

# Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

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# FARM



# BUREAU

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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

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## Board of Directors Gather for Annual Retreat



The Past President's Lunch was held prior to the Board Retreat at Rancho Santa Maria in late January. Pictured (L-R) Kirk Schmidt, Monterey County Supervisor John Phillips, Don Hagerty, Retired Monterey County Supervisor Lou Calcagno, Steve Bontadelli, Tom Am Rhein and Matthew Bissell. John Phillips and Lou Calcagno were guest speakers for the event.

## A Letter to the Editor on Coast Dairies

Written by David Van Lennep, President

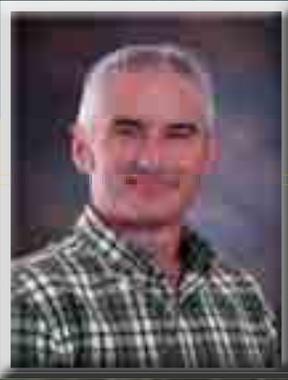
Dear Editor,

Santa Cruz County lands have become increasingly popular with outside preservation groups as a source to collect large sums of money from donors nationwide. These groups, headquartered in major urban centers, have expensive overhead, including rents and many professional staff. In order to survive as an organization, they need to find land throughout the United States that

interest major donors. Many times there is no connection to the land prior to this effort and after the land has been preserved the local communities are faced with property taken off the tax role, increased local law enforcement cost and impacts on roads. Approximately 17 years ago a San Francisco based organization collected millions of dollars from outside interest to preserve the Coast Dairies Property on our north coast.

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# President's Message

DAVID VAN LENEP, PRESIDENT

## Getting the word out about Careers in Agriculture

Over the last several years there has been much discussion about the lack of interest younger generations have in agriculture as a career path. This has been a local and statewide concern as the gap between today's farmers and the future generation of farmers widens. Some of this can be attributed to today's high-tech job focus or the stereotype of agriculture jobs as being low paying, menial labor work. Some blame can be placed at the feet of agriculture for not doing enough outreach to promote the broad range of careers agriculture can offer. Whatever the cause, it is the current state of affairs.

irrigation management.

One of the most exciting developments is the new ag teacher and resurrection of the ag program at Watsonville High (WHS). For obvious reasons this will be a great platform to introduce students to ag. Another interesting point to note is that the Principal at WHS, a graduate of Agri-Culture's Focus Agriculture Class of 2013, has been a champion of careers in agriculture since graduating from the program. She is incorporating agriculture in the curriculum of other departments at the school. She was instrumental in organizing a careers in ag day for over 150 Watsonville High School

**"As Focus Agriculture celebrates 25 years of educating the local community about agriculture, it is encouraging to see how influential our story can be."**

By sheer happenstance, our Board Retreat this January was heavily weighted with guest speakers discussing education, careers and how local agricultural can fit into the picture. We heard from Digital NEST (a high-tech space located in the heart of Watsonville) which provides classes and access to computers, software, Wi-Fi and other digital tools to young people (ages 12-24) in Santa Cruz County and the Monterey Bay area. Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) and Watsonville High School representatives came to introduce the new ag teacher for Watsonville High School. And, Wetlands Watch reported on their work with the County Office of Education's Regional Occupation Program (ROP) and local farms to introduce students to farming practices, organic farming, irrigation, and new innovations such as web-based

President's Message-Continued on Page 11

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# ASK LAURA

Mark Bolda, County Director - Farm Advisor, UCCE

## Spring Is Right Around The Corner

**Q.** Spring is right around the corner, so what sort of preparation work should I be doing on my raspberries and blackberries?

With the warm temperatures of late, we are reminded that spring truly is right around the corner and there might be some things that we should be doing to get our blackberries and raspberries ready for the upcoming season.

**Pruning and Trellising:** If growers and gardeners haven't done so, it is high time to get the pruning done. Pruning is done for two reasons; the first to remove old, diseased cane (bearing in mind that cane which has borne fruit in the last season will no longer bear and should be removed) and secondly to create a stand or hedgerow of canes which facilitates their management. Remember to clip the canes at an angle when pruning so precipitation doesn't pool on top on the cane and provide a platform for diseases.

Trellising is also important to have finished now. Some blackberry cultivars may seem to be more self-supporting than a trailing variety like Ollalieberry, but even so all blackberry types are easier to manage and benefit from trellising. For raspberries, growers should look to maintain an ideal hedgerow width of 12 inches and opening in a "V" shape which ultimately will be about 3 feet wide at shoulder height.

**Disease and Arthropod Control:** In past years it was standard to apply lime sulfur beginning in the fall and through the winter to control various diseases (most often stem and cane rust on Ollalieberry) and arthropods such as redberry mite, but the necessity of these fall/winter lime sulfur applications for newer raspberry and blackberry varieties is something I question based on recent research I have done. Blackberry growers should rather concentrate their pest management efforts on Golden Pest spray oil applications beginning with the first green fruit in the spring for redberry mites, and rust applications for raspberries much later in the season when these diseases become prevalent.

**Field Management:** At this time of year, when possible it does pay to cultivate the area between the hedgerows to keep weeds down and incorporate pruned canes and other plant trash into the soil. Since the caneberry roots generally don't grow near the surface in this area, normal tillage with a disk will not cause much harm to them.

The above has been a brief guide to managing blackberries and raspberries in the later winter on the Central Coast of California. Please contact Mark Bolda at UCCE Santa Cruz if you have more questions on this topic or any other topics concerning blackberry, raspberry or strawberry production.

### Words of Wisdom

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

*Robert Louis Stevenson*

# THE WATER NANNY

## Sharia Law

*"News Alert – Today the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors adopted Sharia Law. Strict and immediate punishment will be dispensed for all misdemeanors and felonies. Of course, thieves will lose their hands, rapists other body parts. Being stoned will take on a whole new meaning. A few local twists will apply; for example, construction without the benefit of a permit, the house will be torched along with neighbors on both sides, for complicity. ..."* from the Blog of SISI<sup>1</sup>

The New Age is upon us. Journalism schools and academies of science are closing for lack of students. The media is full of rumors, innuendo and fantasy. Why bother with facts. Indeed, to question the new order will brand you a heretic and most likely put you to the stake. This trend extends to the extreme on both sides of the political spectrum, whether Fox News or MSNBC. Not vaccinating children is equally popular in Marin and Houston. (not fact checked, not necessary)

Your Nanny foretold this state of affairs way back in January, 2004, with the first report *"An epidemic of intense stupidity is sweeping the country. The cause is goof gas, Boris Badenov's new secret weapon."*<sup>2</sup>

Why should we care? This is impacting farming. From listening to people in the produce section at Whole Foods talk about water greedy farmers, though buying bags of organic almonds, to salmon fishermen denigrating delta water diversions while landing a limit, we are losing the battle of reason. The State Water Board assembled a Nitrate Expert Panel of professors and agronomists only to have Pamela Creedon, the Executive Officer of the Central Valley Water Board, excoriate the results as being inconsistent with soon to be adopted regulations, which now could not be scientifically justified. The regulations were adopted, as the panel was only advisory.

Some environmental groups clearly don't need science when they make up facts to suit their objectives. Save the Sea Otter has imagined historic lakes and rivers in the lower Salinas Valley, where only salt swamps existed, and repeatedly shows a picture of a 1920 tractor to assert that farmers are

illegally clearing the Salinas River bottom. It is obvious that no farmer was in the river for a long time if this is the best fact available.

What about the near extinction of the polio virus? You laugh because it is not on the endangered species list, yet. A U.S. Senator complained about excessive regulations requiring food servers to wash their hands after using the toilet. There has been no cholera epidemic in the U.S. since 1923, so why wash. Wait till he reads the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. Next, at least from my prospective as the original *little old lady from Pasadena*, will be a tirade against highway speed limits. I don't like regulations either, but let's have a discussion based on some reality that is not the alternate kind.

Enough is enough. We didn't get college degrees just so we could move away from home and party all night. Speak up, call the imbeciles out for what they are. Don't be afraid, they are nowhere close to becoming endangered. *"If stupidity got us into this mess, then why can't it get us out?"* (Will Rogers)



<sup>1</sup> Society Infatuated with Silly Imbeciles  
<sup>2</sup> Nanny # 31 – this was fact checked (Jay Ward)





*"Agriculture, the Original Green"*

# FAVORITE RECIPES

## Traditional Irish Shepherd's Pie

**Note from the Editor:** This is a recipe that I have used for several years around St. Patrick's Day as it is a favorite with my friends and family. It is a recipe by the "Grumpy Irish Lady" (not me or Water Nanny) and it is a keeper if you like Shepherd's Pie. Hope you enjoy it!

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 pound ground beef or 1 pound lamb
- 1 large onion, finely diced
- 3 - 4 large carrots, finely diced
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 3 - 4 sprigs fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 glass red wine
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 large quantity mashed potatoes (about 6 cups, fresh or leftover)
- 1 egg, beaten
- grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

1. Pre-heat oven to 400°F
2. Saute carrots in the olive oil until starting to get tender
3. Add in the onions and saute for a minute or two and then add the meat.
4. Season with black pepper and thyme.
5. Cook until browned then drain the fat off.
6. Add the butter and peas.
7. Sprinkle with flour and stir through.
8. Add tomato paste, wine and Worcestershire sauce.
9. Let this reduce slightly then add the chicken stock. Allow to reduce down until you have a thick meaty gravy. Season to your taste.
10. Remove from heat. Grease an oven proof dish with butter and add the sauce. (9" x 13" is usually good or any baking dish that will hold the ingredients).
11. Spoon or pipe the mashed potatoes over the top. Brush with egg and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese if you are using it.
12. Bake about 20 minutes or until the potato is nice and browned on top.
13. Serve as is or with some crusty soda bread or beer bread to mop up the yummy sauce!

### Easy Beer Bread

- 3 cups all purpose flour, **sifted**
  - 3 teaspoons baking powder
  - 1 teaspoon salt
  - 1/4 cup sugar
  - 1 12-ounce can of beer
  - 1/2 cup melted butter (1/4 cup works fine too)
1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
  2. Mix dry ingredients and beer.
  3. Pour into a greased loaf pan.
  4. Pour melted butter over mixture.
  5. Bake 1 hour, remove from pan and cool for at least 15 minutes.

# FROM THE AG COMMISSIONER

Mary Lou Nicoletti, Agricultural Commissioner

## ANNUAL CROP REPORT



It is that time of year again! Our office has sent out Crop Report Surveys to our growers, for use in compiling the 2014 Santa Cruz County Crop Report. To date we have not received many surveys back.

Whether your farm is small or large, it is important to include your operation in our Annual Crop Report to obtain an accurate measurement of agriculture in Santa Cruz County.

The Agricultural Commissioner's office is required by the California Food and Agricultural Code to compile and report information regarding the acreage and gross production value of the county's commodities. The gross production value of agriculture in our county has greatly increased over the decades, as shown below:

- 1983 - \$148,370,000
- 1993 - \$245,540,000
- 2003- \$371,207,000
- 2013- \$599,268,000

The cumulative inflation between 1983 and 2013 is about 135%. This means that the 1983 crop report value of \$148,370,000 would equate to about \$348,670,000 in 2013. Clearly, the county's agricultural production values have grown far beyond the amount attributable to inflation.

County Crop Reports are used for a variety of purposes. The statistics illustrate changes in crops grown in the county over time. The Crop Report is an important tool for farmers and ranchers, insurance companies, bankers, marketers, and government. Research institutions, banks, agencies, and businesses use the information to the benefit of the local economy. So the information provided by each of our growers to the crop report is very important indeed. The data may also be used in future studies on agriculture's economic contributions, such as the 2012 Report on the "Economic Contributions of Santa Cruz County Agriculture", available on our website at [www.agdept.com](http://www.agdept.com)

Please know that the information you provide is kept strictly confidential. It will not be disclosed to private parties, or to any other governmental entity. It may only be used to develop a statistical value that does not allow the identification of any specific person or business. After the crop report is complete, the surveys received from growers are shredded.

If you have received a survey form, we appreciate your prompt attention to completing and returning the form to us. If you lost or did not receive a form, please contact Deputy Agricultural Commissioners Juan Hidalgo or Pamela Cassar by calling 763-8080.

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## The Water Beneath Us

The main source of water in the Pajaro Valley is, of course, the Pajaro Valley groundwater basin. However, the 1200 square mile basin is still in significant overdraft even with all the rain that fell in late 2014.

For the most part, the intense storm events that occurred this past November and December, were not the type of storms that typically provide huge benefits for groundwater recharge. Nevertheless, any rainfall event is better than none especially after three long years of drought. In any case, storm activity that is milder, more frequent and occurring over an extended period of time has a more positive influence on groundwater recharge and results in less runoff. However, the water from rain falling, in any given year, may take several years before it reaches an underground aquifer.

During infrequent storm events, the soil can dry and harden. This can limit the amount of rainfall that enters the

soil, especially, during intense storm events. Basically, the longer the period of time between storm events the more difficult it becomes for groundwater supply to change. Furthermore, over consumption from pumping has worsened the groundwater situation and continues to worsen during this extended drought. *Note: The decline of groundwater levels between September 2011 and September 2013 was in the order of 5-6 feet!*

Excessive pumping can cause ground subsidence and related damage to infrastructure such as roads, wells and other facilities. It can also cause seawater intrusion as it has in the Pajaro Valley. For more information on current groundwater conditions contact the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency. For ideas and help on what you can do to lessen the demand on groundwater contact NRCS at 475-1967.

## 21 COMMUNITY LEADERS SELECTED FOR FOCUS AGRICULTURE CLASS XXVI

Twenty-one community leaders have been selected for **Class XXVI** of the Focus Agriculture program. This "first-in-the-nation" program is designed for community leaders to learn about agriculture in Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley. The program consists of once-a-month, day-long seminars, held over a period of nine months. The first session will be held on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. Speakers ranging from farmers to elected officials to representatives from environmental groups will address the class. The sessions will cover such topics as ethnic groups in agriculture, new technology and diversity of commodities locally grown. In addition, there are many farm tours and hands on experiences. The participants will spend one day working on a farm.

In announcing the selected participants of Class XXVI, Agriculture President **Steve Bontadelli**, stated, "Community leaders will find this program beneficial and, in turn, growers who present information to the class will learn the public's current perspective of local agriculture. The program is designed to be a two way learning process."

The Focus Agriculture program received a national award for its innovated approach to bringing the public and the agricultural community together.

### FOCUS AGRICULTURE CLASS XXVI - 2015

**Robin Boyle**, Director of Marketing & Sales, CCOF; **Shannon Brady**, Philanthropy Director, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center; **Jimmy Dutra**, Councilmember, City of Watsonville; **Marcus Frost**, Director of Development & Communications, Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History; **Rebecca Garcia**, Councilmember, City of Watsonville; **Javier Gomez**, Representative, State Assemblymember Luis Alejo; **Celeste Gutierrez**, Project Specialist, Santa Cruz Office of Education; **Eileen Hill**, Associated Director, Cabrillo College Foundation; **Sarah Hulick**, Communications & Extension Specialist, Driscoll Strawberry Associates; **Meg Janes**, Tax Manager, Plantronics, Inc.; **April Jernberg**, Soil Conservationist, United States Department of Agriculture; **Maritza Pozzi-Loyola**, Private Event Director, Seascope Golf Club; **Jacob Martinez**, Executive Director, Digital Nest; **Sheila McDaniel**, Land Use Planner, Santa Cruz County Planning Department; **Rachel Montoya**, Controller, Sambrailo Packaging; **Josh Morgan**, Manager Human Resources, Cafe Cruz; **James Panetta**, Prosecutor, Monterey County District Attorney's Office; **Brian Spector**, Principal, Spector Corbett Architects, Inc; **Jon Sisk**, SUS-Director of Real Estate/Construction, Santa Cruz County Building Department; **Tom Takano**, Educator; **Alec Wasson**, President, Ideal Farming, Inc.

## Simple Steps Tackle Chemical Concerns

The large amount and variety of chemicals commonly stored on farms today means you have to deal with two major concerns. First, farm chemicals can be dangerous, even lethal, to family members who are unfamiliar with proper handling. And second, no one has to tell you that agricultural chemicals are costly, and therefore prime targets for thieves. Liquid fertilizers, anhydrous ammonia, crop pesticides, cleaning chemicals, the list goes on—and they all bring inherent risks.

Nationwide offers these tips to help guard against both concerns:

### **Tanks/chemical storage:**

- Install locks on all tanks.
- Keep pesticides and all chemicals in a locked, well-ventilated storage room.
- Equip bulk storage tanks with locks and protect them with secondary containment if possible.
- Consider receiving chemical deliveries just before you need them. Return any unused materials to the distributor soon after to reduce chemical storage time.
- Mark all storage tanks with the contents to help emergency responders.
- Store chemicals on shelves rather than concrete floors.

### **Vehicles:**

- Keep all vehicles and equipment in a secure garage or locked area of your property.
- If vehicles must be stored outdoors, park them in well-lit areas. Lock the doors and fit them with lockable tank caps.

### **General security:**

- Be aware of unfamiliar vehicles on or near your farm; watch for suspicious activities.
- Never leave ignition keys in vehicles or equipment.
- Be sure your property is lit well at night; consider video surveillance.
- Have an employee conduct regular but unpredictable security checks, or do it yourself.
- Install alarm systems that are wired directly to local law enforcement offices.
- Restrict employees' access to computer farm records.
- Minimize the number of people who can enter restricted areas of your farm.
- Review your insurance policy with your agent to be sure you know what's covered.

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### **A Letter to the Editor** - Continued from Page 1

Besides paying for the land, the money collected also helped pay for their expensive overhead. A local organization was selected by this group to be the recipient of the farm land on Coast Dairies to help ensure agriculture would be maintained on the property. The rents collected from the growers would be invested back into the property plus help with local farm worker housing, scholarships and other educational programs. The local group spent ten years at their board

meetings planning to be the stewards of this land. The San Francisco based organization arbitrarily removed this group without any written communication and now the growers are continuing to pay rent that is helping with the overhead of an expensive San Francisco office.

Beware of outside groups using Santa Cruz County lands for their own profits.

## Arbitrator Awards Fieldworker \$800,000 For Sexual Attack



A woman field worker who was sexually assaulted at a central coast berry farm during work hours was awarded \$800,000.00 in damages and an injunction against her employer.

The farmer will also be subject to court monitoring for two years to assure its policies for sexual harassment reporting and investigation are changed. The farm workers alleged the company failed to prevent her supervisor from sexually assaulting her and then failed also to properly handle her report of the incident.

The arbitrator found that although the farm worker lost no wages because she continued to work that "It's what goes on in her mind and body during work and non-work time which has diminished the quality of her life that warrants general damages." The general damage award to the worker was apparently \$350,000.

The arbitrator also approved more than \$450,000.00 in attorney's fees and costs for the farm worker's lawyers.

The berry farmer alleged that it had complied with all legally required sexual harassment policies and training but agreed to recommit to do more and apologized publicly and promised to maintain a safer working environment.

The facts were that the farm worker complained to her manager of her co-worker's harassing behavior who nevertheless promoted the co-worker to be her direct supervisor. Her manager failed to document, report or even remember the victim farm worker's complaints. This resulted in the assailant co-worker to be promoted without considering his past behavior.

The assailant, now the farm worker's supervisor, then attacked her in an isolated area of the berry field and tried to force her to touch his genitals and forcibly touched hers.

Afterwards the victim's former manager and other managers were found to have failed to properly respond to her complaint. The company did not immediately call the police and failed to prevent coworkers from retaliating against the vic-

tim for coming forward. The original manager then sent the victim back to work after the attack telling her to find someone to give her a safety pin to keep her pants up because the assailant had torn a button off. The arbitrator determined that these improper responses were caused by inadequate training. The arbitrator then ordered as part of the decision that a court monitor will enforce changes in the farmer's policies including giving workers a dedicated phone number for reporting harassment on a laminated card with information in Spanish and providing longer, more in depth training to management on preventing and investigating sexual harassment and assaults. The assailant is now serving time in prison for the attack.

This case is a reminder that the fields are just like the outside world. Unlike the outside world, the employer has an affirmative duty to train managers and protect employees in the work place. Often the chain of command between the field supervisor and the management of a company is three or four persons deep. Even following all minimum legal requirements may not protect the farmer when an employee assaults another. Practices such as anonymous toll free tip lines and thorough and repeated training of employees and vigilance in the field can prevent harm to the employee and financial consequences to the farmer.



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# Agriculture News

## President's Message -Continued from Page 2

teachers, an event noticed by California Farm Bureau as one of the top innovative programs in the state. As Focus Agriculture celebrates 25 years of educating the local community about agriculture, it is encouraging to see how influential our story can be.

As we work through the day-to-day issues surrounding our industry, we

should remember to keep an open eye for opportunities to educate, inform and promote the world that is agriculture. Those opportunities could be big or small, but may be important in inspiring someone to be a part of ag or appreciate the values that it provides.



"Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down."

Oprah Winfrey

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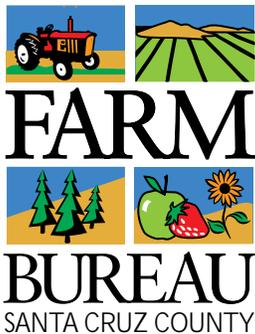
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# Between the Furrows

A Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Monthly Publication

## CALENDAR

**WEDNESDAY - MARCH 11**  
YF&R meeting

**FRIDAY - MARCH 13**  
Focus Agriculture, Session 1

**WEDNESDAY - MARCH 18**  
National Agriculture Day  
Spring Luncheon - Reservations  
are available through  
[www.sccfb.com](http://www.sccfb.com) or by calling  
(831) 724-1356

**THURSDAY - MARCH 19**  
Agricultural Policy Advisory  
Commission

**THURSDAY - MARCH 26**  
Board of Directors' meeting

**WEDNESDAY - APRIL 1**

- **Legislative Committee meeting**
- **Executive Committee meeting**
- **Membership Committee meeting**

**WEDNESDAY - APRIL 8**  
Young Farmers & Ranchers  
meeting

**FRIDAY - APRIL 10**  
Focus Agriculture, Session 2

**MONDAY - APRIL 13**  
Public Relations & Information  
Committee meeting

# MONEY

## IN YOUR POCKET

American AgCredit members earned \$39 million in cash dividends for 2014, for a total of more than \$250 million since 2006.

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