

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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98th Annual Dinner Meeting ...Record-Breaking Attendance!



Farm Bureau President, David Van Lennep, speaking to guests at the 98th Annual Dinner Meeting



Marguerite Remde with husband Steve, daughter Audrey Belle and sons Garrett and Myles



Chris Banthien

Marguerite Remde and Chris Banthien have been selected by the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau as the **2015 "Farmer(s) of the Year"**. **This is the first time the Farm Bureau has selected two recipients.** This award is presented annually to the farmer(s) who have contributed beyond their normal farming duties to help the community. The presentation was made during Farm Bureau's 98th Annual Meeting held at **Kitayama Brothers** in Watsonville. The board of directors felt it was appropriate to honor Marguerite and Chris because of their dedication to the community and their significant contributions within Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. It was noted during the presentation that these two farmers also grow commodities that use very little water.

Featured speaker for the evening was **John Laird, Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency**, who spoke on the topic **"The Drought and California's Water Future"**. Master and Mistress of Ceremonies was **David Van Lennep**, President, Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau and Past-President **Cynthia Mathiesen**.

Other activities of the Annual Meeting included the election of directors. There are a total of 19 directors on the board and all terms commence on November 1, 2015. Elected for a 2nd term, three-year director, were: **Adriana Silva**, Organic Vegetables; **John E. Eiskamp**, Berries; **Kevin Healy**, Berries. For a 3rd term, three-year director: **JJ Scurich**, Berries.

INSIDE - 2015/2016 COUNTRY CROSSROADS MAP



President's Message

DAVID VAN LENNEP, PRESIDENT

“Water is only one example, an especially high profile example right now, of how agriculture can be judged in the court of public opinion. In years past it may have been application of pesticides, too much dust or mud on the roads, water quality or labor practices, tomorrow who knows.”

Public Perceptions

So much of what agriculture does can be viewed by the public. Almost all stages of farming locally can be seen from county roads...preparing the ground for planting to harvesting. Onlookers catch glimpses and form opinions. One example of this is water use, which is vital for growing food and many times necessary during the day and very visible. This can create a perception that farmers are not conserving or using water wisely. Casual observers do not realize some of the tools and technology that are being employed to manage water carefully.

At our 98th Annual Meeting last Friday, Secretary of California Natural Resources Agency John Laird, (longtime Santa Cruz resident) spoke about the drought and water in California. One topic he touched on was how the public perceives water used by agriculture. Recently he had a statewide op-ed published to address some of the myths about water use, below are some excerpts related to agriculture.

Myth—“Agriculture uses a majority of delivered water and is getting a pass in water restrictions”

Response—“While California municipal water agencies are restricted, on average, to 75 percent of their 2013 allocation, many farmers that rely on federal and state water are allocated zero percent and 20 percent of their contracted amount. This has contributed to a 2.8 million acre-foot

cutback, 17,000 jobs lost, a \$1.5 billion economic loss, and over 400,000 acres fallowed — and those are the numbers just through last year.”

These statistics are for California as a whole, but conservation and innovation are taking place here also.

Water is vital for farming, and Farm Bureau supports development of new and creative storage ideas, in addition to conservation of existing resources. Recently Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau sent a letter encouraging the PVWMA to have recycled water available for irrigation to be used at night. The facility can produce and store only so much water,

President's Message - Continued on Page 5

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ASK LAURA

Steve Tjosvold, Environmental Horticulture Advisor, UCCE

Water Use Efficiency In A Container Nursery

Q: What is one simple idea to improve the efficiency of water use in a container nursery?

A: A grower knows that a wilting plant is a sure sign of a need for water. But a grower also intuitively knows that wilting is bad for the plant. So at what point before wilting occurs should the grower water plants? To figure out how that process might be improved, think about what a grower normally does to evaluate a plant's need for water. The grower intuitively picks up the pot and feels its weight! The grower is sensing how much water is in the potting soil, then how much water has been removed by the plant, and then might even estimate how much water needs to be added back to refill the pot.

This process could be improved by actually measuring the weight of the plant container. The weight change in grams, with no intervening irrigation, represents the milliliters of water lost from the container during that time (1 milliliter of water weighs 1 gram). It is important to select representative plants when measuring water use. Large plants tend to use more water than small ones, and those on the borders of fields, benches, or nursery blocks tend to use more than those in the interior. Since accurate scales can be purchased for less than \$100, this method provides a fast, accurate, inexpensive way to monitor plant water use.

Not all the water in the soil is available for use by the plant. After the pot has been fully watered, the water is readily available to the plant. But as the plant uses water and the soil dries, the water held by the soil is less available. Eventually the plant wilts. To determine the total amount of water that

is available to the plant, first measure the weight of a representative plant just after it is fully watered and drains. Then measure the weight daily until the plant just starts to wilt. The difference between the beginning and end weights in grams (and milliliters) is the available water.

Q: So when should water be applied and how much?

A: Generally, irrigation is initiated when one-half of the available water is used. So if there are 300 milliliters of available water in a pot, then an irrigation should be made when 150 milliliters of water has been used (so that occurs when 150 grams are lost as you are measuring with your gram scale). How much water to apply to each plant in this case? The plant needs at least 150 milliliters. A good target is to apply about 10 or 15% more water to "leach" accumulating salts out the bottom of the pot. (Otherwise, salts can accumulate in the soil and cause harm to the plant). Another factor is the efficiency of the irrigation system. Sprinkler irrigation is relatively inefficient and drip irrigation is relatively efficient in distributing the water to plants in a field. For sprinkler systems another 10 to 60% more water might be needed, while a drip system might only need up to 10% more water.



THE WATER NANNY

Black & White

Many decades ago, when the world was black and white and there was another Governor named Brown, the *Twilight Zone* scared children throughout the land. One episode opens with the ultimate drought. The residents were mopping sweat off their brows, heat waves could be seen in the distance, every stream was dry and dead animals abounded. As it turned out the earth had fallen out of its orbit and was spiraling closer and closer to the sun. The world was doomed in mere months. But, as it turned out, it was all a dream. There was no fiery end to civilization. Reality was revealed, the earth had indeed come unglued from orbit, but was streaking away from the sun, to a frozen tomb in deep space, drought averted.



Personally, I would accept any end to the discussion of drought, even if not its resolution. For the last couple of years growers, particularly the Central Valley, have suffered water loss and hundreds of thousands of acres have been fallowed. With the State Water Board mandating residential water use reductions our urban cousins have discovered that water is used to produce food. Since 10% of state water is used by residents and businesses, 40% by agriculture and 50% for environmental safeguards and discharge to the ocean, attention has turned to farmers. This is mostly thoughtless babble.

Growers respond to consumer and market forces. Few farmers have the economic strength to negotiate prices, they take what is offered. Crop changes chase improved profits. Meanwhile, residential water use, above sustenance, is disconnected from market forces. Societies have always built aqueducts for people and farming. Until the end of the 20th century there was uniform popular support for farms, to provide food and fiber for daily survival. With the increased urbanization of the United States the direct link was lost.

Now we are told to reorder our priorities. It is easy to let lawns go brown, but it is harder to quickly predict economic changes in response to sudden regulatory shifts. It took decades to build the State Water Project, land owners and farmers had years to plan with predictable results. Not so much this time. Mountain House, a new subdivision near

Tracy, lost its source of water overnight with regulatory termination of some pre 1914 water rights. Oops, we need to allow them to take some water. Less apparent, the lack of water for spring and fall plantings in Huron, on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, meant more early plantings in the Salinas Valley where water is available.

The black and white solution is to ban sprinklers on both fields and lawns, a false equity will be achieved. Let's move the discussion from B&W to *Living Color*. The unintended consequences of parity with lawns will be week old imported lettuce and higher rural unemployment. So much for sustainability in the produce isle. Move forward and market farmers as conservationists. Our customers, whether in L.A. or Boston, will not be swayed by a black and white argument, so dazzle them with color. We do not sell strawberries in grayscale, we must also market our aquatic frugality in color too. It is suddenly necessary to benchmark irrigation improvements, and demonstrate this to our customers. *"I think frugality drives innovation, just like other constraints do. One of the only ways to get out of a tight box is to invent your way out."* (Jeff Bezos)



I must be getting absent-minded. Whenever I complain that things aren't what they used to be, I always forget to include myself.

George Burns



FAVORITE RECIPES

Blackberry Cobbler

This recipe comes from the Prevedelli Farms website: www.prevedelli.com. You can find the Prevedelli family at the farm or at twelve of the bay area farmers markets during apple and berry season. The locations are listed on their website. This year they will celebrate 70 years of farming in Watsonville. Please check out their website for additional recipes and for information about the Farm Dinner to be held September 6th. And, of course, give this recipe a try...you know it's going to be good.

Prep and Cook Time: About 1 Hour

Notes: serve with ice cream or whipped cream

Makes 6-8 servings

1 ¼ cup sugar
2-tablespoon cornstarch
2-tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca
6 cups blackberries rinsed and drained
1-teaspoon grated lemon peel
1-tablespoon lemon juice
2 cups all-purpose flour
1-tablespoon baking powder
1-teaspoon salt
½ cup cold butter
1 cup whipping cream

In a large bowl, combine 1-cup sugar, cornstarch, tapioca, blackberries, and lemon peel and lemon juice. Mix gently to coat. Pour into a shallow 3-4 quart baking dish.

In another bowl, mix flour, baking powder, salt and remaining ¼ cup sugar. With your fingers or a pastry blender, rub or cut butter into flour mixture until mixture forms soft, crumbly dough.

Pat ¼ cup portions into flat disks ½ inch thick and arrange evenly over fruit.

Bake in a 350°F oven until topping is golden brown and fruit is bubbling 45-to 55 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

President's Message - Continued from Page 2

and if not used, that water goes to the ocean. That does not seem to be the most efficient use of that recycled water.

Water is only one example, an especially high profile example right now, of how agriculture can be judged in the court of public opinion. In years past it may have been application of pesticides, too much dust or mud on the roads, water quality or labor practices, tomorrow who knows.

Your practices are your business card to the public that drive by the fields and forests, a card that will be mentally carried home with them to a local community or to another country.



98TH ANNUAL MEETING



(L-R) Stuart Kitayama, Katy Bannister, John Laird



(L-R) Councilmember Felipe Hernandez, Clint Miller, Rogelio Ponce



(L-R) Ted Remde, Richard Casale



(L-R) Doug Fischer, David Heald, Lou Calcagno



(L-R) Catherine Barr, Jon Barr and Chris Banthien



Watsonville Mayor
Dr. Nancy Billich

98th Annual Meeting
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SAFETY FIRST!

By Mike Burns, Farm Bureau Group Manager

Take Extra Care When Working Around a Tractor

The tractor is easily recognized as a farmer's most important tool, but it is also the most dangerous, accounting for a fourth of all agriculturally related deaths in the United States each year.

Many times, these accidents are the result of rollovers. Other times they involve someone being struck by a tractor or being caught in the PTO (power take-off) shafts.

By their very nature, accidents can be prevented. But for this to occur, everyone working with and around tractors and other pieces of farm equipment must be made aware of the potential dangers and the proper steps that they must take to prevent a mishap. This education process should begin with the farm operator and his foremen instructing all employees of proper safety.

Here are some important checkpoints to cover in any tractor-safety program:

- Walk around and do a visual inspection before operating the tractor.
- If the tractor doesn't have a rollover protective structure (ROPS) and seatbelt, have them installed.
- Keep all shields and guards in place.
- Do not allow anyone other than the driver to ride on a tractor. No exceptions.
- Drive at a safe speed, whether on a field or highway.
- Fields are loaded with booby traps such as ditches and steep, slippery slopes. Be aware of them as they can flip a tractor.
- Don't carry loads higher than recommended in your tractor's operator's manual.
- Widen tractor's wheel base to help prevent rollovers.
- Do not hitch to anything other than the draw bar for pulling.
- Turn off the engine whenever you get out of the driver's seat or cab.
- Use common sense: turn off the engine when filling the fuel tank and don't smoke.

Studies show that safe work practices are vital in reducing injuries and deaths involving tractors. Ask yourself the following questions: Is the operator's platform clear of debris; is the reflective "slow moving vehicle" emblem posted; are lights and flashers operational; are tires properly inflated; are the hydraulics free of leaks; can the brakes be locked together; is the fire extinguisher in place; and is there a fully supplied first aid kit on board?

Familiarize yourself with the tractor operator's manual and warning decals, and pay particular attention to the safety information. Make sure everyone who operates a tractor has received training and is physically fit. Keep bystanders and others away from tractor operation area. Take the time to be safe.

State Fund has a wealth of information on safety topics available for easy access on our website at www.statefundca.com. Click on "Employers" and then "Resources" to find the extensive list of topics.

Today, State Fund is the largest workers' compensation carrier in California. State Fund has regional offices throughout the state, which provide a full range of services to policyholders and injured workers. We provide coverage to employers of all sizes, from "mom and pop" operations to major organizations.

Since 1943, the California Farm Bureau and State Fund partnership has provided farmers with affordable worker compensation insurance coverage and accident prevention training for agricultural employers and their employees. In addition to providing farm and ranch employers with workers' compensation insurance protection, we also have taken on the mission of assisting employers in providing safe places to work.

FROM THE AG COMMISSIONER

By Mary Lou Nicoletti, Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner

DPR Seeks Informal Comments



In the June issue of *Between the Furrows*, I reported that the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) planned to conduct five statewide workshops in May and June to gather input from stakeholders about the development of regulations governing agricultural pesticide use near schools.

DPR held one of these daylong workshops in Salinas on June 2. DPR gave presentations at three sessions that day. One session was geared towards school administrators; one to growers and applicators; the third evening session was attended by teachers and the public. DPR characterizes these workshops as "listening sessions". DPR wants feedback on what should be considered in a regulation, regarding notification to schools of nearby pesticide applications as well as possible further restrictions on pesticide applications near schools.

Several industry members said that adequate protections provided by the pesticide labels, DPR, and the local Agricultural Commissioner are already in place, and stressed that new regulations should be based on evidence of need and be supported by science. Some growers that farm near schools told DPR that their children attend these schools in the community, and said they work closely with nearby schools to inform them of applications.

At the evening meeting, many people called upon DPR to implement a one mile buffer zone around schools, as well as mandatory one week (prior to application) notification to homes and schools within a mile of a pesticide application.

DPR intends to post the informal comments received at the five workshops on their website by the end of June. Those who were unable to attend the workshops and/or did not get a chance to make comments at the workshops are invited to submit informal comments until July 31, 2015. DPR will use the information from stakeholders to publish a proposed regulation in December of this year.

I think it important for the agricultural industry to provide

specific input to DPR, beyond simply stating that adequate protections are already in place. It seems clear that DPR will propose new requirements regarding notification to schools and restrictions of pesticide applications near them. DPR needs to hear from growers and applicators about what DPR should consider for notifications and restrictions. What communication tool(s) could be used? What proximity of the application to schools should be considered in requiring notification? Should notification be required for all pesticide applications, or only for applications of restricted materials? How will notification requirements impact your operation? Should applications within a certain proximity to schools be prohibited while school is in session? Should certain types of applications such as, aerial or airblast, within a certain proximity to schools be prohibited? If so, what distances and how should that distance be determined?

The presentations and additional information can be found on the DPR website:

www.cdpr.ca.gov

"Quick Links" tab

Link to "Regulations"

Link to "Regulations Under Development"


Submit comments in writing by July 31 to George.Farnsworth@cdpr.ca.gov



Smile!

This young man was elated when he turned eighteen in a state where curfew is 11:00 p.m. for any one under seventeen years of age. He told his Dad how happy he was that now he could stay out until 3:00 a.m. if he wanted. "Yes you can stay out as late as you want, but the car is under seventeen and it has to be in the garage by eleven" his father said.

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NRCS NEWS

By Rich Casale, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

More Drought Funds for Water Conservation Available

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) just announced that additional drought funds are now available under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) for water conservation practices on farms and ranches. Additional water conservation funds are also now available under the NRCS Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) as well. Practices such as: irrigation system improvements; irrigation water management; soil and vegetation management practices that lessen the need for irrigation; and other practices that help save, recycle, and/or reuse water on the farm all qualify under both of these programs.

To establish your eligibility to participate in these NRCS programs you will need to first contact the USDA Farm Services Agency in Salinas at 831-424-1036. You can also call or contact NRCS directly at: 831-475-

1967 extension 101, 102, or 104; or e-mail: richard.casale@ca.usda.gov for more information and details.

NRCS also makes no cost, on-site technical and planning assistance available to growers wanting to reduce their demand on dwindling water supplies during this historic drought and time when groundwater supplies are at an all-time low. NRCS conservationists can help you with planning decisions and management ways to improve soil conditions that reduce water use and help increase crop production.

NRCS has a very long history (over 80 years) of working with growers in the Pajaro Valley and in other agricultural areas throughout the County and State. NRCS is a non-regulatory federal agency under USDA. NRCS is an equal opportunity employer and provider and all services are provided free of charge.

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CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY - JULY 1
Focus Agriculture, Session 5

WEDNESDAY - JULY 8
YF&R meeting

FRIDAY - JULY 10
22 Annual Golf Tournament

FRIDAY - JULY 10
California State Fair Opens -
Runs through Sunday, July 26th

THURSDAY - JULY 23
Agricultural Policy Advisory
Commission

THURSDAY - JULY 30
Board of Directors' meeting

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 5

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

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7
Focus Agriculture, Session 6

MONDAY- AUGUST 10
Public Relations & Information
Committee meeting

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 12
Young Farmers & Ranchers
meeting

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