

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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

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2025 Farmers of the Year Larry Jacobs & Sandra Belin 108th Annual Meeting

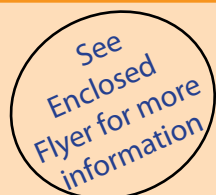


(L-R) Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau President, Dennis Webb, presents the 2025 Farmer of the Year award to Sandra Belin and Larry Jacobs, Co-Owners of Jacobs Farm del Cabo

Larry Jacobs and Sandra Belin, Co-Owners of Jacobs Farm del Cabo, were selected as the 2025 "Farmers of the Year". 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 the Farm Bureau's 108th Annual Meeting/Dinner held in a special garden in La Selva Beach on Thursday, June 19th. The board of directors felt it was important to honor Larry & Sandra because of their leadership in the community and the world over the past several decades.

Larry and Sandra co-founded Jacobs Farm in 1980, a northern California organic farming operation specializing in culinary herbs and other produce. Larry and Sandra are also known for their outstanding leadership in agriculture on a worldwide basis. They have revised the phrase "Act Local, Think Global", and have taken their successful local practices on a worldwide stage.

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau President Dennis Webb was the Master of Ceremonies for this event. The Annual Meeting also included the election of directors and officers. See page 11 for more information.



You're Invited! So get your tickets early!

17th Annual Testicle Festival

Saturday, August 23, 2025

Estrada Deer Camp



President's Message



Dennis Webb, President

AI and Agriculture

Unless you've been living under a rock, you've probably heard a lot about artificial intelligence lately. With all the new AI products out there, it's hard to know what to believe - and there's plenty to be skeptical of. But here's what those in agriculture should know: AI is already helping farmers and ranchers save time and reduce headaches - especially on the paperwork side.

I've been digging into some practical uses of this technology, and I want to share a few ways I believe it could benefit our members - not someday in the future, but right now, if you're willing to give it a try.

Most growers I know don't need help growing a good crop. What we need help with is everything else: paperwork, compliance, scheduling, communication. AI won't walk your field or fix your irrigation -

but it might take a few hours off your week when you're filling out a pesticide use report, drafting a grant application, or sorting through the latest water quality regulation.

Here are a few real use cases we've looked at:

- Automated compliance help: Microsoft Copilot or ChatGPT can take a field note and turn it into a pesticide use report or compliance memo in seconds.
- Grant and loan writing support: Tools like Jasper AI can help you sketch out grant narratives, equipment justifications, or project timelines - with enough structure to get you to a final draft quicker. Continued on Page 5



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ASK DYLAN

Dylan J. Beal, UC IPM Entomology Advisor
Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County

Western Tussock Moth

Q. I've been seeing an odd fuzzy caterpillar in my apple orchards. Could you tell me more about it?

A. Those fuzzy caterpillars are likely the larvae of the Western tussock moth, *Orgyia vestuta*. Western tussock is an occasional pest of apple orchards in Santa Cruz County, especially in unsprayed orchards. The caterpillars of the western tussock moth are generalists. Besides fruit and nut trees, they can feed on coast live oak as well as other oak species, hawthorn, manzanita, pyracantha, toyon, walnut, and willow trees. In Central Coast apple orchards, western tussock moth has one generation per year. Overwintering egg hatch coincides with the expansion of fresh spring growth in the apple canopy. Following hatch, the young caterpillars are dispersed by wind. Mature Tussock moth caterpillars are black with long bristles and numerous red and yellow spots. Caterpillars complete development into adult moths (winged males and wingless females) between May and June. After emerging, female tussock moths lay between 125-300 eggs in a mass on their empty pupal case. These egg masses will hatch the following year if left unmanaged.

It is during the spring that tussock moth caterpillars can cause serious damage to apple canopies. The caterpillars are leaf feeders and their chewing damage can cause trees to appear clipped or ragged. If tussock moth caterpillars are able to build up large populations in apple canopies, they can cause total defoliation of the trees. In some cases, caterpillars may feed on the developing fruit causing discoloration or scabbing as the fruit matures. Monitoring is key to effective integrated pest

management of western tussock moth. During the winter months, monitor tree trunks and branches for egg masses. During the spring, it is important to monitor fruit and flower clusters for caterpillars during bloom to identify potentially problematic infestations. The removal of egg masses, hatched caterpillars, and cocoons by hand can help with spot infestations. Chemical resistant gloves and long clothing are recommended for handling the caterpillars and cocoons as the caterpillar hairs are poisonous and can irritate skin.

If you are already managing other major apple pests like codling moth (*Cydia pomonella*), sprays for that pest will generally control western tussock moth. An extensive infestation of tussock moth caterpillars during the spring may warrant targeted insecticide sprays. The most effective insecticides registered for tussock moth management in California apples are *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) spp. kurstaki and spinosad products. As Bt products are stomach toxins that must be consumed by the caterpillar, they are most effectively applied during warm, dry weather when young caterpillars are actively feeding. If spraying during bloom, spinosad applications at night will reduce potential risks to bees. Always read and follow label guidelines regarding the insecticide product and targeted pest. For general information about western tussock moth and other apple pests, please refer to the UC IPM pest management guidelines for Apple. For direct inquiries about western tussock moth or other agricultural pests in Santa Cruz, San Benito, or Monterey county, please reach out to me at 831-759-7359 or djbeal@ucanr.edu.

THE WATER NANNY

"Agriculture, the Original Green"

Farmers Marketing

Even today, in our modern times, you can drive down a rural road and discover a fruit stand with one or two types of locally grown produce for sale, just leave your cash in the cigar box. This is a great opportunity for everyone in the car, especially kids, to pile out, see and smell the farm next to the tiny fruit stand. After everyone gets over the clear financial trust the grower has in wondering tourists, they will all remember that day on the farm.

Farmers Markets are a great way to meet the farmer, but not see or smell the farm, to know how produce is grown. *Know Your Farmer* is a nice concept, even to the point that USDA has a web page dedicated to this outreach, but by the time Washington adopts something it is no longer a something. The real goal is to **know a farm**. The Santa Cruz Farm Bureau used to hand out Country Crossroads Maps (mostly to farmers who came into their office) encouraging families to travel into the wilderness to visit Santa Cruz, San Benito and Santa Clara farms, but alas it has been long gone.



Visit Santa Cruz County has helped fill in this void with directions for U-pick-um, our local growers; the usual suspects like Gizdich, Live Earth, Swanton Berry, and Beeline Blooms. Google directs searchers to even more U-pick farms throughout our area,

some with location links and even brief websites featuring their fine crops. Over the top marketing goes to *Friends of Local Farms*, organized by our very own Farm Bureau. It not only gets out buyers, it charges them for a ticket to attend. You can join behind the scene tours of Live Earth Farms with Farmer Tom Broz, back stage at the Aptos Farmers Market, complete with \$5 *Farmers Market Bucks*, and, only in Santa Cruz County, a tour of a local indoor cannabis grow at Fog City Farms. This was even featured in *Edible Monterey Bay*, along with *Taste of Terroir*.

Last year the Second Harvest Food Bank had a federally subsidized budget of \$1.5M to purchase locally grown produce from small farmers. Last April that all went *POOF*, leaving those farms searching for new sales. There are existing farm stands; along the North Coast, east of Las Lomas, and Old San Jose Road, to name a few. Few stand

out compared to the robust stands along the eastern Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. If there were more grower/sellers each route could become a destination for weekend tourists, and daily commuters.

Sales and marketing, like farming, requires a solid plan. You attract buyers with a good-looking sign, maybe have a friend with great printing, in Spanish and English, to lure your customers down your drive. Someone on your crew to watch the stand, and chat up the produce through to a sale. A good stand generates word of mouth advertising, maybe even an online star. While there are upfront costs of starting, keep your overhead low as a constant stream of buyers will not be there on day one. However, this can reap great rewards, enough to offset the lack of purchases by the Food Bank.

Be on the cutting edge and invite families to come out for a behind the scene view of your farm and generate sales from your farm stand. *"In marketing you must choose between boredom, shouting and seduction. Which do you want? ... Lives, like money, are spent. What are you buying with yours?"* (Roy H. Williams)



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FAVORITE RECIPES

Banana Blueberry Muffins

This recipe comes from Marguerite Remde, Co-Owner of Belle Farms Olive Oil and it was given to all of the attendees of this year's Down to Earth Women Luncheon. It was adapted from "The Black Dog Summer on the Vineyard" Cookbook. Marguerite says "These muffins are always a hit! Wholesome, hearty and filling, they highlight fresh blueberries when in season and are a great example of using extra virgin olive oil in baking to replace "bad" oils with a nutritious, heart-healthy one. The recipe makes between 18-24 muffins." Thank you for sharing, Marguerite!

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour

1 1/2 cups rolled oats

2 teaspoons baking soda

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon ground mace or nutmeg

6 mashed bananas

1/2 to 1 cup honey

1 cup Belle Farms Extra Virgin Olive Oil

1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

2 cups fresh blueberries (frozen can also be used)

1 cup walnuts or pecans, chopped

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour 2 muffin tins or line with paper cups.

Combine the flour, oats, baking soda, salt and ground mace or nutmeg in a bowl.

In a separate bowl, mash the bananas and then mix in the honey, olive oil and vanilla.

Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix just until blended. Gently fold in the blueberries and nuts.

Fill the muffin cups at least 3/4 full.

Bake for 30-45 minutes. Test with a knife or toothpick in the center of a muffin to determine doneness. The point should come out clean when the muffins are ready.

President's Message - continued from page 2

- Market and policy summaries: Using Feedly or ChatGPT, you can scan through USDA reports or DPR regulatory notices and get a plain-language summary tailored to your type of operation.

Let's be clear: this isn't about handing over your operation to a robot. AI doesn't farm, and it doesn't make decisions for you. It doesn't replace judgment, experience, or common sense.

Think of it like another good tool in your toolbox. You decide when and how to use it. Sometimes it gives you a draft or a translation that saves you a few hours. Sometimes it's not helpful, and you toss it aside. The point is: you're still the one running the show.

In a line of work where time is tight and the demands never stop, anything that lightens the load - even a little - is worth looking into.

If you're curious about how these tools could apply to your own work, I encourage you to talk with other members and bring it up at our next meeting or event. One of the strengths of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau is how often we learn from one another - and this is no different. Sharing what's working (or not working) with these tools could help all of us make better use of our time.

Being a Member Pays Off!

BECOME A FARM BUREAU MEMBER

Join the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau



The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau is an important voice for the Santa Cruz County and Pajaro Valley agriculture industry. Everyone is eligible to be a member and receive the many benefits and services available. By joining the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau you help support agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley.

How to Join

Go to www.cfbf.com and click on the "JOIN" button. No need to log in on this page. Go to the bottom of the page and click on NEVER BEEN A MEMBER to set up a new account.

Questions? Contact the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau
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Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

32nd Annual Golf Tournament

Friday, July 11, 2025
Pajaro Valley Golf Club

California State Fair

Friday, July 11, 2025 to Sunday, July 27, 2025
Cal Expo, Sacramento

Santa Cruz County Fair

Wednesday, September 10 to Sunday, September 14, 2025
Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

Annual Directors' Dinner

Thursday, November 6, 2025
Location to be determined

CFBF Annual Meeting

TBD

Agri-Culture

17th Annual Testicle Festival

Saturday, August 23, 2025
Estrada Deer Camp

29th Annual Farm Dinner

Friday, October 10, 2025
Land Trust Little Bee Barn

Asked of our "Farmers of the Year"... "What did you think about being selected as the 2025 Farmers of the Year?"



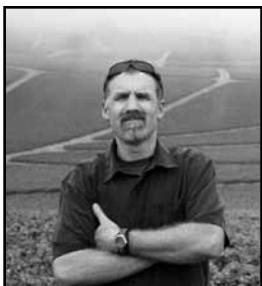
"It was unexpected. We were humbled and honored to be selected and we thank the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau very much".

Larry Jacobs



**Come Celebrate
Agriculture With Us!**

Invasive Mosquito Update for Santa Cruz County



David Sanford

The Mosquito and Vector Control Division is part of the Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Our job is to help protect people from mosquitoes and other pests that can spread diseases or make us sick. These pests are called vectors.

In October 2022, our office received a call from a resident who reported being bitten by mosquitoes throughout the day while in their yard. We placed traps in the area and discovered a mosquito species not previously found in Santa Cruz County: *Aedes aegypti*, also known as the Yellow Fever mosquito. It can spread serious diseases like Yellow Fever, Dengue Fever, Chikungunya, and Zika. *Aedes aegypti* has spread throughout many parts of the state and has caused multiple local cases of Dengue in Southern California over the past two summers.

After two years of hard work and help from local residents, we believe we eliminated the mosquito in the area where it was found in 2022. However, we anticipate future detections, especially as nearby counties like Santa Clara continue to find these mosquitoes in local neighborhoods.

Aedes aegypti are different from our local mosquitoes. They bite during the day, not just in the evening or morning. They can lay eggs in very small amounts of water, even less than a bottle cap. Their eggs can hide and stay alive for a long time, even after the water dries up.

Aedes aegypti are difficult to control due to their ability to live and hide in residential areas. As a result, we have expanded our mosquito surveillance efforts across the county, added specialized traps to our program, and increased public outreach. Still, our agency cannot do it alone – we rely on residents to notify us about unusual mosquito behavior and to help prevent these mosquitoes from becoming established.

Here's how you can help:

- Report mosquitoes that bite during the day or are inside your home.

- Check for any standing water around your yard and dump it out.
- Change water in pet bowls and birdbaths at least once a week.
- Use aerators, pumps, or mosquito-eating fish in ponds or unused pools.
- Watch for items that can hold water when you travel.

The sooner we find these mosquitoes, the better chance we have to stop them. By working together, we can protect our community and keep these pests from spreading serious diseases.

For more information on these exotic mosquitoes and where they can be found in California, visit the California Department of Public Health website at:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Aedes-aegypti-and-Aedes-albopictus-mosquitoes.aspx>

For more information about mosquitoes and other vectors in our County, or to order free mosquito-eating fish, visit the Mosquito and Vector Control Division website at: <https://mvc.santacruzcountyca.gov/>

Strange But Impossibly True!

Movie trailers originally played after a movie.

They "trailed" the feature film—hence the name. But theaters noticed that the audience would leave before these de facto ads ran, so they were moved to before the film, with their old name trailing with them.

Excerpts from the Readers Digest

NEWS FROM RCD, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



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

“Hedgerows: Utilize the Edge”

This month we are going to discuss why *you*, too, should plant a hedgerow! Hedgerows can be thought of as rows or strips of trees, shrubs and other woody plants used as protective borders, like a living fence, offering a buffer around fields. Hedgerows are often intermixed with the additions of drought tolerant perennial and annual grasses and flowers, creating edge habitat. Benefits of hedgerows include pest control, wind breaks, air and water quality protection, increased biodiversity (beneficial insects & birds), shade & cooling benefits, blooming at different times of year, carbon sequestration and providing beauty to our community, just to name a few!

I’m a big fan of one-time practices that can have a multitude of benefits, and hedgerows are right near the top of the list of agricultural practices that fit such criteria. In my time working on the central coast as an irrigation field technician, I always keep a look out for hedgerows! I love encountering hedgerows that were planted back in the 80s or 90s. Usually they have been completely neglected and yet are still resilient, serving their function, and add loads of benefits to the farm ecosystem.

This spring our RCD has been collaborating with growers and other agencies to help implement hedgerow plantings in Watsonville. It is a joy to see these projects come to life. These installations honestly blow me away, especially how quickly the practice can be implemented. One grower we recently worked with, planted 3500 feet of hedgerow in just a couple of days utilizing his crew after the days harvest was finished to help plant out the perennial natives along their ranch perimeter. Now for many years to come this organic grower, the landowner, workers, and passersby will get to reap the benefits of this beautiful planting.

If you are interested in planting a hedgerow or increasing pollinator habitat on your farm, reach out to the RCD of Santa Cruz County today. We are happy to assist with various aspects of the hedgerow planting including plant recommendations, irrigation technical assistance, best practices such as using gopher baskets/pruning, plant spacing, mulch/fertilizer, and how to best establish your hedgerow. Generally, hedgerows only need irrigation for the first year or two and once established they will only require the occasional pruning.

The NRCS has created an excellent EVeg guide with many different species recommendations, and our friends at CAFF (Community Alliance for Family Farmers) and WFA (Wild Farm Alliance) also have excellent hedgerow resources. Some of my favorite hedgerow species include White Sage (*Salvia Apiana*), Sugar Bush (*Rhus ovata*), Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos densiflora*), Yellow bush lupin (*Lupinus arboreus*), and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)... Think of all the habitat and benefits these attractive species could add to your farm or landscape!

To learn more and connect with RCD programs and services contact: Cameron McDonald (cmcdonald@rcdsantacruz.org), Dan Hermstad at (dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org), or Sacha Lozano at (slozano@rcdsantacruz.org). The RCD also has programs related to forest health, fire prevention and environmental restoration. You can learn more about all our work at www.rcdsantacruz.org. All RCD services and programs are voluntary and non-regulatory. ¡Hablamos Español!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“The best way to cheer yourself up is to cheer somebody else up.”
—Mark Twain

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The 108th Annual Meeting - Continued from page 1...

There are a total of 19 director positions on the board. The following directors were elected to fill vacancies from those whose terms expired. All newly elected terms commence on November 1, 2025:

1st term, one year director: Arnett Young, Organic Vegetables

2nd term, three-year director: Sean Baird, Livestock

3rd term, three-year director: Tom Broz, Organics; Amanda Peixoto-Castro, Organics

New Directors:

1st term, three-year director: Kyle Theriot, Wine Grapes, Timber & Apples
Dane Scurich, Berries

Officers:

President and State Delegate, 1 year position - John Pisturino, Cattle

1st Vice-President, 1 year position - Peter Navarro, Berries

2nd Vice-President, 1 year position - CJ Miller, Berries

Past President & Alternate State Delegate, 1 year position - Dennis Webb, Timber



The attendees of the 108th Annual Meeting/Dinner enjoyed a beautiful setting, a delicious meal and good company.



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CALENDAR

FRIDAY - JULY 4
Independence Day Observed
Office Closed

FRIDAY - JULY 11
32nd Annual Golf Tournament

FRIDAY - JULY 30
Focus Agriculture
Day on the Farm

THURSDAY - AUGUST 7
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

WEDNESDAY - AUGUST 20
Focus Agriculture
Session 7

SATURDAY - AUGUST 23
17th Annual Testicle Festival

THURSDAY - AUGUST 28
Board of Directors' meeting

MONDAY - SEPTEMBER 1
Labor Day Observed
Office Closed

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 4
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 25
Board of Directors' meeting

WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 26
Focus Agriculture
Session 8

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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