

Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

MARCH 2026
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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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President's Message

Our Future is Bright!



John Pisturino, President

If you have been concerned about our youth's addiction to social media and detachment from interacting with people, come to our National Agriculture Day Luncheon on March 18th. You will walk away knowing our future is in good hands. During this event the winners of our Poster Contest which we sponsor countywide in classrooms K-6 are announced. The contest theme is "Grown in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley". The art work is not only beautiful, but provides a unique perspective of farming in our area. In grades 7-12, we sponsor a Poetry Contest with the same theme as the Poster contest. These beautifully written poems provide a literal interpretation of local farming.

We also will be presenting eight college scholarships. This year we have 40 applicants. I have had the honor for many years to interview the scholarship applicants. I have found some students come to the interview timid and shy. Sometimes we have to coax them to give us the answers we want. Most of these students haven't been interviewed before. But, then there are the ones that come in sure of themselves, confident and know what they want. We encourage all applicants to apply again while in college. By then, they are even more confident and at ease and know the routine, especially the shy, timid ones.

If you want a positive feeling and to know that our future is bright, please attend our National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon. If you can't make it this year, please attend next year.



Save the Date

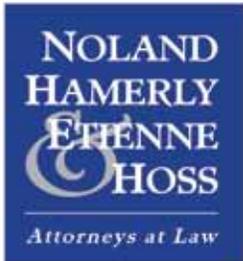
Third Annual Pitch In All County Clean Up Day

May 9, 2026

sign up at: pitchinsantacruz.org



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Happy St. Patrick's Day

*Be sure to attend the National
 Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon
 on March 18th at Heritage Hall.*

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ASK EMILY

**Emily Jane Freed, UC Cooperative Extension Area Director,
Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito Counties**

Planting It Forward



Emily Jane Freed

It has been a wallop of a winter on the Central Coast. January's dark, stormy nights seemed to last forever, and February delivered dramatic downpours and whipping winds that tested fences and fields. As the calendar flips to March, daylight is stretching longer and the first signs of spring are pushing through, such as daffodils, tulips, calendula, and crocosmia adding pops of color to the landscape.

With the Spring season on the horizon, many of us are in greenhouse sowing flats of lettuce, kale, parsley, and flowers. This year, please consider sowing an extra flat or two. Community garden therapy programs in the region are seeking vegetable and flower starts for their raised beds, including programs at the Santa Cruz County Blaine Street Women's Facility and the Monterey County Juvenile Hall Facility. These garden therapy program provide hands-on education, responsibility, and

meaningful outdoor work for participants, in partnership with local law enforcement staff and the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Master Gardeners. If you find yourself with extra vegetable starts, flower seedlings, fruit trees, or rose bushes, these programs and their participants would gladly put them to good use. Seed donations, especially lettuce, radish, cilantro, dill, and flowers are also welcome (new seed only, please). Let's help our local garden therapy programs thrive by sharing a little of our abundance, such as an extra flat, a few seed packets, or a young fruit tree ready for a new home. Sometimes the smallest sowing can grow into something far greater than we imagine.

As always, reach out to Emily if you are interested in connecting and learning more about the UC Cooperative Extension programs in Santa Cruz County. Emily Jane Freed can be reached at ejfreed@ucanr.edu

Your contributions to Agri-Culture are tax deductible!

Please visit agri-culture.us/donations and consider making a contribution to support agriculture education in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley.

Thank You

THE WATER NANNY

Soothsayer

Ancient Greek rulers often consulted the Oracle of Delphi for divine guidance, superior to mere prophecies. No wars were declared without her consultations, which were pronounced as riddles, for guidance and direction. King Croesus, with mythical wealth and the richest ruler in the world, asked, in 543 BCE, if he should make war on the Persian Empire. The oracle of Delphi predicted if he did so he would *"destroy a great empire"*, turns out she was correct, as the Persian defeated Croesus and crushed his kingdom. Alexander the Great, also received correct advice in 336 BC, that *"You are invincible, my son!"*

Lamentably the Delphic Oracle is no longer. Instead, we must rely on statistical data to provide riddles of our future. This is much less fun as we cannot consult with an hallucinogenic prophet of Apollo. In our modern world we consult with StatMuse for sports betting guidance, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and our annual Agricultural Commissioners' 2024 Crop and Livestock Reports. The Santa Cruz Ag Report shows Strawberries as our top crop with \$218,925,000 in value, an 18% increase over 2023, possibly guiding to a good year in 2025, which in general was, due to weak sales from our competitors in Santa Maria. However, the Santa Barbara 2024 report showed Strawberry sales at \$860M, a 10% increase over 2023. Monterey topped everyone with \$1,039M, a 15% increase in value. Based on this depth of strawberry data, the Oracle predicts 2026 will be another fine year for Strawberry harvests.

Monterey also highlighted two other crops for specific attention. Wine Grapes brought in \$152M, a 22% drop in harvest sales. Our old Ag Commissioner is now the new Commissioner in Monterey, Juan Hidalgo, who notes that the sales were reduced by unseasonably warm weather, but pointed out a vast oversupply and reduced demand for fine wine. Monterey, the only county to count Cannabis production, with sales up to \$440M, a 21% increase, while

detailing a 15% reduction in acres and decline of licensed grows by 77%. This seems to be sure bet that licensed pot is rapidly diminishing, but hopefully not disappearing. Santa Cruz also has had a dramatic dieoff of cannabis licenses.

Using the past as a guide for the future is an art, and it assumes that external factors remain constant. Almost every crop report cautions that the gross value of a crop does not equal a profit for the farmer, even with increased annual values. Indeed, increases in yield may result in over supply resulting in lower price per unit, and a slimmer profit margin. Wine grapes are good example. In 2024 Santa Cruz harvested acres increased from 11,168 to 12,126, while sales declined from \$98M to \$70M, a 29% drop.



A review of the Central Valley crop reports was interesting, and seem to undercut my theory that the annual reports predict the future. Fresno County, Monterey's competitor for the largest Ag County by sales, showed table grapes declined 33%, yet winegrapes, grown in the heat of the south valley, increased by 5%. Almonds kicked ass in Fresno with a 43% increase to \$1,455M. Unfortunately, trade tariffs and oversupply in 2025 have significantly cut sales and thousands of acres are being pulled out as money losers.

Sutter County was big in almonds in 2024, an increase of 84% and value per ton of 28%. *C'est la vie* in 2025 and 2026. Sutter County sold Peaches for \$66M in '24, and in 2026 Del Monte closed the last Cling Peach cannery. Growers had 20-year contracts to plant, grow and harvest Clingstones, and they now have no other market. *"Prediction is difficult-particularly when it involves the future."* Mark Twain





FAVORITE RECIPES

Chicken Cacciatore

A Note from the Editor: Last week we were invited to a friend's home for dinner. Our friend, who comes from an Italian family, was raised in the bay area and learned to cook from her mother. She made Chicken Cacciatore and it was delicious. It is a simple dish to make and one to share with family and friends. Of course, her recipe is not written anywhere so here goes Ina Garten's recipe which is pretty close to what she explained to me. Hope you enjoy!

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 4 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (or a cut up chicken) | 1 teaspoon dried thyme |
| 2 Tbsp. olive oil | 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional) |
| Salt and Pepper to taste | 1 cup dry red wine |
| 1 large onion, sliced | 1 can crushed tomatoes |
| 1 red bell pepper, sliced | 2 Tablespoons tomato paste |
| 1 green bell pepper, sliced | 1/2 cup chicken broth |
| 4 cloves garlic, minced | Fresh basil or parsley for garnish |
| 1 teaspoon dried oregano | |

Season the chicken well with salt and pepper on both sides before cooking. Heat the olive oil in a large pot. Brown the chicken until golden, then remove and set aside. Add the onions and bell peppers to the same pot. Cook until soft and lightly caramelized. Stir in the garlic, oregano, thyme and red pepper flakes (if using). Pour in red wine and deglaze the pan, scraping up all the brown bits. Let simmer until slightly reduced. Add the crushed tomatoes, tomato paste and chicken broth. Stir until smooth and combined. Return the chicken back into the sauce and spoon the sauce over the chicken. Cover the pot and simmer on low heat for forty minutes until the chicken is tender. Taste and adjust the seasoning and garnish with basil or parsley.

Our friend served the Chicken Cacciatore with polenta and a green salad with crusty rustic loaf of bread. The interesting part to me was she made her polenta in the microwave. I know, I thought it "Wow, polenta in the microwave". But it too was delicious and only took a few minutes. You can try it if you'd like or make it the standard way, but it was truly a good meal to enjoy with good friends.

Microwave Polenta

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Cup Polenta (Bob's Red Mill was used) | Combine polenta, water and salt in a large, microwave safe bowl. Whisk to combine the ingredients well. Cover the bowl, leaving a small gap for steam to escape. Microwave on High for 6-8 minutes. Carefully remove the bowl from the microwave and whisk vigorously to remove any lumps. Return the polenta to the microwave for a couple of minutes until it thickens. Remove from microwave and stir in the butter and cheese until melted and creamy. |
| 4 cups water (or chicken broth) | |
| 1 teaspoon salt | |
| 2 - 3 Tablespoons butter | |
| 1/4 cup cheese (Pecorino/Romano was used. You could also use parmesan) | |

Note: Remember, all microwaves cook differently so you may have to adjust your time. To prevent boilovers, use a much larger than the volume of liquid. If the polenta gets too thick, you can add a small amount of milk to loosen it up.

Being a Member Pays Off!



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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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I am a Farm Bureau member because...

"My family has owned agricultural land in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties for many years and we have always been a member of the Monterey Farm Bureau. But this year, since I grew up Watsonville and in Santa Cruz County, I decided to join the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau. I support the Farm Bureau and everything it represents. I love being involved in the community and it is my way of giving back."

Matt Ryan, Retired Watsonville Firefighter
Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau member & volunteer



Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

National Agriculture Day Spring Luncheon

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
Heritage Hall, Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

SCCFB 109th Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 25, 2026
Location TBD

California State Fair

Friday, July 17, 2026 to Sunday, August 2, 2026
Cal Expo, Sacramento

Santa Cruz County Fair

Wednesday, September 16 to Sunday, September 20, 2026
Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds

33rd Annual Golf Tournament

Friday, September 25, 2026
Pajaro Valley Golf Club

Annual Directors' Dinner

Thursday, November 5, 2026
Location to be determined

CFBF Annual Meeting

December 1, 2026 to December 4, 2026
Reno, NV

Agri-Culture

18th Annual Down to Earth Women Luncheon

Thursday, May 14, 2026
Driscoll's Rancho Corralitos

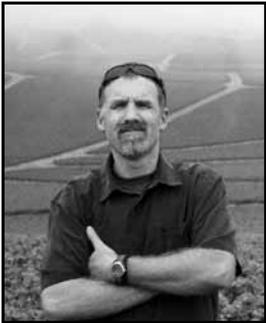
18th Annual Testicle Festival

Saturday, August 29, 2026
Estrada Deer Camp

30th Annual Farm Dinner

Friday, October 9, 2026
Land Trust Little Bee Barn

March Recognizes the Importance of Weights & Measures



David Sanford

to protect our consumers and ensure fairness in our local marketplace.

Weights & Measures inspectors, part of the County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights & Measures Department, test and verify the accuracy of a wide range of commercial devices. This includes fuel pump meters, grocery store scales, taxi meters, wire and rope meters, farmers market scales, shipping store scales, yogurt shop and candy shop scales, and many others. Inspectors also conduct price accuracy audits at major retailers to prevent overcharging and perform package inspections to ensure that labeled net contents match what customers receive. They even verify the accuracy of firewood deliveries and non-PG&E electric, gas, and water meters—such as those used in some mobile home parks and multi-family housing.

Every year, the first week of March (March 1–7) is recognized as National Weights and Measures Week by the

At some point, most of us wonder: Am I really getting what I paid for? Did the gas pump actually deliver 10 gallons? Did the scale at the store correctly weigh those three pounds of apples? Fortunately, you can feel confident that you did, because Santa Cruz County Weights & Measures inspectors are continually working

National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM). This observance commemorates the signing of the nation's first Weights & Measures law by President John Adams on March 2, 1799. The NCWM, a nonprofit made up of manufacturers, retailers, consumers, and state and local officials, develops national measurement standards and selects an annual theme for the week. This year's theme is: "We Measure What Matters."

The theme is especially timely. With inflation affecting households everywhere, ensuring market fairness has become even more vital, particularly for communities managing tight budgets or facing economic inequities.

California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross sums up the role well: "The Weights & Measures inspector is, perhaps, the least known element of daily commerce in the United States, but these experts protect buyers and sellers in every transaction." As John Quincy Adams remarked as U.S. Secretary of State in the 1821 Report Upon Weights and Measures: "Weights and Measures may be ranked among the necessities of life to every individual of human society."

Join the U.S. Weights and Measures community in celebrating Weights and Measures Week using the social media hashtag #ThankAnInspector!



Amazing Facts About US Agriculture

- Female Farmers: Women account for about 30-35% of U.S. farmers.
- Industrial Uses: Agriculture goes beyond food; one acre of soybeans can produce 82,368 crayons.
- Aging Workforce: While new, younger farmers are entering the field, the average age of an American farmer is between 50 and 62 years old.
- Global Employment: Agriculture is the world's largest employer, providing jobs to 40% of the global population.

DISSENTING AND CONCURRING LEGAL OPINIONS



When we read about a California or United States appellate court decision, the headlines usually focus on the “majority opinion.” Of course, that’s the part of the decision that controls the outcome. But if we look more closely at the full opinion, we often see additional writings in the opinion labeled “concurring,” “dissenting,” or even “concurring in part and dissenting in part.”

These separate opinions may seem like “legalese,” but they play an important role in how the law develops—especially in heavily regulated states such as California and heavily regulated industries such as agriculture.

In the early years of the United States Supreme Court, the Justices did not usually issue separate opinions. Instead, they followed the English tradition of delivering “seriatim” opinions, where each Justice gave their own reasoning separately rather than speaking with one voice. The early Court followed British judicial tradition. In English courts, judges commonly delivered opinions individually. The American Supreme Court initially copied that style. Here’s how concurring and dissenting opinions first appeared — and why.

In the 1790s, the Court’s earliest years, the Justices often delivered individual opinions. The Court did not clearly label opinions as “majority,” “concurring,” or “dissenting.” Instead, it was more like a collection of speeches. Agreement or disagreement had to be inferred.

CONCURRING OPINIONS: A major change came in the 1800s under Chief Justice John Marshall who believed the Court would be stronger and more authoritative if it spoke with one voice. He encouraged the Justices to issue a single “Opinion of the Court,” which represented the majority’s reasoning. This practice strengthened the Court’s legitimacy and institutional power.

The first concurring opinions developed gradually in the early 19th century. Because early cases were seriatim, it is hard to pinpoint the “first” concurrence in modern terms. But

once majority opinions became common under Marshall, Justices sometimes wrote separately to express agreement with the judgment, but explaining their reliance on different constitutional or statutory reasoning. Concurring opinions became more clearly labeled and common by the mid-1800s.

A concurring opinion allows a Justice to agree with the outcome, clarify or narrow the reasoning, signal limits to how far the ruling should extend, or propose a different legal framework. Over time, dissenting and concurring opinions became essential features of American law. They promoted transparency in judicial reasoning, encouraged intellectual honesty, provided guidance for future cases, and allowed legal doctrine to evolve. For example, dissents in the late 19th century later influenced 20th-century civil rights jurisprudence.

DISSENTING OPINIONS: A dissenting opinion (often simply called a “dissent”) is written by one or more judges who disagree with the majority’s decision. They explain why they believe the court majority made the wrong decision.

Dissenting opinions began to occur in the early 1800s. Once the Court began issuing majority opinions, it became clearer when one Justice disagreed. By the 1820s, dissents were clearly identified as separate opinions expressing disagreement with the majority.

Dissenting opinions serve several purposes. They allow a Justice to explain disagreement with the majority’s reasoning and explain why that judge believes the court reached a wrong decision. They preserve alternative legal interpretations for future courts. They can influence future legal developments. In fact, many famous dissents later became the foundation for future majority rulings. And dissents may guide legislative or administrative changes. A strong dissent may encourage a higher court to take up the issue. For example, a sharp disagreement at the court of appeal level may make it more likely the supreme court grants review. History shows that some dissents later become the majority view. Legal standards evolve, and today’s dissent can become tomorrow’s controlling law.

CONCURRING IN PART AND DISSENTING IN PART: A judge who “concur[s] in part and dissent[s] in part” agrees with

Continued on Page 9

33RD ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



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Find us on Eventbrite: "33rd Annual Golf Tournament" in Aptos

Legally Speaking - Continued from Page 8

some portions of the majority opinion but disagrees with others. This longer phrase sometimes appears in complex cases involving multiple legal issues.

For example, consider a lawsuit involving both a breach of a farm lease and a related claim for unfair business practices. A judge might agree that the lease claim was correctly decided but disagree with how the court handled the unfair practices claim. The judge may then Join the majority by concurring on Issue A, disagree by dissenting on Issue B, and write separate opinions to explain their concurrence and dissent on both positions.

SUMMARY: So, the first concurring and dissenting opinions did not begin to appear at a single moment. They

evolved out of the early English tradition of separate judicial opinions. Reform occurred in the early 1800s toward unified majority opinions and the need for Justices to formally record disagreement or alternative reasoning.

A dissenting opinion disagrees with the result. A concurring opinion agrees with the result but not the reasoning, a concurring in part and dissenting in part opinion agrees on some issues and disagrees on others.

Together, these opinions reflect the dynamic nature of the law. For farmers navigating an increasingly complex regulatory system, understanding these terms helps make sense of how court decisions are made—and how today's ruling may evolve into tomorrow's legal reality.

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- 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.



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Unknown

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Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

CALENDAR

THURSDAY - MARCH 5
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

SUNDAY - MARCH 8
Daylight Savings Time
Begins

FRIDAY - MARCH 13
Focus Agriculture, Session 1

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 18
National Agriculture Day
Spring Luncheon

THURSDAY - MARCH 20
1st Day of Spring

THURSDAY - MARCH 26
Board of Directors' meeting

THURSDAY - APRIL 2
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

FRIDAY - APRIL 10
Focus Agriculture, Session 2

THURSDAY - APRIL 30
Board of Directors' meeting

WEDNESDAY - MAY 6
Focus Agriculture, Session 3

HURSDAY - MAY 7
Policy & Resource
Committee meeting

WEDNESDAY - MAY 14
Down To Earch Women
Luncheon

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