

# 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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## Apple Pie Baking Contest "Best of Show"



Apple Pie Judges (L-R) Maria Vasquez, Marcus Mendiola, "Best of Show" winner, Janice Weaver, Apple Pie Judges Lily Belli, Kyle Theriot and Farm Bureau member and Apple Pie Contest Chair, Laura Rider

The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau's 48th Annual Apple Pie Baking Contest was held at the Santa Cruz County Fair on Wednesday, September 10th. There were over 50 apple pie entries, and winners were selected for each of the three divisions, Youth, Adult and Masters. Janice Weaver, of Capitola, took the top overall prize by winning "Best of Show". Weaver had previously won "Best of Show" three years in a row (2019; 2021 & 2022 – no contest was held in 2020 due to Covid), then took two years off from competing in the contest, before returning this year to reclaim the prize. The Apple Pie Contest Judges are different every year. The judges for this year's contest were Lily Belli, Food & Drink Correspondent, Lookout Santa Cruz; Kyle Theriot, Apple Grower & Director of Vineyard Operations, Ridge Vineyards; Maria Vasquez, Social & Environmental Impact, Driscoll's, Inc.; and Marcus Mendiola, Water Conservation & Outreach Specialist for PV Water. See page 5 for a list of all contest winners.

The Pajaro Valley apple producers, growers and pie lovers sponsor the annual event in cooperation with the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau. Laura Rider, Farm Bureau Member, is Chair for this very popular opening day event. ■



Past President, Arnett Young, mans the Farm Bureau Booth at the Santa Cruz County Fair



The Opening Day BBQ always draws a big crowd for good food, good friends and a good way to kick off fair week

# President's Message



Dennis Webb, President

## A Reflection My Last Three Years

**A**s my term as president of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau comes to a close this November, I want to reflect on the people and experiences that have stood out over the past three years.

One highlight was my mom, Janet, being recognized as Farmer of the Year in 2024. The award was presented at our family's ranch in Davenport, which made it especially meaningful. It was a proud moment for our family and a reminder of the strong agricultural heritage in this county.

Last month, I had the chance to share Farm Bureau's work with my son, Andy, while greeting visitors at our booth at the Santa Cruz County Fair. We had a great time together, visiting with fairgoers and teaching them about local agriculture.

A major part of my time as

president has been working with our executive director, Jess Brown. He has been a steady leader for this organization and an incredible friend. I have learned a lot from him and value the time we spent working together.

I want to recognize our officers. Incoming president John Pisturino and vice presidents Peter Navarro and CJ Miller are all strong leaders who will continue to move the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau forward. I have also benefited from the guidance and support of recent past presidents, including Arnett Young, Brendan Miele, Tom Broz, and David Van Lennep. Each of them helped me in different ways, and I will do my best to be

Continued on Page 11



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# THE AG COMMISSIONER

David Sanford, Agricultural Commissioner,  
Santa Cruz County

## Regional Pesticide Collection/Disposal Event



David Sanford

The Agricultural Commissioner Offices of Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Clara Counties are collaborating to host a **free pesticide collection event for commercial agricultural operations** in the region. This is a unique opportunity to safely dispose of unwanted agricultural-use pesticides (not home-use products) at no cost.

### Event Details:

**When:** This event is currently planned for **April 2026**.

**Who Can Participate:** Agricultural producers and non-production ag operations (e.g., golf courses, parks, cemeteries) based in Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Clara Counties.

**What's Covered:** All disposal and event costs are funded by the U.S. EPA, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, and participating counties.

**What's Not Accepted:** Empty containers of any kind.

**How to Participate:** Please complete the **Pre-Registration Survey by October 17, 2025**, using the QR code below:



This survey helps us gauge interest. After submission, you'll receive a Confirmation and Inventory Survey to report the types and quantities of pesticides you plan to bring.

### Important Notes:

This is an amnesty event – no regulatory action will be taken for participation.

Unregistered, banned, or illegal-to-use pesticides (with proper permits) will be accepted but must be declared in the second survey.

If you have concerns about specific products, contact your County Agricultural Commissioner.

### Contact Information:

**Santa Cruz County:** (831) 763-8080

**Monterey County:** (831) 759-7340

**San Benito County:** (831) 637-5344

**Santa Clara County:** (408) 918-4600

If you're unable to complete the online survey, please reach out to your County Agricultural Commissioner's Office directly.



# THE WATER NANNY

*"Agriculture, the Original Green"*

## Imaginary Alignment

Apparently, St. Thomas Aquinas did not ask how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, although he was the expert theologian on the nature of angels. Now we are confronted by how many overlapping and redundant regulations can be corralled, as there is professed hope for simplification of recording, paperwork and annual reporting, much less actual compliance with a superabundance of on farm regulations

Your Nanny confronted this quandary decades ago, when the profusion of regulations was smaller, by commending the Monterey RDC and NRCS for teaming up to work together to approve, and fund, conservation practices, which are now mandated by the Water Board. With one-stop permit screening, that also included Army Corps, US Fish and Wildlife, California Fish and Game (now renamed), the Water Board and Monterey County, 26 projects were approved, preventing 33,613 tons of soil runoff from entering waterways. Problem solved, one review, one angel.



The State has a new take on this issue, much more scholastic nature, and way too theoretical for common dirt farmers. "What emerged are solutions that are foundational, proactive, and forward-thinking ... broader commitment to building programs, including regulatory ones, that are transparent, efficient, effective, and equitable ... Let's continue this work together with humility, determination, and the deep pride we all share in California agriculture." It is unlikely that a farmer spoke or penned this, as it is from the recently Regulatory Alignment Study (Final Draft) released by CDFA last month. As a voracious reader of regulatory jargon, I immediately signed up for this best seller. Like its name, it was forward thinking, without any goal of simplification, or efficiency, and much will never be implemented, nor funded.

But wait, there is more... How can our State's food safety and water quality regulations, requirements, and processes work better for agriculture while still delivering on our responsibility to protect the environment and public health? (Karen Ross, Secretary CDFA) This is distilled down to three categories; 1) Foundational Opportunities, 2) Developmental

Opportunities, and 3) Transformational Opportunities. Once you read through pages of platitudes and jargon, there are ideas and even draft solutions. The hired consultant "recommends forming a joint implementation working group and beginning with high-impact Foundational Opportunities." Sometimes you watch a movie that has such a simpleton plot that it is best for your psyche to change the channels.



Reading between the lines on this script there are hidden nuggets that would make overlapping regulations simpler and provide more actual data for agencies to review. Too often the state significantly underfunds the computer systems that hold the flood of farm by farm, field by field, reporting, so that information collected has to be down scaled for submission. It is almost like pouring our well managed data into a bucket of other data and stirring. As a result, the key data collection proposal is to enhance reporting tools for farmers and agency staff(s). Reducing redundancy, consistent expectations, transparency are also touted, along with protection of proprietary data. Great, Just Do It.

Unfortunately, many of the truly great ideas are "Transformational", that is after the Foundational and Developmental Opportunities. Here are the best ideas, which should be first. Establish a California Ag data exchange; track farm cross-program participation; an Ag permit navigation with digital decision tool; modernize CDFA program platforms; recognize qualified third-party audits; and centralize nitrogen data. Most everything in this Final Draft is focused on accepting and using data, something all the named agencies fail to adequately fund. Until the legislature recognizes this statewide flaw everything in this Draft Study will remain imaginary.

And now a few words from our ancestors. "Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets break through." (Benjamin Franklin) "If you have ten thousand regulations you destroy all respect for the law." (Winston Churchill)



# FAVORITE RECIPES

## “Best of Show” Apple Pie

Top Overall Prize Goes to **Janice Weaver**

### CRUST:

2 1/2 cups flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup butter

1/2 cup water

- Combine the dry ingredients
- Cut the butter into the flour
- Add cold water and combine
- Wrap in plastic and refrigerate



Over 50 pies were entered in this year's contest

### FILLING:

10 apples, peeled, cored and sliced

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

1 cup sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 Tablespoon cornstarch

- Roll out one half of dough and place in 9" pie pan.
- Toss filling ingredients together and pour into pan.
- Roll out second half of dough for top of pie.
- Crimp it together and bake at 375°F for 45 to 50 minutes.

## Division Winners of the 2025 Apple Pie Baking Contest

Place	Youth Division	Adult Division	Masters Division
1st	Oliver Klein Santa Cruz	Laura Ortiz Spiegel La Selva Beach	Janice Weaver Santa Cruz
2nd	Claire Keithly La Selva Beach	Bridgett Titus Aptos	Brooklyn Titus Aptos
3rd	Marisa Wood Watsonville	Katie Webb Davenport	Rowena Chu Scotts Valley



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

Questions? Contact the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau  
[sccfb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sccfb@sbcglobal.net)  
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(831) 818-1193 - Text

## I am a Farm Bureau member because...

"I joined the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau because I wanted to do some networking and collaborating with other local farmers and people involved in the agricultural industry."

Anthony Sandoval, new member  
Precision Ag Services



### Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

#### **Annual Directors' Dinner**

Thursday, November 6, 2025  
Location to be determined

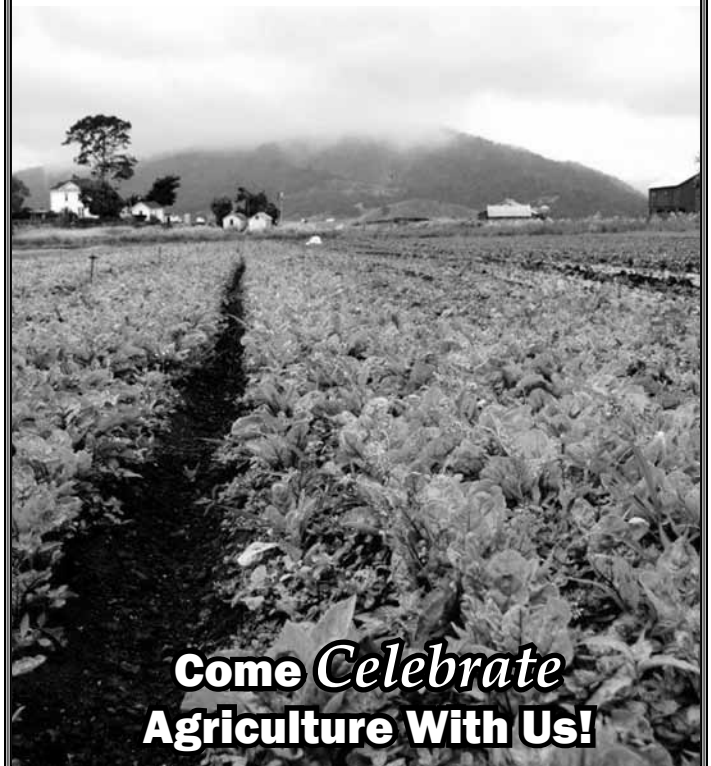
#### **CFBF Annual Meeting**

Hyatt Regency, Orange County, Anaheim, CA  
December 6-9, 2025

#### **Agri-Culture**

#### **29th Annual Farm Dinner**

Friday, October 10, 2025  
Land Trust Little Bee Barn



**Come Celebrate  
Agriculture With Us!**

# REMEMBERING GEORGEANN COWLES EISKAMP 1940 - 1925



**G**eorgeann Cowles Eiskamp, born March 17, 1940, in Watsonville, California, passed away peacefully on September 22, 2025. A fifth-generation Cowles family farmer, community leader and generous supporter of her community, she built a life rooted in service, stewardship and deep love for the land.

Raised on her family's ranch in the Pajaro Valley, Georgeann graduated from Watsonville High School in 1957. She received her bachelor's degree from Purdue University in 1972. She married John G. Eiskamp and raised three

children. She returned to Watsonville in 1999 to assist her father in the family's berry business. Following his passing in 2006, she took the reins of Cowles Berry Farms and guided its operations with passion, resilience and innovation.

A memorial celebration will be held Thursday, October 30, 2025, at 12:00 noon, at the Heritage Hall at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, 2601 E. Lake Avenue, Watsonville, CA 95076. In lieu of flowers, tax-deductible donations may be made to the Georgeann Cowles Eiskamp Memorial Scholarship for Women in Agriculture through the educational organization, Agri-Culture at: [www.agri-culture.us/funds](http://www.agri-culture.us/funds). Checks payable to Agri-Culture with a memo "Georgeann Scholarship" may be sent to: Agri-Culture, 141 Monte Vista Ave., Watsonville, CA 95076. Credit card donations may be made through the Agri-Culture office at: (831) 722-6622.

*"Georgeann Cowles was a valued member of the Agri-Culture Board of Directors and a dedicated advocate for our mission. Her steady leadership and heartfelt commitment left an indelible mark on our organization and our community. As an early leader and fundraiser to the highly successful Down to Earth Women Luncheon, Georgeann helped establish one of our most meaningful community traditions. She will be deeply missed and Always remembered with gratitude." **Steve Bontadelli, President, Agri-Culture, Inc.***

*"She was such a gracious lady and a very poised woman. She always had a great auction item to offer and as the Chair for the Rodgers House, we were grateful. She donated her great grandfather's desk, which has Mr. Rodger's name on the back of the desk." **Loretta Estrada, Chair, Rodgers House Committee***

*"I had the pleasure of working with Georgeann for several years while putting on the Down to Earth Women Luncheon. She was such a warm and thoughtful person. Always leading the way with grace and passion. Her commitment to the community is something that I strive for." **Catherine Barr, Manager, Monterey Bay Certified Farmers Markets***

*"Working with Georgeann was like working with a human dynamo. Her "will do" attitude was extraordinary. The word NO didn't exist in her vocabulary. As a full-time hands-on farmer, how she found the time to do so much community service, was amazing including all she did for California Agriculture. We in the Pajaro Valley continue to benefit from her "will do" legacy. A true gift to all the community." **Karen Miller, Royal Oaks Farms***

*"Georgeann was a quiet force in the farming community, leading with grace and a deep commitment to educating and inspiring others about agriculture. Through the Down to Earth Women Luncheon, she shared her unwavering love of farming and highlights the pride and value that*

*the Pajaro Valley brings to the agricultural community." **June Ponce, Executive Director, Watsonville Community Hospital Foundation***

*"We are forever indebted to Georgeann for her involvement with our organizations. Her intelligence and classy leadership style helped our organizations grow. She was truly a well-rounded person who embraced life; for example, her commitment to physical fitness, which was inspiring. Georgeann was a mentor to many, including myself. Her learn by example influence will be missed." **Jess Brown, Executive Director, Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau and Agri-Culture***

*"Working alongside Georgeann on the Down to Earth Women Luncheon committee was always a joy. She brought such positive energy to everything she did and her willingness to help others never wavered. I feel incredibly fortunate to have learned from her and shared the space with her. I'll never forget our last long conversation she spoke with such intention about passing the torch to Caroline wanting to ensure that all her knowledge and passion would continue to guide the DEW Committee. That was Georgeann, always thinking of others, always building up those around her. She always had something funny to say especially when things didn't go the way we expected on event day. She will be dearly missed by all of us who had the honor of knowing her." **Maria Vasquez, Social and Environmental Impact, Driscolls***

*"I'd known Georgeann for quite some time and have had the joy of working with her on various agricultural projects, including the Down to Earth Women Luncheon. Over the years, we've become good friends, and she has always impressed me with her support for the farming community. Georgeann was a genuine leader, not just through her work but also through her countless contributions to the community, always ready to lend a helping hand. In 2017, I was honored to present Georgeann the well-deserved Farmer of the Year award to a friend and a fellow farmer." **Silvia Prevedelli, 2016 Farmer of the Year***

## Understanding Presidential Executive Orders



The term “executive order” has been in the news a lot from Washington, but what does the term mean and how does it affect the public and agriculture?

A presidential executive order is a document issued by the President, used to manage operations of federal government agencies, like a corporate CEO might write to change how things are done internally. Executive orders are not “laws,” but they may have the same effect. They are used to direct federal agencies, write policies, and respond to urgent situations.

The President’s advisors often write the order. Once signed by the president, the order becomes effective. It is published in the Federal Register, (the US government’s daily journal), so the public and agencies know about it. Federal agencies then carry it out by changing their existing operations or launching new ones.

But executive orders must be based somehow on existing laws or constitutional powers. A president cannot use them to create new laws. The U.S. Constitution does not contain words that give the president power to make law; that power of course was given to Congress. Executive orders are supposed to just direct how the executive branch under the President enforces laws. When an order seems to go beyond enforcement and instead creates new obligations or rights, opponents say the president has taken over Congress’s role. Courts are then asked to decide whether the president was or was not acting within his lawful authority.

Executive orders can directly affect people, businesses, and states in important ways: immigration orders may restrict entry or change visa policy; environmental or labor orders may impose new rules on industry, and states may claim that federal overreach infringes on their sovereignty. Because these orders immediately impose important real-world consequences affected parties often sue to block them.

When Congress is gridlocked and unwilling or unable to challenge an order, the courts are one of the few checks on improper executive orders. Lawsuits then evaluate whether the order conflicts with laws passed by Congress, whether the order violates US Constitutional protections (such as due process or equal protection). Lawsuits may serve not only legal purposes but also political ones: they delay

implementation, rally supporters, and force national debate.

Some orders tell federal agencies to issue regulations or alter enforcement priorities. Such changes may trigger lawsuits under the Federal Administrative Procedure Act (APA) which requires certain rule making processes. Also, separation of powers principles may limit the president’s power over independent agencies.

Executive orders can have a direct impact on agriculture, rural development, and land management. For example, in disaster relief: after floods, droughts, or wildfires, a president might issue an executive order to prioritize emergency aid or loosen regulations temporarily. And such orders may affect how federal agencies manage water rights, pesticide use, or conservation programs. And a president might use an executive order to adjust trade policies that influence crop prices or livestock exports. Orders can change rules around farm labor, including visa programs for workers. Such orders may change the rules of the game—sometimes overnight. Some historical examples are:

- Barack Obama and Donald Trump both used executive orders to shape immigration policy.
- Joe Biden issued orders on climate change, pandemic response, and rural broadband expansion.
- Ronald Reagan issued orders affecting federal land use and environmental regulations.
- Lyndon B. Johnson, issued an order that prohibited federal contractors from discriminating in employment based on race, color, religion, and national origin and take affirmative action to ensure equal employment opportunities for women and minorities.
- Harry Truman issued an executive order directing the Secretary of Commerce to seize and operate most of the nation’s steel mills to avert the expected effects of a strike by the United Steelworkers.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt used executive orders to create the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression, putting thousands to work.

Each order had ripple effects across industries, including agriculture. Executive orders are one of the president’s most significant tools for quickly changing policies and practices.





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

## Pillars of Irrigation Efficiency: System Operation & Maintenance

**W**ith fall upon us, peak production is drawing to a close. Fields are being turned over, and preparations for the coming rainy season are underway. In today's article, we return to the critical theme of **irrigation efficiency**. Back in May's article, we introduced the three pillars of efficiency: 1) irrigation scheduling, 2) system design, and 3) operation and maintenance. In August, I focused on system design and selection. This month, we'll turn our attention to one of the most often overlooked—but essential—pillars of irrigation efficiency: **operation and maintenance**.

Irrigation operation and maintenance (O&M) involves the day to day process of keeping an irrigation system running efficiently and effectively. Properly performed O & M can help conserve water, reduce costs, improve crop yields, and extend the irrigation system's lifespan. It involves both routine and seasonal tasks such as inspecting leaks, repairing worn or broken components, preventing and clearing clogs, flushing lines, managing pressure, servicing air vents, cleaning filters and canals, and replacing damaged sprinkler nozzles or spaghetti hoses. Good O&M also includes monitoring system performance, keeping accurate records, and conducting annual inspections—such as catch-can tests—to ensure water is applied uniformly. Though often overlooked, these day-to-day practices provide significant long-term benefits including productivity and sustainability.

Installing flush valves at the ends of mainlines, submains, and laterals is a simple yet highly effective O&M practice that improves irrigation system performance. Regular flushing removes soil, sediment, fertilizer residue, and other debris that can clog emitters, ensuring uniform water application, reducing waste, and boosting crop yields. Filters should also be cleaned routinely to maintain proper flow. Submains and laterals are best flushed several times per season by opening the line ends while the system is running and allowing water to flow until it runs clear. Note, collecting a small sample of flush water can reveal impurities—such as bacteria, particles, or foreign material—providing insight for future maintenance decisions. Together, consistent flushing and filter cleaning not only improve efficiency but also extend the lifespan of the irrigation system.

Small fixes can make a big difference. During a recent drip system evaluation, we found a leak that had been fixed with a spaghetti lead instead of a proper drip tape coupler. Replacing it with the correct coupler—costing less than \$1—raised the line pressure from 2 psi to 9 psi. For context, 2 psi is far below the required operating pressure for drip tape, while 9 psi falls within the optimal range of 8–12 psi. The impact was clear: plants below the leak were noticeably smaller due to poor water distribution. At a conference last year, I also learned of a study by another RCD in Northern California, where a single mainline leak near a well pump wasted nearly 10,000 gallons of water over one season! In both cases, a simple gasket or coupler repair prevented significant water loss, improved crop performance, and saved money.

Our team at the RCD is happy to assist with how to streamline operation and maintenance practices for your specific crop and type of irrigation system. To learn more and connect with RCD programs and services contact: Cameron McDonald ([cmcdonald@rcdsantacruz.org](mailto:cmcdonald@rcdsantacruz.org)), Dan Hermstad at ([dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org](mailto:dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org)), or Sacha Lozano at ([slozano@rcdsantacruz.org](mailto: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](http://www.rcdsantacruz.org). All RCD services and programs are voluntary and non-regulatory. **¡Hablamos Español!**

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The logo for "Food for Thought" features the words "FOOD FOR THOUGHT" in a bold, sans-serif font. A lightbulb icon is positioned between the words "THOUGHT" and "FOOD".

**"Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in the world, but has not solved one yet."**

**Maya Angelou**

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## President's Message - Continued from Page 2

there for the presidents who follow me.

Another highlight was working with past president Tom Am Rhein on the Farm Bureau's strategic plan. Watching Tom in action and learning from the way he approaches complex issues has been invaluable. The lessons from that process will stay with our whole organization from here on.

Most important of all has been getting to know more of our membership. Farmers are the reason I joined Farm Bureau in the first place. I believe you should surround yourself

with people you admire. Our members are the smartest, most hardworking, innovative and honest people I know. It has been an absolute joy to meet and learn from each of you.

To everyone mentioned here, and to the membership as a whole, thank you. I appreciate the support, the advice, and the trust you have given me over the past three years. It truly has been my pleasure to serve as president, and I look forward to supporting Farm Bureau in the years to come.

## 29th Annual Farm Dinner

Friday, October 10, 2025

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

"Little Bee Barn"

560 Harkins Slough Road, Watsonville, CA

5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Guest Reservations:: \$150 per person  
Reserve now! This event sells out early!

Reservations are available through:

[www.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) - search for 29th Annual Farm Dinner in Watsonville



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# Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

## CALENDAR

**SATURDAY - OCTOBER 10**  
Agri-Culture's Farm Dinner

**FRIDAY - OCTOBER 24**  
Focus Agriculture, Session 9

**THURSDAY - OCTOBER 30**  
Board of Directors' meeting

**THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 6**  
Policy & Resource  
Committee meeting

**THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 6**  
Annual Directors' Dinner

**THURSDAY - NOVEMBER 27**  
Thanksgiving Day Observed  
Office Closed

**FRIDAY - NOVEMBER 28**  
Thanksgiving Day Observed  
Office Closed

**DECEMBER 6 - 9**  
California Farm Bureau  
Annual Meeting  
Hyatt Regency, Orange  
County, Anaheim, CA  
Registration is open  
Website is :  
[https://www.cfbf.com/  
events](https://www.cfbf.com/events)

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