

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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Welcome New Members

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



**Riverside County Sheriff's Agriculture Team (AG Team)
Owner Applied Number**

Marking your equipment

Why mark equipment? Marking leads to recovery of stolen property.

With the recent increase in Agricultural thefts, it is important that you get your farm machinery, equipment and even household goods stamped with an Owner Applied Number (OAN). If you mark it the sheriffs have a better chance to recover it if it gets stolen.

The OAN is a unique number used to protect and identify equipment, tools, vehicles and other valuable items from a ranch, farm, dairy, winery, or any other agriculture related business. It is a 10-digit number that represents an individual agriculture business. Each business will be assigned their own unique OAN that can be imprinted on their equipment.

The program is supported by numerous organizations and agencies including: the California Rural Crime Prevention Task Force, the California Highway Patrol, California Farm Bureau, United Agri-Business League, and California State Grange.

This FBI established system allows state and county to be assigned a number, which is recorded in the NCIC (National Crime Information Center). A directory containing these numbers is available to each law enforcement agency for use in identifying the various state and counties.

It has been proven that thieves are hesitant to take items that can be readily identified. Placing signs, decals, and other visible information warning potential thieves that this equipment has been marked and registered with the local law enforcement officials my help to prevent a possible theft.

The Sheriff's Ag Team is happy to facilitate getting your OAN assigned to you and they are currently able to stamp it on a wide range of materials. This program is free to help combat agricultural theft. If you are interested in getting your own OAN, please call the Riverside County Farm Bureau at (951) 684-6732 and we will forward your information to the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

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Department of Pesticide Regulations ~ Mill Assessment

The Farm Bureau and a broad coalition of agricultural interests submitted comments by close of business on June 2, 2023 outlining our strong concerns related to the Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR) proposal to raise the mill assessment from 21mil to 33mil in budget year 2024. This also in on the heels of our opposition to DPR's Budget Change Proposal this year for new positions that should be tabled until next year because we will be talking about these same issues next year in our budget discussions. The letter clearly states our unified opposition to the 12mil increase which effectively raises the DPR's budget over 50 million dollars and does not explain what that means for their proposal to fund Sustainable Pest Management, which Farm Bureau strongly opposes. We expect robust discussions on this issue in the coming weeks and months as we approach the budget for next year.

Supervisors Approve Establishment of "Agricultural Pass" Program

By City News Service Pristine Villarreal, Copyright 2023, City News Service, Inc.

The Board of Supervisors Tuesday authorized the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and Office of the Agricultural Commissioner to create an "agricultural pass program," intended to provide ranchers, growers and their appointed representatives with permission to enter disaster zones and evacuation areas to tend to their animals.

The program is based on state legislation approved in 2021 that was designed to grant authority to livestock owners and commercial crop growers to care of their animals and products during or immediately after large-scale explosions, earthquakes, wildfires, floods, major storms or other "naturally occurring or manmade events," according to a sheriff's statement posted to the board's agenda.

Agricultural passes will be issued following an application process that has already been tentatively established jointly by the sheriff's department and the Office of the Agricultural Commissioner.

Applications are expected to be made available via the sheriff's web portal in the coming weeks.

"Agricultural owners ... and their agents applying for registration understand that (they're) requesting access to restricted areas subject to official road closure and not otherwise accessible to the public," according to the proposed wording of an application. "In so requesting access, agricultural owners and their agents acknowledge the inherent risks and hazards caused by recent catastrophic fires, including the existence of declared local health emergencies, which extend to the restricted areas."

Applicants will be required to sign waivers vowing to hold the county harmless for any liabilities or adverse circumstances, including injuries, that may arise as a result of their seeking access to areas declared off-limits to the public.

According to documents, the main purpose of the pass is to remove barriers ranchers and others might otherwise encounter while "administering veterinary care to their livestock, or sheltering, moving, transporting, evacuating, feeding, or watering their agricultural products, or their livestock."

Prior to approval of a pass application, property owners will need to provide documentation showing they're involved in some type of commercial agricultural activity, and qualifying applicants will have to undergo a four-hour training session regarding how to safely contend with hazards in an evacuation zone or disaster area.

Once a pass is approved, the holder's information will be added to a county database and an identity badge issued by the sheriff's department.

New Neonicotinoid Regulations Contain Provisions for Quarantine Pests Such as GWSS

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation has adopted new rules restricting the use of neonicotinoids to protect pollinator health. However, there is an exemption for applications to control the glassy-winged sharpshooter (Section 6990(c)(3)), which has been declared a quarantine pest by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The new regulations will become effective Jan. 1, 2024. To read the full text visit <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov> Rule# DPR 22-001 ~ TEXT OF FINAL REGULATIONS ~ Filed with Secretary of State 4/10/23.

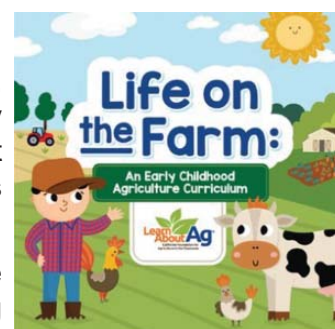
Exciting News!

Our brand-new unit, *Life on the Farm*, is now available on Teacher's Pay Teachers. And guess what? You don't have to pay a penny because it's completely FREE!

This early childhood agriculture curriculum is designed to make learning about our favorite subject, agriculture, an absolute blast for our littlest learners!

Visit our Teacher's Pay Teachers page now to download this fantastic resource for free and watch your students' excitement grow as they explore the wonders of agriculture!

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com> - Click *Browse Catalog*/Click *Free/Type* in the Search Bar *Life on the Farm*.



Farm Service Agency Now Accepting Nominations for Farmers and Ranchers to Serve on Local County Committees

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting nominations for county committee members for elections that will occur later this year. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is unveiling a new GIS tool to make it easier for producers to participate in the nomination and election processes for county committee members, who make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally.

All nomination forms for the 2023 election must be postmarked or received in the local FSA office by Aug. 1, 2023.

"Producers serving on FSA county committees play a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the agency, and they serve as the eyes and ears for the producers who elected them," said FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux. "In order for county committees to be both effective and equitable in their decision-making at the local level, they must reflect the full diversity of American agriculture. I am excited that we have another opportunity through this year's nominations and elections cycle to make our committees more inclusive, and in turn, better equipped to best serve all our customers. I encourage you to consider serving the farmers, ranchers and producers in your community on your local FSA county committee, and I thank you in advance for your public service."

Elections will occur in certain Local Administrative Areas (LAA) for members. LAAs are elective areas for FSA committees in a single county or multi-county jurisdiction and they may include LAAs that are focused on an urban or suburban area.

Customers can locate their LAA through a new GIS locator tool available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

"Based on feedback from stakeholders, including the USDA Equity Commission, we are unveiling this new tool to make it easier for producers to effectively participate in the process," Ducheneaux added.

Agricultural producers may be nominated for candidacy for the county committee if they:

- Participate or cooperate in a USDA program; and
- Reside in the LAA that is up for election this year.

A cooperating producer is someone who has provided information about their farming or ranching operation to FSA, even if they have not applied or received program benefits. Individuals may nominate themselves or others and qualifying organizations may also nominate candidates. USDA encourages minority producers, women and beginning farmers or ranchers to nominate, vote and hold office.

Nationwide, more than 7,700 dedicated members of the agricultural community serve on FSA county committees. The committees are made up of three to 11 members who serve three-year terms. Committee members are vital to how FSA carries out disaster programs, as well as conservation, commodity and price support programs, county office employment and other agricultural issues.

Urban and Suburban County Committees

The 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to form urban county committees as well as make other advancements related to urban agriculture, including the establishment of the Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. FSA established county committees specifically focused on urban agriculture. The urban county committees will work to encourage and promote urban, indoor and other emerging agricultural production practices. Additionally, the new county committees may address areas such as food access, community engagement, support of local activities to promote and encourage community compost and food waste reduction.

Urban committee members are nominated and elected to serve by local urban producers in the same jurisdiction. Urban county committee members will provide outreach to ensure urban producers understand USDA programs and serve as the voice of other urban producers and assist in program implementation that support the needs of the growing urban community.

More Information

Producers should contact their local FSA office today to register and find out how to get involved in their county's election, including if their LAA is up for election this year. To be considered, a producer must be registered and sign an FSA-669A nomination form. Urban farmers should use an FSA-669-A-3 for urban county committees. These forms and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 6, 2023.

To learn more about FSA programs, producers can contact their local USDA Service Center. Producers can also prepare maps for acreage reporting as well as manage farm loans and view other farm records data and customer information by logging into their farmers.gov account. If you don't have an account, sign up today.

Card Check Law Update: AB 113 Amends AB 2183; Takes Immediate Effect; Repeals Mail Balloting; But Changes Very Little Overall

BARSAMIAN & MOODY

On May 15, Governor Newsom quietly signed AB 113—the bill that we have been calling “The Promise” legislation—into law. While some practitioners are highlighting the fact that AB 113 repealed the mail balloting election procedures that were created by AB 2183, the critical takeaway is this: AB 113 did nothing to change the four worst parts of AB 2183 (let’s call them the “Four Horsemen”):

1. The Penalty Provisions;
2. The Appellate Bond Requirements;
3. The Presumption of Retaliation; and
4. Card Check.

Here is what AB 113 does:

First, AB 113 repeals the Labor Peace Compact (mail balloting election) procedures that were created by AB 2183. Second, AB 113 renames the Non-Labor Peace Election (card check) procedures to “Majority Support Petition.” As to the substantive stuff: That’s it!

Here is what the law looks like today:

Effective upon the signing of AB 113 (May 15, 2023), AB 113 amends AB 2183, as follows:

1. The Penalty Provisions

AB 113 did not change AB 2183’s Penalty Provisions. So, the ALRB is still empowered to order an employer to pay monetary penalties up to \$25,000 for each unfair labor practice (ULP) that the employer is found to have committed. These penalties are in addition to any other remedy (e.g., backpay wages, reinstatement of employment, allowing ALRB Field Examiners to discuss the employer’s violation with employees on company-property and on paid-time, etc.) that the ALRB might order. The Penalty Provisions are not set to expire.

2. The Appellate Bond Requirements

AB 113 did not change AB 2183’s Appellate Bond Requirements. So, an employer that seeks appellate court review of an ALRB decision and order involving monetary remedies such as backpay wages and/or the penalties discussed above, must post a bond for the entire amount of the remedy as a condition of filing the appeal. The Appellate Bond Requirements are not set to expire.

3. The Presumption of Retaliation

AB 113 did not change AB 2183’s Presumption of Retaliation. So, if an employer takes adverse employment action (e.g., disciplines, suspends, demotes, lays off, terminates, etc.) against an Ag worker during an organizing campaign, then the action(s) will still be presumed to be retaliatory (a violation of law) and the employer will still have the burden of proving by “clear and convincing” evidence that the action(s) would have been taken for a legitimate business reason.

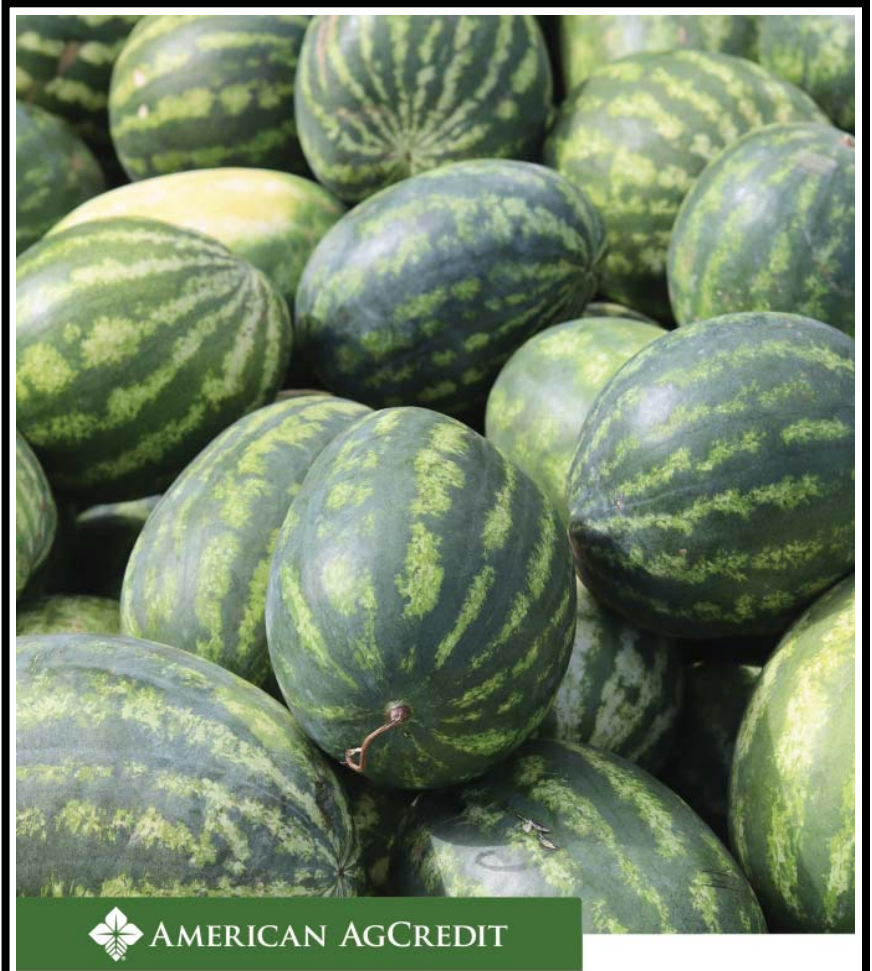
It is critical for employers to understand that it is extremely difficult to meet the “clear and convincing” evidence standard under the ALRB. As such, the Presumption of Retaliation means that if an employer takes adverse action against a worker during an organizing campaign, **then they will very likely be hit with a \$25,000 monetary penalty for each action.**

The liability could be substantial. For example, if a group of workers was laid off or transferred to a different worksite, this could trigger a \$25,000 penalty for each worker. Of course, and as some practitioners have pointed out, the Presumption of Retaliation only applies during an organizing campaign.

But consider this: The reality of a card check campaign is that an organizing campaign could always be in progress, which means the potential threat of the \$25,000 retaliation penalty will always be looming.

4. Card Check

Lastly, AB 113 did not change AB 2183’s Card Check process (it just renamed it to “Majority Support Petition”). This process creates an alternative to the in-person, secret ballot election that was traditionally required to vote a union **CONT. ON PAGE 6....**



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.....**CONT. FROM PAGE 5.** to be certified as the employees' collective bargaining representative. "Card check" allows a union to get certified as the collective bargaining representative by submitting a petition to the ALRB with proof (e.g., authorization cards, signature petitions, etc.) of majority support from the employees. Not surprisingly, modern unions favor card check because it allows them to put greater pressure on employees to vote for the union. Additionally, it makes it easier for unions to conduct organizing campaigns without employers knowing. That said, if an employer needs to rebut the Presumption of Retaliation (see above), they will be hard pressed to convince the ALRB that they did not know that an organizing campaign was occurring.

What This Means for Employers:

First and foremost, employers must proactively train their management team regarding appropriate ways to deal with the kinds of things (e.g., employee complaints about the workplace; work stoppages; etc.) that commonly trigger ULPs in agriculture.

Second, employers should immediately revisit their policies and procedures for making employment decisions with an eye toward ensuring that only trusted/competent managers are empowered to make decisions pertaining to things like hiring, firing, and disciplining Ag workers. Third, employers must continue to create workplaces where employees do not feel the need to seek outside representation/assistance. Finally, employers cannot afford to wait to begin preparing for these changes because when a union knocks at the door, it is too late.

The goal of this article is to provide employers with current labor and employment law information. The contents should neither be interpreted as, nor construed as legal advice or opinion. The reader should consult with Barsamian & Moody at (559) 248-2360 for individual responses to questions or concerns regarding any given situation.

Study Reveals Potential Breakthrough in Grapevine Disease Resistance

UC Researchers Pave the Way for Climate-Adaptive Agriculture

By Ethan Perez, UC Irvine



Photo by Amy Quinton, UC Davis News and Media Relations

A team of scientists has made a significant breakthrough in the battle against a devastating disease affecting grapevines. They include University of California, Irvine, Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Brandon Gaut; and UC Davis professors of viticulture and enology Dario Cantù and Andy Walker.

The paper, recently published in *Communications Biology*, reveals the discovery of candidate genes for disease resistance in wild grape plants, offering hope for the future of the agriculture industry.

Xylella fastidiosa is a bacterium responsible for infecting various crops, including grapevines, coffee, almonds, citrus and olives. This disease has posed a significant challenge for farmers worldwide, with no known resistant varieties in major crops. However, building on a long-term project at UC Davis, the research team focused their attention on a wild grape species, *Vitis arizonica*, which exhibits natural resistance to the bacterium.

Through genetic mapping and genome-wide association studies, the researchers identified potential genes that could be introduced into grapevines to enhance their resistance. These findings have the potential to revolutionize the agricultural industry, offering a solution to a multibillion-dollar problem caused by *Xylella fastidiosa*.

Link to changing climate

One intriguing aspect of the study is the correlation between resistance genes and climate. The researchers discovered that the resistant genes were predominantly found in warm climates, indicating that the pathogen's presence is more prevalent in these regions. By projecting climate change scenarios, the team predicts the future impact of the disease on various crops, including grapes and almonds.

"This study highlights the importance of scientific research in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and plant pathogens," said Gaut, who led the research at UC Irvine. "Understanding the genetic basis of resistance and the influence of climate on disease prevalence is crucial for developing effective strategies to protect our crops and ensure food security."

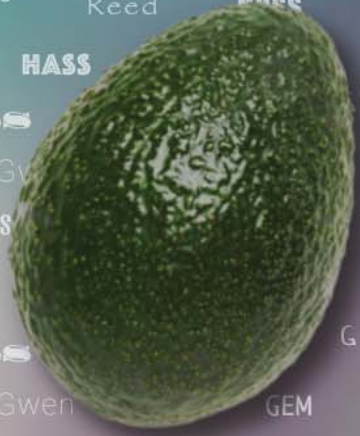
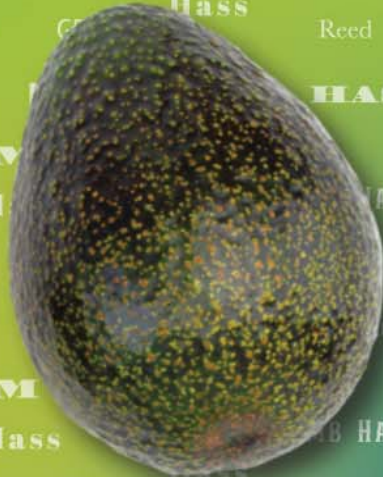
The implications of this research extend beyond grapevines and offer insights into the genetic mechanisms of resistance in other susceptible crops. By harnessing the power of genetics, genomics, and studying wild plant relatives, scientists can identify valuable resistance traits that could enhance crop resilience against *Xylella fastidiosa* and similar pathogens.

"Preserving, maintaining and genetically characterizing plant collections is paramount in our pursuit of discovering valuable genes for grape breeding programs," said Cantù, who led the research at UC Davis.

The study's findings underscore the urgency of continued scientific research in agriculture, especially in the face of climate change. By unraveling the complex interactions between genes, pathogens and climate, researchers can develop targeted solutions to mitigate the devastating effects of plant diseases, safeguarding global food production.

The publication of this paper represents a significant milestone in the fight against *Xylella fastidiosa* and sets the stage for future advancements in crop protection and climate-adaptive agriculture. The collaboration between UC Irvine and UC Davis scientists serves as a testament to the importance of interdisciplinary research in tackling pressing challenges.

The study received funding from the National Science Foundation.



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We're hitting the Farm to Fork Capital! Join us in Sacramento for the California Agriculture in the Classroom Conference.

Our conference is designed for K-12 educators, administrators, and volunteers to come together to learn and exchange ideas on effectively integrating food and fiber into every facet of the curriculum.

Don't miss this opportunity to collaborate with educators who share your passion for agriculture. Join us for the Farm-to-Fork Festival, a Western BBQ, speakers, hands-on activities and more!

We have opportunities for Workshop and Make 'N' Take presenters, see registration link below for more information.

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

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



There will be no Board of Directors meeting in July and August 2023. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

Supreme Court limits “waters of United States” regulations in win for farmers

Farmers for years sought relief from what they called government overreach into vast swaths of land and water through the “waters of the United States” regulations. They got their wish last month when the U.S. Supreme Court set limits on how the Environmental Protection Agency can regulate wetlands and waterways. Farmers argued that EPA was regulating features that are often not recognizable as water bodies. Though the high court reined in the scope of the 51-year-old Clean Water Act, states retain authority to regulate waters within their own borders.

Officials hail farm grant program to safeguard food protection

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is partnering with states to offer a grant program to build resilience across the food-supply system, responding to lessons learned from supply-chain disruptions and food shortages that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The USDA Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program is meant to create new revenue streams for producers and to strengthen local and regional food systems.

The program was discussed during a recent California State Board of Food and Agriculture session on safeguards to protect America's food supply.

Bill training for use of agricultural drones passes California Assembly

Legislation seeking to make it easier for farmers to use drones for targeted pesticide applications passed in the California Assembly and moves to the Senate. Sponsored by the California Farm Bureau, Assembly Bill 1016 would expand the Department of Pesticide Regulation's authority to create training programs for drone aerial applicator licensing. As a result of the bill's progress, Orange Coast College recently announced the creation of an associate science degree in unmanned aerial systems, or drones, with an emphasis on aerial applications.