Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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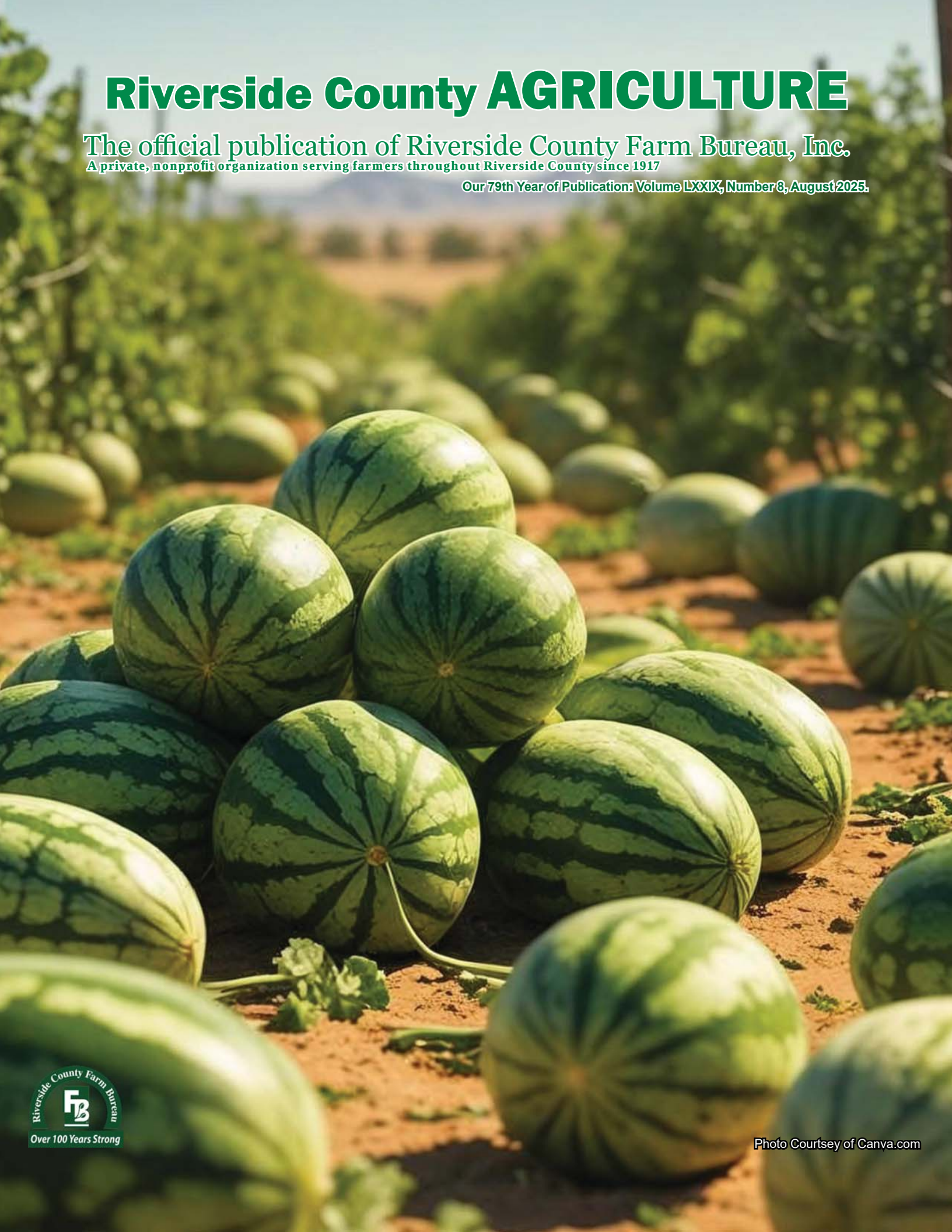

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Welcome New Members

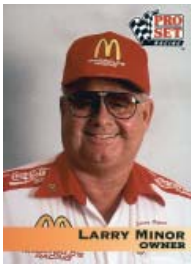
We would like to "Thank You" for becoming part of the Farm Bureau Family.

Remembering Larry Minor

It is with heavy hearts that we have learned of the passing of Larry Minor, a remarkable man whose influence spanned across agriculture and motorsport. Larry passed away on June 25th at the age of 85, leaving behind a legacy that is both profound and enduring.

A Legacy in Agriculture

Larry Minor was a well-known Southern California potato magnate in San Jacinto, CA. His contributions to agriculture were significant and enduring. Larry's dedication to farming and his innovative approaches helped shape the industry, benefiting countless individuals and communities. His passion for agriculture was evident in everything he did, and he was a dear friend to the farming community and Riverside County Farm Bureau having served on the Board from 1993 - 2013.



1992 Pro Set NHRA
#180 Larry Minor

A Force in Motorsports

Beyond his agricultural achievements, Larry Minor made a name for himself in the world of NHRA drag racing. As a successful multi-car team owner and an event-winning Top Fuel driver, Larry's presence in the racing world was formidable. His commitment to excellence and his enthusiasm for the sport inspired many. He was not just a participant but a pioneer who elevated the standards of drag racing.

Remembering a Community Leader

Although it is impossible to encapsulate the entirety of Larry Minor's life on a single page, his leadership qualities and his dedication to both agriculture and racing will always be remembered. Larry was more than just a businessman and a sportsman; he was a leader who cared deeply for his community and worked tirelessly to uplift it.

A Lasting Impact

Larry Minor's passing is a profound loss for all who knew him. His contributions to agriculture and motorsport have left indelible marks on both industries. As we reflect on his life, we are reminded of his passion, his generosity, and his unwavering commitment to excellence.

Larry will be greatly missed, but his legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

In honoring Larry Minor's life, let us celebrate his achievements and remember the indelible impact he made on the world around him. His spirit will live on in the fields he nurtured and the tracks he dominated.

Enhancing Worker Safety in Agriculture, Food, and Fuel Industries: Every STEP Counts

The following information is provided by Nationwide®, your approved insurance and financial services company.

In high-risk industries like agriculture, food processing, and fuel distribution, one misstep can change a life forever. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the agriculture sector alone recorded 453 worker deaths in 2021—a fatality rate nearly five times higher than the average across all industries.[1] While safety standards have improved, even one preventable injury or death is too many.

Why Worker Safety Matters

A strong safety culture protects your most valuable asset—your people. It also reduces costly incidents, improves productivity, and supports long-term business success. But how do you build a culture where safety is second nature?

That's where Every STEP Counts comes in.

Introducing the STEP Framework

Nationwide's Every STEP Counts program is a structured, educational framework designed to help businesses reduce risk and improve safety outcomes. It focuses on four key areas:

S – Selection and Orientation

Hire right, start strong.

This phase helps employers identify candidates with the right skills and experience for the job. It also emphasizes the importance of a robust orientation process to set expectations, reinforce safety protocols, and improve retention.

T – Training and Safety Programs

Keep safety top of mind.

Ongoing training is essential to maintaining a safe workplace. This component provides access to regulatory, general, and industry-specific safety materials to help teams stay informed and compliant.

E – Events and Losses

Respond with care and clarity.

Even with the best precautions, incidents can happen. This phase supports effective reporting, offers innovative solutions during a loss, and promotes prompt, compassionate care for injured workers.

P – Post-Event Understanding and Actions

Learn, recover, and improve.

After an incident, it's critical to analyze what happened and take steps to prevent recurrence. This includes formalizing return-to-work programs and conducting root cause analyses to drive continuous improvement.

Why Every STEP Matters

Understanding when and where risks are most likely to occur is key. Research shows that 40% of worker injury claims happen within the first year on the job.[2] That's why careful selection and onboarding are so important.

Investing in safety also pays off. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, employers can save $4 to $6 for every $1 spent on effective safety programs.[3] The STEP program supports this with sample safety plans and access to additional training resources.

In 2022, private industry employers reported 2.8 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses.[4] Ensuring employees and supervisors know how to respond to an incident is critical that's why the program offers an incident reporting form, toolbox talk on how to handle an incident, and technical bulletin on reporting near-miss incidents.

And when the unexpected happens, STEP offers resources to support recovery. These include a return-to-work sample program and root cause analysis templates to help businesses learn from incidents and improve safety practices.

Take the Next STEP Toward a Safer Workplace

The Every STEP Counts program is more than a checklist—it's a comprehensive risk management solution. From hiring and training to incident response and recovery, the program helps ensure a holistic approach to creating and maintaining a safe workplace. Members are encouraged to take steps toward a safer, more productive work environment – because every step counts.

Learn more at Nationwide.com/AgribusinessWorkerSafety

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References

1. CDC: National Farm Safety and Health Week
2. WCIRB: Employee Tenure and Claim Frequency Study
3. U.S. Department of Energy: Investment in Safety
4. OSHA: Workplace Safety Statistics

Nationwide® is on your side

Riverside County Farmers Concerned After USDA Ends Programs Aimed At Supporting Small Farms

Potential loss of income coupled with tariffs on imported supplies forces some to rethink plans for the future.

by Daniel Eduardo Hernandez, March 24, 2025, The Riverside Record

Mariela Buenrostro's family, which owns and operates Raul and Family Farms in Riverside, has sold produce to food banks and hubs throughout Southern California over the past few years.

The organizations were able to consistently purchase between 700 to 3,000 food items from her family's farm, according to Buenrostro, because of a federal program called the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"It's, honestly, impossible for us to compete with big farms," Buenrostro said. "So it finally gave us an opportunity to sell at large quantities wholesale, but get prices that would be considered decent to us."

However, she said her family would have to look for new forms of stable income after the USDA announced earlier this month that it was ending two federal programs aimed at helping schools and food banks purchase produce from local farmers.

Buenrostro said the program changes enacted by President Donald Trump's administration have added pressure on her family, and farmers throughout the Inland Empire, as they make plans for the upcoming seasons. The move came as Trump has placed tariffs—and subsequently delayed the import taxes—on some of the country's biggest trading partners, which could impact agricultural supply costs and local food prices.

"Down Victoria [Avenue], there [are] a lot of farms there, and I can guarantee you that at least half of those farmers are being affected by the federal freeze," Buenrostro said.

The cut initially included funds that were already set to be dispersed to food banks across the nation. A USDA spokesperson told Politico that the agency notified states it would unfreeze existing food bank fund agreements but would end all future funding for the program.

However, according to a blog post by the California Association of Food Banks, even the temporary pause caused catastrophic damage statewide to organizations that relied on the money.

"The two-week hiatus resulted in nearly one million dollars lost in sales for farmers, while program operators faced potential layoffs," the organization wrote.

Scott Berndt, a coordinator who's worked with several Riverside-based agricultural organizations, said food bank funds are expected to continue until mid-2026. The following disbursement, which would provide funding until 2028, was axed.

"Some farmers were making long-term plans, like possibly renting some more land and growing more and buying more equipment," Berndt said. "But I think they put that on hold now."

Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Calif.), in a March 14 release, said the cancellation of the programs for schools and food banks would put more than $118 million in food purchases at risk throughout the rest of this year.

A California Department of Education spokesperson in an email told The Riverside Record that the USDA had sent notification on March 7 that it would be terminating an agreement for an upcoming Local Food for Schools and Child Care grant. They added that the funds had not yet been received by the state's education department nor had any local programs received the money.

In the Coachella Valley, farmers have also increasingly become concerned with the impact of potential tariffs, according to Riverside County Farm Bureau President Ellen Way, who said that any tax on imported goods could impact crops in vastly different ways.

"We need some of those farming amendments," Way said. "Some fertilizers and different things that come from foreign lands that we need to bring into this country because we don't have it here."

Berndt said that some smaller farmers in the region hoped the implementation of tariffs on Mexican goods would make it easier to compete against their much cheaper produce, allowing them to plant produce like green beans and tomatillos — crops that have been ignored for years — and sell them at fairer prices.

But Berndt said he's advised growers to ignore Trump's tariff talks as they prepare their future harvests.

"It's very hard for local farmers to meet the import price," Buenrostro said. "I thought the tariffs would have brought more consumers to look for their local farmers, but we haven't seen much change."

California Minimum Wage Rises to $16.90 on Jan. 1

Bryan Little, Farm Employers Labor Service

California Department of Finance Director Joe Stepenshaw released on Aug. 1 his annual inflation adjustment for the California minimum wage. Stepenshaw found the United States Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, or U.S. CPI-W, increased 2.49 percent in the 12-month period from July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2024, resulting in a new minimum wage of $16.90 as Jan. 1, 2026.

The state minimum wage has increased every year for employers of all sizes since 2017 in accordance with legislation signed into law by former Gov. Jerry Brown. That law increased the minimum wage to $15. Employers with 26 or more employees reached this cap in January 2022; employers with fewer than 26 employees reached the $15 cap in 2023.

However, a provision in that law requires the minimum wage to be adjusted annually by the lesser of 3.5% (rounded to the nearest 10 cents) or the change in the U.S. CPI-W. All California employers of every size began paying a minimum wage of $16.50 beginning Jan. 1, 2025.

The increase will boost the minimum-salary requirement for exempt executive, administrative and professional employees. In 2026, the minimum weekly salary will be $1,352 (annual equivalent $70,304; monthly equivalent $5,859).

Expect the California Department of Industrial Relations to release a revised minimum wage regulation, also known as the Minimum Wage Order, late in 2025 or early in 2026.

SMALLEST EMPLOYERS WITHOUT A RETIREMENT PLAN MUST REGISTER FOR CALSAVERS BY DEC. 31

CalSavers is a state-run retirement saving program for employees in California whose private-sector employer does not offer them a qualified retirement plan, such as a 401(k) plan, Simplified Employee Pension (SEP) plan, SIMPLE IRA plan, or payroll deduction IRA. The three-year phased rollout of the CalSavers program has ended. An employer with five or more employees but without a qualified retirement plan must have registered for CalSavers by June 30, 2022. An employer with one to four employees (at least one of whom is age 18) but without a qualified retirement plan must register for CalSavers by Dec. 31, 2025. For details, see CalSavers frequently asked questions.

California Farm Bureau
2025 Photo Contest

ENTER YOUR PHOTO!
Open now through September 22

Submit photos of fresh food, rural scenery, animals, crops, harvests, life, work, family or any inspiring photo captured on the farm or ranch.

Enter up to **five** high-resolution photos for the general contest and **one** photo for the People's Choice category at cfbf.com/photocontest.

Prizes
1st place $1,000
2nd place $500
3rd place $250
People's Choice $100

Budding Artists
(ages 13 & younger)
1st place $250
2nd place $100

Voting for the People's Choice category will be open from Sept. 24–30.

The contest is open to amateur photographers who are Farm Bureau members. Participants who are not Farm Bureau members can visit **cfbf.com/join** to learn about becoming a member. Go to **cfbf.com/photocontest** for contest rules.

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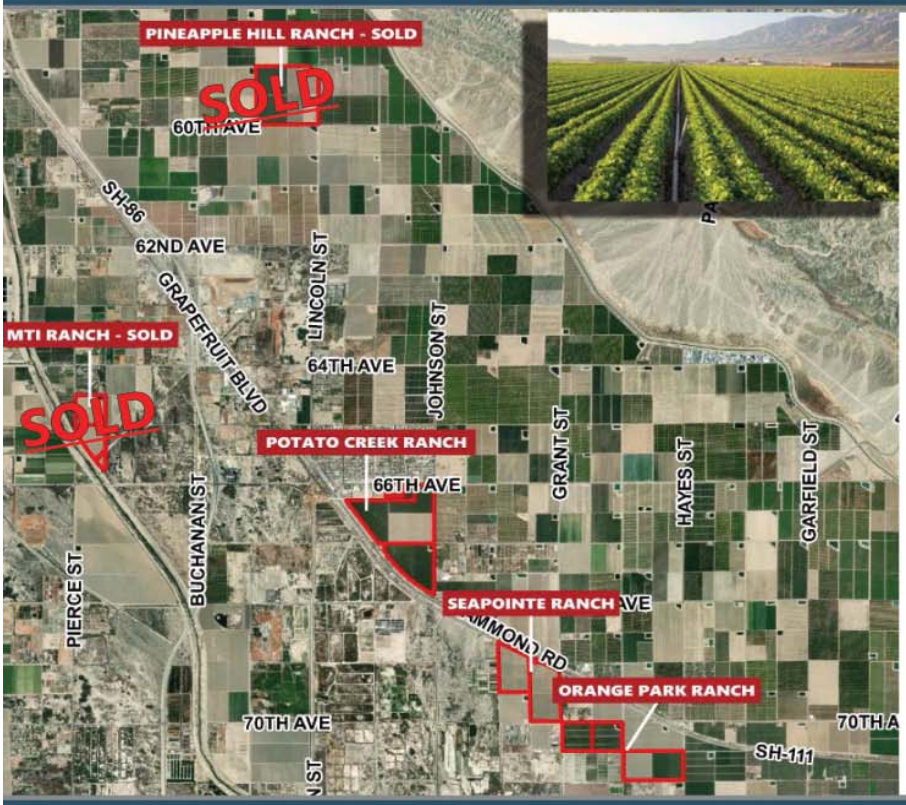

RANCH INFO

- **MTI Ranch $1,353,420 ($18,000/AC)** SOLD
  75.19 AC Pierce St & 65th Ave, Thermal
- **Potato Creek Ranch $5,326,200 ($22,000/AC)**
  242.10 AC SWC Johnson St & 66th Ave, Mecca
- **Seapointe Ranch $2,645,800 ($20,000/AC)**
  132.29 AC NWC Hwy 111 & Grant St, Mecca
- **Orange Park Ranch $3,111,800 ($20,000/AC)**
  155.59 AC Colfax St & 70th Ave, North Shore
- **Pineapple Hill Ranch** SOLD
  157.69 AC NWC Lincoln St & 60th Ave, Thermal
- Ranches are leased until June 30, 2026. Seller may terminate the leases in the event of a sale.

COACHELLA VALLEY

VICINITY MAP

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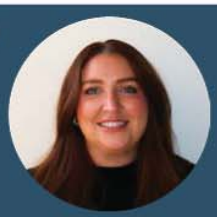

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AGRICULTURE

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California Foundation for Ag in the Classroom

Annual Conference

September 26-28, 2025

Registration is Open: Last Day to register is September 10

Sacramento, CA

The conference is designed for Pre K-12 grade educators, administrators, and volunteers to come together to learn and share how to incorporate food and fiber into all curricular areas. From hands-on learning and workshops to engaging guest speakers and field trips, this event is an incredible way to learn how to bring agriculture education into the classroom.

https://learnaboutag.org/programs/conference/

New resource aims to help aging farmers plan for succession

Nearly half of California farmers are 65 and older, and many have yet to plan for what happens to their farms when they retire. For those without family heirs, that decision can be especially complex. A new set of resources from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, aims to help those producers explore options for succession so that farmland can stay in production and continue supporting local communities. *https://cap.unl.edu/news/navigating-farm-succession-without-family-heir-embracing-change-and-coping-loss/*

"Farm Bureau Working for You"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 10, 2025 ~ 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

Low prices, other woes put squeeze on farm economy

California farmers continue to face significant economic challenges as they contend with lower commodity prices and soaring production costs that have been made worse by inflation, pest control restrictions, water constraints, rising labor costs, regulatory burdens, trade disruptions, and other financial headwinds. That was the central message from the State Board of Food and Agriculture meeting, where industry leaders pointed to current and trending conditions that have impacted farm profitability and threaten the long-term viability of some farms.

USDA fields questions about plan to slash staff, facilities

As the U.S. Department of Agriculture moves forward with its reorganization, questions remain about how the changes will affect farmers. USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden responded to concerns and fielded questions about the reorganization during a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry. Sen. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., a member of the committee, asked why a USDA hub was not placed in California, the No. 1 agriculture-producing state. In response, Vaden said the proposed hub in Utah is closer to California than Washington, D.C., and said that hub locations were chosen to lower the cost of living for federal employees.