

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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Santa Cruz County Top In Organic Value

The Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner's Office recently released the 2014 Crop Report. This 15-page report is full of interesting information about the agriculture industry in our county.

Santa Cruz County is the second smallest county in land area in California, with only San Francisco city/county being smaller. Yet, our county consistently ranks #22-23 among all of California's 58 counties in gross agricultural production values. The total gross production value of Santa Cruz County agricultural commodities for 2014 was \$616,456,000. This is a 2.86% increase over 2013 production values.



The favorable weather of the region allows nearly year round production and, coupled with the rich soils, the ability to grow multiple crops during the year.

Santa Cruz County is also a leader in the value of organic agriculture production.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture, which was published last year, shows California led the nation in the value of organic product sales and Santa Cruz ranked #4 among California counties. Santa Cruz County has been growing certified organic crops since the 1970's.

As a side note, our farmers have also been leaders in water conservation efforts. Pajaro Valley farmer's well water use was down 19% compared to the same period last year according to a recent report by the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency (PVWMA). They also built and operate, with the City of Watsonville, a sophisticated water recycling facility that delivered 2,470 acre feet of

recycled water to growers along the coast, where farmers were able to reduce well pumping by 40% year to date.

A copy of 2014 Crop Report is available online at www.agdept.com.

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President's Message

DAVID VAN LENEP, PRESIDENT

"If the opportunity presents itself to talk to a group or individual about what you do in agriculture, take it. That information may find its way to many more people than you thought and have a positive influence on their perceptions."

Being the Messenger

For various reasons I have done a fair amount of public speaking in the course of my career. In part due to the nature of my job, the many Boards and Commissions that regulate us and the public participation aspect of our permitting process, I have been required to address numerous regulatory entities and have been the guest of honor at more than a few public meetings. In sharp contrast are the presentations that I have been asked to do for Farm Bureau or Focus Agriculture where the group is open and receptive to the presented material. Both formats have provided good experience, one clearly more pleasant than the other.

As President, there seems to be even more speaking opportunities. I am surprised at the number quite frankly, but most have been on topics I can speak to without lots of prep time. Great pictures help.

Most recently, I spoke to a group of State Park Docents, graciously invited by the Park staff to talk about forestry past and present. Docents, all volunteers, are often the face seen by the visitors and take questions about all manner of things, including logging and current forest management. My invitation to speak was precipitated by a previous gig, set up by Farm Bureau and attended by a Docent. She thought the information would be helpful and interesting to the Docents. Ten years ago I would not have guessed that

State Parks would ask someone in to talk to their volunteers about cutting down trees, regardless of how well it is done. I was not exactly sure how my talk would be received, but they were a welcoming group with lots of good questions.

It is not often that those in agriculture get the opportunity to discuss what, how and why we do what we do, independent of an issue or a new regulatory burden. It seems that people are increasingly interested in having more first-hand knowledge about farming and other land uses. It may be a bit of a "new frontier" of sorts as so few produce for themselves in this society, yet have so

President's Message - Continued on Page 8

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ASK LAURA

Mark Bolda, County Director and Farm Advisor, Strawberries & Caneberries, UCCE

Cold Conditioning Of Strawberries

Q. Can you explain the concept behind cold conditioning of strawberries? It seems complicated and I don't understand why it would be so important to pay so much attention to it.

A. The cold conditioning to which you refer is an essential part of growing and producing strawberries in California. This cold conditioning is defined as being the cumulative period, measured in number of hours or days below a certain temperature that is needed to produce the internal changes in the strawberry plant that result in the normal sequence of growth following winter dormancy. In strawberries, the time accumulated at temperatures between 28 and 45 degrees Fahrenheit are considered to be effective and are counted as towards chill requirement.

Chill requirement in California strawberry is actually made up of two stages. One stage is what the plant accumulates in the field before being harvested, and the other is accumulation of chill after harvest and the plant is in storage. There is a difference between the two. In-field chill takes place when the plant is still in the soil, out in the open and still has all its leaves. Supplemental chill takes place after harvest

of the plant and occurs in a constant near freezing temperature, in the dark and the plant has none to very few leaves left.

So what strawberry growers need to do is strike the right balance between vigor and vegetative growth and fruiting. If there is too little vigor the plant is of reduced fitness and does not have a capacity to produce a large amount number of fruit, whereas a plant with large amounts of vegetative growth will have its fruiting ability compromised, since it is dedicating too many resources in the production of leaves, crowns and runners.

Additionally, accumulation of chill in the strawberry transplant makes it stronger and better able to survive the stress of harvest and subsequent transplant. Harvest of transplants means their leaves are cut off, they are ripped from the ground, tumbled in a drum and exposed to drying out in the open air. So, while in theory it is possible to grow good productive plants from transplants that are short of the recommended chill requirement, in practice, namely a commercial operation, plants lacking in supplemental chill requirement will not do well and some will probably not survive transplanting.



"To be successful, regardless of the field, one needs to be a participant in the field of battle, rather than a spectator."
Charles Duncan, 5-minute Habits

THE WATER NANNY

Fair(y) Tale

Maybe a better title would be *Change or Die*. Sometimes things continue to exist because they always have. This was the case of the Santa Cruz County Fair. It has seen good times and sour times, but it was always there since World War II, just east of Watsonville. We all went, because we all went every year. Yet even this enviable business model can end if not attended to and nourished. After all even bigger fairs have failed, just look at San Jose. Two times during dark hours I have commented on the tribulations of our fair. Now it is only appropriate to recognize its new blossoming.

From ancient times there have always been weekly town markets and much grander annual fairs. Annual fairs were in towns along trading routes and became specialized with traders journeying from afar to sell cloth, metal, food or weapons. Who can forget the famous Champagne and Brie fairs (named after two adjoining counties) of the middle ages. It took over a month for mule trains to cross the Alps from Genoa bringing goods to these fairs. Still popular is the five day Puskar camel fair in Rajasthan, the highlight of which is the longest moustache contest.



Our fair may not have the notoriety of champagne or camels, but it entertained with cattle and produce contests, horse shows and carnivals. What could go wrong? Management changes and the loss of State subsidies. A few years ago the end appeared near. Fortunately the fair board started to work with a volunteer management team to execute a business turn-a-round suitable for a TV make over show.

From a business perspective the old fairgrounds did not search out revenue sources, like venue rentals and a weekly farmers market. Sure the fair is profitable, but one event cannot carry the operation throughout the year. State subsidies used to make up the difference. Now the fair seeks out tenants and the Santa Cruz County Heritage Foundation has stepped in to replace the State with money for improvements and maintenance. We still have the legal fiction that the fairgrounds is a State agency, but in reality all of the funding and control is now local.

Special credit needs to be given to two people, John Kegebein and Dave Kegebein. This father and son team have lead the drives that sustained the fair. John is a fair gnome, he knows more about the fairgrounds than anyone, and Dave brings smart farmer business skills to running the fair. Next time there is a man of the year contest, they should win as a team.



Talk about farmer smarts, the Heritage Foundation is focused on making the future of the fairgrounds is assured and in the present improved. Just look at a few purchases by the Heritage Foundation to assist the fair in 2013 alone: **"Purchased equipment needed for maintaining the fairgrounds, including 3 Kubota UTV's, a Kubota tractor, a utility truck, boom lift, scissors lift, a flail mower, an implement for the Horse Arena, a janitorial cart, and a dump truck."** This is truly a list written by a farmer who has been neglecting his assets.

So besides attending the fair, we should support the Heritage Foundation. Easy, they have the alcohol concession for the fairgrounds. When you go to the fair this year, have a beer. Two weeks later the Heritage Foundation is pouring at the Burrito Bash on October 3rd, have another beer. The fair will appreciate your donation.

While you are at the fair, don't forget to visit the Farm Bureau's award winning booth in the Harvest building. Why not go whole hog and attend the Farm Bureau's opening day BBQ and Apple Pie contest, and come back on the weekend to buy a 4Her's pig or rabbit. There really is nothing like the aroma of a fresh cattle auction.

This year the fair starts on Wednesday, September 16th. Let's all go to the fair. *"You always get a special kick on opening day, no matter how many you go through. You look forward to it like a birthday party when you're a kid. You think something wonderful is going to happen."* Joe DiMaggio



FAVORITE RECIPES

Savoy Cabbage Gratin

This recipe comes from the **Live Earth Farm** website. Live Earth Farm is owned and operated by the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau's 1st Vice President **Thomas Broz and his wife Constance**. Live Earth Farm is a small family owned business on 75 acres in the Pajaro Valley committed to growing the best organic fruits and vegetables possible. You can become a CSA member, participate in their educational programs, Community Farm Days, u-pick events and hands-on workshops. Their produce is offered at local farmers markets, an on-farm stand and local restaurants, businesses, schools and organizations. See more at: <http://www.liveearthfarm.net>. The recipes were posted by **Rebecca Mastoris**. Rebecca is a chef/teacher at Bauman College and a partner in Vibrant Foods Catering along with Karen Haralson. Both Karen and Rebecca teach cooking classes at the farm and in town locally.

Ingredients:

About 4 tablespoons butter, divided

1 small head Savoy cabbage, cored and cut into 8 wedges

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon sea salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 clove green garlic, plus part of the tender green stem, chopped

$1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons fresh thyme leaves plus thyme sprigs

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1 tablespoon flour

1 cup heavy whipping cream

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded aged gouda cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh breadcrumbs

Directions: Makes 6-8 servings as a side dish

1. Butter a shallow 2-quart baking dish and preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a sauté pan or large frying pan over medium-high heat and add the cabbage wedges cut side down. Sprinkle with $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons pepper. Cook, turning once until lightly browned, 5-7 minutes.
3. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water to the pan. Partially cover and cook cabbage until just tender, 3-5 minutes more. Transfer cabbage and any stray leaves to prepared dish, arranging wedges so they lie flat (they should fit snugly).
4. Return pan to medium heat and melt remaining butter. Add garlic, chopped thyme, nutmeg, and flour. Stir until thoroughly combined, add cream, and cook, stirring, just until thickened and bubbling, about 2 minutes.
5. Pour cream mixture over cabbage. Top with cheese add breadcrumbs. Bake until browned and bubbling, about 20 minutes. Garnish with thyme sprigs and season to taste with salt and pepper.



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Raisin Farmer Wins Big Marketing Order Case in US Supreme Court



The United States Supreme Court on June 30, 2015 voided a marketing order diversion of 47% of a California farmer's raisin crop to a State administered Raisin Administrative Committee.

The farmer's suit challenged the USDA marketing order program for raisins as an unlawful government taking without just compensation under the Fifth Amendment to the US Constitution. The marketing order program required California raisin producers to convey a percentage of their raisin crop to be disposed of by the Raisin Administrative Committee, a government board composed of raisin industry representatives. A California farmer refused to turn over 47% of his crop as required by the marketing order issued under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937. The State then fined the farmer almost one half million dollars based on the fair market value of the raisins plus civil penalties.

Programs such as the raisin marketing order suffer if some of those regulated ignore the program but benefit from it. The fine program was intended to police "free riders" who don't go along with the program to cut production but double benefit from increased prices and more of their production for market.

The farmer sued and the case eventually reached the United States Supreme Court. *Horne v Department of Agriculture* decided June 22, 2015. In an 8-1 decision (with the majority opinion split 5-3) the US Supreme Court ruled that the ordered diversion of the raisins was an unlawful government taking of personal property. The Supreme Court then relieved the farmer of the one half million dollar fine and civil penalties.

The State argued to the Supreme Court that the State raisin marketing order program was designed to benefit raisin producers by propping up prices. The State argued that the half million dollar fine should not be voided but instead the case should be sent back to a lower court to determine whether the economic benefit of the marketing order program and

diversion mitigated or exceeded the half million dollar diversion imposed on the farmer. A majority of 5 of the Supreme Court however refused to do that. A minority of three wanted a remand to a lower court for a determination of mitigation arguing that the majority decision undermined the established principal that benefits from a government project should offset damages. The decision however is somewhat unclear on how the claim should be determined.

This may be the end of this particular type of marketing order, i.e. marketing orders that physically divert agricultural products from the market to prop up prices.

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Take Extra Precautions to Protect Your Eyes

If you work in or around areas that pose an eye hazard, you should wear eye protection. Nothing can replace the loss of an eye and a few seconds is all it takes to destroy your eyesight. That's the same time it takes to make sure that your eyes are properly protected.

Eye injuries happen much too frequently in the United States. The rate is nearly 2,000 per day. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, three out of five workers who suffer eye injuries wore no eye protection at the time of the injury. And of those who did wear protection, two of every five wore the wrong kind. Not only should you wear the proper eye protection equipment for your job, please follow all safety instructions. Protective eyewear is only effective when it is cared for and worn correctly. Here are some additional steps to follow to help prevent eye injuries to either you or other workers:

- Conduct a thorough analysis of the work to be done and the equipment that will be used. Inspect work areas and equipment and identify operations and areas that present eye hazards.
- Select protective eyewear designed for a specific operation or hazard. Protective eyewear must meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.
- For best protection against eye injury, wear eye protection whenever it is warranted and require workers to do the same. Allow no exceptions.
- Make sure you clean and store the protective eyewear properly.
- Protective eyewear that doesn't fit properly and comfortably should not be used. Have it fitted by an eye care professional. Plan for an emergency. Establish first-aid procedures for eye injuries. Make eyewash stations accessible, particularly where chemicals are used. Train employees in basic first aid and identify those with more advanced first-aid training.
- Educate and review. Conduct ongoing educational programs to establish, maintain, and reinforce the

need for protective eyewear. Continuously review and when necessary revise your accident prevention strategies.

Eye safety is no accident. Nothing can replace the loss of an eye. Protect your eyesight from workplace hazards by wearing and caring for appropriate, approved protective eyewear.

State Fund has a wealth of information on safety topics available for easy access on our Website at www.statefundca.com. Click on the "Safety & Seminars" section at the top of the home page to find the extensive list of topics.

As the largest workers' compensation carrier in California, State Fund plays a stabilizing role in the economy by providing fairly priced workers' compensation insurance, making California workplaces safe, and restoring injured workers.

State Fund recognizes that your loss prevention efforts affect the frequency and severity of injuries and illnesses in your work environment. Reduce or eliminate workplace illnesses and injuries with informed planning and education. We are committed to a safe workplace to increase worker productivity and lower your workers' compensation costs.

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seed that you plant."

Robert Louis Stevenson

President's Message - Continued from Page 2

many concerns about how it is done for them.

If the opportunity presents itself to talk to a group or individual about what you do in agriculture, take it. That information may find its way to many more people than you thought and have a positive influence on their perceptions.

FROM THE AG COMMISSIONER

By Mary Lou Nicoletti, Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner

A Confession



I am a little embarrassed to share this information. After all, I am the "Agricultural" Commissioner. But, here's what happened--my zucchini crop failed this year! What? I've always had more than enough zucchini in the past--how could the crop fail?

I thought I did everything right: prepare the soil carefully, provide a sunny location, water regularly. And the plants did fine for a short time, providing several nice tasty zucchinis. But suddenly, nearly all of the little zucchinis fell off instead of growing larger. I looked online and learned that zucchini, like all squash, have male and female flowers—I did not know this. The male flowers are typically taller, held above the plant. The female flowers grow closer to the base of the plant. For a zucchini to develop, the female flower must be fertilized by the male flower. Well, the plants are in a spot that is not close

to other flowering plants. I thought maybe they were not being pollinated, so I put in some plants attractive to bees nearby. Then I discovered that all the flowers being produced on my two plants were female flowers, so I could not even hand pollinate. Thankfully, there are ample zucchinis to be found, from friends and at markets. Thankfully, I am not dependent on the crop to provide for my family.

But this experience reminded me once again of the challenges faced by growers to produce a crop. (Growers are smarter than I am, and know enough to try to provide for ample pollinators.) But growers cannot control the environment: there may be insect or plant disease pressures, unfavorable weather, or even a new regulatory requirement. As I drive around and look at all of the crops growing and being harvested, I am filled with admiration and respect for the men and women who somehow deal with numerous challenges to bring the crops to market. Thank you from all of us!

NRCS NEWS

End of Drought....Not So Fast

By Rich Casale, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

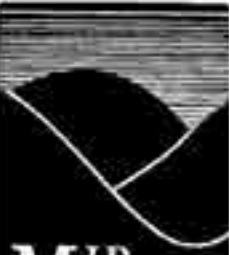
I believe that the majority of people impacted by California's drought think that when it starts raining again the drought will be over. I certainly wish that were the case but there are some underlying consequences of our State's historic drought that will likely delay the declaration of an official end for some time. In order to gain a wider awareness of the long-term effects of prolonged drought it is important to understand the full extent of damages that have occurred over the past four years and why it will take time and community-wide efforts to help restore surface and groundwater supplies as well as other natural resources that have suffered. *Note: It could take a decade or more for groundwater levels to be restored even with conservation efforts and several years of average to above average rainfall.*

Drought not only affects water supply. It can also have a

devastating effect on soil/slope protecting vegetation that in turn can increase the likelihood of wildfire; soil erosion and sedimentation; downstream flooding; and damages to water quality and local ecosystems.

Everyone needs to be concerned and involved in long term drought resiliency planning and/or projects at the home, farm or community level. Plans and projects should consider such things as: strategies to conserve, reuse/recycle water from existing supplies; development of new and innovative water supplies; groundwater recharge; use of drought tolerant vegetation and/or lower water using crops; irrigation water management; soil health practices; infrastructure modifications; and other practices that can help prevent damage to natural resources, surface and groundwater supplies, water quality, and local ecosystems.

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WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 16
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Apple Pie Baking Contest

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 24
Agricultural Policy Advisory
Commission

THURSDAY - SEPTEMBER 24
Board of Directors' meeting

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WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 2
Focus Agriculture, Session 8

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 7

- Legislative Committee meeting
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- Membership Committee meeting

MONDAY - OCTOBER 12
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Committee meeting

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 14
Young Farmers & Ranchers
meeting

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 24
19th Annual Progressive Dinner
For reservations please
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