

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

FEBRUARY 2017
VOLUME 41, ISSUE 2

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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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LAKESIDE ORGANIC GARDENS TO BE MAJOR “CENTENNIAL SPONSOR”

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Is Celebrating Its 100th Anniversary In 2017



It was recently announced that Lakeside Organic Gardens is the \$50,000 “Centennial Sponsor” for the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau (SCCFB). 2017 marks the 100th Anniversary of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, one of the oldest non-profit organizations in the county. Thomas Broz, President of the County Farm Bureau, stated “We are honored to have the support of Lakeside Organic Gardens during this special year. Lakeside is an innovative leader in local agriculture and a generous contributor to our community.” Lakeside Organic Gardens will be highlighted throughout the year in the activities of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau as well as in all publications. Dick Peixoto, Owner of Lakeside Organic Gardens, stated, “I’ve been involved with the Farm Bureau for decades and feel honored to partner with them to

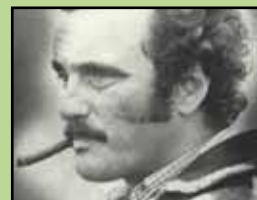
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Please Join Us For A Relaxing Evening to Raise Funds for the JJ Crosetti, Jr Memorial Fund

Shadowbrook restaurant has again selected the organization Agri-Culture for a community dinner on **Tuesday, February 21st**. The Agri-Culture Board of Directors has designated the **JJ Crosetti, Jr. Memorial Fund** to be the recipient of the money raised that evening. There is no formal program for the evening, it’s just friends and family going out to dinner and one third of their bill will go to the Crosetti Fund.

Reservations should be made directly with Shadowbrook. When making the reservation, please **tell them you are attending for the nonprofit organization, Agri-Culture.** If you enjoy appetizers and cocktails at the bar that evening, please tell them you are there for **Agri-Culture.**

Please come and join us for an enjoyable evening! The Crosetti family looks forward to seeing you there.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SCCFB.COM

President's Message

THOMAS BROZ, PRESIDENT



“As much as we value our independence as farmers it is important (more than ever) to build healthy partnerships among agriculture organizations that harness the strength of more collective action to build awareness around the issues affecting agriculture and defend the interests of farmers to reduce the risk and increase their resilience during these times of uncertainty .”

The Nature of Farming - Often Unpredictable!

Last week we had a rather humorous incident here on the farm where mother nature took things into her own hands. It was just before dusk on a Sunday afternoon when I went out to bring “Bella”, our milking cow, in from the hillside pasture behind our house. This chore normally doesn’t take more than ten to fifteen minutes. Bella, being a very docile Jersey cow, typically waits patiently to be led into her paddock near the barn where she is fed and stays the night to be milked the next morning. That particular evening Bella was nowhere to be found and after a two-hour search - mostly in the dark, I gave up, hoping to have more luck the next morning. During dinner I got an unexpected call from a rancher friend down the road who asked if I was missing my cow. After I confirmed that I was, he laughed saying that she had wandered over to visit his herd of Hereford cattle at the bottom of Pioneer road probably paying “Ocho,” his breeding bull, a visit. I was incredulous. That’s almost 2 miles away from our farm, separated by fences and roads. He assured me she was safe staying the night with the rest of the herd and added jokingly that he might have to charge me a stud (breeding) fee. Go figure! Good thing I am not a dairy farmer. I know vegetables will stay put where I plant them.

Every farmer and rancher is continuously faced with the vagaries of nature and knows to accept the risk and unpredictability of its impacts. These January rains seem to be

a good example; our winter is shaping up to be much wetter than any we have seen in awhile. As I try to finalize my crop plan for the season, I am typically making decisions three to nine months into the future. To stay on schedule with my harvest projections; for example, my next planting of broccoli and sowing of carrots should be next week. At this very moment as heavy rains are drenching the farm and I am getting flash flood warnings on my cell phone, I will need to be flexible and adjust to the conditions at hand. Farming is different from other businesses in that it is fundamentally dependent on climate and nature’s God-given biological principles. Farmers know they can only move

President’s Message - Continued on Page 8

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New Minimum Wage and Overtime Laws

Q: What can you tell me about the new minimum wage and overtime laws?

A: New minimum wage (Senate Bill No. 3) and overtime (Assembly Bill No. 1066) laws for agricultural operations were passed in 2016. There are different phase-in schedules for growers who employ 26 or more workers vs those who employ 25 or fewer workers—farms in the “fewer” category have longer phase-in time horizons. It is not yet clear what the overall impact of the laws will be on prevailing agricultural wages, therefore agricultural labor costs are currently in flux. At UC Cooperative Extension we perform cost and return analysis for a variety of crops produced in California. In the most recent studies for this area we estimated the base hourly wage rates at \$11.50 per hour for field labor (including irrigators) and \$15.50 per hour for equipment operators. Benefits packages were estimated at an additional 40 percent. Wages and benefits packages vary from farm to farm and depend upon individual situations.

Table 1. shows the minimum wage phase-in schedule and the percent increase by year. It is worth noting that the wages rates used in our studies are higher than the state’s required minimum wage for 2016. The new overtime law will gradually decrease the number of hours employees can work on a weekly basis before overtime wages are required. Prior to its passage field workers (including irrigators) and equipment operators could work up to 60 hours per week without overtime wages; by 2022 the requirement will be lowered to 40 hours per week. Table 1 shows the phase-in schedule for the new overtime law and the overtime hours per week for 60-hour work weeks, which are most likely during peak production and harvest periods. Additional overtime stipulations are written into the law, but are not discussed here.

Table 1. Minimum Wage and Overtime Phase-In Schedules, 2016 – 2022*

| CA Law Phase-In: Minimum Wage | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Minimum wage | 10.00 | 10.50 | 11.00 | 12.00 | 13.00 | 14.00 | 15.00 |
| Percent increase by year | na | 5.0 | 4.8 | 9.0 | 8.3 | 7.7 | 7.1 |
| CA Law Phase-In: Overtime | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Hours per week (non-overtime) | 60 | 60 | 60 | 55 | 50 | 45 | 40 |
| Overtime hours per week** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 |

* For employers with 26 or more employees. Smaller operations have a longer phase-in time horizon.

** Assuming a 60-hour work week.

How wages will change, over time, for agricultural operations in this area is still in question. As an alternative to hiring farm workers directly, growers may also elect to use contract labor or the H-2A visa program to employ workers because of labor constraints and on-farm operational needs. If using either one of these two approaches, base wages, benefits and compliance with housing, meals, transportation, and other requirements will vary, and may result in labor costs that are higher than those discussed here. Please call or email our office if you would like additional information.

THE WATER NANNY

Apple City

It is hard to find a farm town with a colorful past. No gold rush wealth, no river gamblers; well, maybe some small time gaming and vice, but nothing to write home about. About the most colorful part of our town history is its founding. Judge John Watson and D. S. Gregory laid out the town in 1852. The ownership of the town site was based on a claim Watson filed in 1851 against Sebastian Rodriguez, owner of Rancho Bolsa de Pajaro. Land theft was common in the early years of the State of California. Spanish and Mexican grants were to be recognized, but little documentation and fewer attorneys existed. The claim was rejected and Watson, as they say, left town. Don Rodriguez was not the only Mexican land grant owner to confront a land grab by Yankees, he fared better than many. Even so, the town, named Watsonville, was incorporated in March 30, 1868. Don Rodriguez graciously donated the city plaza to the people of Watsonville.



Watsonville has grown ever since. Harvests varied, but there was always a dominant crop. Claus Spreckels built his first sugar beet factory on Walker St. Beets were a staple for a long time. Indeed the town logo used to include a sheaf of wheat and a sugar beet. However, good

beets were less profitable than apples, leading to a carpet of orchards and the Apple City moniker. At one point we had more freezer and cold storage than anywhere in the country. Despite Martinelli's best efforts, apples long ago gave way to berries and organic vegetables.

The town had its ups and downs too. In the 50's when Alfred Hitchcock filmed *Vertigo* in San Juan Bautista, the stars stayed at the Resetar Hotel, the finest in the area. People from Gilroy would journey over Mount Madonna for movies, as there were two theaters in Watsonville. The cannery strike in 1985, followed by the devastation of the Loma Prieta earthquake left holes in the social fabric and streetscape that lasted decades.

For too long we have heard city council members decry a ridiculous unemployment rate north of 17%. Where this figure came from is unclear, and as any farmer knows, the actual rate of unemployment among people willing to work is

close to zero. The town administrators have been milking the disadvantaged community funding tit for too long. It is very hard to attract new businesses, or residents, to the Pajaro Valley if we tout the economic profile of an Appalachian coal town.



Truth is stranger than this fiction. From Lakeview Farms' new cooler, to FedEx, from housing projects to classy apartments on Main Street, the town is blooming. Three new hotels have been approved and one more is in the planning stages. Even a Chinese company has come to town to build two residential subdivisions. We may even soon see a grand revival of downtown with the replacement of the old city hall and police department with a large mixed use development revitalizing the town core. Combine that with new breweries, wine tasting rooms and restaurants and it is a story of growth in the new year. Best yet, all this growth is within the city limits and no farmland is lost to our civic improvement. Watsonville needs to move from the shadow of prior political expediency and display our true, better self. *Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.* Abraham Lincoln



"A good life is when you assume nothing, do more, smile often, dream big, laugh a lot and realize how blessed you are."

Author Unknown



FAVORITE RECIPES

Basil Shrimp & Artichoke Pasta

Thank you to Kirk and Carol Schmidt for sharing this recipe with us.

If you have a recipe you would like to share, please email it to jemawalter@sbcglobal.net. We love to share our local recipes with our readers!

- 1 lb. penne pasta
- 1 lb. fresh shrimp, de-veined, trimmed & shelled
- 1/2 medium white onion, sliced thin
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 oz. fresh basil, chopped
- 1 oz. fresh chives, chopped
- 1 (16 oz.) jar of prepared Alfredo-style sauce
- 2 (6.5 oz.) jars of marinated artichoke hearts, drained
- Freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Cook penne pasta according to directions. Cook shrimp and white onion with four tablespoons olive oil in a skillet. Chop four tablespoons each, basil and chives and reserve remaining sprigs for garnish. Drain cooked pasta and return to pan. Combine hot pasta with chopped basil and chives, Alfredo sauce, artichoke hearts and shrimp. Salt & pepper to taste. Serve with grated fresh Parmesan cheese. Garnish with whole basil leaves. Enjoy! Serves approximately 6.

Lakeside Organic Gardens - Continued from page 1



Dick Peixoto

celebrate their 100th anniversary. The Farm Bureau is an awesome organization and continues to be the leader in Santa Cruz County agriculture." The Farm Bureau is the largest agricultural organization in the county and has continued to be at the forefront of many issues that affect agriculture at the state and national levels. President Broz stated, "Santa Cruz is the second smallest geographic county

in the state (next to San Francisco) but has been a major leader on agricultural issues such as the first to promote buffer zones when development occurs next to farms, the first to have organic growers serve on its board of directors, and one of the first to have a woman serve as president." Broz continued, "SCCFB is unique in that it is an organization that welcomes all members of the agriculture community by offering a platform where to network, engage, and represent the issues and interests affecting their particular industry or trade. Over the years the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau has helped to establish many other organizations such as the educational organization Agri-Culture, the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, Ag Against Hunger, Ag HELP (Helping Employees with Legalization Papers), to name a few." The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau and some of the organizations it helped establish have received many state and national awards. To celebrate the Centennial year, the organization is incorporating the anniversary into many of its yearly activities as well as 100 things for the public to do during the year that are agriculture-related.

USDA And ARS Communication Practices Reviewed By New Trump Administration



The Washington Post reported on Wednesday, January 25th that employees of the US Agriculture Department were ordered on Monday January 23rd to stop publication of “outward facing” documents and news releases, which the Post said caused concern that the new Trump administration would try to influence distribution of ARS research findings.

The Monday memo reportedly caused confusion. Department employees revised the memo Tuesday afternoon, saying the (ARS) had not “blacked out public information” and that scientific articles published through professional peer-reviewed journals have not been banned. If a ban were imposed, it would have conflicted with established scientific integrity standards and previous encouragement but not requirement that USDA scientists communicate with the media about their scientific findings. By Tuesday evening, another email went out to employees saying Monday’s internal email was released before receiving official guidance and was rescinded.

The ARS memo was not coordinated with other offices at the USDA, department officials said, and partially contradicted a different department-wide memo that went out on the same day. The other, USDA-wide memo, issued by the Department’s acting deputy administrator was intended to offer guidance on “interim procedures” until a new secretary takes over USDA.

The deputy director reportedly said during a phone call with reporters that his guidance did not place a gag order on publication to scientific journals, does not place a blanket freeze on press releases, nor prohibit food safety announcements.

The Monday memo, a copy of which was given to The Washington Post, reportedly said that press releases and policy statements must be routed through the office of the Secretary of Agriculture for approval to deliver a unified, consistent messages. The Monday memo reportedly said that policy-related statements should not be made to the press without notifying and consulting the Office of the

Secretary of Agriculture, including press releases and on and off the record conversations.

ARS is the main research arm of the USDA. ARS is charged with extending scientific knowledge and solving agricultural problems through its four national program areas: nutrition, food safety and quality; animal production and protection; natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems; and crop production and protection. ARS has more than 2,200 permanent scientists working on approximately 1,100 research projects at more than 100 locations in the US.

The “public-facing documents” memo Monday, which was first reported by BuzzFeed, raised fears among some that the Trump administration would filter articles about ARS scientific research.

The USDA and ARS have however issued media guidance in the past. Under the Obama administration, guidance published in 2013 said that USDA employees should clear any “media inquiries on topics that are sensitive” with public affairs staffers. That media guidance also reported by the Post to have urged them to communicate with supervisors about “any instances where they feel public affairs or communications staff is stifling their ability to communicate about their work.”

The USDA does not yet have a permanent department head. Former Georgia governor Sonny Perdue was nominated by President Trump to head the USDA last week but has not yet begun the confirmation process. The congressional committee overseeing his hearing has not given guidance on when his hearing will take place, pending his submission of necessary paperwork

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FROM THE AG COMMISSIONER

By Juan Hidalgo, Agricultural Commissioner, Sealer of Weights and Measures

Crop Report Survey Time!



The Agricultural Commissioner's Office is in the process of sending crop report surveys to all our growers in order to collect production data for 2016. We hope to begin receiving completed surveys in the next few weeks. The data received is used to prepare

our annual crop report. The data is compiled solely for the purpose of reporting total county-wide statistical averages. Nothing in the report details information specific to any grower, property operator or business. The surveys themselves are destroyed upon completion of the crop report. Providing a statistical description of county agricultural production is one of the functions of the local agricultural commissioner. The annual crop report is an important record for our county. The report provides a window of information on agricultural production and economics in Santa Cruz County and serves as a good indicator of the health of the local farming community. The statistical data contained in the report allows our growers and our community to get a sense of agriculture in Santa Cruz County. In 2015 the total

gross production value for our county was \$625,438,000 with the number one commodity being strawberries valued at \$219,233,000! Information gathered at the county level is used by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to assess the value of agriculture statewide. California agriculture was valued at \$47 billion dollars in 2015, making California the leading state in cash farm receipts. California growers produce more than a third of our nation's vegetables and two-thirds of the nation's fruits and nuts. Commodities grown in Santa Cruz County that are in the state's top ten list include:

- Cattle, calves – valued at \$3.39 billion
- Lettuce – valued at \$2.25 billion
- Strawberries – valued at \$1.86 billion

The importance of Californian's agricultural production cannot be understated. California's agriculture is so important that our state receives more support and funding from the federal government for its protection than any other state. This is all thanks to your participation at the local level. Your contribution is essential in helping to create a more thorough and accurate report and to continue to promote and support agriculture in our county, California, and our nation. Thank you for taking the time to complete and return your survey.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY SPRING LUNCHEON

Heritage Hall, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

\$45 per person

To make reservations, please call the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau
(831) 724-1356 or visit the website at www.sccfb.com

WE ARE HONORED...

Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture Honors Dick Peixoto, Frank & Loretta Estrada & DEW Luncheon

The Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture held their Annual Awards Dinner on Saturday, January 28, 2017. The recipients chosen by the Pajaro Valley Chamber are very close to our organization and to the organization Agri-Culture.

- **Dick Peixoto - "Man of the Year"**
- **The Down to Earth Women Luncheon - "Event of the Year"**
- **Frank & Loretta Estrada - The Lifetime Achievement Award**

Congratulations to all of the recipients.



Marisella & Dick Peixoto

Dick Peixoto has dedicated a lifetime to the Pajaro Valley. Over the last several decades, the young man growing string beans in high school has grown to be the largest family-owned, solely organic grower, packer-shipper in the U.S. And with his highly successful career in organic farming, he has made it a habit of giving back to the community. Dick has been a member and director of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau for many years. For these and many other reasons, Dick has been named the **2016 Man of the Year!**

This year will mark the 10th Anniversary of the **Down to Earth Women Luncheon**. During these ten years, the DEW



Down to Earth Women Luncheon 2016



Katherine Barr

Luncheon has raised over \$440,000 dollars for agriculture education and scholarships in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. A dedicated group of women organize this annual event sponsored by the organization Agri-Culture. It has become one of the premier events of year, one highly anticipated by the nearly 250 women who attend. And that number continues to grow. Congratulations to all of the committee members and participants for making the luncheon so successful and being named **Event of the Year!**

Frank & Loretta Estrada have been volunteering from the time they were young children and continue to do so today. The number of organizations, schools, boards and districts that have benefited from the energy of this dynamic duo is countless. The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau has been one of those grateful organizations and congratulate Frank and Loretta for being given the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce **Lifetime Achievement Award!**



Frank & Loretta Estrada

President's Message - [Continued from page 2](#)

at nature's pace and therefore the issues and conditions they face are unique and often misunderstood.

As much as we value our independence as farmers it is important (more than ever) to build healthy partnerships among agriculture organizations that harness the strength of

more collective action to build awareness around the issues affecting agriculture and defend the interests of farmers to reduce the risk and increase their resilience during these times of uncertainty.

Wettest Winter in Years

I concluded November's article with the line, "let's hope the storms pay us a return visit soon." Well, we must have all done something more than hope, because the rains have hardly let up since then! We have been blessed with one of the wettest winters in recent years, and here at the Resource Conservation District, we have been inundated with calls for assistance from residents to help them manage impacts caused by rainfall and runoff. The prolonged, and often intense, atmospheric river events that we've seen this year remind us of what winter can be like on the Central Coast. Driving through the valley this fall, I saw lots of early planning and implementation of practices such as furrow alignment, use of cover crops, ditch armoring and water bars, among many others. However, the volume of rain and resulting runoff can expose weakness in even the best winter preparedness efforts. If you are experiencing problems, whether practices are not functioning as intended or unanticipated problems have emerged, the RCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service can assist you and provide recommendations. In some cases, there may be financial assistance to help with practice implementation. For more information on ways to manage the impacts of winter storms, contact the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service at (831) 475-1967 or the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County at (831) 464-2950.

Happy
Valentine's
Day

2017 Calendar of Events

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

Heritage Hall, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds
March 15, 2017
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

100th Annual Meeting

Watsonville Slough Farms
June 22, 2017
5:45 p.m.

California State Fair

Cal Expo, Sacramento, CA
July 14 through July 30, 2017

24th Annual Golf Tournament

Springs Hills Golf Club
12:00 p.m. Shotgun Start, July 14, 2017

Santa Cruz County Fair

September 13 through September 17, 2017

Annual Directors' Dinner

Location to be determined
November 2, 2017
6:15 p.m.

CFBF 98th Annual Meeting

Reno, NV
December 3 through December 6, 2017

Agri-Culture

10th Annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon

Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos
May 11, 2017
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

9th Annual Testicle Festival

Estrada Deer Camp
August 26, 2017
3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

21st Annual Progressive Dinner

To be determined
October 28, 2017
3:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

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AG NEWS

Important February Dates & Deadlines

Community Dinner for the JJ Crosetti, Jr. Memorial Fund
Tuesday, February 21, 2017 - Shadowbrook Restaurant
Reservations Suggested
Tell them you're attending for Agri-Culture

Jimmie Cox Memorial Scholarship Application
Deadline - Wednesday, February 22, 2017 before 4:00 p.m.

National Agriculture Day Poster Contest
Deadline - Wednesday, February 22, 2017
Posters must be submitted before 4:00 p.m.

National Agriculture Day Poetry Contest
Deadline - Wednesday, February 22, 2017
Entries must be submitted before 4:00 p.m.

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Tom Broz, Owner of Live Earth Farm

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CALENDAR

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 14
Happy Valentine's Day

MONDAY - FEBRUARY 20
Presidents' Day observed
Office Closed

WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 22
Deadline for Jimmie Cox
Memorial Scholarship
applications, Poster & Poetry
Contest entries

THURSDAY - FEBRUARY 23
Agricultural Policy Advisory
Commission meeting

THURSDAY - FEBRUARY 23
Board of Directors' meeting

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 1

- Legislative Committee meeting
- Executive Committee meeting
- Membership Committee meeting

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 8
Young Farmers & Ranchers
meeting

FRIDAY - MARCH 10
Public Relations &
Information Committee
meeting

MONDAY - MARCH 13
Public Relations &
Information Committee
meeting

*Happy
Valentine's
Day*

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