

Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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

Our 78th Year of Publication: Volume LXXVIII, Number 5, May 2024.



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Welcome New Members

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

Pastrana joins UCCE as Plant Pathology Advisor

Ana Pastrana joined UCCE on Jan. 16 as a plant pathology advisor serving Imperial, Riverside and San Diego counties.

In her role, Pastrana will collaborate with pest control advisers and support growers with disease management. In addition to identifying high priority concerns, she will conduct research and develop educational content that addresses growers needs.

Before moving to Southern California, Pastrana worked as a research scientist on plant pathology at the University of Seville, Spain, and at Vineland Research and Innovation Center in Canada. Previously, she completed a postdoctoral assignment in the Department of Plant Pathology at UC Davis in the Thomas Gordon Lab, where she specialized in soilborne diseases affecting strawberries and blackberries.

While attending the University of Seville, Pastrana earned master's and bachelor's degrees in biology. At Investigación y Formación Agraria, Pesquera, Alimentaria y de la Producción Ecológica, a government institution in Spain, she earned a Ph.D. and completed her dissertation on strawberry diseases.

"At that time, Europe banned methyl bromide and other soil disinfectants. Strawberries rely on these disinfectants so plenty of soilborne diseases emerged," Pastrana said.

Originally from Seville, Spain, Pastrana said that her small hometown is surrounded by plum and citrus trees. Her mother, like many others, worked in the agricultural industry and Pastrana wondered how plant life works, inspiring her to study biology.

As a Ph.D. student, Pastrana didn't know she would pursue plant pathology specifically because she was open to studying diseases in general whether it be humans, animals or plants.

"Plant pathologists are like doctors. Not everyone is happy to work with us because it usually means that there is some sickness involved," said Pastrana. "But if growers work with pathologists from the beginning, we can focus on preventative care and helping to protect plants from getting sick."

Pastrana is based at the UCCE office in Holtville and can be reached at ampastranaleon@ucanr.edu.

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Registration after August 16 - \$385

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for CONFERENCE INFORMATION

USDA Announces Farmworker Housing Loans and Grants

Bryan Little, Farm Employers Labor Service

Recently USDA Rural Development announced two programs related to financing of farmworker housing. The agency has loans available to develop or rehabilitate certain on-farm worker housing. It also has grants and loans available to help finance the development of off-farm housing for year-round and migrant or seasonal domestic farm workers.

According to USDA these opportunities are available for housing that is used to house H-2A workers, since the definition of “domestic farm laborer” to include “a person legally admitted to the United States and authorized to work in agriculture.”

Below are high-level summaries of each program. For more information about USDA Rural Development and these opportunities, visit www.rd.usda.gov

On-Farm Labor Housing Loans

Overview

- Provides affordable financing to develop or rehabilitate affordable rental housing for very low to moderate income domestic, migrant, and seasonal farm laborers
- Provides funding used to increase the supply of affordable housing for farm labor
- Provides the producer the ability to offer affordable, decent, safe, and sanitary housing for farmworkers

Eligible applicants include:

- Individual farm owner
- Family farm partnership
- Family farm corporation
- Association of farmers

Loan terms include:

- No loan minimum
- Loan maximum is 100 percent of the allowable total development cost
- Loan interest rate is 1.0% annually
- Loan term will not exceed 33 years
- Grants are not available for on-farm labor housing

Deadline: This program accepts applications on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are depleted.

Off-Farm Labor Housing Direct Loans & Grants

Overview: Provides affordable financing to develop housing for year-round and migrant or seasonal domestic farm laborers.

Eligible applicants include:

- Broad-based nonprofit organizations
- Nonprofit organization of farmworkers
- Federally recognized Indian Tribes
- Community organizations
- States or local governments Limited partnerships with a nonprofit general partner

Loan terms include:

- Low interest loans
- Up to 33 year payback period
- 1% fixed rate
- Grants based on need and may not exceed 90% of project cost

Deadline: Final applications for funding for repairs must be submitted by June 18, 2024, 12:00 p.m. ET. Final applications for funding for new construction must be submitted by July 3, 2024, 12:00 p.m. ET.

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Final Rule: Improving Protections for Workers in Temporary Agricultural Employment in the United States

The U.S. Department of Labor (Department) has published the final rule, "Federal Register (www.federalregister.gov) Improving Protections for Workers in Temporary Agricultural Employment in the United States" effective on June 28, 2024. The final rule strengthens protections for temporary agricultural workers by making several changes to H-2A program regulations to bolster the Department's efforts to prevent adverse effect on workers in the U.S. and ensure that H-2A workers are employed only when there are not sufficient able, willing, and qualified U.S. workers available to perform the work. These changes include empowering workers to advocate on behalf of themselves and their coworkers regarding working conditions; improving accountability for employers using the H-2A program; improving transparency and accountability in the foreign labor recruitment process; requiring seat belts in most vehicles used to transport workers; enhancing existing enforcement provisions; improving transparency into the nature of the job opportunity by collecting additional information about owners, operators, managers, and supervisors to better enforce program requirements; clarifying when a termination is "for cause" to protect essential worker rights; and revising provisions and codifying protections that are outdated, unclear, or subject to misinterpretation in the current regulations. The final rule also strengthens protections for temporary agricultural workers when employers fail to properly notify workers that the start date of work is delayed, and clarifies and streamlines procedures to prevent noncompliant employers from using the Employment Service.

USDA APHIS Electronic ID Rule for Certain Cattle and Bison Finalized

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) unveiled a final rule to try and bring full adoption of electronic identification to US cattle herds. Per estimates from USDA and other groups, roughly 90% of the industry utilizes some form of electronic tagging for their herds, with the remaining portion mostly consisting of smaller family operations. APHIS' intent is to focus particularly on those that are moved in interstate transit. With the recent HPAI outbreaks amongst dairy cattle, it has served as a recent example of how APHIS hopes the changes will bring better traceability to the US cattle supply should disease or other maladies impact the industry.

The final rule applies to all sexually intact cattle and bison 18 months of age or older, all dairy cattle, cattle and bison of any age used for rodeo or recreation events, and cattle or bison of any age used for shows or exhibitions. The rule requires official ear tags to be visually and electronically readable for official use for interstate movement of cattle and bison, and revises and clarifies certain record requirements related to cattle. A fuller readout of these changes can be found below.

Stop DPR from Raising California Food Prices!

Despite current budget challenges in the state, the Department of Pesticide Regulation has proposed a \$33 million food tax that would pay to add add 117 new positions, and require the farmers and ranchers to pay more for crop protection material even though they can't pass on those increases to consumers.

With food costs continuing to rise and many family farms struggling to survive, please ask your legislator to oppose the Department of Pesticide Regulation Budget Change Proposal that would raise the cost of food for all Californians.

Write your Assemblymember and Senator and ask them Stop the Food Tax.



Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is collecting information for the 2023 Annual Crop Report

This report is the single best source of data which measures and highlights the values of Riverside County agriculture, the information is also utilized by numerous industries, institutions and state agencies. All individual information is confidential, please help show agricultures strength by participating.

Riverside District - Rudy Valencia, Ruvalencia@rivco.org, 951-534-1588
(Corona, Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris, Lake Elsinore)

San Jacinto District - Kevin Gallego, KGallego@rivco.org, 951-654-2050
(Temecula, Murrieta, Hemet, San Jacinto, Banning, Beaumont)

Coachella Valley and Palo Verde District
Steven Triplett, Striplett@rivco.org, 760-863-7057



Sprouting School Gardens Grant

Across the country, Sprouts has been supporting thousands of school gardens and nonprofit organizations through their grant programming. To help more schools create or expand their school garden-based programs, we are pleased to announce their new Sprouting School Gardens Grants!

The grants range in size from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and support school garden program operations, program supplies, and educator stipends to help school gardens thrive. Organizations must be schools or 501(c)(3) nonprofits with a presence in cities and communities where Sprouts Farmers Market operates stores in order to apply. This grant program is replacing their previous Neighborhood Grant, which since 2016 has awarded more than \$4 million to 400 nonprofit organizations. **Application deadline: May 31, 2024**

Lundberg Family Farms Sprouting Habitats Grant

Imagine if every student had the opportunity to step outside of their classroom into a wildlife wonderland right on campus. A space bustling with native plants and animals, a place designed for exploratory learning where classroom lessons are brought to life.

In honor of Earth Month, Lundberg Family Farms is teaming up with the Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation to bring wildlife habitats to life on school campuses. With a shared commitment to increasing childhood connection to nature, outdoor education and creating healthier green spaces, fifteen schools across the country will be awarded \$1,000 to build their school wildlife habitat. **Application deadline: May 31, 2024**



To apply or learn more about Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation Grants, please visit <https://www.sprouts.com/about/sprouts-foundation/grants/>



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7. 41.5 AC Ave 61 & Harrison St, Vista Santa Rosa
Price: \$2,075,000 (\$50,000/AC)
8. 75 AC Ave 62 & W Pierce St, Thermal
Price: \$3,375,000 (\$45,000/AC)
9. 298.15 AC 81755 Ave 62, Vista Santa Rosa
Price: \$17,900,000
10. 42.94 AC Ave 63 & W Pierce St, Thermal
Price: \$1,502,900 (\$35,000/AC)
11. 48.56 AC NWC Pierce St & Ave 64, Thermal
Price: \$1,699,600 (\$35,000/AC)
12. 75.48 AC SEC Ave 68 & Harrison St, Oasis
Price: \$3,500,000 (\$46,370/AC)
13. 40.74 AC Polk St & Ave 74, Thermal
Price: \$1,629,600 (\$40,000/AC)
14. 74.67 AC Ave 76 & Expressway 86, Oasis
Price: \$1,866,750 (\$25,000/AC)
15. 39.12 AC Ave 81 & Lincoln St, Thermal
Price: \$1,369,200 (\$35,000/AC)
16. 48.2 AC 92745 Avenue 84, Oasis
Price: \$1,928,000 (\$40,000/AC)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



The next Board meeting will be held in person at Farm Bureau office and via Zoom Conference on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. Please call our office at (951) 684-6732 for more information.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CBBF

New farm organizing rules lead to union wins, controversy
California's new farm labor organizing law has delivered union wins and a string of competing allegations from employers, farmworkers and labor organizers. In March, Wonderful Nurseries, the nation's largest grapevine nursery, claimed United Farm Workers organizers tricked more than a hundred of its workers into unwittingly signing union authorization cards. UFW denied wrongdoing and responded with counter charges against the company. At issue is a new organizing system—called “card check”—that allows collection of signed cards instead of secret-ballot elections.

Study: California pork prices rise under Proposition 12
Pork products subject to California's Proposition 12 animal welfare law have increased in price by an average of 20% since the law began to take effect, according to a new economic analysis. The findings in the University of California's Agricultural and Resource Economics Update noted that pork prices in the state have risen more sharply than the rest of the nation under initiative requirements. Bacon, ribs and loin products had higher per-pound prices of \$1.04, 54 cents and \$1.42, respectively, than similar products in other states.

Protections for Southern California steelhead trout could bring water restrictions

A state determination that Southern California steelhead trout merit additional protections could mean tighter water restrictions. The California Fish and Game Commission on April 18 unanimously agreed with a staff recommendation that listing the Southern California steelhead as endangered under the state Endangered Species Act is warranted. Increased protections for the species would affect water users and districts in several Southern California counties. Agricultural groups and water districts argue that there is not enough scientific evidence to warrant the endangered listing.