

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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

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100 Ag Activities

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Visit the Driscoll Berry Store



Enjoy fresh, locally grown produce at the new California Grill



Enjoy an afternoon tasting cider at the Martinelli Company Store



Enjoy a slice of pie, pick your own berries, enjoy an afternoon at Gizdich Ranch



Enjoy winetasting at Storr's Winery



Buy local sustainable lumber at Big Creek



Enjoy Lakeside Organic Gardens produce at Charlie Hong Kong



Take advantage of the events at Live Earth Farm:

- Purchase a CSA Membership
- Attend the Farm Discovery Annual Feast in the Field
- Have your child attend the Farm Discovery Summer Camp
- Pick your own and shop at Live Earth Farm's Weekend Farmstand

The first 35 Ag Related Activities have been released and you will find all 35 on an insert inside this newsletter. See how many of these activities you can enjoy this year! The next 33 will be released May 11th at the Down to Earth Women Luncheon, so more fun and enjoyment is on the way. The final 32 Ag-Related activities will be released at the 100th Anniversary Annual Dinner Meeting on June 22, 2017. Stay tuned!!

ATTEND OUR 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, JUNE 22, 2017. VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.SCCFB.COM

President's Message

THOMAS BROZ, PRESIDENT



“The current labor shortage affecting farmers here and across the country is tied to a complex number of political, social and economic issues; but a greater awareness about the life of farmers and farm workers might translate into the collective political will to allocate a larger portion of our food dollars to ensure a stronger and healthier farm economy.”

The People Behind The Tiny Green Baskets

Little green basket on my counter, red and sweet

It takes my mind to the people I'd meet

They come to our country from a different land

Hoping to create a better plan

Where do they live and how do they survive

Making so little, picking berries to thrive

We are so blessed with the fruits that we eat

Grown so close to the ground at our feet

Are they happy to be in the land of the free

With their daughters and sons, that study with me

With red lips and seeds in my braces

I thank God for the farms growing strawberries by the cases

By Abigail Gerhold - 2017 Monte Vista Christian School

The above poem, composed by Abigail Gerhold, a 7th grader at Monte Vista Christian School, won 3rd prize among hundreds of poems submitted for this year's National Agricultural Day poetry contest. What caught my attention is Abigail's mindfulness of how her enjoyment of eating strawberries is directly linked to the field workers who make a living harvesting them - a perspective we often don't think about when buying produce at the grocery store. It may be the Pajaro Valley where Abigail goes to school and her interaction with fellow classmates, some of whose families have immigrated to work on strawberry farms in hopes of making a better life for themselves, that gives her a greater appreciation for the fruit she enjoys eating.

We as consumers pay a fairly small percentage of our annual household expenditures on food. According to the USDA we spend

[President's Message](#)
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ASK LAURA

Mark Bolda, Farm Advisor, Strawberries & Caneberries, UCCE

The Effects Of Late Rains On The Local Strawberry Crop?

With these late rains we are having, what are the effects on the local strawberry crop?

Thank you for your concern about the strawberries. Some of us are regretting that we hoped for so much water, because yes indeed it is now setting the growers back.

While frequent rains do not damage strawberry plants themselves that are being grown in properly drained fields – and as a matter of fact can be beneficial since they help in leaching away accumulated and harmful salts- they do cause harm to fruit in two ways.

Rain damage: Damage from rain becomes apparent in strawberries very soon after the rain has passed. One might observe outright damage from the rain droplets striking the surface of the soft fruit, or cracking usually at the stem end and water soaking, where the plant or the fruit simply has taken up an excess of water. While close observers of strawberries note that some varieties seem to exhibit some tolerance to rain, any precipitation over ½" will result in a lot of damaged fruit, no matter what the variety.

Fungal Infection: The real concern for growers during these rains is infection by

the fungus *Botrytis cinerea*, which causes gray mold of the fruit. It is important to point out that this fungus mainly infects floral parts first, but the resulting immature fruit immediately after flowering shows no symptoms of disease. It is only after the fruit reaches maturity, in other words is red and ripe, that we see the symptoms, the gray masses of mold and spores which are thriving on the increased soluble solids within. These spores and fungal parts are then spread around even more to other flowers by continuing rains and splashing water.

With this in mind, it is important that growers of strawberries realize that it is the flower which needs to be protected by the use of fungicides, not the fruit. If one has a lot of flowers open and a rainstorm is in the forecast, it is judicious to apply a fungicide to protect those flowers. Applying to fruit already infected serves very little purpose at all.

The above has been a brief clarification of rain damage in strawberries. Please contact Mark Bolda at UCCE Santa Cruz if you have more questions on this topic or any other topics concerning blackberry, raspberry or strawberry production.



"To succeed in life, you need three things; a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone."

Reba McEntire

Down to Earth Women Luncheon Thursday, May 11, 2017

Rancho Corralitos

11:30 to 1:30

\$100 per person

Get your reservations early!

(831) 722-6622 or visit www.agri-culture.us

THE WATER NANNY

Luxury Fertilizer

In our brave new world framing the message is more important than substance, practicality or logic. Polluted groundwater, hardly a sexy topic, had little political constituency beyond a few social justice groups. However, a "basic human right to clean drinking water" is like motherhood, apple pie and kittens which cannot be opposed.

The State and Regional Water Boards have been regulating water discharges in agricultural areas since 2003. Initially, the sole focus was on surface water pollution by sediment, chemicals and fertilizer. As the discharge of surface water can be observed it was easy for farmers to focus on management practices which would reduce or eliminate the discharge and consequent regulatory scrutiny.

In 2012, the water boards pivoted to groundwater pollution. While it is hard to dispute that the high nitrate levels in some well water is a result of farm fertilizer, there is no clear observable linkage between the water in the aquifer and farm practices. Environmental and social justice groups railed on and on about blue babies and poor communities as alleged victims of groundwater pollution, with little traction. Then the California Legislature enacted Human Right to Water legislation creating a "right" to clean drinking water, the tenor of the conversation changed.



Clean water laws are structured around measuring discharge to determine compliance with permit objectives. With groundwater there is no ability to measure discharge so the Water Board is in the process of creating a proxy to measure culpability for continued impairment of the groundwater. This proxy is the difference between the amount of nitrate fertilizer applied to a crop and the amount removed from the field when the crop is harvested.

Region 5, the Central Valley Regional Water Board, compelled the 14 Ag Coalitions in the Central Valley to undertake a Crop Nitrogen Knowledge Gap Study to summarize research on nitrate use by 106 crops grown in the Valley. The objective was to see if a possible proxy is the N applied divided by N removed at harvest (A/R). In order for this to work all Central Valley growers may have to report irrigation, nitrate fertilizer applied and harvested

yield for each crop. This information, and your farm harvest, will become public record. The idea is that Region 5 staff can regulate farming from their cubicles by comparing the A/R ratio of growers with the same crop. This may even make sense for tree and vineyards, but is pretty meaningless for Central Coast vegetable crops.



Let's look at a few crops. First of all the research reviewed was not conducted to determine the amount of N removed with harvest, but to aid growers to efficiently farm. The Gap Study shows N removed in pounds per ton of harvest. So arriving at A/R requires further library time. Skipping to the bottom line – Almonds have 136# N per ton harvested, annual N fertilizer applied of 180#/ac and a harvest of 2,400#/ac. This gives us an A/R ratio of 1.1 ($180/163=1.1$). Romaine hearts produce about 11.2 tons per acre, with N applied of 157#/ac and a removal rate of 3.62#N/ton harvested for an A/R ratio of 5.26. Broccoli averages an A/R ratio of 1.09, Apples A/R=4.8 and Strawberries A/R=1.7.

The objective of all this is to compare all romaine farms, those with a higher ratio may receive a visit from the regulators, without regard to soil, temperature or season. Indeed Region 3 staff has even questioned growers with a lower N usage than average, as there may have been an error, not superior technique. If there is a lesson here, it is to strive to be a "C" student and never receive a call. However, what if Save the Sea Otter starts to gripe that romaine is problematic compared to broccoli, or imply that apples can't cut it compared to almonds. We may all be in for a change of diet.

Still this is difficult to turn into a sound bite for the nightly news. So recently our regulators have coined a new pejorative phrase to characterize the "excess" fertilizer i.e. exceeding the target A/R ratio, **Luxury Fertilizer**.

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field."
(Dwight Eisenhower, 1956)



FAVORITE RECIPES

Make Ahead French Toast With Berries

This recipe came from <https://edibleparadise.com/recipes/>. The recipe is by Annaliese Keller, Marketing Director of the Monterey Bay Certified Farmers Market. The website is full of wonderful recipes from appetizers to vegetables. Please be sure to check out the website for recipes and much, much more.

Here is a great idea for Mother's Day Brunch, or any other Sunday morning for that matter. It can be made ahead and refrigerated overnight. Breakfast/brunch becomes a time to enjoy the family and some great food. Give it a try soon!!!

INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 loaf Francese or French bread , cubed | 2 cups milk |
| 1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese, cut into 1/2 inch cubes | 1/4 – 1/3 cup sugar, honey, agave syrup or maple syrup |
| 1 cup fresh blueberries, raspberries or blackberries | 2 teaspoons vanilla |
| 12 eggs, beaten | Powdered sugar, for dusting |
| | Maple or berry syrup |

METHOD:

Place half the bread cubes in a greased 13 x 9 inch pan. Layer cream cheese cubes evenly over bread. Sprinkle blueberries over top. Cover with the remaining bread cubes.

In a large bowl, whisk eggs, milk, sugar (or sweetener of your choice) and vanilla. Drizzle egg mixture evenly over bread. Cover and refrigerate 2 hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cover pan and bake 30 minutes. Uncover and bake 25 to 30 minutes more, or until center is firm and top is golden brown.

Lightly dust casserole with powdered sugar. Serve with blueberry or maple syrup

The President's Message - Continued from Page 2

less on food than any other country in the world. But maybe more importantly, only 8.6 cents of a typical dollar spent on food goes to cover cost of food production¹. This begs the question - if we as consumers have the awareness that Abigail has, would we pay a higher price for the food we eat and would it make a difference in raising the income of farm workers? Ask any successful farmer and he or she will agree that a farm's greatest assets are its employees. It is conceivable that if a greater portion of every dollar that is spent on food makes it back to the farm it could translate into increased compensation for farm workers – which in turn could attract

more workers as well as increase their retention rate.

The current labor shortage affecting farmers here and across the country is tied to a complex number of political, social and economic issues, but a greater awareness about the life of farmers and farm workers might translate into the collective political will to allocate a larger portion of our food dollars to ensure a stronger and healthier farm economy. One small step in that direction may be by reading the kind of poem Abigail has shared with us.

¹Source: 2015 USDA Economic Research Forum – Food Dollar Series



Calling all future organic farmers: **GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR ORGANIC STUDIES!**

If you are a...



K-8 teacher:

Get funds to incorporate organic into your classroom's project-based learning.

AWARD AMOUNT: Up to \$1,000

NUMBER OF AWARDS: Up to 30

PURPOSE OF AWARD: The CCOF Foundation and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom administer the *Look at Agriculture...Organically!* grant program for K-8 teachers who teach their students about organic in the classroom.

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants must be certified K-8 teachers in the United States. Applicants must submit a project proposal with an itemized budget for a project to be completed in the 2017-2018 school year. A significant percentage of grant funding will go to teachers in school districts with 50% or more of its students enrolled in the free/reduced lunch program.

DEADLINE: May 15, 2017



High school student:

Get a grant for your organic FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project.

AWARD AMOUNT: \$1,000

NUMBER OF AWARDS: Up to 30

PURPOSE OF AWARD: The CCOF Foundation gives grants to help high school students cover the expenses of conducting FFA SAE projects using organic production methods.

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants must be students in grades 7-11 who are current FFA members planning to do a SAE project. Proposed SAE project must follow USDA organic production standards. Applicants' financial need is taken into account for grant decisions.

DEADLINE: Applications open Fall 2017—Check www.ccof.org/fofgf for the official deadline



Higher education or vocational student:

We can help you pay for your studies in organic agriculture.

AWARD AMOUNT: \$2,500

NUMBER OF AWARDS: Up to 30

PURPOSE OF AWARD: The CCOF Foundation gives grants to higher education and vocational students pursuing organic agriculture programs to help with tuition and educational expenses.

ELIGIBILITY: Applicants must be enrolled in educational programs in the United States that will benefit their careers in organic agriculture, including vocational training/certificate programs, junior college/two-year degree programs, and bachelor's/four-year undergraduate degrees. Applicants' financial need is taken into account for grant decisions.

DEADLINE: May 15, 2017

Learn more and apply today at www.ccof.org/fofgf »

The Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund is a program of the CCOF Foundation that is growing the next generation of organic farmers by investing in their education. Meet some of our previous grant recipients at www.ccof.org/future-organic-farmers

The CCOF Foundation is part of CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers), a nonprofit organization based in Santa Cruz, California. CCOF advances organic agriculture for a healthy world through organic certification, education, advocacy, and promotion. We envision a world where organic is the norm. Learn about CCOF at www.ccof.org.

Thank you to the individuals and businesses who make the Future Organic Farmer Grant Fund possible: CCOF, the UNFI Foundation, the CCOF Processor/Handler Chapter, the Clif Bar Family Foundation, Dr. Bronner's, Duncan Family Farms, Forager Project, Frey Vineyards, Frontier Co-op, Green Ox Pastors, the Independent Natural Food Retailers Association, National Co-op Grocers, Organic Valley, and SunRidge Farms.

FROM THE AG COMMISSIONER

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

What is happening with Hemp?



Most cannabis conversations in the last few months have revolved around regulating cultivation for medical use and more recently, with the passing of Proposition 64, additional discussion has been generated. This proposition legalized cannabis for use

by adults 21 or older and allows individuals to grow up to six plants for personal use. There has been little discussion about another important change created by the passing of Proposition 64: Making the California Industrial Hemp Farming Act (Division 24 of the Food and Agricultural Code) operable and allowing for commercial production of industrial hemp. The Industrial Hemp Farming Act was passed by the California legislature in 2013, however, a restriction in the law prohibited hemp production unless authorized by federal law. Proposition 64 removed this restriction and hemp production became legal effective January 1, 2017. Hemp is a fast growing variety of the *Cannabis sativa* plant. It provides

an excellent source of usable fiber for industrial applications to make items such as rope, clothes and paper products. Hemp seed is used in a variety of ways to make consumer products including health foods, body care products and hempseed oil for cooking to name a few. Hemp belongs to the same cannabis species used for medical uses but hemp's chemical makeup and cultivation methods are different. Hemp contains less than 1% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive compound found in the species used for medicinal uses, and it is planted at high densities. Currently raw hemp used in the fabrication of various products in the U.S. is imported from other countries. The ability to produce this commodity commercially in the near future represents a new opportunity for California growers. However, before hemp can be produced in our state, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has to develop a program to administer the new law. This includes the formation of the Industrial Hemp Advisory Board. The Board will assist CDFA in developing regulations, a registration process, and a list of approved seed cultivars. To stay up to date on this new program you can visit the California Industrial Hemp website at: www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/industrialhemp.

The RCD and NRCS Partnership: Supporting Local Landowners and Growers

By Chris Coburn, Executive Director, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

In 1942, visionary farmers in Santa Cruz County formed one of the first resource conservation districts (RCDs) in California and the nation. The Dust Bowl crisis had just destroyed millions of acres of cropland by drought and subsequent soil loss. In response, the United States Department of Agriculture established the Soil Conservation Service (later renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service, or NRCS). Local counterparts were set up across the nation to ensure that local priorities were served - thus were born RCDs. To this day, the Santa Cruz RCD continues to have a close working relationship with the NRCS, and our offices are co-located in Capitola. Through this partnership, the NRCS provides a district conservationist who offers technical assistance and administers federal cost-share programs, and serves as the link to regional soil conservationists, agronomists, biologists, engineers, and more. For over half of

its existence in Santa Cruz County, the NRCS office was staffed by District Conservationist Rich Casale. Rich retired in January after 42 years on the job leaving big shoes to fill. Fortunately, Roger Tompkins has stepped up to the challenge, and has been appointed as the Acting District Conservationist. One of the programs we're fortunate to be working on with Roger and the NRCS is the Community Water Dialogue Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). This program provides technical and financial assistance to local growers to implement conservation practices that reduce groundwater pumping, increase aquifer recharge, and protect surface water by reducing nitrate leaching into the groundwater. If you are interested in this program, or would like to more generally discuss your conservation goals, please contact the RCD at 464-2950 or the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service at 475-1967.

Safe Storage of Pallets and Bins

Indoor storage of stacked idle pallets and bin boxes presents one of the greatest challenges to sprinkler systems because it creates an ideal arrangement for the rapid spread of fire.

Managers often look at indoor pallet storage from an operational efficiency perspective and don't recognize that this practice can easily overcome typical automatic sprinkler systems. The result can be devastating to a business, including potential production interruption and total loss of a building.

Wood pallets and bins dry out quickly, which makes them susceptible to catching fire with a relatively small ignition source. When combined with a high heat release rate and a large amount of built-in air space, fire can develop rapidly.

Controlling or extinguishing such a fire is especially difficult because the undersides of pallets and bins are shielded from the discharge of automatic sprinklers, preventing water from reaching the base of the fire. High piling considerably increases both the challenge to sprinklers and the probability of involving a large number of pallets or bins in the event of a fire.

To avoid fire hazards, Nationwide recommends storing idle pallets and bins outside or in a detached structure. Do not store them in non-sprinklered warehouses containing other stock of significant value.

The **National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 13 Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems** details the following guidelines for pallets or bins stacked on the floor of buildings equipped with typical automatic sprinkler systems (control mode density-area systems):

Wood pallets and bins: Stack no more than 6 feet high. Each pallet pile of no more than 4 stacks should be separated from other piles by at least 8 feet of clear space or 25 feet of commodity.

Plastic pallets and bins: Stack no more than 4 feet high. Each pallet pile of no more than 2 stacks should be separated from other piles by at least 8 feet of clear space or 25 feet of commodity. Protection should employ high-temperature-rated sprinklers.

Read our **full-length article** on MyNSightOnline.com to view tables detailing recommended clearance of stored idle

pallets and bins or to learn more about pallet management in the food industry.

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MyNSightOnline.com features extensive risk management and safety expertise articles. Nationwide customers can log into MyNSightOnline to access additional risk management tools, resources, training and worker's compensation information developed specifically for farmers and ranchers. Simply visit **Farm.NationwideAgribusiness.com** to log in or click "Sign up for account access." For help signing up, contact the Farm Service Center at 1-800-418-3188.

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"Farm Bureau gives me a reason to meet with other farmers, to learn about what is going on on their farms and keep up to date with the issues that face all farmers in our area."

Nita Gizdich, Gizdich Ranch

Commas Can Be A Big Deal



Remember the magazine cover promoting an article about an interview television personality Rachael Ray: "Rachael Ray finds inspiration in cooking her family and her dog." The dog looked nervous. It was intended to say Rachael Ray finds inspiration in cooking, her

family, and her dog.

O'Connor v. Oakhurst Dairy, (March 13, 2017) No. 16-1901 (1st Cir. 2017) was a 29-page decision about an exemption from the State of Maine's overtime law. The Court said that if the exemption "used a serial comma to mark off the last of the activities that it lists, then the exemption would clearly encompass an activity that the drivers perform. And so, the drivers would plainly fall within the exemption and outside the overtime law's protection. But there was no serial comma in the exemption's list of activities, thus leading to a dispute whether the drivers were within the overtime exemption or not. The decision would cost the dairy ten million dollars.

Three truck drivers sued Oakhurst, seeking more than four years' worth of overtime pay that they had been denied. Maine had a law which applied to people who work with perishable foods. The law required workers to be paid 1.5 times their normal rate for each hour worked after 40 hours, but had certain exemptions. Delivery drivers distributed perishable foods, but they don't pack the boxes.

The dispute involved a list of three or more items — like spinach, lettuce and beets. Some put a comma after lettuce and some would not. This is known as the serial or Oxford comma. The debate over commas doesn't matter most of the time but it mattered here.

The Maine state law said overtime rules do not apply to: "The canning, processing, preserving, freezing, drying, marketing, storing, packing for shipment or distribution of: (1) Agricultural produce; (2) Meat and fish products; and (3) Perishable foods."

Did the law intend to exempt workers who distribute the three categories that follow, or was it intended to exempt

only - *packing for* - the shipment or also the distribution of them? If there were a comma after "shipment," the Court said it might have been clearer that the law exempted the distribution of perishable foods. But the Court sided with the drivers, saying the absence of a comma produced enough uncertainty to rule in their favor and reversed the lower court decision. Whether the drivers were subject to a law that denied them thousands of dollars a year depended entirely on how the sentence was read!

You're Invited
**100th Annual
Dinner Meeting**

Thursday, June 22, 2017
5:45 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

\$100 per person

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AG NEWS

Important Notices

Agricultural Commodities Exemption

The California Highway Patrol has extended the **agricultural commodities exemption**, commonly known as the Tie-down exemption, from the federal load securement rules for another year. The **exemption has been extended to 4/30/2018** or upon the implementation of the regulatory requirements, which are still being reviewed by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The rules and conditions of the original exemption, granted in 2007, are still in effect. Updated forms and instructions can be downloaded from the CFBF website at: <http://www.cfbf.com/top-issues#trade>.

American Farm Bureau Launches \$145K Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge

The **American Farm Bureau Federation** opened online applications for its **4th Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge**, which will award \$145,000 to individuals with ideas and business innovations that benefit rural regions of the U.S. It's the first national rural business competition focused exclusively on entrepreneurs working on food and agriculture businesses. "Rural entrepreneurs typically face hurdles that make it challenging to develop successful businesses, including lack of capital, business networks and business training," said **Lisa Benson**, AFBF's director of rural development. "Through the challenge, we're helping food and agricultural entrepreneurs take their businesses to the next level." Submissions are due by **June 30** at the link below. The **top 10 teams**, to be announced in **October**, will have the opportunity to pitch to potential investors. <http://www.strongruralamerica.com/challenge>

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CALENDAR

THURSDAY - MAY 11
Agri-Culture's Down to Earth
Women Luncheon, Rancho
Corralitos, 11:30 - 1:30pm

THURSDAY - MAY 25
Agricultural Policy Advisory
Commission meeting

THURSDAY - MAY 25
Board of Directors' meeting

MONDAY - MAY 29
Memorial Day Observed
Office Closed

FRIDAY - JUNE 4
Focus Agriculture XXVIII,
Session 4

WEDNESDAY - JUNE 7
Legislative Committee
meeting

- Executive Committee
meeting
- Membership Committee
meeting

MONDAY - JUNE 12
Public Relations &
Information Committee
meeting

WEDNESDAY - JUNE 14
Young Farmers & Ranchers
meeting

THURSDAY - JUNE 22
100th Anniversary Annual
Dinner Meeting
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