

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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President's Message

Yes on Measure Q

Protect Farmland and Prevent Urban Sprawl



Arnett Young

Well, it's here, Measure Q is now the official ballot designation to extend the life of Watsonville's Urban Line Limit (formerly known as Measure U) until 2040. The fate of local agriculture is fully dependent on the City of Watsonville's voters. If it passes, Measure Q will continue to protect local agricultural lands. Well, that's not entirely true. Measure S, the City of Watsonville's countermeasure, is also on the ballot. Although the authors of Measure S frame it as protecting farmland, in actuality, Measure S gives farmland no protection.

Reading the published argument for Measure S makes it clear of the intent to mislead voters. The argument states that Measure S "can preserve and protect our prime agriculture land and wetlands and still provide our community the necessary resources and facilities." However, they neglect to mention the actual ballot language states, "Shall the City of Watsonville maintain the restrictions on growth approved by the voters in 2002 until 2040, **with the exception of any property identified by the City Council during the General Plan update...**". So, what is the purpose of the extending the ULL with Measure S? None, other than to deceive voters. Proponents of Measure S also state, "Measure S does not change the Urban Limit Line or arbitrarily intends to build over our valuable farmland." OK, so then why does the city need the exception clause in Measure S if this was true? It seems to me that the authors

of Measure S are worried that the argument for Measure Q is popular enough to pass with Watsonville residents, and the only way to stop it is to deceive voters into passing Measure S, which gives the City Supervisors the authority to ignore the Urban Line Limit as they see fit.

I would like to address another point continually raised by supporters of Measure S. Measure Q proponents are comprised of a "special interest group" (a very ominous statement). In truth, the people that brought Measure Q to the ballot are largely the same organizations and people that developed the ULL in 2002. These include representatives from the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, Watsonville Wetlands Watch, a former Watsonville City Mayor, and local community leaders who recognize the value of preserving local agriculture while still promoting a healthy and vibrant Watsonville community. So my question is, if they weren't a special interest group then, why are they now?

At the beginning of this article, I hinted that if Measure Q passes, it does not mean that farmland will continue to be protected by the ULL due to the City of Watsonville's counter Measure S. One odd thing about our electoral process is that if both Measures Q and S pass, the measure with the most votes overrides the other. This means that Measure Q must receive more than 50% of the vote and receive more votes than Measure S. I urge all readers to Stop Sprawl and Protect Farmland:

Vote **YES** on Measure Q

Vote **NO** on Measure S

Community Foundation funds have been established for Susan Kim Am Rhein and Frank Prevedelli. Visit agri-culture.us for more details.

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ASK MARK

Michael Cahn, UCCE Irrigation and Water Resources Advisor

Is Salinity Harming Your Crop?

Q. Could you share with me how to tell if salinity is harming your crop?

A. How do you know if the salt level is too high in your field? You might see symptoms on the margins of the leaves that look like salt damage, or some plants may be stunted or growing slowly. If you can rule out a disease or insect pest problem, you may want to evaluate the salinity of your irrigation water and soil.

The first step is to collect samples of the irrigation water and the soil. Be sure that no fertilizer is being injected into the irrigation water when it is sampled. It is useful to compare soil salinity in symptomatic and asymptomatic areas of the field. Also, soil samples should be collected from several depths within the root zone and below the root zone. This strategy will allow you to assess if there is adequate leaching of salts. If the salinity increases with depth there is likely adequate leaching of salts, but if the salinity is higher near the surface where roots are concentrated then leaching was probably not adequate. For drip irrigated crops you may want to compare the salinity level of the soil near and away from the drip line. With adequate leaching under drip, salts are usually pushed out to the sides of the beds as well as downward.

The next step is to evaluate the salinity of the water and soil samples. The most common method is to measure the electrical conductivity (EC) which can be related to the concentration of all dissolved salts in the sample. This is simple to do in water using a conductivity meter which measures EC in units of deciSiemens per meter (dS/m). The EC of the water will be higher as the concentration of dissolve salts increases. The same is true for soil. However, water

also conducts electricity. To remove water as a factor, electrical conductivity should be measured from a soil saturated with moisture also known as a saturated paste. To create a saturated paste, distilled water is added to a known weight of air-dry soil to the point where all pore spaces are filled.

After the soil equilibrates with the added water, the paste is extracted by applying vacuum pressure or by centrifuging. The EC of the extract is then determined using the conductivity meter. Many laboratories will measure the soil EC base on a saturated soil paste, but other laboratories do not, and may add water to soil at a ratio of 1:1 or 2:1. The water to soil ratio is critical to know because adding too much water will dilute the salts in the extract and give lower soil salinity values. Also, published soil salinity thresholds for salt tolerance of crops have been established using saturated paste extracts.

Salinity tolerance thresholds for many crops were published in the online document, FAO Irrigation and Drainage Paper 29 (Water quality for agriculture), as well as in several UC publications. The table below shows salinity thresholds for several crops grown in Santa Cruz County. Yield was not observed to decline below the soil and water thresholds for 100% Yield (Table 1). Above these thresholds, yield generally declines proportional to the salinity level of the water or soil. For some crops (strawberry), which are salt sensitive, the decline in yield with increasing salinity is relatively high, while for other species (celery) the decline in yield with increasing levels of salinity is relatively low.

Ask Mark continued on page 5

THE WATER NANNY

Mandates

Fertilizer costs have caught my attention. For years the Water Board has urged, and now mandates reduced fertilizer use. Unfortunately mandates seldom achieve their objectives, while stifling crop yields. You may have noticed that in 2021 the government of Sri Lanka banned the use of chemical fertilizers. Now let's understand that this is a very poor country in the middle of the Indian Ocean. About 7% of their GDP comes from farming yet it is the primary activity of 27% of the population. Fertilizer is important, although farmers can't afford to use it at the rate of US growers. So losing chemical fertilizer was a big hit to their rice output. Yields fell by 50% and net farm incomes dropped much more.

Why did the Sri Lankan President decide to ban chemical fertilizer? The government had run out of money to import it. Protests sprang up, the army was tasked with making organic fertilizer. This is an interesting thought, emergency rapid organic fertilizer production overseen by Major Major out of *Catch 22*, this was not an efficient nor effective substitute. Farmers received little to no army rations.

West Point teaches classes of military history, highlighting great victories, as well as remarkable failures. Maybe UC Davis should have a class on great Ag failures so our ever wise state bureaucrats will benefit from the failure of others. A good source of attendees could be the Air Resources Board, you know the agency that shares a high rise in Sacramento with the Water Board. They have just published a way too clever draft document that postulates the end of global warming while bringing perfect clarity to our air, something the Central Valley could benefit from.

While it is in all of our best interests to reduce carbon pollution from autos, industry, homes and agriculture, as global warming will impact our crop yields overall quality of life, we should be aware of the **Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy**. Both the California Natural Resources Agency and Air Resources Board have adopted this phrase as a touchstone of smart regulation. Actually we should be even more afraid of any government proposal with smart in the title; it is not a synonym for cost effective, proven or wise. Natural and Working lands includes farms, along with everything without a building or pavement. As

it applies to Central Coast farms, its primary recommendation is *"Regenerative agriculture practices, agroecology, cooperative farming, rangeland protection"*. Statewide: *"Scale up soil health practices for carbon storage, greenhouse gas emission reduction from soils, climate resiliency, soil water retention, improved water and air quality, and more, while supporting socially disadvantaged farmers."*

Draft 2022 Scoping Plan Update, as to agriculture it concludes: *"Increasing climate smart agricultural practices to at least 50,000 acres a year, annually conserving at least 6,000 acres a year of croplands, and increasing organic agriculture to comprise at least 20 percent of cultivated acres in California by 2045."*

All of the above sounds good, but once it becomes the State regulatory gospel it will become controlling without any scientific or economic review. We, that is commercial "Working Lands Operators", need to be vigilant that policies dreamed up in cubicles do not become universal mandates guiding all regulatory policy.

Meanwhile, back in Sri Lanka, the government has fled, protesters have been shot in the streets, and they still have tiny farm yields with no money to import food. History is taught so that we can avoid repeating prior mistakes. ■



Interesting California Trivia

In 1949, the income from agriculture in the state was around \$2.3 million. However, after some forty-five years in 1995, the same income grew to a whopping sum of \$2.6 billion. It also produces walnuts, pistachios, and almonds in the largest quantity in the U.S.[1,4]

According to the 2021 Crop report from the California Department of Agriculture, the state's 69,600 farms and ranches income grew to \$49.1 billion. ■



FAVORITE RECIPES

Honey Chipotle Grilled Chicken Skewers

1/4 cup honey

3 cloves garlic

1/4 cup chipotle chilies and adobo sauce (from a can)

1 teaspoon cumin, ground

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar (or lime juice)

1 pound boneless and skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into bite sized pieces

1 tablespoon soy sauce

Puree the honey, chipotle chilies and adobo sauce, vinegar, soy sauce, garlic and cumin in a food processor.

Marinate the chicken in half of the honey chipotle sauce for 20 minutes to overnight.

Skewer the chicken and grill over medium-high heat until slightly charred and cooked, about 2-5 minutes per side.

Serve with the remaining honey chipotle sauce for dipping.

TIPS:

Soak wooden skewers in water before using to help prevent them from charring.

OPTIONS:

Add 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce to the sauce. Also, replace honey with maple syrup.



Ask Mark

Continued from page 3

Table 1. Tolerance of fruit and vegetable crops to salinity in soil and water, expressed as electrical conductivity. Adapted from FAO irrigation and drainage paper 29 (Ayers and Wescot 1994)

Crop	100% Yield Potential		90% Yield Potential		75% Yield Potential	
	EC _{soil}	EC _{water}	EC _{soil}	EC _{water}	EC _{soil}	EC _{water}
	----- dS/m -----					
Blackberry	1.5	1.0	2.0	1.3	2.6	1.8
Broccoli	2.8	1.9	3.9	2.6	5.5	3.7
Cabbage	1.8	1.2	2.8	1.9	4.4	2.9
Celery	1.8	1.2	3.4	2.3	5.8	3.9
Grape	1.5	1.0	2.5	1.7	4.1	2.7
Lettuce	1.3	0.9	2.1	1.4	3.2	2.1
Onion	1.2	0.8	1.8	1.2	2.8	1.8
Spinach	2.0	1.3	3.3	2.2	5.3	3.5
Strawberry	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.9	1.8	1.2
Tomato	2.5	1.7	3.5	2.3	5.0	3.4

The above article has been about assessing salinity in one's crop. For more information on this topic and other areas of irrigation, please contact Michael Cahn, UCCE Irrigation and Water Resources Advisor, mdcahn@ucanr.edu. ■

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*The following information is provided by Nationwide®, the #1 farm and ranch insurer in the U.S.**

Nationwide Agribusiness Farm & Ranch members have a new tool in the fight against wildfires and property damage they cause. If you're already part of the Nationwide Agribusiness Farm & Ranch family, you're covered at no extra cost.

A new approach to wildfire risk management

Nationwide Agribusiness is partnering with the Wildfire Defense System (WDS) to help protect your property in the event of a fire. Wildfire Defense Systems started in 2008. Its services strengthen overall risk management "before, during and after wildfire events." With the Wildfire Solutions Program, it now delivers those services to Nationwide Agribusiness Farm & Ranch members.

"The program adds a layer of protection for our members in the event of a wildfire. Wildfire Defense System watches wildfire conditions. And it dispatches resources to policyholders' residences when they're needed," said Nationwide Farm Underwriting Director Scott Elliott. "It all helps protect structures at risk."

This new service creates a unique approach to helping manage the risk wildfires pose farmers and ranchers, even in the most fire-prone areas.

"Many people think of insurance as protection at the time of a loss. This program is different," Elliott added. "It's a proactive way to help prevent loss and damage to property from wildfire."

Ways the program helps prevent wildfire damage

Wildfire Defense System offers specific services to help preserve property from wildfire damage. They include:

- Preparing structures and relocating combustible materials
- Securing structures and taping vents
- Applying vegetative fire retardant or fire-blocking gel
- Installing temporary sprinkler systems
- Mitigating vegetative fuel and constructing fire breaks

- Conducting post-fire services

The program provides these benefits and other unique risk management resources through a partnership with [Wildfire Defense Systems \(WDS\)](#). The Bozeman, Montana-based company offers a full suite of wildfire protection tools like:

- mitigation
- suppression
- response

"The idea is to help our members do more to be ready for wildfires," Elliott said. "It also gives them confidence they will have a trusted partner when they have to clean up after a fire."

New strategy helps first-responders

The program has benefits beyond the member's farm gate. It helps state and local first-responders do their jobs at times when demand far outpaces supply, Elliott said. That enables all residents, fire crews and other public safety officials to better respond to fires. Finally, it helps prevent at least some of the property damage fires might otherwise cause.

"It's peace of mind that in the event of a wildfire, WDS provides additional resources focused on protecting property from approaching wildfires," he said. "State and local response is often stretched very thin during these large events. WDS is strategic in their response to Nationwide Farm & Ranch policyholder properties."

Talk to your Nationwide Independent Farm Agent to learn more about the Wildfire Solutions Program and the steps you can take to help protect your farm from fire. ■

THE AG COMMISSIONER

Juan Hidalgo, Agricultural Commissioner, Santa Cruz County

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ORGANIC VALUES IN TOP 5



The California Department of Food and Agriculture recently published their “California Agricultural Organics Report 2020-21” outlining organic trends and gross sales data for each county in the state. The report highlights the diversity of organic commodities grown in California and the important role our state plays in organic production for our nation. If you have not guessed, California leads the way in organic production. According to the report, “California accounts for 36 percent of all organic production in the U.S.” Organic acreage in California continues to grow and there was a six percent increase from 2019 to 2020 from 2,064,883 to 2,186,551 acres. CDFA also reports that organic acreage has increased 22 percent from 2014 to 2020 from 1,796,080 to the current 2,186,551! USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service Organic Survey for 2019 reports that there are 16,585 certified organic farms in our nation and 3,012 of those farms are in California. The runner-up is Wisconsin, with 1,364 certified organic farms. Organic sales for 2020 in our state totaled \$11.9 billion, with producer sales making up approximately 35 percent of that amount at \$4.1 billion.

CDFA’s report ranks Santa Cruz County number three with organic gross sales of \$950,712,459 behind Los Angeles County at \$1,976,810,306 and Monterey County at \$2,587,388,872. Kern and Merced Counties round up the top five with sales of \$804,785,298 and \$612,978,398 respectively. The Santa Cruz County value is made up of producer and handler sales, with 204 producers reporting sales of \$69,847,836 and 41 handlers reporting \$880,864,623.

The total organic harvested acreage for Santa Cruz County is reported at 7,556 and top organic commodities grown here include rangeland and beef cattle, caneberries, strawberries, apples, lettuce, and miscellaneous vegetables. The top organic commodities produced in California include rangeland and beef cattle, milk, lettuce, almonds, winegrapes, and miscellaneous vegetables. It is outstanding to see how successful growers are in our county and the impacts they make for agricultural production in our state and nation. ■

Save the Date

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau

Santa Cruz County Fair
September 14 through September 18, 2022

Annual Directors’ Dinner
November 3, 2022
5:45 p.m.

CFBF 104th Annual Meeting
Monterey, CA
December 4-7, 2022

Agri-Culture

26th Annual Farm Dinner
Location to be determined
October 22, 2022
4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Written by Alan Smith,
The Grunsky Law Firm PC

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT EXPANDS TREBLE DAMAGES TO INCLUDE BUSINESS DISPUTES



Alan Smith

On July 21, the California Supreme Court issued a long-anticipated business lawsuit decision. In *Siry Investments vs. Saeed Farkhondehpour*, the Court agreed with a limited partner's position that Penal Code § 496 applies to the theft of business funds. The Court said its decision "that treble damages and attorney's fees are available under section 496(c) when, as here, property 'has been obtained in any manner constituting theft' — is compelled by the statute's unambiguous words and our obligation to honor them. The Court held for the first time that Penal Code statutory treble damages and attorneys' fees apply to business disputes and other cases where the defendant is alleged to have stolen any form of property.

The facts were a little complicated but are basically that Plaintiff Siry Investment, L.P., was a limited partner in a partnership with defendant real estate moguls. The partnership's main asset was a Los-Angeles-based swap meet building occupied by small businesses. The partnership got rent from tenants of the mixed-use property

After resolution of a first lawsuit that was filed in 2003 by the other limited partners against Siry, appellant Siry filed a second lawsuit to recover damages based on the other partners' misdeeds in handling the partnership. Following the first trial, the jury awarded Siry \$3.5 million in damages. The judgment was ultimately reversed on appeal on a technicality; and the case was remanded for a new trial.

In 2013, following remand, Siry sought treble damages and attorneys' fees under Section 496(c). Following extensive discovery abuse, Siry obtained sanctions and a default judgment against all the other partners. After examining Siry's extensive evidence, the trial court issued an eight-figure default judgment against the remaining partners.

Despite being in default, defendants argued the judgment wrongly awarded \$42 million in damages. While denying a motion for new trial based on excessive damages, the trial court reduced the damages to \$7 million.

Then both sides appealed, and the court of appeal affirmed the trial court judgment as to liability but reduced the judgment to \$3 million and held the Penal Code 496 civil theft statute did not apply to the theft of partnership funds, thereby eliminating the attorneys' fees and statutory treble damages.

The court of appeal decision was then appealed to the California Supreme Court which granted discretionary review due to a split in California courts of appeal on the issue. After extensive briefing on the merits and oral argument, the California Supreme Court reversed the court of appeal and held that Section 496(c) does indeed apply to all forms of commercial and non-commercial litigation where the statute's elements have been satisfied.

The Supreme Court's decision means a business partner who misappropriates partnership property is subject to triple damages and attorney fees. This decision will have significant impact on lawsuits throughout California, including agricultural operating entities, such as partnerships, corporations, limited partnerships, and limited liability companies where misappropriation or theft of assets is alleged. ■

SMILE!

The banker fell overboard from a friend's sailboat. The friend grabbed a life preserver, held it up, not knowing if the banker could swim, and shouted, "Can you float alone?" "Obviously," the banker replied, "but this is quite an interesting time to talk business."

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CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY-SEPT. 14
Santa Cruz County Fair
begins and runs through
Sunday, September 18th

WEDNESDAY-SEPT. 14
Annual Apple Pie Baking
Contest

WEDNESDAY-SEPT. 14
Opening Day Barbecue
starts at 12 noon

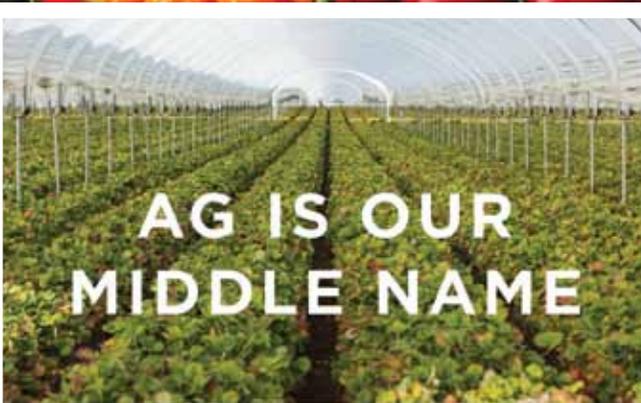
WEDNESDAY - SEPT. 21
Focus Agriculture,
Session 8

TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 27
Agri-Culture's Board of
Directors' meeting

FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 29
Farm Bureau Board of
Directors' meeting

FRIDAY - OCTOBER 14
Focus Agriculture, Session
9- Graduation

SATURDAY - OCTOBER 22
26th Annual Farm Dinner



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