member/ Supporter because...





I am proud to be a Farm Bureau member because our local farmers work with such devotion, grow our food and provide economic vitality to our community. The local organization has great leadership.

Save the Date

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

Wednesday, April 26, 2023 Heritage Hall, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

SCCFB 105th Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 22, 2023 Rodgers House, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

30th Annual Golf Tournament

Friday, July 14, 2023 Pajaro Valley Golf Club

California State Fair

Friday, July 14, 2023 to Sunday, July 30, 2023 Cal Expo, Sacramento

Santa Cruz County Fair

Wednesday, September 13 to Sunday, September 17, 2023 Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

Annual Directors' Dinner

Thursday, November 2, 2023 Location to be determined

CFBF Annual Meeting

Saturday, December 2 to Wednesday, December 6, 2023 Reno, NV

Agri-Culture

15th Annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon

Thursday, May 11, 2023 Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos

14 Annual Testicle Festival

Saturday, August 26, 2023 Estrada Deer Camp

27th Annual Farm Dinner

Saturday, October 21, 2023 Location to be determined

A Season of Climate Whiplash



his has been the wettest winter in California since 2017 and one of the rainiest in state history. Record snowfalls have occurred in the Sierras and record rains to our region. Donner Summit has broken a forty-year record, getting 675 inches of snow by mid-March, while the snow level on

Mammoth Mountain stands at over 700 inches. Santa Cruz has received over 46 inches of rain this year; downtown Los Angeles 25 inches (171% of normal). The precipitation has alleviated the extreme drought that has plagued California in recent years – not ending it completely but leaving the state clearly better off for water resources than it was even a year ago. Assessing the level of groundwater supply is more difficult, as groundwater aquifers recharge slowly. The state's increased dependence on groundwater over the prolonged period of drought means that it would take many years of solid rainy seasons for these to fully recover. (The California Department of Water Resources will take annual snowpack measurements in April, and if the Sierras have spring temperatures conducive to slow snowmelt this can help to further improve the extent to which aguifers are able to recharge.)

With the many obvious benefits to the state's depleted water reserves, the heavy rains this winter have also resulted in tremendous loss due to flooding. In Santa Cruz County, neighborhoods from Felton to Watsonville experienced flood events, causing heavy damage to residences, roads, and infrastructure. A federal emergency declaration made

by President Biden on March 10th has made FEMA disaster assistance available to forty-three counties in California, including Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. Agricultural production acreage in the County suffered losses from the flooding as well, including delayed planting for vegetable growers with fields flooded or too saturated to work, and inundated berry fields which will cause both direct losses and losses due to delays in the harvest season. All told, this damage and delay to ag production in the County will be costly for growers as well as those workers and businesses that are involved with their operations, and clean-up and reconditioning of affected fields will be extensive. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made disaster assistance available, both technical and financial, for farmers significantly impacted by the winter flooding. Growers should contact our local USDA Service Center (Monterey/Santa Cruz/ San Mateo FSA Office) about recovery assistance options. The Farm Services Agency (FSA) also makes farm loans available, including operating and emergency farm loans. In addition, FSA runs the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), a costshare program where eligible producers are reimbursed for a percentage of the clean-up and restoration expenses. To apply for or inquire about these federally backed assistance programs and options, contact our local USDA/FSA office at:

> 744 LaGuardia Street, Suite A, Salinas, CA 93905 (831) 424-7377

Contact information for our USDA/FSA Service Center as well as more information regarding their assistance programs can also be found at our website, www.agdept.com.

President's Message - Continued from Page 2

is almost fully approved and funded. Most recently, Pajaro Valley residents and businesses voted overwhelmingly to support a new tax that will pay for levee maintenance, which we have long known is just as important as the rebuilding of the structure itself.

In today's regulatory environment, though, it seems that no work (no matter how critical) can happen fast enough. The levee overhaul is not scheduled to start for at least another year or two. In the meantime, the weather has not cooperated. I think we're all hoping that next winter is a bit milder – and in the meantime, let's finally get to work on those long-overdue levee repairs.

California Legislature Expands Pay Data Reporting and Pay Transparency: SB 1162



overnor Newsom signed
Senate Bill 1162 on
September 27, 2022,
(effective January 1, 2023) amending
Government Code section 12999 and
Labor Code section 432.3, expanding
pay data reporting and increasing
pay scale transparency.

Existing law required private employers with 100 or more employees who are required to submit an annual Employer Information Report (EEO-1) to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission must also submit a pay data report to the California Civil Rights Department (CCRD) each year before March 31. Existing law allowed employers to satisfy the California reporting requirement by submitting a federal EEO-1 with the same or similar pay data information to the CCRD.

SB 1162 now requires all private employers with one hundred or more employees to submit a pay data report to the CCRD by the second Wednesday of May each year, beginning on May 10, 2023. Under the new law, employers can no longer satisfy this requirement by submitting an EEO-1 with similar information. SB 1162 expands the data that must be reported. Under existing law, the pay data report must include the number of employees by race, ethnicity and sex in specified job categories. SB 1162 now requires that the pay data report also include the median and mean hourly rate for each combination of race, ethnicity and sex within each job category.

Employers with more than one establishment previously had to report for each establishment and a consolidated report that includes all employees. SB 1162 removes the consolidated report requirement.

SB 1162 adds a reporting requirement for contracted workers. Private employers with one hundred or more employees hired through labor contractors within the previous calendar year must file a separate pay data report for those workers. Employers must also include in the pay data report the ownership names of all labor contractors used to supply employees. This pay data report is also due by

the second Wednesday of May each year, beginning on May 10, 2023.

SB 1162 defines a "labor contractor" as "an individual or entity that supplies, either with or without a contract, a client employer with workers to perform labor within the client employer's usual course of business." So, agricultural employers should not have to report labor contractors that supply janitorial workers.

SB 1162 does not address where a labor contractor supplies both workers who perform work within the employer's usual course of business and workers who perform work not within the employer's usual course of business. So until an administrative agency or a court case refines the reporting requirement, the better practice would be to report all persons supplied by a labor contractor.

Also, SB 1162 requires labor contractors to "supply all necessary pay data to the private employer" But it does not define what "all necessary pay data" includes and does not impose a deadline for labor contractors to supply the data. Employers should verify any labor contractors are aware of the responsibility to provide the necessary pay data before the May reporting deadline and should include this obligation in any contract with the labor contractor.

The California Civil Rights Department could seek an order requiring employers to comply with these reporting requirements and recover costs. SB 1162 now permits courts to add a civil penalty of up to \$100 per employee on employers who do not file the required report and a civil penalty of up to \$200 per employee for any later violation.

Under present law, employers must provide job applicants with the pay scale for a position upon reasonable request. Under SB 1162, employers with 15 or more employees must affirmatively include the pay scale for a position in any job posting. This obligation extends to any third party the employer has announce, post, publish or otherwise make the job posting known. SB 1162 also adds to Labor Code section 432.3 to require employers to provide employees with the pay scale for the position in which the employee is currently employed, upon reasonable request.

Continued on Page 9

News & Information from RCD

Written by Dan Hermstad, Agriculture Program Specialist Resource Conservation District, Santa Cruz County

Irrigation and Water Conservation

pring is here! It's time to start thinking about irrigation and, more importantly for the future of Ag in our region, how we can best save water while giving our crops all the water they need. For a long time people thought that water conservation was anti-farming but farmers in the Pajaro Valley led the way in showing that we can be pro-farming and pro-water conservation. The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County is your one stop shop for free assistance to conserve water while keeping your crop happy. We offer the following services:

- Irrigation Monitoring we'll install equipment at an irrigated block and show you how to use Cropmanage to see how much water you are putting on your crop. We'll also show you how much water the crop is using and where you can make improvements to your overall system.
- Distribution Uniformity and Water Audit our team will conduct an evaluation on your whole irrigation system to show you what parts of the field are receiving

- less water than others. We'll also be able to point out weak points in the system such as low pressure, bad/faulty equipment, etc.
- PV Water Rebate for any equipment that saves water

 RCD staff will review your site and discuss your ideas for equipment that will help you to apply water more efficiently or otherwise save water. Examples of what the rebate can be used for include: efficient sprinkler heads, pipe gaskets, VFD's, PC tape on hills, etc. The program covers 100% of costs up to \$5,000 and 50% of costs above \$5,000 up to \$20,000.

We also offer free services to help you with your Total Nitrogen Applied reporting for the water board and, generally, can offer assistance around nutrient management on your fields.

Please contact us directly if any of the above are things you could use some help with. Reach out to Dan Hermstad at dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org or Sacha Lozano at slozano@rcdsantacruz.org.

Legally Speaking - Continued from Page 8

SB 1162 adds a requirement that employers must keep records of the job title and wage rate history for each employee for the duration of the employment, and for three years after termination and these records must be open to inspection by the State Labor Commissioner.

SB 1162 requires the Labor Commissioner to investigate complaints alleging violations of these requirements and authorizes the Labor Commissioner to order an employer to pay a civil penalty for any violations. The new law also authorizes a person hurt by a violation of these provisions to seek an injunction and other civil remedies.

National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

Rescheduled for Wednesday, April 26, 2023 Heritage Hall, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds 11:30 .am. to 1:30 p.m.

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