California pulls 'emergency brake' in bid to stop unprecedented virus surge

By: Victoria Colliver & Jeremy B. White, Politico

OAKLAND — California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Monday ordered widespread closures of indoor operations as the state faces its fastest surge in cases since the Covid-19 pandemic began, pulling what he called the "emergency brake" on 94 percent of residents.

Newsom said he was compelled to act by a case surge that is "simply without precedent in California’s pandemic history."

California’s daily cases have doubled in the past 10 days, with topping 9,890 on Sunday, the state reported Monday. "This is simply the fastest increase California has seen since the beginning of this pandemic," Newsom said during a press briefing.

That has led Newsom to accelerate the stay-at-home process, ensuring 41 of California's 58 counties will have to shut churches, indoor dining and gyms until the state deems them safe for operation. That includes most of the state's heavily populated counties, including most of the San Francisco Bay Area that previously had forestalled the same coronavirus spread seen elsewhere.

Instead of waiting for the state's normal Tuesday announcement to restrict new counties, Newsom made the change Monday and said the emergency measure allows for them to move into shutdowns after only one week of rising infection spread. He said the state will no longer wait until each Tuesday and could respond sooner when infections rise. The timeline for businesses to comply will be compressed from 72 hours to 24 hours.

Until this month, California was still an anomaly compared to much of the nation that had seen an explosion in cases and positivity rates. On a per capita rate, the state is still not suffering nearly as badly as the Midwest. But the spread in less than two weeks has been dramatic.

University of California, San Francisco epidemiologist and infectious disease expert George Rutherford said he was surprised by just how quickly the virus was spreading in California. He supported the governor’s crackdown as necessary.

"Short of stopping planes from flying into California and walling the state off like Hawaii does and testing people at the border, we don’t have a lot more levels to pull,” he said.

Monday’s actions mark the most significant change to the color-coded, four-tiered reopening framework that the Newsom administration rolled out in late August after the state experienced a summer surge in Covid-19 cases.

Hospitalizations statewide over the past two weeks have increased by 48 percent, while intensive care units have seen nearly 39 percent more admissions in that same time period.

Santa Clara County officials had expected the county to move to the less-restrictive red tier on Tuesday, but called on residents to adhere to the new purple-tier requirements. It was a whirlwind shift for a county that just four weeks ago had reduced infections.

Farmers, ranchers celebrate defeat of split-roll tax measure

By: California Farm Bureau

Crediting a unified effort by California farmers, ranchers and their organizations, California Farm Bureau Federation President Jamie Johansson thanked voters for rejecting the split-roll tax measure on the Nov. 3 ballot.

The initiative, Proposition 15, would have allowed reassessment and higher property taxes on a variety of business properties, including agricultural structures and improvements such as barns, dairies, wineries, processing plants, vineyards and orchards. Nearly 52% of voters rejected the measure in votes counted to date; the Associated Press projected its defeat last night.

“Farmers can breathe a little easier today, knowing their hard work made the difference to turn back the largest property tax increase in California history, which would have created havoc for family farmers and ranchers across our state,” Johansson said during a virtual news conference conducted today by the measure’s opponents.

“For months, we’ve said Prop 15 would hurt farmers, ranchers and ultimately all families, through higher food prices,” Johansson said.

“What’s clear from these results is that more than 8 million California voters recognized this reality and agreed

See ‘Split-Roll’ Page 17
W ell, we made it. Kinda. Maybe I am feeling too accomplished in making it through the time when every commercial break has a minimum of 3 political ads in it. Slowly, votes are still being tabulated and there are a number of races that are still too close call. Taken from numbers released last Thursday, the county still has 1,751 unprocessed ballots left to count. A larger amount of 486,108 votes are still left to be counted by the state.

The late evening of November 10th did bring us some good news as Proposition 15 was officially determined as a fail on their year’s ballot. We do want to thank you for your efforts in getting the vote out and informing friends and family on Proposition 15. In Merced County, Proposition 15 failed by a large margin – 60.76% no to 39.24% yes. In voting numbers, it was 52,932 to 34,178. On a statewide level, the vote was 52.0% (8,662,011) to 48.0% (7,991,550).

Local numbers will be updated again on November 20 and all votes need to be certified through the state by Friday, December 11.

In other news, we are still on the obstacle course that is 2020. Monday, November 16, Merced County, along with several other California counties, slid back into the purple tier under Governor Newsom’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy. In total, 42 counties have been moved back into the purple tier meaning that restaurants are only allowed for outdoor dining or take out and gyms must be closed among other modifications. Time will tell on how long we are in this new tier as there are specific ways in which counties are able to move between tiers.

In other news, all members should have received a mailer from our office. We ask that you review the information card and send it back in as soon as you can. We have many contact numbers and emails that are inaccurate, making it difficult for us to do our jobs when there is a necessary issue to inform our membership. Review the various committees we have available as we would love to hear from you on various topics that impact your operations. Lastly, I encourage each of you to join us in tuning into California Farm Bureau’s Annual Meeting taking place December 6-9 through a virtual platform. There are several breakout sessions that are highly impactful to our community and we are excited to provide this opportunity to all members.

As you gather around your tables this year, in whatever manner you do, we wish you all the health and happiness this holiday season. Happy Thanksgiving!

from the
President’s Corner
Eric Harcksen

Hello, Merced County Farm Bureau members! Hope this finds you and your family well. It looks like we have defeated Proposition 15. It was a close race which is concerning for the future. We as a whole need to educate the public on the taxation pressure from California. I am really concerned that the state is coming up short on their budget especially now that we are looking at more shelter-in-place and shut down orders. We all know that the government will not cut their budgets so it’s likely that they will be looking to raise taxes any way possible. This is why it is imperative that we stay vigilant in educating the public that more taxation on agriculture will likely raise the price for food and goods. As we all know farmers are not price makers, we are price takers when it comes to what we get paid for our products. This is why we cannot afford to take a hit during this unprecedented time.

During the holiday season let’s all try to remember what we need to be thankful for. We are all here to have another day of farming and we as a whole will help each other keep this wonderful life going. I hope you and your family have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

from the
Director’s Desk
Breanne Ramos

If you are a member of the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, member packets should be arriving in your mailboxes soon, if they have not already. If you need in-person assistance completing your INMP Summary Report, I am available by appointment only. You can make

from the
Editor’s Notes
Denelle Flake

Since the release of the Virtual FARM2U program last month, we have received a lot of positive feedback from teachers that our Merced County 3rd graders are really enjoying and having fun with it. This week, we released a Thanksgiving themed lesson featuring a California turkey farmer. We are excited for the students to continue to use the program the remainder of the school year, as we plan to release a second round of videos in January. As mentioned before, Merced County Farm Bureau is a finalist for the California Farm Bureau Innovator’s Award. As a member, you can vote for us by attending the virtual California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. Please see page 20 for more information on how to register.

If you are a member of the Merced County Farm Bureau’s Mission Statement

Merced County Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, grassroots organization that advocates for the men and women who provide food, fiber, and nursery products for our community, state, and nation.

Merced County Farm Bureau exists for the purpose of improving the ability of individuals engaged in production agriculture to utilize California resources to produce food and fiber in the most profitable, efficient and responsible manner possible, guaranteeing our nation a domestic food supply.

Merced County Farm Bureau supports policies and legislation that promote and protect our Country’s number one industry - agriculture for future generations and the security of our nation.
an appointment by calling our office at (209) 723-3001.

Lastly, MCFB Scholarships are now available on our website at www.mercedfarmbureau.org/scholarships. Applications are due no later than 4 PM on Friday, December 18th. Please share these scholarship opportunities with any graduating high school seniors that qualify. Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Deadline to register for California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

November 26-27
MCFB Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

November 30
Deadline to register for California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting

December 6-9
California Farm Bureau Annual Meeting (pg. 20)

December 10
Stanislaus Farm Supply - Ask a PCA (pg. 12)

December 18
Deadline to apply for MCFB Scholarships (pg. 4)

December 23
MCFB Closing at noon

December 24-January 1
MCFB Closed for Christmas & New Years

December 31
Deadline to nominate for Golden Owl Award

January 25
Drive Thru Dinner Fundraiser Benefiting Nolan Pedretti (pg. 11)
Yosemite Farm Credit Supporting the Future of Agriculture

By: Yosemite Farm Credit

Yosemite Farm Credit remains dedicated to supporting the future of agriculture. YFC recently awarded 39 scholarship recipients with a total of $22,500. The following scholarships were awarded to high school and college students to help further their education in the agriculture field:

- $2,500 Stanislaus State Ag Entrepreneurial Scholarship: 1 recipient
- $750 MJC William Merriam Scholarship: 2 recipients
- $750 Merced College Scholarship: 2 recipients
- $500 FFA High School Scholarships: 32 recipients
- $500 Dairy Princess Scholarship Program: 2 recipients

Even though the local county fairs were cancelled this year, Yosemite Farm Credit remained committed to supporting local 4-H and FFA Students. In total, YFC donated over $44,000 to exhibitors of the Merced, Stanislaus and Mariposa County Fairs.

- $20,000 to the Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Auction to help support students and their projects
- $12,000 to the Stanislaus County Fair Virtual Livestock Auction
- $5,200 to Stanislaus County Fair replacement heifer exhibitors: 104 recipients
- $2,350 to Stanislaus County Fair beef exhibitors
- $2,000 to Stanislaus County 4-H for milkshake donations
- $1,000 to Merced County 4-H for milkshake donations
- $850 towards exhibitor project donations
- $800 to the Mariposa County Livestock Show
- $720 to Stanislaus County Fair Beef Supporters group for show shirts

Yosemite Farm Credit continuously works hard to provide the next generation of agricultural leaders with the tools they need to succeed. To learn more about community outreach and scholarship efforts please visit www.yfc.ag or contact Yosemite Farm Credit.

California Farm Groups Urge Costa Appointment as Agriculture Committee Chair

By: California Farm Bureau

A coalition of California farm organizations and water districts has formally asked House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to appoint Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, as the new chair of the House Agriculture Committee.

In a letter sent to Pelosi today, the 70 organizations said Costa “possesses the experience and leadership adeptness” to serve effectively as committee chair. The position opened last week when the current chair, Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn., was defeated for re-election.

The letter cites Costa’s 16 years of experience representing an agriculturally productive congressional district in the San Joaquin Valley, plus his long-time advocacy on behalf of federal nutrition programs, expansion of foreign markets for U.S. farm products, workforce issues and immigration reform, agricultural research, natural resources policy and on-farm conservation programs.

“Jim Costa has a broad and deep understanding of what’s needed to bring food and farm products to Americans’ homes,” said Jamie See ‘Costa’ Page 9
A Look Back: The Farm Bureau Organization 100 Years Ago

By: Emily Lin, Head of Digital Curation and Scholarship, UC Merced Library

“Merced County was what might be termed virgin territory for rural organization work before the farm bureau came into this county,” wrote County Agent J.F. Grass in his November 30, 1920 Narrative Report. But Grass reported that with a few “good men” of experience placed in office who were “willing workers,” and with ongoing attention to “developing individuals” to be “trained to act as leaders,” “the program of work idea is working out satisfactorily in this county.” As of December 1st of that year, the Farm Bureau of Merced County had fifteen farm centers and 1,075 members.

Three years after the start of the county farm bureau, the 1920 annual report strikes a reflective tone, and Grass takes stock of the factors that are important to the progress of work: the importance of “efficient local leadership,” and of addressing the needs of local conditions, which were found to be diverse across the county. Near the end of the report, he captures an interesting snapshot in time of what he sees as the needs and prospects of those fifteen centers—starting with Amsterdam and ending with Stevinson—based on their population, attitudes, and the physical conditions of the land. Of one center he writes, “moving population and sparsely settled, poor soil to the greatest extent, lack of unity among the settlers.” Of another, a “good center, a group of people in this center who always want to change the existing order of things… always making resolutions.”

Grass’s narrative provides a valuable window into the early years of farm bureau organization in Merced County. The 1920 report includes discussion of the Merced and West Joaquin irrigation districts recently formed, the founding of the Merced County Purebred Livestock Breeders Association, and the development of the Farm Bureau Exchange, as well as photographs illustrating farm demonstrations, agricultural clubs, and other work conducted in the county. Now, anyone with an internet connection can freely view and download these historic materials through UC Merced Library and the California Digital Library on Calisphere (www.calisphere.org).

In 2018, the National Archives awarded UC Merced Library a Major Initiatives grant to preserve and digitize these and other records of California’s Cooperative Extension (UCCE) county offices. The award recognized that the Cooperative Extension records represent “documentary heritage essential to understanding our democracy, history, and culture.” Merced County’s UCCE records are among the first the library archived, under an agreement between the campus and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. Over the course of the three-year grant, collections from fourteen California counties have been archived and are being digitized.

They are core to the California Agricultural Resources Archive (cara.ucmerced.edu), an effort the library is undertaking to aggregate and provide digital access to a host of historical research material on California agriculture online.

In subsequent issues of this newsletter, we’ll be featuring more highlights from CARA. Next month: Mary Van Camp, the county’s home demonstration agent, documented leaders’ efforts to improve health and nutrition in 1920.
Woods Wins National Sheep Proficiency at FFA National Convention

By: Austin Bell, Gustine FFA Chapter Reporter

G ustine FFA is extremely proud to announce that our very own Madison Woods is the National Sheep Proficiency winner. The advisors have watched Maddie’s project grow from her freshman year where she started with only a handful of ewes, to where she is now with a flock of about 30. Besides her project, Maddie has grown so much as an individual, and she says that she owes it all to it for the FFA organization, and what it has taught her in terms of leadership and responsibility.

Maddie had to win sectional, regional, and state proficiency to gain the opportunity to compete at a national level. Once she was in the national contest, the judges looked at all of the contestants’ applications to determine who would be in the top 4. After Maddie made it to the top 4, she was asked to submit a video to the national judges that was explaining her project and answering questions pertaining to her application and record book. Once the video was submitted, Maddie had to nervously wait until the winners were announced. The results were to be found out during the virtual national convention which started on Tuesday, October 27. In the days leading up to the announcement, all Madison had to was hope. Her family, her advisors, and the whole chapter has seen how much time and hard work Maddie spends on her project. “It’s amazing to see how much work Maddie puts into her project. She’s constantly making decisions to better her flock”-Emma Woods. So, on Thursday, October 29 when Madison Woods was declared the National Sheep Proficiency Winner, everyone knew that it was well deserved. Our whole chapter is honored to have a national winner among us, and is extremely happy that Gustine FFA can be represented at a national level.

Four Merced area high school students win national FFA proficiency awards

By: Shawn Jansen, Merced Sun-Star

F our local high school students from Golden Valley and Merced high schools received national Future Farmers of America Proficiency awards recently.

Golden Valley High’s Hunter Aue, Spencer Stephens, Peter Bliss and Merced High’s Alyssa Loredo were all named national winners. The FFA organization has over 700,000 members nationwide.

Each winner will receive $1,000 and a plaque.

“These students have worked toward this accomplishment since they were toddlers, and it is the culmination of the hard work they have put in for many years,” said Golden Valley FFA advisor Cody Jacobsen. “The students dedication toward being successful and focus on being continual learners is admirable, these students will continue to be successful throughout their lives and will be leaders in the Agriculture industry.”

Merced ag instructor Stephanie Kuhr says they have excitedly watched the announcement of the

“While they were listing the other candidates, you could see the nervousness in (Loredo’s) smile,” Kuhr said. “Once they announced her as the winner, you can see that smile turn into a jump of joy. We both started screaming so loudly that one of our neighboring teachers came to ask if everything was okay.”

ALYSSA LOREDO, MERCED

The first time Kuhr saw Loredo, she was at the Merced County Fair selling her jerky product. Kuhr was transferring to Merced High from Livingston that year and she had made a mental note that she had to get in contact with Loredo.

“I asked my fifth period soil chemistry class if anyone knew the girl that sold beef jerky from that point on she was nicknamed jerky girl,” Kuhr said.

Loredo’s national proficiency award was for agricultural sales-entrepreneurship. Loredo has a supervised agricultural experience named Wild Game Jerky, involving the sale and marketing of domesticated and exotic animal jerky products.

The business began small, setting up a county fairs, but now has expanded to sales on Amazon. Loredo currently sells 30 types of jerky including bison, alligator and ostrich.

“I believe what makes Alyssa’s project stand out is the novelty of the product she sells,” Kuhr said. “Alyssa is extremely hardworking and dedicates a lot of her time to business. It is not easy balancing school, sports, college classes all the while trying to grow her business. Alyssa does not come from an agricultural background which really strengthens the fact the FFA is for everyone.”

HUNTER AUE, GOLDEN VALLEY

Aue raises, breeds and sells bucking bulls. His national proficiency award is for beef production-entrepreneurship.

Aue began his project in 2008 and by high school some of the bulls he has produced have become competitive at Professional Bull Rider events across the Western and Midwestern United States.

He currently has 105 head of Brahman-influenced cows and nine bulls that are active in PBR events. He also has eight bulls that have competed in World Finals in Las Vegas.

SPENCER STEPHENS, GOLDEN VALLEY

Stephens won his national proficiency award for environmental science and natural resources-entrepreneurship/placement.

Stephens was only 10 years old when he began working for his family’s business, SS Blue Diesel Exhaust Fluid.

He has focused his work on specifically cleaning and maintaining of the facilities. The fluid is a combination of deionized water and urea, which when combined is used in all new tractors, trucks and other agriculturally-related equipment.

It helps reduce carbon emissions in the air because it removes nitrous oxide.

PETER BLISS, GOLDEN VALLEY

By the time Bliss was 6 years old he was operating tractors and harvesters, while helping to grow and harvest cotton.

Bliss’ national proficiency award was for fiber and/or oil crop production-entrepreneurship/placement.

When Bliss started high school he had inherited 30 acres of ground to plant his own cotton. Today he grows 182 acres and manages all field preparation, irrigation, chemical application and Acala cotton harvesting.

“All three students (Aue, Stephens and Bliss) have been involved with their projects since they were young kids,” Jacobson said. “Over the years, they have been entrusted by their families to continually expand their knowledge and skills, and I have no doubt that all three of them will be expanding and taking over their family operations in the future years.

“All three students had specialized school schedules their senior year of high school so that they could do what they love, work and expand upon their projects and achieve success.”
BC FFA Members Perform Well in Virtual Speaking Contests

By: Buhach Colony FFA

With so much changing in our lives in the past eight months, one thing has remained constant - the will and determination of an FFA member! The BC FFA members have shown true dedication and the determination of a leader who will work to succeed despite any situation. We have seen some major changes to life as we know it, but the members of our chapter have met those challenges with an attitude of perseverance and that is something to be proud of. While we did see a brief halt to the way FFA members compete, the organization was quick to adapt to the hundreds of hard working members, and as the gears shifted, much of what we do went virtual. We had many students participate at the various levels of competition throughout the year 2020 and most recently two members, Shayla Silva and Cristina Dillsaver went the extra mile to compete in a nationwide virtual speaking competition. Shayla entered the Prepared Public Speaking competition with her prepared speech on the topic of Swine Production and the use of Farrowing Crates and performed extremely well. Cristina represented our chapter in the Creed Speaking competition, delivering a flawless rendition of the FFA Creed written by E.M Tiffany and answered the questions presented in the same manner, earning her a spot in the top three in the nation! With her impressive finish, Cristina brought home a $250 prize and we are really proud of both for showing what is possible, even in the toughest times. These two have set the stage and a precedent for how we will continue to do what we do and will strive to grow and develop as leaders and the future of the industry.

Socktober

By: Jenna Bates, Livingston FFA Reporter

Every year in October, the Livingston FFA collects socks for “Socktober”. Through this event, we collect new pairs of socks for people in need. This year, we held a drive through event, so students and supporters could drop off the socks. We are so excited to announce that we collected over 350 pairs of socks. Our decision on where to donate the socks was a difficult one. We finally chose to donate the socks to California wildfire victims. Many people lost their homes and everything in them this year. Socks are one the most asked for items after these tragic events. With all the wildfires so close around us this year, we thought it only suitable to give back to the victims. We hope that this little contribution will help people that really need it. Livingston FFA has always prided themselves on giving back to the community and others. As we continue through this unknown school year, we hope to find other ways to give back and help those in need. For more information about Livingston FFA, check out our website at livingstonffa.org or our social media @livingston_ffa.

Supreme Court agrees to hear California grower’s challenge to state farm labor law

By: David G. Savage, The Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court agreed Friday to hear a property rights challenge to a 45-year-old California labor law that allows union organizers to go on farmland to speak with workers at the start of their day or during a lunch break.

Several growers backed by the California Farm Bureau contend the law should be struck down as unconstitutional because it amounts to the government taking private property.

Lawyers for the Pacific Legal Foundation, who filed the appeal, called it a “union trespass law.” “The Constitution forbids government from requiring you to allow unwanted strangers onto your property. And union activists are no exception,” said Joshua Thompson, a senior attorney at Pacific Legal.

“California’s regulation that allows them to do so violates property owners’ fundamental right to exclude trespassers.”

The case points to how a more conservative court could make changes in many areas of law well beyond the more familiar culture war disputes over abortion and religion.

Since the 1930s, federal labor laws have protected workers and their right to organize and join a union. But most of those laws did not protect agricultural laborers, the state’s lawyers said. That prompted California’s Legislature to adopt the Agricultural Labor Relations Act in 1975 to protect the rights of farmworkers.

At issue in the high court now is a regulation issued shortly afterward on “the right of access by union organizers to the premises of an agricultural employer for the purpose of meeting and talking with employees and soliciting their support.”

The state’s lawyers said that this right was “limited and conditioned” and that “organizers may enter the property only for one hour before the start of work, one hour after the completion of work, and one hour during employees’ lunch break.”

According to the challengers, the case began early one morning when union activists, yelling into bullhorns, came on to the property of the Cedar Point Nursery, which grows strawberry plants just south of the Oregon state line.

A second company, Fowler Packing Co. in Fresno, joined the suit after refusing access to union organizers. Fowler grows grapes and citrus fruit, and says it employs 1,800 to 2,500 workers in its field operations and an additional 500 at its packing facility.

“Like Cedar Point, none of Fowler’s employees live on premises, and all of its workers are fully accessible to union organizers when they are not at work,” the lawyers told the court.

The court will again consider the meaning of the 5th Amendment clause that says “private property [shall not] be taken for public use without just compensation.”

In the past, the court has said this means the government may not take possession of private property without paying for it. However, the court has not forbid regulating property.

A federal judge and a U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals panel, by a 2-1 vote, rejected the challenge. “The access regulation is not a permanent physical taking” of property, and therefore does not violate the Constitution, said Judge Richard Paez for the 9th Circuit panel.

In their appeal, lawyers for Pacific Legal argued that the regulation allowed union organizers regular access to the farm property, and they compared the case to disputes over access to beaches on the California coast.

The justices plan to hear arguments in the case, Cedar Point Nursery vs. Hassid, early next year and issue a decision by the end of June.
Virus

continued from page 1

enough that the state would have allowed it to bring back NFL fans for the first time this season.

“These are really significant changes. We know that it has a huge effect on business in the community, but we all know this has a significant effect,” Santa Clara County Counsel James Williams said at a press conference Monday.

Not all government officials supported the rollback. In more conservative Placer County, “we’ve gone from the second-least restrictive tier to the most-restrictive tier in less than six days,” said Kirk Uhler, a county supervisor who has been critical of the governor’s approach. He said shutting down businesses hurts businesses, but doesn’t curb the spread.

“Los Angeles County, which never got out of purple — they’ve been in the most restrictive lockdown this entire time — and they’ve still had a spike,” Uhler said. “So show me the evidence that restricting these businesses stops the spread. It doesn’t exist.”

State Assemblymember Devon Mathis (R-Visalia), whose district includes Tulare County, which also never has gotten out of purple, doesn’t think the tier system is working. “We need to treat the people we govern as adults and allow them to make those decisions for themselves,” he said.

But Newsom on Monday defended his reopening process, saying the “blueprint” is working as the administration intended. The system was designed to offer a slower transition to businesses and residents, both in reopening and in closing back down. That was the case until infection numbers alarmed state officials over the past several days.

While the state’s approach so far has allowed for variation among counties, Newsom said a spike in cases has prevailed across the state rather than in isolated areas and has hit every age group. "We are seeing community spread broadly," he said.

Newsom also floated the idea that he was “assessing” the idea of a curfew to help curb the spread. He said he is not yet committed to the idea and is reviewing what it would mean to impose a curfew on business activities.

Lee Riley, an infectious disease expert at the UC Berkeley, questioned how well a curfew would work if much of the transmission appears to be occurring within households.

Riley suggested that providing clearer guidance on how people can gather safely, such as maintaining a two-week buffer between visits, could be more effective than curfews. “The formal relaxation of businesses may have contributed to the relaxation of informal gatherings,” he said.

Monica Gandhi, also an infectious disease expert at UCSF, said the color-coded system sets clear standards, and she believed it’s appropriate to tighten restrictions on counties that exceed the thresholds for positivity rates and new cases.

“There’s going to be a dance — literally, it’s a dance — between the virus and the human populations,” Gandhi said. “We’re going to go back and forth between restrictions until we get a vaccine, which we’re getting really close to.”

Under the new adjustments, some counties dropped multiple tiers to land in the most restrictive tier. Eight counties — Alameda, Butte, El Dorado, Napa, Nevada, Santa Clara, Siskiyou and Tuolumne — shifted two tiers, from orange to purple. Humboldt County and San Francisco, the only urban county to reach the least restrictive tier, were moved from yellow to red, skipping orange. Only two rural Sierra Nevada counties — Mariposa and Alpine — remain in yellow.
What will tax increase advocates do now?

By: Dan Walters, CalMatters

Proposition 15, which would have boosted property taxes on commercial real estate by billions of dollars a year, finally bit the dust last week.

It wasn’t a surprise. Although its advocates — unions, mostly — may cite the COVID-19 pandemic and recession as causes for failure, the measure never polled strongly even before the twin crises struck.

Their pitch was two-fold — schools and local governments need the money and big commercial property owners benefit from an unfair loophole.

The successful counter argument from business opponents was also a two-fer — if Proposition 15 passed, property owners would shift extra taxes to business tenants and their customers, and it would be the first step toward dismantling Proposition 13, California’s iconic and popular property tax limit.

Proposition 15’s rejection creates a dilemma for public employee unions and other spending advocates who ardently believe that despite already having one of the nation’s highest taxation levels, somewhere over 12% of personal income, California governments need much more money.

Those advocates enjoy strong support in the overwhelmingly Democratic Legislature, which could simply raise sales, personal income or corporate tax rates without going to voters. Tax increases will no doubt be introduced when the Legislature reconvenes in December since putting a bill in the hopper is a cheap way for a legislator to show solidarity with unions and other pro-tax factions.

However, having enough Democratic legislators to pass new taxes and putting up enough votes for specific levies are not the same thing, particularly if they lack gubernatorial support.

When Gov. Gavin Newsom endorsed Proposition 15, he pointedly said he would not sanction more bites on his fellow high-income Californians or a “wealth tax,” both of which have been floated in the Capitol.

“In a global, mobile economy, now is not the time for the kind of state tax increases on income we saw proposed at the end of this legislative session and I will not sign such proposals into law,” Newsom said.

Newsom’s reference to a “global, mobile economy” implies awareness that the state budget is already very dependent on taxing incomes of the wealthy. In fact, the top 1% of taxpayers — about 150,000 in a state of 40 million — generate more than a third of the state’s unrestricted revenues.

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Newsom’s reference to a “global, mobile economy” implies awareness that the state budget is already very dependent on taxing incomes of the wealthy. In fact, the top 1% of taxpayers — about 150,000 in a state of 40 million — generate more than a third of the state’s unrestricted revenues. Hitting them up for more could encourage tax avoidance, such as freezing taxable income from capital gains, or even fleeing to other states.

If Newsom and the Legislature won’t act, would advocates risk another a ballot measure in 2022? The California School Boards Association and its allies had wanted to put a $15 billion personal and corporate income tax hike on this year’s ballot, but bowed to pressure from Proposition 15’s advocates, particularly the California Teachers Association, to not compete.

“After conducting a significant amount of polling and analysis, we have determined that having two measures on the same ballot that — at least in part — provide funding for public schools, risked a scenario where our measure would come up short,” California School Boards Association CEO Vernon Billy said last December as his group backed off.

An extra $15 billion a year would raise California’s per-pupil spending to the national average on the way to the education community’s goal of entering the top ranks of states in school support, which would require another $15 billion per year.

Those are big numbers and don’t take into account demands from health, social welfare and early childhood education advocates for billions more they want to expand services.

Does Proposition 15’s defeat cool the jets of tax increase advocates, or spur them to greater efforts?
Diane sweetpotato reign as the premier red yam coming to an end?

from the
Farm Advisor
Scott Stoddard
UC Cooperative Extension, Merced County

Every year with the cooperation of plant breeders in North Carolina and Louisiana, I screen 25 – 50 new cultivars of sweetpotatoes in early stages of development. The emphasis for more than 10 years has been on orange flesh, red-skinned types to replace a variety known to the industry as “Diane”. Diane is a strong, easy to grow cultivar that has good yield potential, and sometimes, good shape and color. While not grown in other areas of the U.S., Diane is a major player in the California market. I estimate it accounts for at least 30% of the harvested acreage, or about 232 million pounds annually.

Diane sweetpotatoes have been around since about 1987. They were tested by my predecessor and emeritus farm advisor Bob Scheuerman. They originated at the University of Maryland, and even though they had good yield and vibrant red skin, they were considered too long and so they were dropped from further trial work after 3 years. Additionally, they were nematode susceptible and didn’t store well. Despite this, a couple of growers decided to continue to grow and test Diane on their own. There was a lot of incentive to do so: the red skin variety being used at the time was Garnet, a notoriously low-yielding variety very susceptible to common virus diseases that infect sweetpotatoes. By 1998, Diane had become a major variety for California growers.

But sweetpotatoes are one of those vegetables expected to be on the shelf year-round, and so cultivars with good storage potential are needed. Furthermore, using fumigants to control root knot nematodes has become more problematic than 30 years ago, and so nematode resistant varieties are more important now than ever before. With two major strikes going against it, Diane should have been replaced long ago. Why not?

The genetics of sweetpotatoes are complex -- it has 90 chromosomes, which even for plants is a very high number. Sweetpotatoes are hexaploids: they have 6 sets of chromosomes of 15 traits. Humans and most animals are diploid, in that there are 2 sets of chromosomes. People for example, have 23 chromosome pairs, for a total of 46 per cell. Many plants have more than two. For example, wheat it tetraploid and has 28 chromosomes. One theory about sweetpotatoes is that this high chromosome count gives the plant an evolutionary advantage, since the additional sets of chromosomes can compensate for the ones that have collected mutations and can thus still produce a healthy and normal plant (Jun Yang et al., 2017. Nature Plants (3), pp 696-703).

But one of the drawbacks of hexaploidy is that seeds are not true to type. Seeds will produce roots that look nothing like what they came from! As a result, sweetpotatoes must be vegetatively propagated by taking plants from sprouted roots or cuttings from field grown plants. Furthermore, it also means that the variety traits tend to wander even within these cuttings: skin color, shape, and root set can change each year. A good example of this is ‘Burgundy’.

The first commercial release of a red skin cultivar since Diane was ‘Burgundy’ in 2014, initially entered and evaluated as L-04-175. It started out as an attractive, high yielding variety with excellent flavor and good storage characteristics. Then it changed. It has been commercially unsuccessful because of poor root set, skin color that is more maroon than red, and low average yields.

The next red in the pipeline is ‘Vermillion’, named for a parish in Louisiana, and tested here since 2015 as L-13-81. It has good shape, very smooth red-purple skin color, deep orange flesh, and a unique “double skin” that reduces the appearance of scratches on the surface of the roots. Yield has been about 86% of Diane, which is acceptable considering it stores better. Last year, I thought this could be the replacement, finally, for Diane.

But then 2020 came along. And like so many things this year, weird things happened. Some growers had high transplant stand loss. Others experienced forked roots and shape issues. Many commented that yields were not high enough. As one grower put it, “It’s pretty, but it’s no Diane. Doesn’t taste good enough”.

Diane is kind of like Russet Burbank potatoes or nonpareil almonds – tough to beat. There’s a reason some varieties have lasted for decades. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody. And please eat those sweetpotatoes.
Enjoy some of Merced County's Top 15 Commodities this Thanksgiving!

Sweet Potatoes
Rank No. 5

Turkeys
Rank No. 14

The Merced County 2019 Report on Agriculture is now available online at https://www.co.merced.ca.us/151/Crop-Statistics-Reports

Merced County Farm Bureau Heritage Members
Platinum Heritage Members

Grimbleby Coleman CPAs
Holt Ag Solutions
Minturn Nut Company
Turlock Irrigation District

Gold Heritage Members

Save the date for a Drive Thru Dinner Fundraiser benefiting Nolan Pedretti. Nolan is the 4-year-old son of Gino and Michelle Pedretti. He is currently undergoing treatment for acute myeloid leukemia.

January 25, 2021
$100 per ticket | Meal for four
Details regarding ticket purchase, time and location to come
November 13, 2020 - ELECTIONS

Proposition 15 (also known as “split roll”) was officially defeated this week after a week’s worth of continued ballot counting. While not all ballots have been counted, the current 600,000 (approximate) vote margin will not be erased by the remaining ballots across the state. This is a great relief to farms and ranches across the state. The California Farm Bureau led a coalition along with Western Growers and the Agricultural Council of California that helped defeat the initiative.

CANNABIS

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) today released modified proposed regulations for the OCal Program, a statewide certification program that will establish comparable-to-organic cannabis standards. The release of these modified regulations marks the official start of a third public comment period provided under California law. All interested parties are encouraged to submit comments about the current modifications to the proposed cannabis regulations by close of business on Tuesday, November 24, 2020. The OCal Program will ensure that cannabis products bearing the OCal seal have been certified to consistent, uniform standards comparable to the National Organic Program.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Department of Food and Agriculture has announced that they will be celebrating Healthy Soils Week from November 30th to December 5th. Farm Bureau will be participating in a variety of the virtual activities.

PACKAGING

The Assembly Natural Resources Committee will be hosting two informational sessions (Monday, November 16th and Wednesday, November 18th) to discuss the impact of plastic packaging on the environmental and the impact of COVID-19 on the recycling industry. It is likely discussions of reviving failing measures SB 54/AB 1080 from last year’s legislative session will be discussed. Friday Review readers may remember that Farm Bureau opposed both measures with concerns that eliminating access to plastic packaging for agricultural commodities may limit shelf life, complicate distribution and pose a food safety risk. It is unclear, but perhaps likely, that agricultural packaging will be discussed. Farm Bureau will view the hearings and make a public comment, if necessary.

WATER

The State Water Resources Control Board will meet Tuesday, November 17th at 9:00 a.m. Among other items the Board will consider a proposed order imposing Administrative Civil Liability on Pimentel Family RLT for failure to timely file supplemental statement of water diversion and use for 2018 diversions and use under S023607, S023608 and S023610, and on Timberlake Estates Homeowners Association for failure to timely file annual licensee report for water-right License 7716 (Application A017108) for 2018 diversions and use.

The California Water Commission will meet Wednesday, November 18th at 9:30 a.m. Among other items on the agenda the following may be of interest:
• Conveyance Projects Panel Discussion
In preparation for the Commission’s work assessing a state role in financing conveyance projects, a panel of project proponents will discuss conveyance projects being proposed by their organizations. A second panel will discuss the Human Right to Water within the context of conveyance projects.

• Water Storage Investment Program: Options for Available Funding
Commission staff will discuss the resolution received from the Temperance Flat Reservoir Authority indicating the project is withdrawing from consideration for funding from the Water Storage Investment Program and discuss options for the use of available funds.

• State Water Project Briefing: Subsidence and the State Water Project Department of Water Resources (DWR) staff will brief the Commission on the impact of subsidence on State Water Project infrastructure and how DWR is responding to those impacts.

• State Water Project Briefing: Construction Update
DWR staff will update the Commission on State Water Project construction activities.

Governor Gavin Newsom reappointed Celeste Cantu, 65, of Temecula, to the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, where
Will ‘Amtrak Joe’ Biden bail out California’s troubled bullet train? Don’t bet on it

By: Ralph Vartabedian, The Los Angeles Times

President-elect Joe Biden is a self-professed train fanatic who estimates that he has ridden more than 2 million miles on 16,000 trains. This fall, he rode the rails to campaign across Ohio and Pennsylvania, part of the “Build Back Better” train tour.

For months, some supporters of California’s troubled high-speed rail project have pined for a Biden presidency, hoping his administration would throw its support behind the planned system between Los Angeles and the Bay Area, with trains running at 220 mph.

But while state officials anticipate more peaceful dealings with the new administration, nobody expects an imminent bailout. Some doubt that the president-elect will make investment in high-speed rail a priority.

“Biden is a fan of the typical Amtrak route, which is akin to our Metrolink or the Amtrak service in the Central Valley,” said Ara Najarian, a board member of Metro and Metrolink. “High-speed rail is a question mark. I don’t know he would go that far.”

California’s high-speed rail endeavor, launched in 2008 when voters approved $9 billion in bonds, faces daunting challenges. It has a funding shortfall of $80 billion. It may run out of money even to complete a 171-mile starter system between Bakersfield and Merced by 2028, as Gov. Gavin Newsom has proposed. The project still lags in acquiring needed land and has encountered problems building bridges.

Even under a friendly Biden White House, California would need to signal a stronger commitment to fund the project and resolve many thorny issues it has avoided, such as a plan to subsidize the service in violation of state law, experts say.

And ultimately, the state needs to come up with a credible plan to connect Los Angeles and San Francisco, not just build an isolated starter system in the Central Valley, as it is now doing.

But with the stroke of a pen, Biden officials could reverse some of the punitive actions that the Federal Railroad Administration took against the project over the past year.

Brian Kelly, chief executive of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, is careful not to set expectations too high, though he has already been in contact with members of Biden’s transition team, including Phil Washington, Los Angeles’ Metro chief.

Just having a normal government relationship would be a good first step, Kelly said. Federal officials in the Trump administration stopped taking calls or responding to emails from senior California officials last year. The Federal Railroad Administration rejected invoices submitted to match federal grants and refused to act on environmental submissions.

“I am encouraged by the opportunity to have a functional partnership,” Kelly said.

As for more money, Kelly said there is the possibility of “public help” and private participation down the road. “We are at the end of a tough beginning,” he said about the project’s status.

Advocates for bullet trains have bigger dreams. The U.S. High Speed Rail Assn., based in Washington, wants $360 billion for bullet train projects across the nation, including $60 billion for the California system.

The American Society of Civil Engineers — founded in 1862 — wants the federal government to focus on decay in existing highways, bridges, rail systems, tunnels, dams, sewers, airports and other essential civil works. The organization notes that more than 40% of buses and 25% of rail transit hardware are in marginal or poor condition.

President Trump was not an immediate enemy of the California project, but over the last two years, his administration became hostile. Earlier this year, the Federal Railroad Administration terminated a $929-million grant issued in 2010 by the Obama administration, saying the rail authority had failed to comply with a requirement that it make “reasonable progress” in building a bullet train between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The state filed a lawsuit, which is pending. Kelly said he looks forward to a resolution of the suit.

“I would guess that the $929 million in the fiscal 2010 grant would be re-obligated,” said Louis Thompson, a passenger-rail veteran who chairs the state-appointed peer review panel.

Exactly how the Biden team would restore the grant is unclear.

The fact that the state’s suit alleged that the termination was arbitrary and capricious may ease the restoration of the funds, compared to a negotiated administrative procedure, said Eloise Pasachoff, a law professor specializing in federal grants at the Georgetown University Law Center.

The Transportation Department did not appear to file a motion to dismiss the suit or slow the proceeding, she added, so “a settlement could indeed involve reinstituting the grant.”

The other key step that Biden could take is relaxing construction and environmental clearance deadlines set under a $2.5-billion grant issued in 2009 under the Obama stimulus program. It required that the state build 119 miles of structures and track, as well as complete all environmental reviews from San Francisco to Los Angeles by 2022.

Although Kelly said it is not yet clear whether the project will need a relaxation of the deadline, industry officials and analysts say the project has an almost impossible job in trying to complete the track installation, given that many bridges, viaducts and other structures have not even begun construction.

If Republicans retain control of the Senate, a possibility that will not be settled until January, any direct help to the California project is doubtful. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is married to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, who helped lead the Trump battle
Member Spotlight
Macedo's Mini Acre

By: Denelle Flake, Farm News Editor

The holiday season is upon us and what better gift to give than something locally produced? Larry and Maureen Macedo, owners of Macedo’s Mini Acre, located in Turlock, CA offer a variety of alpaca fleece products sure to keep your loved ones warm this winter!

In 2006, Larry and Maureen’s daughter was working at a local yarn store and shared with her parents how soft, yet durable alpaca fleece was, but was also expensive to purchase. After that day, the family decided to get 2 male alpacas. Present day, the ranch has about 70 alpacas, including the two boys they started with. They have a variety of color in their herd from solid white to solid black, patterns and shades of grey or brown. All the harvesting, cleaning, carding, spinning, dying, knitting and felting are done right on their ranch. Maureen still uses her great grandmother’s carding combs to help make yarn. They even have a garden of various plants they use for producing their own dyes. They offer fiber, yarn, hats, dryer balls, gloves and more in their ranch store!

While harvesting the fibers is their main focus, Larry and Maureen host a variety of opportunities right on their ranch! Their passion for what they do really plays out through providing their community the opportunity to interact with alpacas and learn about their operation. Alpacas are very smart animals and can be trained to perform tricks and complete obstacle courses. On their ranch, they host performance shows, clinics and agritourism events. Most recently, they hosted yoga and paint night events while guest mingled with the alpacas. They also offer classes for those that want to learn to spin, knit or felt.

Macedo’s Mini Acre is a multifaceted operation that is owned and operated by two individuals that put their heart and soul into caring for their alpacas, producing quality fibers and products and educating their community. You can shop Macedo’s Mini Acre on their web page, www.macedosminiacres.com, or their ranch store and can like them on Facebook at Macedo’s Mini Acre to stay up to date on all events and sales. If you would like to schedule an appointment or learn more, feel free to contact them at macedosminiacre@gmail.com or (209) 648-2338. This holiday season, be sure to support local and visit Macedo’s Mini Acre for all your warm, soft and fuzzy product needs!

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against the California project.

A Transportation Department spokesperson said Tuesday that the department was willing to work with the state over the last seven years but that the state “consistently failed to meet its obligations and milestones” under the grant agreement and federal law. The department, the person said, responded with “appropriate corrective actions as steward of taxpayers dollars to keep it from being a complete boondoggle.”

Even with a Democratic-controlled Senate that would back a big infrastructure spending package, California would have to compete with 49 other states for money and bullet train continued from page 13

would have to decide how to prioritize its share among many important transportation needs.

“Prospects for some financial participation by the federal government are better than they were, but it is easy to overestimate them,” said Martin Wachs, an emeritus professor at UCLA who is an expert in transportation.

“There could be a few billion dollars, but it would not eliminate the need for the state to put the project on a sound financial footing.”

Wachs and others have long argued that California needs to show a stronger long-term commitment to the project with a funding plan that shows it can eventually connect the Central Valley construction to the state’s urban centers.

In their last year, officials in the Obama administration took tough steps to tighten control of the project, even as the rail authority dismissed their warnings of cost overruns.

Biden’s selection of Washington, the Metro chief, to head his transition team for transportation has raised hopes that California has an “in” with the new White House. But Washington has made a career in urban mass transit.

Indeed, many Democratic legislators in California have already called to slow spending on the Central Valley bullet train and redirect funding to Southern California and the Bay Area, where there is greater public need for transit. And Democrats have prioritized education, housing and healthcare over everything else.

Dan Richard, former chairman of the rail authority, is similarly cautious. “It is impossible to forecast if there will be additional [bullet train] funding and the size of it,” Richard said. “You can’t ask for a pot of money without saying, ‘This is what it will deliver.’”

He notes that Biden supports a big stimulus that would include infrastructure and is a known fan of Amtrak. “That doesn’t necessarily translate to the California high-speed rail,” he said. “Amtrak needs a big infusion for repair and modernization.”

The key question is how much California’s powerful Democratic leaders, including Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, Gov. Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who is being considered for a cabinet post, will invest in high-speed rail.

As the project has endured delays, technical setbacks and cost overruns, they have publicly said little or nothing on the matter.

Legislative continued from page 12

she has served since 2018. Cantu has been an advisor with the Water Solutions Network since 2017. She was General Manager of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority from 2006 to 2017, Executive Director of the California State Water Resources Control Board from 2001 to 2006, State Director at U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development from 1998 to 2001, Executive Director at the Imperial Valley Housing Authority from 1978 to 1998 and Planning Director for the City of Calexico from 1977 to 1978. Cantu is vice chair of the Water Foundation Board of Directors and Water Education Foundation Board of Directors and president of the Public Policy Institute of California, Water Policy Center Advisory Council. She earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. This position requires Senate confirmation and the compensation is $250 per diem. Cantu is a Democrat.

WILDFIRE

The Assembly Agriculture Committee will be hosting an information hearing on Wednesday, November 18th from 1-4pm to discuss the impacts of wildfire on California Agriculture. Farm Bureau President, Jamie Johansson, and several Farm Bureau members will be testifying, sharing their experiences, losses and opportunities.

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## Merced County Business Member Directory

Businesses Supporting the Farm Bureau

To be included in the directory, join Merced County Farm Bureau as a business member by calling 723-3001.

### REPAIRS & SERVICES

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### GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS

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<td>Blue Diamond Growers</td>
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<td>Silva’s Hay Source</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Pollination Connection</td>
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<td>Minturn Huller Co-op</td>
<td>(559) 665-1185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Merced Hulling</td>
<td>667-2308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace &amp; Son</td>
<td>382-0131</td>
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### IRRIGATION, WELLS, & SEPTIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allison Sierra, Inc.</td>
<td>966-4082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agri-Valley Irrigation</td>
<td>384-8494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickey's Pump Service</td>
<td>394-3112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frasier Irrigation Company</td>
<td>387-4202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation Design &amp; Construction, LLC</td>
<td>387-4500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision Aqua</td>
<td>756-2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Well Drillers</td>
<td>357-0675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rain for Rent/Westside Pump(559) 693-4315</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robal Inc.</td>
<td>826-4540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannon Pump Company</td>
<td>723-3904</td>
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### INSECT & WEED CONTROL

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<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Spraying Service</td>
<td>667-1038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malm Ag Pest Management</td>
<td>392-6905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Creek Land</td>
<td>704-1790</td>
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### FARM SUPPLIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ag Flag</td>
<td>357-3424</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cal Farm Service</td>
<td>358-1554</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kellogs Supply</td>
<td>722-1501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Livingston True Value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardware &amp; Farm Supplies</td>
<td>394-7949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marfab</td>
<td>826-6700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modesto Dairy Supply</td>
<td>669-6200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanislaus Farm Supply</td>
<td>723-0704</td>
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### FUEL SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.H. Breshears, Inc.</td>
<td>522-7291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western States Petroleum Assoc.</td>
<td>(661) 321-0884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Pacific Petroleum</td>
<td>948-9412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van De Pol Petroleum</td>
<td>667-0236</td>
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### INSURANCE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barlocker Insurance</td>
<td>383-0220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flutensch &amp; Busby Insurance</td>
<td>722-1541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Norton Insurance</td>
<td>357-3626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rico, Pfitzer, Pires and Associates</td>
<td>854-2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walter Mortensen Insurance</td>
<td>353-2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Valley Insurance</td>
<td>826-5667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winton Ireland Insurance</td>
<td>394-7925</td>
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### FINANCIAL SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice B. Contreras CPA</td>
<td>722-6778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Ag Credit</td>
<td>384-1050/826-0320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers &amp; Merchants Bank</td>
<td>626-4100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grumbley Coleman CPAs</td>
<td>527-4220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans County Title Company</td>
<td>383-4660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yosemite Farm Credit</td>
<td>383-1116</td>
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### SOLAR

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coldwell Solar</td>
<td>259-9260</td>
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### MISCELLANEOUS

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<tr>
<th>Company</th>
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<tr>
<td>Amarants Propane Service</td>
<td>358-2257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berliner Cohen LLP</td>
<td>385-0700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Farmland Trust</td>
<td>916 544-2712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAC Engineering Inc.</td>
<td>664-1067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hat Source</td>
<td>357-3424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merced County Fair</td>
<td>722-1506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. B. Iyer, M.D.</td>
<td>854-1120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Anne's Garden Nursery</td>
<td>358-3875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe Pet Hospital</td>
<td>383-5050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS Blue</td>
<td>722-2583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwired Broadband</td>
<td>(559) 336-4157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CFBF, Western Growers and the Agricultural Council of California formed a coalition, Family Farmers Against Prop 15, which mobilized rural voters to reject the tax measure. Johansson thanked the more than 1,000 family farmers who contributed $250 or less to the campaign and who recognized how damaging the measure would have been to rural communities.

“Many California voters were already struggling with the affordability crisis facing our state before COVID-19, and even more are struggling now,” he said. “The defeat of Prop 15 can be seen as a rejection of this specific, harmful measure, but also as a broader call to our elected officials to stop enacting costly policies that hurt farmers, consumers and businesses.”

Just Around the Corner

In this wild, crazy, confusing year of politics, posturing, pandemic, and pandemonium, we’re all trying to make sense of 2020. It’s been an extremely difficult year for so many, both mentally and physically. The medical experts have switched gears so many times in the last six months, its left heads spinning. Finally, it seems the light at the end of the COVID tunnel is coming into view with a vaccine within our grasp.

With the approval and distribution of a vaccine, we are looking forward to holding our popular Hornitos Rib Dinner in March. As with many other nonprofit groups, we’ve not been able to hold our fundraisers this year. Our support of the Mariposa County youth agricultural programs has continued throughout this financially challenging year regardless. These programs are so important to our young adults, discontinuing them is not an option. Your participation and support of our fundraiser dinner would be greatly appreciated.

With the holidays just around the corner, the stressful shopping season is in full swing. I find it harder and harder to buy the perfect gifts for the adults in my life. If you are in the same quandary, and are buying for the agriculture enthusiast in your life, may I suggest a donation to the Mariposa County Farm Bureau Scholarship Fund, or the Bud Swift Memorial Carcass Contest? These educational programs are very important to the future of our 4-H and FFA members and makes the perfect Christmas gift.

With that, I am wishing everyone a very Happy (Indoor) Thanksgiving, and as always, I encourage farmers, ranchers and conservators to invite friends, neighbors and family members to join the collective voice of the Farm Bureau. Together, we can make our organization stronger than ever, one member at a time.
Thank you for advertising in the Merced County Farm News.
Are you interested in running an ad in the Farm News? Call Denelle at 723-3001 for prices and publication schedule.

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Kirby Manufacturing .............................. 723-0778

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Shannon Pump Co. .............................. 723-3904
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