Riverside County

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 4, April 2026.

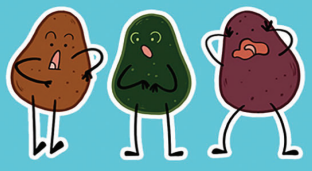
LET'S LEARN ABOUT AVOCADOS!

KEEP 'EM FRESH!

STORE UNRIPE AVOCADOS IN THE FRIDGE UP TO 3 WEEKS

HOW TO RIPEN 'EM

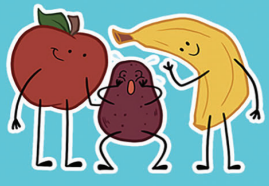
THEY'LL RIPEN AT ROOM TEMPERATURE IN 4 TO 7 DAYS



CALIFORNIA GROWS 90% OF U.S. AVOCADOS

STORE CUT AVOCADO IN THE FRIDGE WITH CUT ONION TO KEEP IT FRESH

KEEP THEM IN A BAG WITH AN APPLE OR BANANA TO RIPEN FASTER



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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Meet Your Board of Directors: Dan Hollingsworth

A Legacy of Leadership and Service

In our continuing series introducing the Riverside County Farm Bureau's (RCFB) Board of Directors, we are delighted to feature a director who brings an extraordinary depth of experience and dedication to agriculture. Please meet Director Dan Hollingsworth, RCFB's longest-serving board member.

Hollingsworth's legacy within the organization is both extensive and impactful. Over the years, he has held numerous leadership roles, including serving as RCFB President and as a member of the California Farm Bureau Board of Directors. He remains actively engaged today, contributing his expertise through various RCFB committees. His service has been recognized with the Riverside County Farm Bureau's prestigious Robert M. Howie Award in 1989 and the California Farm Bureau Federation's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, in 2011.

Dan's story begins in the heart of the Great Depression. Born in Grand Junction, Colorado, he spent his earliest years in a log cabin in Unaweep Canyon, about 40 miles southwest of the city, sharing the home with seven siblings. At the age of four, his family relocated to Pomona, California, making the journey with ten people in a 1928 Nash long before seat belts were standard.

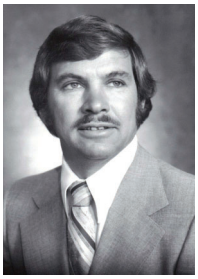
He grew up in the Pomona area, where he lived, worked, and attended school before enrolling at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (Cal Poly). There, he earned a degree in Dairy Science and distinguished himself as a member of the Championship Dairy Judging Team. He was also one of only two senior dairy students to receive the George M. Drumm Award for outstanding achievement.

Dan's involvement with Farm Bureau began early joining at just 19 years old. In 1961, he was elected as a director of the Riverside County Farm Bureau, beginning what would become an extraordinary 65 years of continuous service. Throughout that time, he has served as president and frequently represented Riverside County as a delegate at the annual state convention.

In 1955, during his junior year of college, Dan married his lifelong partner, Joan Clark, his sweetheart, best friend, and steadfast partner in both life and business. Together, they built a remarkable agricultural enterprise.

In 1960, Dan and Joan founded "Dan's Dairy" in San Jacinto, California. What began as a small cash-and-carry dairy quickly grew into a full-service operation, where they milked cows, processed milk, and provided home delivery. Joan played an integral role running the dairy store, assisting with processing, and managing their home while raising their four children.

After selling the original operation in 1969, the couple went on to establish a wholesale dairy operation, milking 600 cows three times a day. Dan also gained recognition as a breeder of registered Holsteins, developing a cow that set four national milk production records, as well as a state Grand Champion. His breeding program extended globally, with bulls whose frozen semen was sold both nationally and internationally. He also served as a director of the California Holstein Association.



In 1986, Dan sold his dairy herd as part of the Dairy Buyout Program. Never one to slow down, he transitioned into new agricultural ventures, including a veal calf operation, a beef feedlot, and eventually a specimen tree nursery in Murrieta, California.

In addition to his agricultural accomplishments, Dan has had a long and active career in public service and politics. In 1970, he spent five years working as a district representative for a U.S. congressman. He also served multiple terms as Chairman of the Riverside County Republican Party and has been a longtime member of the Republican State Central Committee. In 2009, he was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Republican Party of Riverside County. His political involvement has afforded him the opportunity to meet many notable figures, including five U.S. presidents.

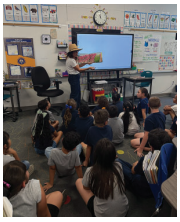
Dan's leadership has extended beyond national borders as well. As a member of Class III of the Agricultural Leadership Program, he helped organize one of the first "People to People" agricultural visits to the People's Republic of China in 1975. In the years that followed, he traveled extensively throughout Asia and later worked with the Russian Ministry of Agriculture in 1993, assisting in efforts to transition toward private farm ownership.

Among his many achievements, one stands out as particularly meaningful to him. During a time of severe milk surpluses in the early 1980s, when the U.S. government was purchasing approximately 10 percent of the nation's milk production, Dan developed the concept of the "Whole Herd Dairy Buyout." His advocacy helped bring this idea into reality as part of the 1985 U.S. Farm Bill, signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. This remains one of his proudest contributions to the industry.

Today, Dan resides in Murrieta with Joan, his wife of 70 years. Together, they enjoy the blessing of having their family close by. A man of deep faith, Dan attends Orchard Church in Temecula and attributes his many accomplishments to his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Through decades of service, innovation, and leadership, Dan Hollingsworth has left an indelible mark on agriculture and the Riverside County Farm Bureau. His story is one of perseverance, vision, and unwavering commitment. He truly is an inspiring legacy for generations to come.

Connecting Agriculture with the Classroom



In celebration of National Agriculture Week, the Coachella Valley Chapter of California Women for Agriculture organized "Read with a Farmer" events at local schools throughout the Coachella Valley. RCFB President Ellen Way, RCFB Director Celeste Alonzo, Mark Tadros of Aziz Farms, and George Tudor of Tudor Ranches received a warm welcome as they visited with and read to elementary school children. The day was filled with storytelling, laughter, and meaningful conversations, all aimed at helping students better understand where their food comes from and the vital role agriculture plays in their everyday lives.

During each visit, farmers shared an age-appropriate book centered on agriculture, food production, and life on the farm, using the stories as a starting point for discussion. Students had the opportunity to ask questions, hear firsthand experiences, and learn how crops are grown, animals are raised, and how food makes its way from the farm to their tables.

Developed by Farm Bureau's California Agriculture in the Classroom program, Read with a Farmer is designed to bridge the gap between agriculture and school children who may not have farm experience. By bringing farmers directly into the classroom, the program fosters understanding, builds trust, and inspires curiosity about agriculture. It also highlights the importance of supporting local farmers and recognizing the essential role they play in sustaining our communities.

PHOTO REQUEST

In celebration of Mother's Day in our May issue and Father's Day in our June issue, we are excited to invite our members to share photos honoring the incredible moms and dads in their lives. Whether it's a candid moment on the farm, a cherished family photo, or a snapshot that captures their dedication and spirit, we would love to help showcase the people who have made a lasting impact on your family and our agricultural community.

We look forward to celebrating and highlighting the families that make our community so strong!

Photos may be submitted by email to bell@riversidecfb.com. Please be sure to include your name, the name of the individual(s) featured in the photo.

California Farm Bureau honors State Treasurer with Champion of Agriculture Award

In recognition of her long record of advocacy for California farmers, ranchers and rural communities, California State Treasurer Fiona Ma has been honored with the Champion of Agriculture Award.

The California Farm Bureau presented the award at the organization's annual legislative action day. The award recognizes dedicated service to agriculture and honors individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to protecting and advancing the needs of California farmers and ranchers.

Nicknamed "The Urban Cowgirl," Ma is a founder of the San Francisco Farm Bureau and serves as its adviser. As the 34th state treasurer and throughout her career in public service, Ma has backed policies that support the Golden State's diverse farming communities.

"Treasurer Ma has shown a long commitment to California agriculture," said Shannon Douglass, president of the California Farm Bureau, which represents more than 23,000 farmers and ranchers statewide. "Her work on behalf of farmers and ranchers across the state is exactly what this award celebrates."

A member of the state Assembly from 2006-2012, Ma authored and supported legislation beneficial to agriculture, including the Eat Local Buy California Grown Act, which prioritizes California-Grown products in state institutional purchasing and expanding market access for small, local and underserved farmers.

She also crafted legislation to create the California Blueberry Commission to help promote California-grown blueberries. In addition, Ma has worked to secure funding for agricultural programs and infrastructure. In her commitment to understanding California's agricultural landscape, she has participated in numerous farm tours, visiting agricultural operations across the state.

"I'm honored to receive the Champion of Agriculture Award," Ma said. "My appreciation for California agriculture began in 2009 when I helped protect the Cow Palace from being sold, an experience that opened my eyes to the vital role our farmers and ranchers play in producing more than 400 agricultural products and feeding our state and nation."

"California Farm Bureau is proud to honor Treasurer Ma with the Champion of Agriculture Award and for her commitment to California farmers, ranchers and rural communities," Douglass said.

California Farm Bureau works to protect family farms and ranches as part of a nationwide network representing more than 5 million Farm Bureau members. Learn more at www.cfbf.com or follow @cafarmbureau on Instagram, LinkedIn, X or Facebook.

AB 2646 Sparks Concern for Agriculture

Assembly Bill 2646 (Krell) would significantly increase agricultural labor costs by raising the H-2A wage floor by about 30 percent in one year, with automatic annual increases thereafter. The bill applies to both H-2A and domestic workers performing similar jobs.

While recent federal adjustments to the Adverse Effect Wage Rate provided some cost relief, AB 2646 would reverse those gains. Critics warn the proposal could reduce available work hours, limit earning opportunities, and increase production costs, ultimately impacting farmers' competitiveness and contributing to higher food prices for consumers.

SB 921 Seeks to Support Farmworkers and Agricultural Employers

Senate Bill 921, introduced by State Senators Shannon Grove (R-Bakersfield) and Melissa Hurtado (D-Bakersfield), aims to increase farmworker earnings while providing financial relief to agricultural employers. Co-sponsored by the California Farm Bureau and the California Association of Winegrape Growers, the bill proposes a payroll tax credit to help offset the cost of paying overtime wages.

The legislation is designed to create a win-win solution, encouraging employers to offer more overtime hours while boosting take-home pay for farm employees, particularly during peak seasons. Under SB 921, the tax credit would cover the difference between an employee's regular pay rate and their overtime rate, reducing the financial burden on employers.

The bill responds to ongoing concerns about reduced work hours and earnings following the state's 2016 agricultural overtime law, which gradually lowered the overtime threshold from 60 hours per week to 40. Research indicates that, since the change, farmworkers have seen fewer hours and decreased income.

By helping employers manage overtime costs, SB 921 aims to restore lost earning opportunities for farmworkers while supporting the sustainability of California's agricultural businesses and rural communities.

AB 2447 Nitrogen Pollution Reduction Act Raises Concerns

Litigious environmental groups have long pushed for water quality policies that restrict agricultural operations, and Assembly Bill (AB) 2447 represents the latest effort. The proposed legislation would significantly change how agricultural water quality is regulated in California by requiring enforceable, statewide limits on nitrogen use and discharge. These limits must meet strict drinking water standards by 2030, regardless of regional differences in crops, soils, or growing conditions.

In addition to these requirements, AB 2447 introduces a series of new compliance measures for farmers. These include mandatory sign-off from certified crop advisors, expanded monitoring and testing, and cross-checking fertilizer use against sales data. The bill also requires detailed, field-level reporting, much of which would be publicly accessible, and allows regulators to increase fees to fund the expanded oversight.

Critics argue that the bill overlooks decades of progress made by farmers, regulators, and scientists in improving water quality. Existing programs, such as those developed under the East San Joaquin Order and the CV-SALTS Nitrate Control Program, could be undermined or rendered obsolete. The proposal also moves forward despite ongoing work by the state's Second Agricultural Expert Panel, which is still evaluating the scientific feasibility of current nitrogen limits.

If enacted, AB 2447 could have far-reaching impacts on farming operations across the state. By setting strict caps on nitrogen application and overall nitrogen balance, the bill would create enforceable limits that could expose farmers to financial penalties for noncompliance.

As the debate continues, many in the agricultural community remain concerned about the potential economic and operational impacts of the legislation, as well as its departure from established, science-based approaches to water quality management.

AB 1585 Strengthens Wine Labeling Standards

Assembly Bill 1585 establishes a clear standard for wines labeled "American" or "United States," requiring that they be made entirely from grapes grown in the United States. This measure brings national labeling practices in line with California's long-standing commitment to transparent, place-based wine labeling. It also builds upon existing law that requires wines labeled "California" to be produced using 100 percent California-grown grapes.

Currently, federal regulations allow wines labeled "American" to include up to 25 percent imported wine, which can create confusion for consumers. AB 1585 addresses this inconsistency by ensuring that labeling more accurately reflects the origin of the product.

The new requirements will apply to wines produced, bottled, labeled, or sold in California, beginning with those bottled on or after July 1, 2027, providing a clear and consistent standard for both producers and consumers.

"Farm Bureau Working for You"

Job Posting for General Manager at the Palo Verde Irrigation District

The Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) in Blythe, California, is seeking a highly qualified General Manager to serve as its chief executive officer and lead the District's operations, strategy, and long-term planning. This critical leadership role reports directly to the Board of Trustees and is responsible for ensuring efficient water delivery, supporting agricultural productivity, and maintaining strong financial and organizational performance.

The General Manager oversees all aspects of District operations, including water distribution, engineering, maintenance, finance, and administration, while ensuring compliance with complex federal, state, and interstate water regulations. A key responsibility includes managing the District's Colorado River water supply and representing PVID in high-level discussions with agencies such as the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and regional and interstate water organizations. The role also involves active participation in negotiations and planning efforts tied to the Colorado River and broader water policy.

In addition to operational oversight, the General Manager is tasked with developing and administering the District's budget, guiding long-term infrastructure and resource planning, and fostering strong relationships with landowners, growers, and stakeholders within the agricultural community. The position requires leadership in personnel management, labor relations, and organizational development, as well as serving as the District's primary public representative.

Ideal candidates will bring a strong background in water resources, agriculture, engineering, or public administration, along with at least five years of progressive management experience. Expertise in western water law, particularly the Law of the Colorado River, and familiarity with irrigation systems and public agency operations are highly desirable. Strong communication, leadership, and negotiation skills are essential to successfully navigate the complex and evolving water landscape.

Compensation is competitive and commensurate with experience, with a comprehensive benefits package. PVID is conducting a confidential recruitment process to identify a dynamic and experienced leader capable of guiding the District into the future. For more information, please contact PVID at 760-922-3144 or email pvid@pvid.org.

Webinar

Growing California's Avocado Oil Industry: Research Insights on Variety, Harvest, and Oil Quality

April 29, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Register at:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdirUjUjOquApt1eAoAWaNBi0ouVd6iV0ZlCTgfNJKYG85pfQ/viewform?usp=publish-editor

A zoom link will be sent within 24 hours of the meeting to all registered participants

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Riverside County Farm Bureau

Brad Scott & daughter Jill
Scott Bros. Dairy

Andy & Cindy Domenigoni
Domenigoni Brothers Ranch

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TOGETHER WE GROW!

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 13, 2026 ~ 5:30 PM, Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting. In person at the CA Date Commission office, Palm Desert and via Zoom Conference. Please call our office at (951) 684-6732 for more information.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

March heat wave affected crop timing for California farmers

The record-breaking heat wave last month wreaked havoc on the timing of some California crops. Celeste Alonzo, who grows vegetables in Riverside County, said the unusual weather brought her sweet corn harvest forward by nearly two weeks. "We're harvesting corn, and we usually don't harvest until around April 10. We thought we'd be harvesting on April 3, which is still ahead of schedule, but we started harvesting in late March. We had early fruit and early flowering," Alonzo told Ag Alert® earlier this month in a field report. Meanwhile, the high temperatures caused problems for Alonzo's bell peppers. "That early flowering and fruiting combined with the heat has been a challenge, especially with the baby plants," she said. "We're making sure they're getting enough water so they don't die in the heat wave. We're just not used to this weather at this time."

Mentorship program grows next-generation farmers

The California Bountiful Foundation, a nonprofit research and education arm of the California Farm Bureau, created the Expanding Our Roots mentorship program to connect beginning farmers and ranchers with experienced producers who share practical, real-world knowledge. Through the program, mentors and mentees work through topics such as production planning, business management, market access, navigating regulations, managing risk, adopting climate-smart practices, and accessing resources and grants. The program continues to grow. To date, 246 farmers from 46 counties have enrolled.

California asparagus growers hang on despite acreage decline

Ever-increasing labor costs in California and free trade that led to a surge in cheaper, duty-free asparagus imports from Mexico have pushed the state's asparagus industry to the brink of extinction. But a handful of growers and packers continue to hang on, with some even expressing a ray of optimism. The state now has probably fewer than 1,000 acres of commercial asparagus, according to industry estimates.