



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 8, August 2026.



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June 13, 1935 - July 26, 2026

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(USPS 466-900) Published monthly by Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc., a non-profit organization serving farmers and ranchers at P.O. BOX 670, SAN JACINTO, CA 92581, Telephone 951/684-6732. Subscriptions: \$1 per year of membership dues. Periodicals postage paid at Riverside, California 92507, under act of March 3, 1887. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RIVERSIDE COUNTY FARM BUREAU, P.O. BOX 670, SAN JACINTO, CA 92581. For advertising information, Telephone (951) 684-6732 ~ Printed by Layton Printing, La Verne, California.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

President's Message

On July 26th, longtime and beloved Riverside County Farm Bureau board member Dan Hollingsworth was called home to be with the Lord. We give thanks for Dan's tremendous leadership, faithful service, and lasting contributions to Riverside County Farm Bureau and to the Riverside County community he loved so dearly. Dan was one of the most patriotic and America loving people I have ever known. Throughout his life Dan was engaged in local politics, led discussions on difficult issues, and was a tireless advocate for agriculture.

While Dan's passing is a time of great sadness, let's choose to celebrate his long and fruitful life that was well lived. There is so much to celebrate about Dan's life; he married the love of his life Joan and they shared 70 years together, they have a large, beautiful family, and he committed his life to service and faith. These are goals set by many and achieved by few. Dan set an example for all of us and his legacy will live on in all we do at Farm Bureau.

We hope you will join us in celebrating Dan on August 21st. If you are unable to attend the service, please keep Dan and his family in your prayers. May the Hollingsworth Family find comfort in God's peace, strength in cherished memories, and hope in the promise of eternal life.



Your President,
Ellen Way

Riverside County Sheriff's Rural Crime Team Disbanded

The Riverside County Farm Bureau recently learned that the Riverside County Sheriff's Rural Crime Team (RCT) has been disbanded as part of broader reductions to specialized Sheriff's Department task forces. This decision is deeply concerning for Riverside County's agricultural and rural communities.

The RCT provided specialized law enforcement for crimes affecting agriculture, including equipment and commodity theft, livestock and irrigation theft, fuel theft, vandalism, trespassing, and illegal dumping. Deputies developed valuable knowledge of agricultural operations and strong relationships with local farmers and ranchers.

The Rural Crime Team is not a luxury, it is an essential public safety resource.

Protecting a \$1.8 Billion Industry

Riverside County agriculture generated approximately \$1.768 billion in 2024, an increase of \$228 million from the previous year. With more than 70 commodities produced throughout the county, agriculture is a vital part of our local economy.

The RCFB Board of Directors strongly opposes the elimination of the RCT and is advocating for its restoration. We have contacted county leaders to express our concerns and discuss the impact on agriculture and rural communities.

We Need Your Help

We encourage farmers, ranchers, agricultural businesses, and rural residents to contact Sheriff Chad Bianco and their County Supervisor and ask them to:

- Restore the Rural Crime Team
- Protect law enforcement resources for rural communities
- Support specialized enforcement for agricultural crime

**Protecting agriculture is protecting Riverside County
Its economy, communities, and future.**

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Remembering RCFB Director Daniel “Dan” Hollingsworth

A Lifetime Dedicated to Agriculture, Community and Service

Riverside County agriculture lost one of its most dedicated advocates with the passing of Daniel “Dan” Hollingsworth on July 26, 2026, at the age of 91. Dan’s life was woven into the history of Riverside County Farm Bureau, he served as a director for an extraordinary 66 years, including as Farm Bureau President from 1976 through 1978, providing generations of farmers and ranchers with leadership, perspective, and an unwavering commitment to agriculture. Dan’s story, however, was about much more than the positions he held. It was a life built around family, agriculture, public service, and helping others.



Dan graduated from Cal Poly in 1957 with a degree in Dairy Science and soon put that education to work alongside his wife, Joan. Early in their marriage, the couple took a leap of faith and started Dan’s Dairy, a small cash-n-carry dairy on Ramona Boulevard in San Jacinto. They began with approximately 50 cows, a mortgage and three young children. Dan milked and fed the cows while also operating a home milk-delivery route through Idyllwild and surrounding communities. During construction of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, helicopters would even land to pick up milk for crews working on the mountain. Joan worked alongside him, helping bottle milk, serving customers, and caring for their growing family.

One of the most meaningful stories from those years involved families living at the nearby Soboba Indian Reservation. Ernie Salgado fondly remembers how Dan and Joan went door to door letting families know fresh milk could be delivered directly to their homes. They extended credit when families needed it and treated those they served with kindness, dignity, and respect. Years later, that kindness was still remembered, it is a simple story, but one that says a great deal about the way Dan and Joan lived their lives.

Dan understood early that farming also meant becoming involved in the decisions affecting agriculture. In addition to his decades with Riverside County Farm Bureau, he served as a California Farm Bureau Federation Region II director and delegate and participated in California Agricultural Leadership Class III.

Dan also believed in learning about agriculture beyond his own community. His agricultural exchanges and study tours took him throughout Asia and to the Soviet Union and Russia, broadening his perspective on the common challenges shared by farmers around the world. His interest in agricultural policy eventually took him directly into public service. Dan served as a district representative for Congressman Victor Veysey and worked to make sure policymakers understood agriculture firsthand. He hosted staff members from the U.S. Senate and House Agriculture Committees for visits focused on the dairy industry, believing that those making agricultural policy needed to see farms and hear directly from producers.

One of Dan’s most significant legislative contributions came during a difficult period for the nation’s dairy industry. He helped develop and authored the original concept for what became the Dairy Termination Program, or Whole Herd Dairy Buyout Program, which was ultimately incorporated into the 1985 Farm Bill signed by President Ronald Reagan. It was a remarkable example of a Riverside County farmer helping shape agricultural policy at the national level. Dan continued advocating for agriculture before local, state and federal decision-makers throughout his life, helping agriculture navigate increasingly complex water-quality and regulatory issues.

His service was recognized at both the county and state levels. In 1989, Riverside County Farm Bureau presented Dan with the Robert “Bob” Howie Award for Outstanding Service to Riverside County Agriculture. In 2011, the California Farm Bureau Federation presented him with its Distinguished Service Award, recognizing decades of exceptional service to Farm Bureau and California agriculture. And even after receiving those honors, Dan continued to serve.

Through every chapter, Joan was beside him. Dan and Joan married in 1955 at First Baptist Church in Pomona and shared more than 70 years together. From Dan’s Dairy to agricultural organizations, public service, international travel and eventually JoDan Farms, the wholesale tree nursery they began operating in Murrieta in 1989, agriculture was very much a family endeavor. Together they raised four children, Bettina, Marcella, Leonard, and Dennis, they watched their family grow to include seventeen grandchildren and step-grandchildren, and twenty-seven great-grandchildren and step-great grandchildren.

An Irreplaceable Part of Farm Bureau

It is difficult to capture 66 years of Farm Bureau service in a few paragraphs. Dan watched Riverside County agriculture change dramatically over those decades. Water, labor, land use, environmental regulation, and government policy became increasingly complex, but through it all, Dan kept showing up. He attended meetings, made calls, traveled to Sacramento and Washington, talked with elected officials, welcomed policymakers onto farms, and shared his **CONT. ON PAGE 4.....**

.....**CONT. FROM PAGE 3.** knowledge with younger agricultural leaders. Around the Farm Bureau board table, Dan carried decades of institutional knowledge that simply cannot be replaced.

On behalf of the Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, staff, members, and agricultural community, we extend our deepest condolences to Joan and the entire Hollingsworth family, along with our sincere gratitude.

Thank you, Dan, for a lifetime of showing up for agriculture. Riverside County Farm Bureau and Riverside County agriculture are stronger because you were part of them.

Remembering Charles “Chuck” Hills A Dedicated Voice for Agriculture

The agricultural community has lost another longtime friend and advocate with the passing of Charles “Chuck” Hills, on August 5, 2026, he was a Redlands citrus grower and dedicated leader of the San Bernardino County Farm Bureau.

A graduate of Fresno State, Chuck devoted much of his life to agriculture and to preserving the citrus industry that has long been an important part of Redlands and San Bernardino County. Through his work with Larry Jacinto Farming and H&H Citrus, Chuck was closely involved in the management and care of



local citrus groves, including some of the historic groves that remain an important part of Redlands’ agricultural heritage.

Chuck understood both the traditions of citrus farming and the challenges facing modern agriculture. Over the years, he worked alongside growers, researchers and agricultural organizations on issues affecting the citrus industry, including the threat of the Asian citrus psyllid and Huanglongbing, or citrus greening disease. He was a strong advocate for protecting commercial citrus operations and for addressing abandoned groves that could pose a risk to neighboring producers.

That same commitment carried into his many years of service with the San Bernardino County Farm Bureau, where Chuck served as a director and longtime president. In that role, he represented farmers and ranchers throughout the county and worked to ensure agriculture had a voice as the region continued to grow and change.

Perhaps just as important as his leadership was the way Chuck treated the people around him. If someone had a question, needed advice about a grove he was ready to help. He generously shared his knowledge and experience, Chuck’s commitment to agriculture went well beyond his own groves. He cared deeply about the future of farming, the preservation of local agriculture and the people who make their living from the land.

The Riverside County Farm Bureau extends its sincere condolences to Chuck’s family, friends, and colleagues at the San Bernardino County Farm Bureau. His many years of leadership and service to Southern California agriculture will be remembered and greatly missed.



California’s Regulatory Barriers Facing Agriculture Technology Adoption

Outdated Regulations Meet Modern Technology

From startups in the Central Valley to research institutions along the coast, innovators are developing tools that make farming more efficient, sustainable, and resilient. Precision agriculture allows farmers and ranchers to use data to manage inputs with accuracy—reducing waste, protecting natural resources, and improving profitability. These advancements ensure that small and mid-sized family farms can remain competitive in a global marketplace.

The state is investing heavily in its workforce to support this transformation. Through community colleges and technical programs, California is training farmworkers to operate, manage, and repair automated systems and vehicles. These programs prepare workers for higher-skill, higher-wage jobs, helping them grow alongside the technology that is reshaping the industry.

California’s agriculture covers more than 400 commodities, including:



¾ of the fruits and nuts consumed in the U.S.



½ of the vegetables consumed in the U.S.

76,400 California farms and ranches generate \$100 billion in economic activity.



⚠️ Outdated Rules, Missed Opportunities

California’s Vehicle Code (Section 36000) and Workplace Safety Regulation (§3441) were written before autonomous equipment existed. Implements of husbandry like tractors, sprayers, and haulers have evolved—but regulations haven’t.

§3441 still requires an operator “stationed at the vehicular controls,” effectively banning autonomous equipment in fields. This misalignment blocks field testing and innovation, limits safety advancements and labor-saving efficiencies and prevents real-world data collection on autonomous equipment safety.

Farm Bureau’s Solution

The California Farm Bureau advocates modernizing California’s outdated regulations to allow easier access to and deployment of autonomous agricultural equipment. Keeping the state’s workplace safety standards current and capable of meeting the opportunities afforded by technology opens up more innovation while ensuring California’s workers have needed skills for success in a modern workplace.

Autonomous tractors, sprayers, weeders, and transporters are helping farmers:



- reduce risk and improve efficiency
- remove human operators, and improve worker health and safety
- deliver materials directly to harvest site
- transport full cartons to packing areas, minimizing heavy lifting

Modernizing these rules for California ensures:



- agriculture remains globally competitive
- empowers a skilled workforce
- supports the state’s broader goals for sustainability and economic growth
- the state stays the lead in the nation in responsible agricultural innovation



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U.S. Supreme Court Denies Review of Case Seeking to Overturn the Clean Water Act's Irrigated Agriculture Exemption

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to the Grassland Bypass Project, letting stand a major ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The high court's decision affirms that agricultural irrigation projects are exempt from Clean Water Act permitting requirements, even if return flows contain incidental, nonagricultural pollutants mixed from nonpoint sources.

The Ninth Circuit decision, issued on Sept. 5, 2025, upheld the dismissal of a lawsuit alleging that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority's operation of the Grassland Bypass Project and the San Luis Drain violated the Clean Water Act. Environmental groups alleged that the project could not use the Clean Water Act's irrigated agricultural exemption from federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems permits because the irrigation return flows mixed with other flows. The Ninth Circuit upheld the irrigated agricultural exemption, clarifying that minor commingling with nonpoint sources such as stormwater runoff, dust or groundwater seepage does not negate the exemption. California Farm Bureau, along with other agricultural groups, filed an amicus brief supporting the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority and Grassland Water District, pointing out that the lawsuit conflicts with the congressional intent of the Clean Water Act and threatened irrigated agriculture in the West. California Farm Bureau Legal has been following this case since 2011.

Senate Agriculture Committee Fails to Advance Farm Bill

The Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry held a highly anticipated markup of the Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2026, commonly known as the farm bill. Despite hopes for a bipartisan agreement, the committee failed to advance the bill in a 10-11 party-line vote. Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky was unable to participate.

The committee adopted several amendments early in the markup, but partisan divisions became more apparent as the meeting continued. Democrats sought a two-year delay in state cost-sharing requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which are scheduled to begin next year. The bill also included a provision allowing year-round sales of E15 fuel, but it was not enough to secure additional support.

The committee recessed without advancing the bill, allowing members to resume consideration after the August recess, September at the earliest. California Farm Bureau joined numerous agricultural organizations in a letter urging lawmakers to reach a bipartisan agreement and continue moving the farm bill forward.

HLB Quarantine Expands in San Diego County; Impacts for Growers

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has expanded the Huanglongbing (HLB) quarantine boundary in San Diego County following the confirmation of one HLB-positive residential citrus tree in Fallbrook. CDFA is also expanding the Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) Bulk Citrus Regional Quarantine Zone 6 to reflect the HLB quarantine boundary expansion. A map of the expanded boundary can be found on CDFA's website [here](#).

The area under the expanded quarantine boundary is comprised of over 220 businesses that may be affected by the expansion, including over 80 growers and 40 commercial nurseries.



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California Reduces Dependency on Colorado River; Severe Drought Continues

Water is critical to America's food supply. The Coachella and Palo Verde valley's of Riverside County are nearly year-round contributors to the fruit and vegetable production that feed people here and around the world. The Colorado River not only irrigates our eastern Riverside County farms it also provides water for more than 40 million people and fuels hydropower resources in seven states. It serves as a vital resource for 30 tribes and two Mexican states, sustaining 5.5 million acres of farmland and agricultural communities throughout the West, while also supporting critical ecosystems and protecting endangered species.

On July 31, the Department of the Interior, (Reclamation) released its final Environmental Impact Statement for future use of Colorado River water. Due to a **20 year drought** on the River, the report shows the obvious need for California (and all users) to continue to reduce dependency on the River. Lower Basin States (CA, AZ, NV) proposed an Operational Plan curtailing CA use by 440,000 AF per year plus an additional 300,000 AF over water years 2027 and 2028. CA receives 4.4 MAF per year, so this combined amount is a reduction of 13.2%. CA has already reduced its draw on the Colorado River from 4.4 MAF to 3.7 MAF in 2023 (-16%) 3.9 MAF in 2024 (-12%), and 3.6 MAF in 2025 (-18%).

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) and valley farmers have participated in conservation programs contributing to prior year savings. Coachella Canal water users have not been impacted by direct reductions while some growers are participating in voluntary, compensated, temporary conservation programs. Well over 100,000 AF over the last few years in combined farmer conservation and groundwater recharge curtailment.

CVWD has extended and committed to 90,000 AF over the next 2 years in system conservation programs utilizing Federal Inflation Reduction Act dollars which will reduce groundwater recharge by 70,000 AF and to on farm conservation of 20,000 AF.

In addition to providing water to grow food, the Coachella Valley has also been putting Colorado River water into the underground aquifer to sustain a healthy groundwater supply. Through responsible water management by CVWD, desert municipalities, farmers, golf courses, and other valley water districts, the Groundwater Aquifer remains healthy and is recognized as sustainable under the state's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requirements.

Coachella Valley Growers have been responsible users of water supplies for decades, actively investing their own resources into water-use efficiency technology, including drip irrigation, micro sprinklers, land leveling, reservoir construction, tile line installations, composting, plastic mulching on planting beds, evapotranspiration science-based water scheduling, soil moisture monitoring, and crop selection, demonstrating their dedication to effective water conservation and proactive resource management.

Farmers know water is a finite resource and something we can't afford to waste. The ongoing negotiations over Colorado River water cuts are vital for national security and highlight the need for unified efforts among water users and policymakers.

Oriental Fruit Fly Treatments in Menifee

CDFA confirmed two Oriental fruit flies in Menifee between July 14 and July 20, 2026, and has determined that an infestation exists. Due to the threat to California agriculture and the environment, CDFA will conduct an emergency eradication program through November 24, 2026.

Treatment will primarily involve chemical control, with host fruit removal used when breeding populations are identified. Residents and growers in the affected area should follow treatment guidance and remain alert for additional detections. For treatment notices and maps, visit www.rivcoawm.org.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

There will be no Board of Directors meeting in July or August. The next Board meeting will be held 3:30PM on Wednesday, September 9, 2026 at the Date Commission Office, 39205 Leopard Street Suite E, Palm Desert.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

Latest campaign positions walnuts as fresh produce

To strengthen the market position of walnuts, the California Walnut Board and Commission has been running a campaign this summer to encourage shoppers to think of the tree nut as more than just a baking ingredient and to get retailers to place walnuts in the fresh produce section. Such a placement would allow walnuts to be marketed as a healthy snack and versatile food ingredient. The effort extends last year's campaign to position walnuts as a lifestyle brand for millennials and Gen-Z consumers who increasingly turn to natural foods for better health. "The younger generation is much more educated about food as medicine, and they understand that nuts play an important part of not only breakfast, lunch and dinner but also snacking," said Robert Verloop, the walnut board and commission's executive director and CEO.

State's farmers seek fairness in trade talks with Canada

California farm groups are closely watching the trade relationship between the U.S. and Canada-the state's top export market for its agricultural products-as negotiations of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement continue. The Trump administration last month announced new tariffs on some Canadian goods and chose not to automatically extend the trade pact, leading to annual negotiations. California Farm Bureau hosted a meeting last week with Canadian officials and various agricultural commodity groups to discuss trade concerns and ways to strengthen cooperation. One major issue is Canada's ban on U.S. alcohol sales, which caused California wine exports to Canada to drop sharply. The decline has made conditions more difficult for California's struggling wine sector, which is already facing lower global demand and an oversupply of grapes. Matthew Viohl, director of federal policy advocacy for the California Farm Bureau, said California farmers want to ensure trading partners follow labor and environmental standards outlined in trade agreements. "What we really stress when it comes to trade is stability and fairness," he said.

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