



# AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.  
A private, nonprofit organization serving farmers throughout Riverside County since 1917

*Our 80th Year of Publication: Volume LXXX, Number 1, January 2026.*



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING AND BECOMING PART OF THE FARM BUREAU FAMILY.

## Welcome, Nisha Noroian – New RCFB Director

Representing the Palo Verde Valley



We're proud to introduce Nisha Noroian as the newest Director for Riverside County Farm Bureau, representing the Blythe and Palo Verde Valley region.

Born and raised in Blythe, Nisha brings a lifetime of agricultural experience and deep community roots to her role. Nisha represents a third generation of farming leadership: her father, Nish Noroian, first established Nish Noroian Farms in Blythe in 1948, and the family's farm has grown a diverse range of crops and contributed

to regional agricultural success for decades.

Nisha earned her degree in Agricultural Business from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and went on to attend law school at Arizona State University, a path she pursued to better support and advocate for agriculture and water rights throughout the region.

Today, Nisha serves as the Managing Director of Nish Noroian Farms, overseeing the farm's daily operations alongside her mother, Linda. She also serves on the Palo Verde Irrigation District Board of Trustees, where she brings a strong voice to water management and agricultural infrastructure issues that are vital to growers in the Palo Verde Valley.

Her leadership and community involvement reflect her deep commitment to sustaining and advancing agriculture in eastern Riverside County. We are excited to have her perspective and expertise helping guide RCFB's mission and initiatives. Please join us in welcoming Director Nisha Noroian!

## Young Farmers and Ranchers 'Imagine, Grow, Lead' at American Farm Bureau Competitive Events at 2026 Annual Convention, Anaheim



Photo L-R: J.P. Beall, Leah Groves, and Ben Abatti

California Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers finalists had an outstanding showing at the 2026 AFBF Annual Convention, each reaching the highest levels of competition in their categories; J.P. Beall (San Bernardino County) advanced to the Sweet 16 in the national Discussion Meet, Leah Groves (Trinity County) advanced to the national Top 10 in Excellence in Agriculture, while Ben Abatti (Imperial County) also earned a place in the national Top 10 for the Achievement Award, so proud of these young individuals showing a strong reflection of the leadership and talent coming out of California agriculture. Congratulations!

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## Happy New Year Riverside County Farm Bureau

The new year arrived with rain throughout Riverside County, a blessing, as I was raised to believe rain brings good luck to farmers. I'm taking it as a good sign for agriculture in 2026. I hope you and your families enjoyed a blessed Christmas and New Year celebration together.

I am pleased to kick-off the 2026 membership campaign for Riverside County Farm Bureau, "Together We Grow," and it's never been more important. With less than 2% of Americans growing the food that nourishes our country and the world, unity isn't optional ~ it's essential.

We all know how easy it is to become divided. Water issues alone can pit neighbor against neighbor. Every farm faces different challenges, different needs. Legislators will tell you that's what makes agriculture so difficult to represent, we all want something different. But when we fracture, we only empower those who would regulate us out of existence. The opposition counts on our division.

The truth is simple: we are stronger together, even when we don't agree on everything. That's how we effect real change. That's how we protect our rights as farmers.

Here's how you can help strengthen our Farm Bureau:

- Bring a new member to our organization
- Attend a Farm Bureau meeting
- Donate to our political action committee
- Take time to talk to people about farming

*"Together we grow. Together we endure. Together we thrive."*

This spirit of unity has sustained us for over a century. Riverside County Farm Bureau is 109 years old, older than

California Farm Bureau itself. To honor this legacy, we're introducing the 1917 Circle, recognizing farm families and ag companies who have been members for at least 50 years. If you're part of this remarkable group, watch for a letter arriving in your mailbox soon. Your decades of commitment have built the foundation we stand on today.

On behalf of the Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, I wish you a healthy, bountiful, and prosperous 2026! And may the rain only fall when it best suits your crops.



Your President,  
Ellen Way

### RATES FOR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS ANTICIPATED TO DROP IN 2026

According to preliminary calculations from multiple accounts, Southern California Edison rates are expected to drop for agricultural customers by 6.3% in 2026 as reflected in Advice Letter 5687-E as shown in the table below.

| Bundled Average Rates (¢/kWh)     |               |                   |                |              |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Customer Group                    | Current Rates | Proposed Decrease | Proposed Rates | % Change     |
| Residential                       | 35.3          | (2.1)             | 33.2           | -5.9%        |
| Lighting - Small and Medium Power | 32.2          | (2.1)             | 30.1           | -6.5%        |
| Large Power                       | 21.3          | (1.2)             | 20.1           | -5.5%        |
| Agricultural and Pumping          | 25.4          | (1.6)             | 23.8           | -6.3%        |
| Street and Area Lighting          | 36.1          | (2.4)             | 33.7           | -6.6%        |
| Standby                           | 18.0          | (3.3)             | 14.7           | -18.1%       |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>30.2</b>   | <b>(2.0)</b>      | <b>28.1</b>    | <b>-6.7%</b> |

| Residential Bill Impact (\$/Month) |          |                   |          |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Description                        | Current  | Proposed Decrease | Proposed | % Change |
| Non-CARE residential bill          | \$193.22 | (\$8.18)          | \$185.05 | -4.2%    |
| CARE residential bill              | \$122.31 | (\$11.20)         | \$111.11 | -9.2%    |

Staff Contact: Karen Norene Mills at [kmills@cfbf.com](mailto:kmills@cfbf.com) or 916-715-7912

# The Class 53 Agriculture Legacy Scholarship

A Commitment to Future Agricultural Leaders

The **Class 53 Agriculture Legacy Scholarship** aims to support and nurture the next generation of leaders in the field of agriculture. This scholarship is provided by the fellows of Class 53 from the California Ag Leadership Foundation, whose contributions to the agricultural industry have set a benchmark for excellence and innovation.

The Class 53 Agriculture Legacy Scholarship will provide financial assistance to students pursuing degrees in agriculture, agribusiness, agronomy, horticulture, or related fields.

Five scholarships will be awarded annually for 5 years (2026-2031) to deserving students who demonstrate excellence, leadership potential, and a commitment to advancing the agricultural industry.

**Apply at: <https://forms.gle/DHa9zzUa8iyC9fQB6>**

Each recipient of The Class 53 Agriculture Legacy Scholarship will receive an award of \$1,000.

## Selection Committee

The selection committee will consist of members from Class 53 of the California Agricultural Leadership Program.

## Timeline

The following timeline outlines the key dates and deadlines for The Class 53 Agriculture Legacy Scholarship:

- Application Period Opens: November 1st
- Application Deadline: March 1st
- Review of Applications: March 2nd - April 30th
- Announcement of Recipients: May 1st
- Award Distribution: Dependent on dates of award ceremonies.

To apply Scan  
QR Code



## Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for the scholarship:

- Enrolled or accepted into an accredited junior college, trade school, college, or university
- Be pursuing a degree in agriculture or a related field
- Have a minimum GPA of 2.5
- Demonstrate leadership potential and involvement in agricultural activities

## Application Requirements

Applicants must submit the following materials:

- Completed scholarship application form
- Unofficial or Official academic transcript (emailed to [scholarship@class53.com](mailto:scholarship@class53.com))
- One letter of recommendation (emailed to [scholarship@class53.com](mailto:scholarship@class53.com))
- A personal statement outlining career goals and commitment to the agricultural industry
- A 250-word minimum essay describing what a legacy in agriculture means



The Class 53 Agriculture Legacy Scholarship supports the education and development of future agricultural leaders; this scholarship ensures that their legacy will continue to inspire and shape the industry for generations to come. We are excited to launch this initiative and look forward to recognizing and rewarding the outstanding achievements of our scholarship recipients. For questions about this scholarship or to email attachments, please email [scholarship@class53.com](mailto:scholarship@class53.com)

## Rain Bird Micro Spinner Field Trial

We're excited to share a new field trial opportunity for California growers interested in evaluating the next generation of irrigation technology (additional full details below).

In partnership with Rain Bird, we are launching a Micro Spinner Field Trial Program kicking off in early February, which will include installation of Rain Bird's micro spinner products. This trial is designed to test the performance, durability, and overall design of the micro spinner system under real-world growing conditions—and to gather valuable feedback directly from growers.

Who should apply? This opportunity is open to California growers statewide who currently use low-flow micro sprinklers, including competitive spinners or jets, for both non-flow control and flow control applications.

Eligible applications and commodities include:

- Permanent crops (orchards)
- Row crops
- Nurseries



If you're interested in participating or would like more information, we encourage you to apply by submitting your information on the form fill at <https://www.cfbf.com/ag-news/rain-bird>

Selected participants will have the chance to work hands-on with Rain Bird's micro spinner technology and share insights on its field performance, reliability, and appearance, helping shape future irrigation solutions for California agriculture.

# American Farm Bureau ~ 107th Convention



At the 2026 American Farm Bureau Annual Convention in Anaheim, AFBF President Zippy Duvall addressed attendees by setting the tone around leadership, advocacy, and Farm Bureau's role in shaping the future of agriculture. His message emphasized unity, developing the next generation of ag leaders, and staying engaged on the issues that impact farm and ranch families.

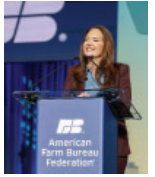
The convention also featured a congressional agriculture leadership panel with the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees: Sen. John Boozman and Sen. Amy Klobuchar, along with Rep. GT Thompson and Rep. Angie Craig, who discussed

major priorities such as farm labor and H-2A improvements, the path forward on the Farm Bill, trade, and the economic pressures facing producers.



The closing general session included remarks from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, who spoke directly to Farm Bureau members about the challenges and opportunities ahead for American agriculture and USDA's focus on supporting producers. The convention concluded with motivational speaker Tim Tebow, who encouraged attendees to lead with purpose, resilience, and a service mindset, reinforcing the importance of strong leadership and community connection as agriculture moves into the year ahead.

Thank you as well to directors Brad Scott, Dalton Abrams, and Marlene Salazar Pongs for taking the time to attend and represent Riverside County Farm Bureau.



## 2026 Commodity Advisory Committee Schedule

As part of California Farm Bureau's policy development process, we are excited to share the 2026 schedule for Commodity Advisory Committee meetings. Similar to last year, these hybrid gatherings will be held around the state and provide an opportunity for roundtable discussions on issues most important to our members. Participants are encouraged to bring questions, challenging experiences, and ideas across a spectrum of topic areas.

In addition to splitting up the Forestry and Public Lands CACs into two separate events, we are also happy to announce the addition of an Apiary CAC.

### SCHEDULE

#### January

26<sup>th</sup>: Forestry – Stanislaus  
26<sup>th</sup>: Public Lands – Stanislaus  
27<sup>th</sup>: Fruit Trees – Fresno  
27<sup>th</sup>: Apiary – Fresno  
29<sup>th</sup>: Wheat, Feed, & Small Grains  
– Yuba-Sutter

*Learn More Here!*



#### February

3<sup>rd</sup>: Nut Trees – Glenn  
5<sup>th</sup>: Grapes – San Joaquin  
24<sup>th</sup>: Livestock & Dairy – Merced  
26<sup>th</sup>: Field Crops – Monterey

#### March

5<sup>th</sup>: Horticulture - Orange



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## Early Legislative Activity in 2026 Session

Less than one week into the 2026 legislative session, several lawmakers are already updating their bill packages. Notably, state Sen. Kelly Seyarto (R-Murrieta) has introduced two measures of interest. Senate Bill 288 is a gut-and-amend bill that clarifies the interaction between Proposition 19 and the probate process to protect family members from unintended property tax reassessments. The bill ensures that individuals who inherit a family home through probate are not penalized for delays beyond their control by specifying that the one-year occupancy clock does not begin until the probate process is complete.

Seyarto also gutted and amended Senate Bill 523, which would allow insurers to distinguish fire coverage within homeowner insurance policies by separating internal and external fires. The measure differentiates between fires originating on the insured property and fires originating off-site, such as wildfires.

### CDFA Lifts Statewide Ban on California Poultry and Dairy Cattle Exhibitions at Fairs and Shows

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has lifted the ban on exhibitions at fairs and shows. The cooperation from producers to adhere to biosecurity measures and herd immunity acquisition led to this action. CDFA will continue to ensure that biosecurity practices are met. CDFA strives to protect animal and public health.

### Entries are now open for the San Diego County Fair Wine Competition!

This beloved competition uncorks the best of Southern California, celebrating the passion, creativity, and craftsmanship of winemakers from San Diego, Riverside, and Imperial Counties. Open exclusively to local amateur and professional vintners, it highlights our region's diverse terroir and bold innovation—from backyard batches to established wineries.

Produced by the team behind the San Diego County Fair, each wine is judged with care and enthusiasm for what makes

our local wine scene truly special. Top-scoring Gold and Double Gold winners earn the spotlight, poured and celebrated at the Fair's Wine Experience, where guests can swirl, sip, and savor the very best our region has to offer. Because great wine tastes even better when it's local. **Ready to pour your passion into the spotlight? Sign up now and enter your wines today. Entry Deadline is March 27th <https://www.sdfair.com/p/participate/entry/wine-competition>**

### San Diego County Fair's Grown & Gathered Honey Competition

The San Diego County Fair's Grown & Gathered Honey Competition is now open and accepting entries from apiaries across Southern California. Open to both professional and hobbyist beekeepers, the competition features divisions for liquid honey, comb honey, creamed honey, and hive products, giving every producer a chance to shine. This is your opportunity to have your honey judged, celebrated, and showcased at one of the largest county fairs in the nation—earning recognition, ribbons, and serious bragging rights for your work in the hive. **Enter the contest here: <https://www.sdfair.com/p/participate/entry/grown-gathered-honey>**

## Calling All Farmers & Farm-Based Creators!

The Farm2U Market is launching at the 2026 San Diego County Fair, and we're inviting local farms to sell their products in a high-visibility, agriculture-focused marketplace—on consignment. Located inside the popular Farm2U Exhibit, this new market celebrates farm-made and farm-sourced goods, from honey, jams, olive oil, wool, and herbal products to goat-milk skincare, dried florals, and more. Products are sold on consignment, meaning we handle staffing, sales, and daily operations, so you can participate without committing to a full-time booth for all 20 days of the Fair. This is a unique opportunity to share your farm story, reach hundreds of thousands of fairgoers, and turn curious visitors into loyal customers—all while keeping your focus on the land. **Sign up to be a vendor here: <https://sdcf.festivalpro.com/form/cusjCpthvhNfhhbMiygCc/55>**

***“Farm Bureau  
Working for  
You”***

## STATUS OF THE AG PASS PROGRAM AND MANDATORY TRAINING

### Agricultural Lands and Livestock Procedures | 04/01/2026

For information and to apply online, please visit <https://www.riversidesheriff.org/798/Agricultural-Pass-Rural-Crime-Team>.

The mandatory Agricultural Pass training is scheduled for Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at the East County Training Center. The training is a requirement for agricultural owners and their agents to obtain an Agricultural Pass, which provides limited access to agricultural properties within an evacuation zone during a disaster. If you are one of the applicants and have not registered, please do so by registering.

**What:** Mandatory Agricultural Pass training for commercial farmers & ranchers.

**When:** Wednesday, April 1, 2026  
from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Where:** East County Training Center - (760) 393-3510  
73520 Fred Waring Dr.  
Palm Desert, CA, 92260

**Cost:** \$90.00 registration fee

**Registration & Contact Information:** Registration information can be found at the Regional Training Program website <https://regionaltrainingprogram.org/index.php/home/advanced-officer-training/aot-courses/agricultural-lands-and-livestock-procedures-04-01-2026> or by contacting Deputy Pedro Vera at [pvera@riversidesheriff.org](mailto:pvera@riversidesheriff.org).

# Workplace Know Your Rights Act — Senate Bill 294 (SB 294)

Status: Adopted, Regulatory Agency: California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), Effective Date: January 1, 2026

## What Employers Need to Know:

SB 294 requires all employers to provide a stand-alone written notice to every new and current employee outlining their key employment rights, including:

- Workers' compensation
- Immigration inspection rights
- Protection against unfair immigration-related practices
- Union and organizing rights
- Certain constitutional protections

This notice must be given at hiring and annually thereafter.

The California Labor Commissioner has released a template in English and Spanish to assist employers in compliance. <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Know-Your-Rights-Notice/Know-Your-Rights-Notice-English.pdf> and <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Know-Your-Rights-Notice/Know-Your-Rights-Notice-Spanish.pdf>

Additional Requirement: Employers must also allow employees to designate an emergency contact. Notice of this requirement must be provided by March 30, 2026.

## Non-Governmental Organizations:

You may also contact a nonprofit legal or community-based organization for assistance.

For a list of organizations that partner with state agencies to help workers to understand their rights, scan the QR code above, or visit [www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Nonprofit-Legal-and-Community-Based-Organizations-Serving-Workers.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/Nonprofit-Legal-and-Community-Based-Organizations-Serving-Workers.html)



## Tymon brings environmental horticulture to UCCE in Inland Empire

Lydia Tymon has joined UC Cooperative Extension as an environmental horticulture advisor serving San Bernardino and Riverside counties. She will be developing and extending horticultural knowledge in areas including climate-adapted landscape trees and integrated pest management to nursery, landscape and urban forestry professionals and community organizations.

Tymon brings extensive experience in applied pathology and nursery production. She previously held research and leadership roles at Washington State University where her work focused on the management of fungal and bacterial pathogens and pests affecting vegetable and small fruit growers in the state.

Most recently, she was the senior director of Bio R&D at Mast Reforestation, where she worked with nursery growers and foresters on projects focused on seedling survival, drought tolerance, and disease and pest management.

She holds a Ph.D. in plant pathology from Washington State University, as well as a master's degree in forestry and bachelor's degree in botany, both from the University of Washington.

Throughout her career, she has emphasized translating science into practical solutions and she is looking forward to applying that approach to her work in California. Tymon is based at the UCCE office in Riverside and can be reached at [ltymon@ucanr.edu](mailto:ltymon@ucanr.edu).



## 2026 CE Series Schedule Announced Register Today!

California Farm Bureau presents the Farm Bureau Extension: Continuing Education Series. Get ready for another year of high-quality Continuing Education designed to keep California agriculture informed, compliant, and ahead of the curve. Our 2026 CE Webinar Series will feature monthly one-hour virtual sessions (9:30–10:30 a.m.) offering DPR and CCA credits, delivered by leading experts. Subject matter experts will share information immediately applicable to your business operations and advance your professional development. CE certificates will be sent for each webinar attended after the successful completion of a simple quiz on the material.

- February 5 — SPM Implementation from a PCA (1 hr Other)
- March 12 — Wine grape IPM decisions in a challenging market (1 hr Other)
- April 9 — Advances in UAV Agriculture - Exploration of drone technology and its expanding role in modern farming (0.5 L/R & 0.5 Other)
- May 7 — Emerging Pest Management Tools - A deep dive into pheromone-based solutions with specialists from Suterra (1 hr Other)
- June 11 — Nobel's Orchard Essentials (1 hr Other)
- July 9 — Rodent Management Innovations - Integrated approaches to managing ground squirrels from UC experts (0.5 L/R & 0.5 Other)
- August 6 — Regulatory Refreshers - Annual Updates on laws, regulations, and pesticide use around schools and sensitive sites (1 hr L/R)
- September 10 — SPM Program Updates - Insights from the Sustainable Pest Management team (0.5 L/R & 0.5 Other)
- October 8 — Safe Pesticide Use Around Schools (1 hr L/R)
- November 12 — Safe Pesticide Use Around Bees (1 hr L/R)

Each webinar is hosted live via Zoom. Whether you're looking to maintain your certifications or stay informed on the latest in California agriculture, this year's lineup is built to meet your needs.

Cost is free for Farm Bureau members and \$400 for non-members. Join Farm Bureau as an Agricultural member and enjoy CE classes at no cost! Click here to become a member and save!

<https://www.cfbf.com/ag-programs/farm-bureau-extension>

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# Riverside County AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.



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### Why Join Farm Bureau?

- ✓ Standing up for farmers on key policy issues in Sacramento and Washington D.C.
- ✓ Defending private property rights and ensuring you have the tools needed to farm.
- ✓ Cultivating tomorrow's leaders with training and Young Farmers & Ranchers programs.
- ✓ Stay connected with local farmers on topics that matter most to your operation.

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 11, 2026 ~ Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting via Zoom Meeting. Please call our office at (951) 684-6732 for more information.

## Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

### New state laws affecting farms take effect Jan. 1

Several new state laws set to take effect this week will impact agriculture in California. Beginning Jan. 1, the cost of agricultural labor will rise as California's minimum wage increases in 2026 from \$16.50 to \$16.90 an hour. A new state law will affect the way counties in California address abandoned orchards and vineyards, which have increased pest pressures in neighboring farms in recent years as lower prices for winegrapes and tree nuts resulted in a surge in abandoned acreage. A pair of new laws will give California farmers and ranchers more options for disposal of organic waste. A different new state law will provide more opportunities for agritourism operators by reducing regulatory barriers to hosting overnight campers on working lands. And while immigration law is federal, a new California law bans the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers, possibly affecting immigration enforcement operations in the state.

### December storms boost California water supplies

After a dry start to December, a series of recent storms brought rain and snow to much of California, deepening the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada and bolstering water supplies for the state. As of last week, the statewide snowpack had risen to 71% of average, according to an announcement by the California Department of Water Resources. "The dry conditions and warmer temperatures in early December delayed our snow-building season, but the return of storm activity, especially in the last week, helped to build a solid base for this year's snowpack," said Angelique Fabbiani-Leon, hydrometeorologist for DWR. "Thankfully, the recent storms that reached the state were cold enough to provide necessary benefits for the snowpack and our water supply. While California is in a better position now, it is still early in the season and our state's water supply for this year will ultimately depend on a continued cadence of storms throughout winter and early spring."