

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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INSIDE this issue

- 3 Ask Mark**
Pollination Issues in Strawberries
- 4 Water Nanny**
Fuel Not Fertilizer
- 5 Recipe**
Rosalynn's Hushpuppies & Red, White & Blue Pound Cake
- 12 Calendar**

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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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Jess Brown, Managing Editor

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Past President's Luncheon Held



The 2024 Past Presidents' Lunch was held on Thursday, January 25th at Rancho Santa Maria. Pictured above (L-R) are Kirk Schmidt, Jess Brown, Brendan Miele, Dennis Webb, Shannon Douglass, David Van Lennep, Sherry Mehl, Tom Broz, Nita Gizdich, Michael Theriot, John Pisturino, Arnett Young and Cynthia Mathiesen. Pictured left is Shannon Douglass, the first woman president of the California Farm Bureau (2024) with Sherry Mehl, California's first woman to become a county Farm Bureau president (1984). ■

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



Dennis Webb, President

Spring Is Just Around The Corner

National Agriculture Day Celebration Coming Soon!

Though we're still wading our way through winter, spring is right around the corner. Next month will be March already, bringing with it warmer temperatures, and hopefully a break from wet weather. Every year, I look forward to March for the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau's National Ag Day celebration.

National Ag Day occurs every year in March. It is a day to recognize and appreciate the critical role agriculture plays in our economy and society. It's a day that helps us communicate how food and fiber products are produced, appreciate our farmers for their work providing our food, and acknowledge the opportunities for young people in the agricultural field.

This year, our Farm Bureau will once again host our National Ag Day lunch at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds. This event is

always well-attended by both farmers and non-farmers alike. Each year, the room is packed with everyone from past Farm Bureau presidents to Focus Agriculture graduates. I particularly look forward to the presentation of the Al Smith Friend of Agriculture Award.

Al Smith was the founder of Orchard Supply Hardware and donated Swanton Pacific Ranch to Cal Poly. I never knew Al, but I know he believed strongly in the value of educating farmers and teaching the public about farming. The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau presents the Friend of Agriculture Award in his name each year to recognize an individual, business or organization that has done much for our industry. I hope you will be in attendance for the presentation of this year's award! ■



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Happy Valentines Day!

See page 6 for upcoming events for the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau. Hope to see you there!

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ASK MARK

Mark Bolda, Farm Advisor, UCCE,
Santa Cruz County

Pollination Issues in Strawberries

Q. Could you write about pollination issues in strawberry? It seems there is a wide range of opinions as to how these come about.

A. Yes, there are several reasons for pollination issues in strawberry, but to understand them we need to first review the process of pollination itself.

Pollination is the first step of the fruit development, and it begins when the anther, a part of the male reproductive part of the flower which contains the pollen, ruptures. Some of the pollen grains from the anther are deposited on surrounding receptive pistils, which are the female reproductive parts of the flower. The pollen grain germinates and then begins to grow down through the pistil and fertilizes certain cells of the ovule.

A key point is that this fertilization initiates the growth of the embryo into a seed within a hard fruit called the "achene", which many people refer to as the seed but is actually the true fruit of the strawberry. This achene produces a hormone for enlarging the tissue right around it to form the fleshy material we think of as the fruit and is most of what is eaten. For all of this to form normally into the fruit shape we expect from a strawberry, the maximum number of ovules, say for example 200, must be successfully fertilized. If they aren't, the fruit can end up being misshapen in the forms we are discussing as pollination issues.

Certain weather conditions can bring about failure of flower fertility and subsequent fruit malformation. For example, high heat which dries out the pollen and lessens pistil receptivity is a good candidate for fruit misshaping, as

would be frost on the flower itself which can outright destroy anthers and pistils.

Insect feeding, especially that of lygus bugs, is also a common factor in strawberry misshaping. As lygus numbers increase through the season, this damage becomes more intense in the latter part of the summer. The poking and prodding of the ravenous lygus nymphs in the strawberry flower as well as penetrating the seed coat and disturbing the nascent fruit result frequently in severe fruit twisting in strawberry.

While there has been serious debate about what effects each of these factors; being heat, cold or lygus, have on the subsequent fruit formation, it is important when making diagnoses to take into account what has recently occurred. For example, an early season frost would be the likely culprit of an April flush of deformed strawberry fruit, since lygus numbers are low at this time, and well, it wasn't hot.

The above has been a brief discussion about the causes of deformation of strawberry fruit and possible causes. For questions on this matter and any others related to strawberries or caneberries, please contact Mark Bolda at mpbolda@ucanr.edu. ■



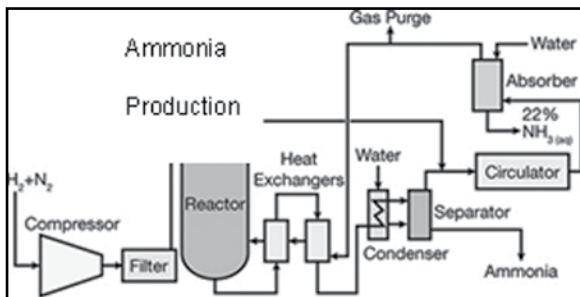
THE WATER NANNY

Fuel not Fertilizer

Apparently, food grown on our farms may become fuel produced on farms, giving meaning to the greening of the chemical industry. Sounds good, but it has several side effects, like diverting fertilizer, that is ammonia, to fuel, and reduced acres for cattle feed, as well. This is a rerun of 2001 with the drive to produce more ethanol to mix with gasoline. Corn farmers were ecstatic, but corn oil producers and cattle feed lots ended up with higher prices.

There is a new demand for genetically modified soybeans with higher oil content. This is part of the green research conducted by Exxon and Chevron to manufacture commercial soy jet fuel. While I do enjoy tofu and a soy latte, I am not the biggest consumer of soybeans; that prize goes to cattle, and cooking oil. California doesn't even rate as a soybean state with the USDA, while Iowa has over 9,950,000 acres of this one crop. Probably insufficient acreage to affordably grow cattle feed and jet fuel.

The Green Revolution is causing disruptions for chemical companies who "manufacture" ammonia for fertilizer and explosives. Before World War I, most ammonia was produced



by animal waste; not really produced, but a by-product. The first synthetic ammonia was invented to rapidly produce nitrogen as an inexpensive explosive. The War to End All Wars ended, the same companies produced ammonia as a fertilizer, ushering in the first green revolution, dramatically increasing crop yields.

We also have another green mandate, to cap methane by reducing cattle herds (belches are a major source of methane). At the same time the price of natural gas, a principal ingredient for ammonia manufacture, rocketed in price due to the Ukrainian war, which reduced worldwide production of ammonia. CF Industries, a major manufacturer,

started rethinking its corporate strategy, after spotting several trends that executives worried could reduce demand for fertilizer, such as interest in meat substitutes and thus declining demand for cattle feed (really?). This shift focused on soy beans grown for hydrogen jet fuel, and future sales of ammonia directly as a hydrogen fuel. It is hard to transport hydrogen (H₂), as the molecule is so tiny it can escape from most tanks. Wrapping H₂ with nitrogen to form ammonia gives the H₂ fuel a longer and safer shelf life. Ammonia delivered to your neighborhood gas station for your shiny new hydrogen car.



The US produces 13 million metric tons of ammonia annually, for fertilizer, bombs, refrigerant, and other uses, only a fraction of what we consume, the rest is imported. A significant by-product of ammonia manufacture using natural gas is CO₂, a pollutant. It is possible to mash H and N together producing H₂ independently from a fuel source, out of thin air, but the cost per ton is significantly higher, and there is still CO₂ disposal. A new startup is proposing, production starting in 2024, to bury CO₂ underground, producing 20,000 tons of ammonia per year (about 0.15%). To produce green ammonia, lots of electricity is necessary, so they need to build giant wind farms. This expensive ammonia will be diverted to power George Jetson's flying car, or your future Toyota, not your farm field.

So much for my lesson in chemistry. From a farmer's perspective the cost of fertilizer is going up, maybe way up. One of the problems for farmers is that we have a very small margin, our annual profit. Large increase in green ammonia, with higher costs, will inevitably lead to less fertilizer, less green in our fields and lower yields. It also means the above mentioned soybeans won't plump up as well either. "Happiness is overrated. There has to be conflict in life" (Brad Pitt). ■



FAVORITE RECIPES

Rosalynn's Hushpuppies

In celebration of February's President's Day festivities, this is a favorite recipe of Rosalynn Carter, wife of President Jimmy Carter. It is included in "The Carter Family Favorites Cookbook".

1 1/4 cups self-rising cornmeal

1 egg beaten

3/4 cup self-rising flour

1/2 cup finely chopped onions

Salt

1 cup buttermilk

Mix all dry ingredients together. Add egg, onion and buttermilk. Drop batter by small spoonfuls into deep fat. They will sink toward the bottom, then pop back to top. Turn if they don't pop over when brown on one side. Drain on paper toweling and serve warm.

Makes about 1 dozen

Red, White & Blue Pound Cake

According to the Library of Congress, this recipe was a White House favorite, especially around the national holidays, such as the 4th of July, and in later years, Memorial Day and President's Day holidays.

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter

1 teaspoon baking powder

2 cups sugar

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

4 eggs

1 cup blueberries, fresh or individually quick frozen

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups raspberries, fresh or individually quick frozen

3 cups all-purpose flour

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease well a standard tube pan.

With an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla. Beat until very smooth and light. Scrape the bowl to make sure everything is emulsified.

Stir in the baking powder, salt, and flour and mix on low until combined. Do not over-mix. Fold in the berries and stir until just mixed throughout.

PRO TIP: If using frozen berries, do not thaw them. Add

them to the cake batter right from the freezer. This will make the cake batter somewhat stiff, but that is fine. Do not over-mix or your batter will become purple!

Bake in the center of the oven until a cake tester comes out clean, about 1 hour 15 minutes, or slightly more. If using frozen berries, it will be closer to 1 hour 20 to 25 minutes.

Cool in the pan until the cake can be handled. Run an offset spatula or knife around the edges of the cake pan. Invert onto a dish, then right side up again onto a cooling rack. Cool fully.

Decorate with a simple powdered sugar glaze, a dusting of powdered sugar, or some buttercream topped with freeze-dried or fresh berries.

"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
sccfb@sbcglobal.net
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I'm a Farm Bureau Member/ Supporter because...

"I am a Farm Bureau member because the Farm Bureau supported my brother and me through college scholarships, job references, community engagement and has protected ranching and farming on the coast side where we were raised."

**Sean Baird, Swanton Pacific Ranch
Director, Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau**

Save the Date

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Heritage Hall, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

SCCFB 107th Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 15, 2024

Big Creek Lumber Property, Swanton

31st Annual Golf Tournament

Friday, July 12, 2024

Pajaro Valley Golf Club

California State Fair

Friday, July 12, 2024 to Sunday, July 28, 2024

Cal Expo, Sacramento

Santa Cruz County Fair

Wednesday, September 11 to Sunday, September 15, 2024

Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

Annual Directors' Dinner

Thursday, November 7, 2024

Location to be determined

CFBF Annual Meeting

Saturday, December 1 to Wednesday, December 4, 2024

Monterey

Agri-Culture

16th Annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon

Thursday, May 9, 2024

Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos

16th Annual Testicle Festival

Saturday, August 24, 2024

Estrada Deer Camp

28th Annual Farm Dinner

Saturday, October 18, 2024

Land Trust Little Bee Barn

Annual Production Survey for the Crop Report



David Sanford

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 2023. We hope to begin receiving completed surveys in the next several 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.

Completing the annual report on 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 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 solid sense of current trends in agriculture in Santa Cruz County. In 2022 the total gross production value for our county was \$666,955,000 with the number one commodity being strawberries valued at \$220,013,000! Information gathered at the county level is used by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to assess the value of agriculture in the state and nationwide. California agriculture was valued at \$55.9 billion dollars in 2022, 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:

- Strawberries – valued at \$2.68 billion
- Lettuce – valued at \$3.15 billion
- Cattle, calves – valued at \$3.63 billion

The 2023 survey will also include a section for comments or information you can share with respect to crop damage/production loss your operation suffered due to the January

and March 2023 atmospheric river events that caused such extensive flooding throughout the county.

The importance of California'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. ■

Strange But Impossibly True!

Sloths can hold their breath longer than dolphins can. Dolphins need air after ten minutes, but a swimming sloth can hold its breath for up to 40 minutes. Their secret: Sloths can slow their heart rate at will, reducing the need for fresh oxygen.

Excerpts from the Readers Digest



**"Rivers never go in reverse. So try to live like a river.
Forget your past and focus on your future.
Always be positive."**

Morgan Freeman

FOCUS AGRICULTURE - CLASS 33

20 Community Leaders Selected for Focus Agriculture, Class 33

Twenty community leaders have been selected for Class 33 of the Focus Agriculture program. This “first-in-the-nation” program is designed for community leaders to learn about agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. Class 33 members include:

Hilary Bryant, Donor Services Director, Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County; **Peter Detlefs**, Principal Administrative Analyst, County of Santa Cruz; **Zeke Fraser**, CEO/Secretary Manager III & Fair Manager, 14th District Agricultural Association; **Nicholas Solano**, Sergeant, Community Policing Division, Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Department; and **Lois Sones**, Program Director, Community Bridges Elderday. (Full list of the 20 class members is below). Each year, more applications are received for this program than spaces available, and the Agri-Culture Board of Directors selects 20 participants.

The program consists of nine day-long sessions, held over a period of eight months. The first session will be held on Friday, March 15th. Speakers ranging from farmers, to elected officials, to representatives from environmental groups will address the class. The sessions will cover such topics as ethnic groups in agriculture, new technology, and diversity of commodities locally grown. In addition, there are many farm tours and hands on experiences. The participants will also spend one day working on a farm.

In announcing the selected participants of Class 33, Agri-Culture President **Steve Bontadelli**, stated, “Community leaders will find this



Hilary Bryant



Peter Detlefs



Zeke Fraser



Nick Solano



Lois Sones

program beneficial and, in turn, growers who present information to the class will learn the public’s current perspective of local agriculture. The program is designed to be a two-way learning process.”

The Focus Agriculture program received a national award for its innovative approach to bringing the public and the agricultural community together. ■

Focus Agriculture, Class 33 - 2024

Steve Allen, President/CEO, Allen Property Group, Inc.

Hilary Bryant, Donor Services Director, Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County

Drew Clowser, Marketing Manager, Lakeside Organic Gardens, LLC

Leah Cowan, Government Relations, Sutter Health

Liz Dasher, Fund Development Director, Hospice of Santa Cruz

Peter Detlefs, Principal Administrative Analyst, County of Santa Cruz

Brent Dunton, VP, Senior Business Banking Officer, Santa Cruz County Bank

Zeke Fraser, CEO/Secretary III & Fair Manager, 14th District Agricultural Association

Ramon Gomez, Chief of Staff, Santa Cruz County Supervisor, Felipe Hernandez

Vance Landis, Founder/CEO & President, Gateway Health Management/Heritage Farms

Sara Lozano, Marketing & Product Development, Sambrailo Packaging

Sarah Newkirk, Executive Director, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Forrest Revere, Board of Supervisors Analyst, Santa Cruz County Supervisor Zach Friend

Meggie Rhodeos, Admitting & Business Services Manager, Sutter Health

Jenna Rivera, Community Engagement Specialist, Driscoll’s, Inc.

Amy Ross, Director of Patient Services, Salud Para La Gente

Nicholas Solano, Sergeant, Community Policing Division, Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Department

Lois Sones, Program Director, Community Bridges Elderday

Matt Sparke, Professor & Director of Global & Community Health, UCSC

Tracey Weiss, Executive Director, O’Neill Sea Odyssey

National Ag Day Spring Luncheon

Get Your Reservations Early!

National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

SPRING! A Time for Celebration

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Heritage Hall

Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

This event is coordinated by the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau and Agri-Culture

For Reservations or more information:



Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau
Agri-Culture

141 Monte Vista Avenue
Watsonville, CA 95076

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Text: (831) 818-1193

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Scholarship Application Deadline

Friday, February 16, 2024

For more information,
visit www.agri-culture.us/scholarships
or call Agri-Culture at (831) 722-6622

Applications are available online



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2024 National Ag Day Poster and Poetry Contests

The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau has announced the 2024 National Agriculture Day **Poetry Contest for grades 7-12**. The theme is **"Grown in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley"**. The deadline for entries is **Friday, February 23, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.** For more information, please call (831) 724-1356 or (831) 722-6622. The winning entry will receive \$250.

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau & Agri-Culture Presents

2024 NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY POETRY CONTEST

For Grades 7-12
(top poems will be judged for best poem)

The winning entry will receive \$250

Theme
"GROWN IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AND THE PAJARO VALLEY"

Any style poetry may be used and should not exceed 12 lines.
The winning entry will also be used on 18,000 placemats and distributed to county restaurants next year!

All entries must be submitted to:
Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau
111 Monte Vista Avenue
Watsonville, CA 95076

****PLEASE PRINT FULL NAME, GRADE, AND SCHOOL ON BACK OF ENTRY****

Deadline: Friday, February 23, 2024, 4:00 pm
For more information about agriculture in Santa Cruz County, please call (831) 724-1356 or (831) 722-6622

POSTER CONTEST

2024 NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY

CONTEST IS OPEN TO GRADES K-6

Theme
"GROWN IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AND THE PAJARO VALLEY"

THE ABOVE WORDING MUST BE INCLUDED, LEGIBLY, ON THE FRONT OF THE POSTER AND MUST REFLECT THE ACTUAL CROPS GROWN IN THE REGION

First prize receives \$250

Winning entry will be featured on 20,000 placemats and distributed to county restaurants next year!!!

Contest Rules

- Contest theme to be included legibly, on front of poster
- Copies should be printed on glossy paper no larger than 18" x 20"
- All posters must be prepared by the student; no adult assistance allowed
- Any medium may be used (marker, pencil, felt tip pen, etc.)
- The top three (3) entries per grade level will be included in final judging
- On back of poster, print name, full name, grade and school
- One entry per student

Contest Deadline
Friday, February 23, 2024, 4:00 p.m.

Agri-Culture and the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau has also announced the 2024 National Agriculture Day **Poster Contest for grades K - 6**. The theme is **"Grown in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley"**. The deadline for entries is **Friday, February 23, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.** More information is available by calling (831) 724-1356 or (831) 722-6622. The winning poster will receive \$250. Winners of both contests will be announced at the **National Agriculture Day Luncheon on March 20, 2024**. Tickets are available by calling the numbers listed above or online at Eventbrite.

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Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

CALENDAR

THURSDAY - FEBRUARY 1

Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 16

Scholarship Application
Deadline

Office closes at 4:00 p.m.

MONDAY - FEBRUARY 19

President's Day
Office Closed

FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 23

Poster & Poetry Contest
Deadline

Office closes at 4:00 p.m.

THURSDAY - FEBRUARY 29

Board of Directors' meeting

THURSDAY - MARCH 7

Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

FRIDAY - MARCH 15

Focus Agriculture, Class 33
Session 1

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 20

National Agriculture Day
Spring Luncheon

**YOUR
FUTURE
GROWS
HERE.**

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