

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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Photos taken by Jill Scott.

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Welcome New Members

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

2023 Howie Award Recipient

**Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer
Ruben Arroyo**



Ruben Arroyo is from the small agricultural town of Lindsay in Tulare County, Ca. His first true Ag job other than picking fruit with his family was working at the local tomato packing shed as the "automatic dumper", heaving tomato lugs onto the conveyor belt. Later, he was promoted to working in the citrus groves spraying and pulling irrigation hoses. After graduating from Lindsay High, he moved to the big city of Fresno to attend California State University of Fresno and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business.

His first introduction to working for the county of Fresno involved a seasonal summer job writing citations for cantaloupe thieves. He soon became full time as an Agricultural Biologist, after 5 years he took a job as Deputy Agricultural Commissioner in Kings County. After 10 years in Kings County, he became the Agricultural Commissioner of Kern County for 9 years, and then his journey brought him to Riverside County where he was appointed the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer in 2017.

Ruben is the 9th Ag Commissioner for Riverside County; he feels that a successful Commissioner is defined first by competence but equally important is having a strong relationship with the agricultural community. He believes that effective communication and educational outreach is the foundation of his regulatory position.

Commissioner Arroyo has demonstrated his commitment and dedication to serving the agricultural community, not just through his creations or development of agricultural programs, but his effectiveness in advocating for the agricultural industry.

The Robert M. Howie Award

The Robert M. Howie Award is an annual award given by the Riverside County Farm Bureau to recognize outstanding service and dedication to Riverside County agriculture. With the first presentation in 1983, the Riverside County Farm Bureau created this award to honor Robert M. Howie, who retired in 1982 after serving 28 years as the County Agricultural Commissioner. The Riverside County Farm Bureau presents this award to remind our industry each year of the dedication that Bob Howie demonstrated also to recognize and encourage that kind of dedication in other people.



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Western Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge – Current Status

By Bruce Colbert, Executive Director, Property Owners Association of Riverside County

The current status of the proposed Western Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge was discussed at the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) Stakeholders Committee meeting on September 20, 2023.

Legislation to authorize the establishment of the proposed Western Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge died on January 3, 2023, at the end of the 117th Congress. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla had jointly introduced S. 4669 – “Western Riverside National Wildlife Refuge Act,” on July 28, 2022. Congressman Ken Calvert had introduced H.R. 972 – “Wildlife Refuge Conservation and Recreation for the Community Act,” on February 11, 2021.

RCA staff commented that they had fulfilled current requests regarding future legislation by Senators Feinstein and Padilla and Congressman Calvert, by providing Guiding Concepts reflecting stakeholder feedback, together with a draft iteration of a Potential Refuge Acquisition Boundary Map encompassing 87,037 acres southeast of Diamond Valley Lake and northwest of Lake Riverside, within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) 300,000-acre MSHCP Criteria Area. These provide a framework for future legislation. RCA staff is only monitoring at this time.

Concerns

Concerns regarding the preparation of future bills include no consensus among stakeholders for future language, no funding, and no process to address the inholding parcels created by the MSHCP in the Refuge.

No Consensus Among Stakeholders

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) will not commit to give assurances about the regulatory requirements that would apply on lands within the Potential Refuge Acquisition Boundary. This lack of assurances does little to alleviate the concerns of certain stakeholders and continues the impasse on a stakeholder consensus regarding bill language.

Stakeholders are concerned that a Refuge acquisition boundary line around properties would put a cloud on these properties, diminishing the land values of these properties. The FWS wants legislation to contain a map to provide more specificity of the area to be managed, yet FWS will not commit to give assurances to property owners about the regulatory requirements that would apply on these lands.

The authors of future legislation will not accept the amended language requested by six impacted water districts. For example, the six water districts had requested that Senator Feinstein amend the language of S. 4669 to prevent the impact on “existing water supply agreements (or obligations and rights arising therefrom); acquisition or exercise of water rights; the diversion, conveyance, impoundment, recharge, treatment, or storage of water, for water supply (including recycled water), groundwater, wastewater, and flood risk management or for any other related beneficial uses.”

Refuges can acquire water rights needed for Refuge purposes. For example, the mandates of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, Refuge Water Supply Program are to acquire or secure the water supply necessary to meet the delivery requirements of the refuges. Just as the refuges compete with Central Valley agriculture for water, so the Refuge may begin to compete with Riverside County agriculture for water rights/use, which could lead to controversy during a drought. In the Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, the FWS prevented property owners from continuing access to priority rights to water. The Refuge may also compete with public water suppliers, such as the six water districts, impacting the access, operations, and water rights of the water districts, and reducing water available for urban and agricultural uses. In addition, the Indian tribes have sovereignty concerns that have not been addressed regarding the Refuge.

No Funding

Presently, there is no federal appropriation for a National Wildlife Refuge. The FWS does not want the management nightmare of being given the responsibility for managing a wildlife refuge without being given the funding for management of the refuge.

Without a federal appropriation for acquisition of Refuge lands, the proposed National Wildlife Refuge cannot provide a new federal funding opportunity for the MSHCP. No funding was appropriate for acquisition of lands or water in the previously introduced legislation. Refuges compete for funding.

The RCA Board of Directors approved a 15-year extension of the acquisition period at its December 2020 board meeting. The RCA has a total of 24 years to acquire the land, including the 15-year extension.

The Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge has received \$21.5 million over a 10-year period, which is about \$2 million per year. The San Diego National Wildlife Refuge receives about \$2 million per year in federal funding. A Refuge would provide about \$48 million over the 24-year acquisition period [$\$2 \text{ million/year} \times 24 \text{ years} = \48 million]. There is no guarantee of receiving this \$48 million in federal Refuge funding.

This level of funding is inadequate for the magnitude required by the Refuge. For example, the land value of the 96,000 acres remaining to be acquired over 24 years as part of the MSHCP is \$1.3 billion as of 2017, according to the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Nexus Fee Study, October 2020, page 35. The federal share of the \$1.3 billion total land value that must be acquired within 24 years is \$245 million (Nexus Fee Study, pp. 18, 20-24) [$1/2 \times 34,392 \text{ acres} / 91,180 \text{ acres} \times \$1,297,055,399$

CONT. ON PAGE 5.....

RIVERSIDE COUNTY FARM BUREAU (RCFB) CELEBRATES ITS 106th ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

November 5, 2023, at Monteleone Meadows, Murrieta.



Riverside County Farm Bureau President Richard Schmid commenced the 106th Annual Dinner Meeting by giving a warm welcome to the one hundred members and guests that were present. California Farm Bureau 1st Vice President Shannon Douglass gave the Invocation with Riverside County (3rd District) Supervisor Chuck Washington reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Our special guest speaker was State Senator Kelly Seyarto from the 32nd Senatorial District.

In his opening address, Richard shared, "November is the month for reviewing the past year's accomplishments and giving thanks to all the good things, big and small. As agriculture inevitably has struggles and challenges, we in the industry along with our families have always found a way to first survive, then rise above these challenges and struggles to be successful. In our industry it's more than just a business, it's about family and our way of life." He continued, "Our county farmers have faced many obstacles this year, such as flooding, severe inflation in farm input prices, increased regulations, invasive pest, etc., but in our industry, we continue to strive to think outside the box to solve many problems and I believe we are doing it well.

And, while others continually try to knock us down, we continue rising above it all. We are strong, innovative, proud and for that I am thankful for the opportunity to represent our organization. It is important that our members and those in the industry know that the Riverside County Farm Bureau is here working on those issues that our industry faces."

The Nominating Committee proposed a slate of candidates for the officer and director positions in accordance with the bylaws of the Riverside County Farm Bureau. Richard Schmid has been re-elected by acclamation to serve as president for a twelfth term. Ellen Way, Andy Wilson, and Paul Cramer being re-elected to serve as vice-presidents, and the following Board of Directors were re-elected to serve another a one-year term; Dalton Abrams, Celeste Alonzo, Linden Anderson, Grant Chaffin, Steve Corona, Andy Domenigoni, Cindy Domenigoni, Dan Hollingsworth, Ellen Lloyd-Trover, Joyce Jong, Lauren Oostdam, and Brad Scott. President Schmid noted that the board had a combined total of 307 years of service with Director Dan Hollingsworth having served in various capacities on the board for 63 years, making him the longest serving director.

This year's Howie Award recipient is Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner Ruben Arroyo.

With the conclusion of the program, President Schmid gave recognition to the Nominating Committee, the Howie Award Committee, and the Annual Dinner Meeting Committee for their efforts in making this annual event a success and expressed his deepest gratitude to our sponsors and Monteleone Meadows for their outstanding food and service.

We would like to extend a gracious thank you to our special guest speaker State Senator Kelly Seyarto, Congressman Raul Ruiz's Director of Stakeholder Engagement Sharya Hernandez, Riverside County Supervisor Chuck Washington, Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco, Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner Ruben Arroyo, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner Delia Jimenez Cioc, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner Daniel Delgado and Deputy Agricultural Commissioner Misael Martinez, CAFB 1st Vice President Shannon Douglass and 2nd Vice President Shaun Crook, and Gabriel Riojas of CAFB Farm Employers Labor Service for joining us in making our 106th Annual Dinner a remarkable event.

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.....**CONT. FROM PAGE 3.** = \$244,616,853]. The \$48 million in federal Refuge funding pays for only 20 percent of the remaining \$245 million federal share of MSHCP acquisition costs, leaving the MSHCP with a \$197 million remaining federal obligation of acquisition costs.

No Process to Address the Inholding Parcels Created by the MSHCP in the Refuge

The MSHCP Criteria Area was designed to not be a hard-lined boundary. MSHCP Section 6.1.1 "Property Owner Initiated Habitat Evaluation and Acquisition Negotiation Strategy (HANS), Expedited Review Process for Single Family Homes or Mobilehomes to Be Located on an Existing Lot Within the Criteria Area" allows a single-family home to be constructed in the MSHCP Criteria Area. MSHCP Section 6.1.1 states, "The Criteria Area is an analytical tool which assists in determining which properties to evaluate for acquisition and Conservation under the MSHCP and does not impose land use restrictions." MSHCP Section 2.1.1 "Data Sources and Limitations" states, "This approach is compatible with the criteria-based format of the MSHCP which calls for assembly of 153,000 acres of Additional Reserve Lands from within an approximate 300,000-acre Criteria Area. ... This criteria-based format differs somewhat from large-scale NCCPs/HCPs for which a specific reserve boundary is delineated on a map at the time of permit issuance."

Yet, a residence is considered an incompatible use in a National Wildlife Refuge. The hard-lined acquisition boundary of a National Wildlife Refuge, with its land use regulations, is incompatible with the flexible, Criteria-based format of the MSHCP. The Criteria-based format of the MSHCP would create private inholding parcels, which are incompatible with the National Wildlife Refuge. No process to address the inholding parcels created by the MSHCP in the Refuge was given in the previously introduced legislation.

USDA grant to support beginning farmer and rancher program

The California Bountiful Foundation, the 501(c)3 nonprofit science, research and educational organization of the California Farm Bureau, has received a \$574,750 grant to support the California Farm Bureau Beginning Farmer and Rancher Mentoring Program. The program has been named "Expanding our Roots" and is dedicated to supporting newly emerging agriculturalists in California. More information on the program may be found [here](#).

The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The funds will support the development and implementation of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Mentoring program, which will partner with the California Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers organization.

"This was a very competitive grant solicitation process that the California Bountiful Foundation pursued, and it is one of many examples how the foundation is supporting farmers and ranchers as well as helping us build our agricultural future," said California Farm Bureau President Jamie Johansson.

The initiative will match 200 beginning farmers and ranchers with one to 10 years of experience with agricultural mentors who have worked in California farming and ranching for more than a decade. Mentoring will focus on topic areas including market access, climate challenges, navigating the regulatory system, pest management and the business aspects of farming and ranching.

Beginning agriculturalists receiving support under the program will include military veterans and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Partners in the effort include the California Farm Bureau YF&R program, county Farm Bureaus, the Black Agriculture Working Group and the Farmer Veteran Coalition's founder, Michael O'Gorman.

"We are excited to implement this program and for the opportunity to support beginning farmers and ranchers who are critical to California's agricultural future," said Amrith Gunasekara, Ph.D., science and research director of the California Bountiful Foundation. "This effort will provide valuable experiences, training and opportunities for our young agriculturalists and mentor the next generation of leaders in America's most productive farming state."



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and

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It is my privilege to submit the 2022 Riverside County Agricultural Production Report. This report is produced in accordance with Section 2279 of the California Food and Agricultural Code, and summarizes the acreage, production and valuation of our County's agricultural commodities.

The gross value of all agricultural crops produced during 2022 in Riverside County is **\$1,490,459,000**. This total represents an increase of \$84 million (6.0%) from last year's total value. The largest increase (19%) was seen in nursery production followed by Field and Seed (18%) while Tree and Vine crops saw a 4% drop in value.

Using historical economic values, the total agricultural contribution to Riverside County's economy is approximately \$3.9 billion.

This report is our yearly opportunity to recognize the growers, shippers, ranchers and other businesses instrumental to and supportive of agriculture in Riverside County. As such, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the industry for their continued efforts in providing the vital information that enables the compilation of this report. Special recognition goes to the Agricultural Commissioner's staff for their efforts in the production of this year's report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruben J. Arroyo
Agricultural Commissioner
Sealer of Weights and Measures

RIVERSIDE COUNTY **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION REPORT** 2022



To view the full report, please visit
<https://rivcoawm.org/resources/publications-databases>

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DISTRICT VALUATIONS - AGRICULTURAL CROPS

District	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Riverside/Corona	105,905,000	126,279,000	135,650,000	136,700,000	137,200,000
San Jacinto/Temecula Valley	153,514,000	148,788,000	165,415,000	166,300,000	167,400,000
Coachella Valley	623,805,000	684,911,000	703,250,000	705,310,000	707,100,000
Palo Verde Valley	151,721,000	209,974,510	216,100,000	210,000,000	214,000,000
Total Crop Valuation	1,034,945,000	1,169,952,510	1,169,953,000	1,218,310,000	1,225,700,000

ACREAGE STATISTICS

Crop	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Citrus	17,333	19,756	18,889	19,400	19,390
Tree and Vine	22,988	21,075	22,506	21,982	20,870
Vegetable, Melons, Misc.	44,287	46,709	40,550	40,978	39,751
Field and Seed	102,829	116,182	127,346	114,382	96,246
Nursery	6,909	5,616	5,624	6,407	6,436
Total Planted Acreage	194,346	209,338	214,915	203,149	182,693

TOTAL VALUATION

Crop	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Citrus	170,775,000	121,934,000	126,567,000	127,473,000	132,062,000
Tree and Vine	249,150,000	268,368,000	282,840,000	280,105,000	270,078,000
Vegetable, Melons, Misc.	371,570,000	354,217,000	334,440,000	324,895,000	328,236,000
Field and Seed	93,282,000	141,652,000	156,114,000	135,033,000	159,419,000
Nursery	165,758,000	204,768,000	247,765,000	267,547,000	318,683,000
Apiculture	5,473,000	6,123,000	5,858,000	5,925,000	5,950,000
Aquaculture	4,732,000	4,776,000	4,596,000	4,873,000	5,749,000
Total Crop	1,060,740,000	1,101,838,000	1,158,180,000	1,145,851,000	1,220,177,000
Livestock and Poultry	238,468,000	219,427,000	260,040,000	260,059,000	270,282,000
GRAND TOTAL	1,299,208,000	1,321,265,000	1,418,220,000	1,405,910,000	1,490,459,000



TEN LEADING CROPS FOR 2022

Rank	Crop	Value
1st	Nursery Stock	\$318,683,000
2nd	Milk	\$177,450,000
3rd	Alfalfa	\$97,690,000
4th	Dates	\$84,100,000
5th	Avocados	\$77,000,000
6th	Table Grapes	\$76,846,000
7th	Eggs	\$76,830,000
8th	Lemons	\$68,890,000
9th	Bell Peppers	\$68,391,000
10th	Turf Grass	\$34,700,000

OTHER MILLION DOLLAR COMMODITIES

Crop	Value	Crop	Value	Crop	Value
Lettuce - Head	28,608,000	Celery	10,672,000	Cabbage	3,749,000
Carrots	26,366,000	Cauliflower	9,879,000	Beets	3,525,000
Grapefruit	25,750,000	Bermuda Grass	8,208,000	Cotton Seed	3,513,000
Broccoli	25,213,000	Okra	8,193,000	Green Beans	3,405,000
Mandarins/Tangerines	24,624,000	Wheat - Grain	7,450,000	Watermelon	3,312,000
Wine Grapes	23,057,100	Romaine Lettuce	7,434,000	Honeydew melon	3,300,000
Spinach	20,865,000	Strawberries	5,469,000	Sudan Grass	2,740,000
Cotton	19,400,000	Eggplant	4,974,000	Kale	2,562,000
Artichokes	15,057,000	Chili peppers	4,797,000	Potatoes	2,338,000
Oriental Vegetables	13,680,000	Pollination	4,775,000	Industrial Hemp	2,000,000
Corn - Sweet	12,870,000	Talapia	4,480,000	Rye Grass	1,771,000
Cattle / Calves	11,600,000	Mixed Melons	4,464,000	Corn - Silage	1,425,000
Oranges	11,350,000	Spices / Herbs	4,127,000	Sheep and Lambs	1,372,000
Onion - Dry	11,116,000	Tomatoes	4,091,000	Wheat	1,251,000
Alfalfa - Silage	10,758,000	Canteloupe	3,811,000	Squash	1,183,000

CALIFORNIA'S LEADING AGRICULTURAL COUNTIES BY TOTAL VALUE OF PRODUCTION

<u>2021</u>			<u>2020</u>		
<u>Rank</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Value (\$)</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Value (\$)</u>
1	Kern	8,341,294,840	1	Fresno	7,979,650,000
2	Tulare	8,089,621,300	2	Kern	7,669,409,070
3	Fresno	8,086,000,000	3	Tulare	7,140,076,500
4	Monterey	4,100,240,000	4	Monterey	3,910,135,000
5	Merced	3,724,451,000	5	Stanislaus	3,476,093,000
6	Stanislaus	3,545,672,000	6	Merced	3,401,610,000
7	San Joaquin	3,193,234,000	7	San Joaquin	3,031,279,000
8	Kings	2,343,144,000	8	Kings	2,179,476,000
9	Imperial	2,287,312,000	9	Imperial	2,026,427,000
10	Ventura	2,085,999,000	10	Ventura	1,985,365,000
11	Madera	2,045,495,000	11	Madera	1,949,532,000
12	Santa Barbara	1,918,186,000	12	Santa Barbara	1,819,198,000
13	San Diego	1,752,999,086	13	San Diego	1,810,326,411
14	Riverside	1,405,910,000	14	Riverside	1,418,220,000

Delicious is in season

When it comes to avocados, the California variety may only be in season for a limited time each year, but the wait is well worth it!



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Riverside County AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.



ORIENTAL FRUIT FLY QUARANTINE IN RIVERSIDE & SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES

Continued Oriental Fruit Fly (OFF) detections in Riverside and San Bernardino counties have expanded the OFF quarantine. Stay tuned for an upcoming OFF grower meeting scheduled for early December. OFF information and quarantine maps can be found at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/off/regulation.html>. To receive regulatory updates directly from CDFA, sign up at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/subscriptions/>. Please continue to contact CDFA for OFF related questions.

HLB UPDATES / NEW SAN DIEGO CO. HLB QUARANTINE

A newly established HLB quarantine in San Diego Co. has been declared following the detection of the deadly citrus plant disease Huanglongbing (HLB) in five trees located on a residential property with non-commercial citrus acreage in the Valley Center area of San Diego County. Read more at <https://citrusinsider.org/news/>

As of November 17, 2023, a total of 211 residential citrus trees have been confirmed positive for HLB in Riverside Co. for a total of 6,790 residential citrus trees statewide. New HLB tree detections continue to be found in the city of Corona. HLB quarantine maps can be found in the Citrus Insider website. When moving citrus from, to, or within an HLB quarantine, please follow the recently updated HLB Bulk Citrus Quarantine Requirements and continue to submit the required mitigation forms to the Riverside Co. Agricultural Commissioner's Office. If you need a pest control or tree removal referral, please contact me, Sandra Zwaal szwaal2@gmail.com.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



There will be no Board of Directors meeting in December 2023. The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. More details will be announced at a later date.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

State funding supports crop replacement, groundwater recharge

The California Department of Water Resources has awarded \$11.8 million in funding for two projects that promote agriculture and groundwater conservation in Southern California. The Rancho California Water District in Riverside County received funding from DWR's Urban Community Drought Relief Program. Some \$5 million in funding will support an agriculture program, CropSWAP, which is converting 160 acres from water-intensive plants to drought-resilient crops. DWR also awarded \$6.8 million to build a 40-acre groundwater recharge pond.

Water year is off to a slow start, but high reservoir levels give farmers hope.

As California's weather swings from droughts to floods, farmers say they are planning for either extreme but remain confident knowing the water supply in state reservoirs is well above the historical average for this time of year. The currently abundant surface water stored in reservoirs across the state is the result of an El Niño weather pattern that brought soaking atmospheric river storms and flooding early this year. But since the 2024 water year began on Oct. 1, the state has received little precipitation and snow.

Two beetle pests raise concerns for almonds, pistachios and pears

Two different beetle pests found in California orchards this year have growers on alert and researchers looking to learn more as they try to develop treatments to control infestations. One is the arrival of a new invasive beetle, the *Carpophilus truncatus*, which was found infesting almonds and pistachios in the San Joaquin Valley earlier this fall. The other is an existing native pest—a species of flatheaded borer that historically attacked only wood but was found feeding on pear fruit in Lake County. Growers are urged to be on the lookout for the pests.