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# Merced County Farm News

## Work Continues on 2020 Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Sale

## Legislative Update

Community support already pouring in; Friends of the Merced County Fair to underwrite all sale commissions and the first \$10,000 add-on donation received

Courtesy of CFBF

By Danielle Griffin, Merced County Fair

May 8, 2020 –  
COVID 19 Materials

The Governor has released guidance for the agricultural and livestock industry amidst COVID 19 which can be reviewed at <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-agriculture.pdf>

Agriculture, Generally  
The Assembly Agriculture Committee, set to meet on Monday, May 11th, has been cancelled. This means all bills, including SB 3211 (Fong), which Farm Bureau supported, will no longer be heard. It is understood that no bills met the criteria as COVID related.

### Climate Change

AB 2954 (Rivas-D) would require the State Air Resources Board, in consultation with other state agencies, to develop a climate goal for the state's natural and working lands to be integrated into the State's next scoping plan. The goal will include practices, policy incentives and barriers to achieving carbon neutrality and resiliency to climate impacts. This work will need to be completed by July 1, 2023. Farm Bureau is leading a coalition of agricultural and business interests in opposition to the bill. Our opposition reflects concerns about the existing draft form of the Natural and Working Lands Implementation Plan that will likely be used as the basis for developing the goal, the concern that uncontrollable weather events or regulatory impacts such as wildfire or fallowing from



MERCED, CALIFORNIA,  
May 7, 2020 – Plans continue to move forward on the 2020

Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Sale, presented by Merced Irrigation District (MID), to support the more than 500 Merced County Fair 4-H and FFA exhibitors through the utilization

of the StockShowAuctions.com (SSA) online sales platform. The virtual sale will take place starting Thursday, June 11 at 8 a.m. and go until Saturday, June 13 at 8 p.m.

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## Will Merced County reopen before much of California? There's a plan for that, officials say

By Abbie Lauten-Scrivner, Merced Sun-Star

May 8, 2020 – As some businesses across Merced County reopened Friday, the Board of Supervisors held a special meeting to begin progressing the county through the stay-at-home order faster than the rest of the state.

Gov. Gavin Newsom laid out guidelines Thursday permitting businesses that had been shut down during the coronavirus pandemic to reopen with modifications. The

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Address



## President's Corner

Eric Harcksen  
President

Greetings Merced County Farm Bureau! We are now 47 days into the shelter-in-place order issued by Governor Gavin Newsom. Under the shelter-in-place order only essential workers are allowed to work in the community and it remains that all agriculture production is unaffected by this order. The dynamics of the governors order of the state, county, and local government are changing day by day. Your Merced County Farm Bureau has been working diligently to decipher the health departments recommendations for the stay-in-shelter orders.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the demand and supply chain uncertain. The current market situation makes for low consumer confidence. Which makes it a big gamble for the producers to plant crops in the spring, with hopes that the markets will be strong at the

time of harvest. Even with talks of COVID-19 coming back in the fall, the show must go on and that's what makes us in the agriculture community great and the best at what we do.

The Merced County Fairs have been canceled, as well as the California State Fair, which is the first time since World War II. It is important to not forget about the young men and women during this time. The Farm Bureau has helped out by increasing its donations to both of the local fairs. The board elected to donate \$2,000 to both the Spring Fair and Merced County Fair from our Scholarship & Education fund. You can get involved by helping out at the auction, making a donation to the exhibitors themselves, or by making a bump bid.

If you have any further questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact MCFB.



## Director's Desk

Breanne Ramos  
Executive Director

will be in place for 60 days after the presumption Order, until July 5, 2020.

- The following items must be met for the presumption to occur:
  - The positive test must be within 14 days after the employee performed and that the date of work must be after March 19, 2020.
  - The positive diagnosis must be made by a physician who holds a physician and surgeon license issued by the State of California; and
  - The diagnosis is confirmed by further testing within 30 days of the date of diagnosis.
- Employers have 30 days to reject and rebut the claim
- Any evidence used to rebut the claim must be discovered within 30 days from the date of the claim from being filed

This is one of the many issues we have continued to monitor as the impacts of COVID continue to grow. Along with calling our office, I would also encourage you again to contact Farm Employers Labor Service, a division of California Farm Bureau, who can help answer any questions you may have. They, in partnership with their attorneys, have developed some wonderful information for your use. We are also always happy to answer those questions as they arise on your operations.

In other news, we are managing just as you are. Our office is still closed to the public; however, you may notice a bit more movement at our office as we are rotating in on a routine basis. We hope you are well and to see all of you soon!

We have reached mid-May and everyone's favorite topic is still running supreme. Every news station and paper are covered in various angles on Novel Coronavirus (COVID), ensuring readers must dig to find an article unrelated to the virus. We have found this frustrating as we also try to continue work on other areas of life.

Coupled with the barrage of news media covering COVID are the new programs that have been released in recent weeks. I'm a person that lives in the acronym world and I feel as though I'm playing catch up each day with the new items that are being rolled out. The new language is daunting to anyone as all are being updated every five minutes from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) to Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). Not to mention the latest wrinkle being Governor Newsom's latest Executive Order N-62-20 covering Workers Compensation Presumption related to COVID.

As this is one of the newer portions of COVID, I do want members to notice a big pieces to this:

- Workers Compensation Presumption to COVID is retroactive to the initial shelter in place Order directive by Governor Newsom on March 19, 2020 and

## Judge temporarily blocks Trump's California water plan

By Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — A federal court on Monday temporarily blocked the Trump administration's efforts to pump more water to the agricultural Central Valley, which critics said would threaten endangered species and salmon runs.

A judge issued a preliminary injunction in two lawsuits brought against the administration by California's Natural Resources

Agency and Environmental Protection Agency and by a half-dozen environmental groups.

The order bars the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation until May 31 from going ahead with expanding the amount of water it pumps from the San Joaquin Delta through the federal Central Valley Project.

The suits argued that the exports would cause irreparable harm to

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### 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.



# Editor's Note

**Denelle Flake**  
**Project Specialist**

on various aspects of agriculture. We plan to provide teachers with educational packages, such as lesson plans courtesy of California Farm Bureau Federation's Ag in the Classroom, supportive materials, and an educational newspaper. Our newspaper will allow students to learn about local agriculture, top commodities and get the opportunity to "Meet a Farmer" and more. We know this is not the typical platform, but we are glad this version has presented us with new ideas and concepts. We are in our beginning phase of development; however, we are eager to take on this task and cannot wait to share what we develop!

Typically, now would be the time of year that we would begin the initial planning stages of our FARM2U Day, an agriculture education day for local third graders typically hosted at the fairgrounds. Due to the current times and challenges we are all facing, we will not be hosting the in-person day this year that would normally take place in October. We do however have some exciting alternatives in the works! We are currently developing a virtual FARM2U that will feature farm tours and presenter discussions

## Calendar of Events May

18: High-Speed Rail Webinar (15)

19: Nationwide - Social Security Webinar (17)

19: UC IPM Respiratory Protection Webinar- ENGLISH (13)

26: UC IPM PPE and COVID-19 Webinar- SPANISH (13)

28: Online Pesticide CE Class (10)

## June

2: UC IPM Respiratory Protection Webinar- SPANISH (13)

3: Mid Valley Ag Day

8: Shelter-In Showdown (13)

9: UC IPM Pesticides in Water Webinar - ENGLISH (13)

11-13: Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Auctions (1)

16: Nationwide - Long-term Care Webinar

16: UC IPM Label Reading Webinar - ENGLISH (13)

23: UC IPM Pesticides in Water Webinar- SPANISH (13)

30: UC IPM Label reading Webinar - SPANISH (13)

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Farm News Editor  
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## WATER FROM PAGE 2

species protected by state and federal law.

President Donald Trump has denounced rules meant to ensure that enough fresh water stayed in rivers and the San Francisco Bay to sustain more than a dozen endangered fish and other native species, which are struggling as agriculture and development diverts more water and land from wildlife.

But especially in the wake of a long drought, farmers in the Central Valley — a Republican enclave in a Democrat-controlled state — are thirsty for more water. The valley is the heartland for the state's \$50 billion agricultural industry.

The administration says its proposed changes will allow for more flexibility in water deliveries. In California's heavily engineered water system, giant state and federal water projects made up of hundreds of miles of pipes, canals, pumps and dams, carry runoff from rain and Sierra Nevada snow melt from north to south — and serve as the field of battle for lawsuits and regional political fights over competing demands for water.

"Today's victory is critical, but the fight is not over," state Attorney General Xavier Becerra said in a statement. "We have the facts, science, and the law behind us, and we look forward to making our case in court."



## Fair Food Fridays

*Courtesy of Merced County Fair*

**We heard you loud and clear — you want your Fair food!**

Just because there isn't a fair this year doesn't mean you still can't get your Fair Food fix! We have teamed up with Valley fair food vendors to bring this new drive-thru "Fair Food Fridays" event to the Merced County Fairgrounds! Our goal? To bring a taste of the fair for the community to still enjoy, while

supporting the fair's Valley food vendors and their families who have been hit hard by COVID-19 and widespread cancellation of fairs and events throughout the state.

"We wanted to bring something positive to the fairgrounds and give the community something fun to do while still aligning with the pandemic guidelines. So we came up with the idea to have a

drive-thru food event! It definitely put a smile on people's faces and our food vendors could not be more thankful for the support. We look forward to continuing our 'Fair Food Fridays' throughout the month and into June." - Teresa Burrola, CEO, Merced County Fair

So, here is the scoop on "**Fair Food Fridays!**"

**SEE FAIR FOOD ON PAGE 20**

## Farm Credit, Dairy Industry Partner to Help Expand Farm to Family Program

*Farm Credit provides seed money for food banks; Dairy Farmers of America, Hilmar Cheese donate 37,000 pounds of cheese*

*By Linda Sadler, Farm Credit Alliance*



*Forklift driver loads cheese to be sent to food banks from Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc.*

In an effort to provide food to California families in need, Farm Credit, Dairy Farmers of America (DFA) and Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc., are partnering to assist the expansion of the state's Farm to Family Program, as recognized last week by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

The program is designed to help meet the growing demand at California food banks due to the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus crisis.

The governor said in a press release that private funding from Farm Credit and other organizations "will be leveraged to launch a \$15 million campaign to support the Farm to Family program through

the end of the year."

Farm Credit is providing seed money to the California Association of Food Banks to help distribute 37,000 pounds of cheese — 10,000 pounds of two-pound cheese blocks from DFA and 27,000 pounds of bagged cheese shreds from Merced County-based Hilmar Cheese Company, said Leili Ghazi, the chair of the Farm Credit Marketing Alliance in California and senior vice president of the Farm Credit Banking Group at CoBank.

"This partnership between the dairy industry, the state and the private sector will provide nutritious food to the growing number of California families

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## DAIRY FROM PAGE 4

who need it, and we are proud to be a part of the program,” Ghazi said. “Farm Credit, Hilmar Cheese and DFA have been working for several weeks to make this program a reality and I’m thrilled that we were able to overcome logistical challenges to make it happen.”

Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food & Agriculture, expressed her appreciation for Farm Credit’s involvement.

“I’m very grateful to everyone in our agricultural family for stepping up in this critical time,” said Ross, who helped develop the Farm to Family program. “Thank you, Farm Credit, for helping our rural communities and dairy farmers by supporting the delivery and packaging of wholesome dairy products to the food banks of our state.”

And the cheese is greatly appreciated by food bank operators,

said Stacia Hill Levenfeld, CEO of the California Association of Food Banks.

“Cheese is a coveted commodity at food banks as it’s valued by young and old alike,” Levenfeld said. “Food banks provide essential groceries for those who struggle to make ends meet, and we are incredibly grateful to Farm Credit for supporting access to cheese through our food banks. This donation could not come at a more opportune time as the need for nutrition support has exploded throughout our state. Thank you to Farm Credit for your donation and your leadership. I hope this inspires others to help us meet the urgent need in our communities.”

Hilmar Cheese Company and DFA are also excited to be part of the program.

“Hilmar Cheese Company is pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this program and

make 27,000 pounds of cheese available to families in need,” said Denise Skidmore, the company’s director of education and public relations. She noted that the donation is the equivalent of 432,000 one-ounce servings.

Added Gary Stueve, chief operating officer for DFA’s Western Area: “We are honored to partner with the state of California to provide nutritious dairy products to individuals and families who need it most right now. Even though they are facing hardship in these uncertain times, our farm families remain dedicated in their commitment to supporting the communities in which we live and work.”

Food banks have seen an increase in demand of over 70% compared to the previous year, while farmers and ranchers have seen their market decrease by 50% because of the sharp drop-

off in demand for fresh produce, dairy products, meat and other commodities in the foodservice sector.

The shelter-in-place orders have caused schools, restaurants and other foodservice businesses to sharply reduce or eliminate purchases. With no market for their commodities, many farmers, dairy operators and others have been forced to dump or plow under food because they can’t afford to pay to harvest, process and ship finished products to food banks.

The Farm to Family Program will facilitate food donations from farmers and ranchers by supporting food production, processing and distribution of the food supply chain, including offsetting the costs of picking, packing and transporting donated commodities. The program is partnering with 41 food banks serving all 58 California Counties.

# Forty-two students benefit from Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc. scholarships

By Denise Skidmore, *Director of Education & Public Relations, Hilmar Cheese Company*

**HILMAR, CA. April 30, 2020.**

Forty-two students demonstrating community involvement, academic performance and financial need will each receive a scholarship toward their higher education through Hilmar Cheese Company’s annual scholarship program. This is Hilmar Cheese Company’s eighteenth year awarding scholarships.

The scholarship program has three categories: children of employees of Hilmar Cheese Company, children of the dairy farm families who ship milk to Hilmar Cheese Company, and students with an agricultural major living in the counties where the company is located. This third category is for students not affiliated with the company; but dedicated to the agricultural industry and living in Merced and Stanislaus counties in California, and Dallam and Hartley counties in Texas.

Thirteen children of Hilmar Cheese Company employees will receive a scholarship. The eleven graduating high school seniors and two college students awarded \$1,000 include Alyssa

Herrera (El Dorado High School), Britani Moreno (Gregori High School), Ellena Urrutia (El Capitan High School), Ethan Machado (CSU Stanislaus), Jacob Hendrix (Central Valley High School), Jesse Gutierrez (Delhi High School), Julia Travis (Gustine High School), Justin Barros (Hilmar High School), Kailea Fogleman (Oakdale High School), Kaitlyn Davis (Dalhart High School), Ky Przilas (Dalhart High School), Mackenzie Peterson (Modesto High School), and Sierra Alamo (CSU Stanislaus).

The four children of the dairy farm families who ship their milk to Hilmar Cheese Company in California to each receive a \$1,000 scholarship are Grace Nightengale (Central Catholic High School), Jacob Silva (Turlock High School), John Alamo (Hilmar High School) and Jordyn Silva (Turlock High School).

Merced and Stanislaus counties California agricultural majors Alison Nunes (Modesto Junior College), Alyce Silva (Modesto Junior College), Aubrie Hazan (Gustine High School), Billy Marchy (Turlock High School), Bryce Ludwig (Fresno State),

Carolyn Boster (Fresno State), Celeste Lopes (Modesto Junior College), Cole Marchy (Modesto Junior College), Devan Gomes (Cal Poly, SLO), Doreen Dyt (Orestimba High School), Gunnar Kale (Atwater High School), Hayley Vargas (Atwater High School), Isabel Paterson (Hilmar High School), Jeff Clark (Cal Poly, SLO), Kaitlyn Hay (Modesto Junior College), Kate Menefee (Cal Poly, SLO), Katie Percival (El Capitan), Kylar Kahl (Chowchilla Union High School), Luz Soto (Atwater High School), Morgan Bettencourt (Modesto Junior College), Rikki Silveira (Hilmar High School) were each awarded \$500. Aidan Azevedo (Hilmar High School) will receive

\$1,000

Dallam and Hartley counties Texas agricultural majors John Moorhouse (Dalhart High School) and Kailie Childress (Dalhart High School) are awarded \$500. The Hilmar Cheese Company scholarship program reflects the company’s ongoing support of higher education and its commitment to employees, dairy farm families, and the California and Texas agricultural industries. Qualifying students are encouraged to apply November 1 through February 1, 2021. For more information about Hilmar Cheese Company’s scholarship program, visit the About Us section of [www.hilmarcheese.com](http://www.hilmarcheese.com).



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## UPDATE FROM PAGE 1

SGMA will result in significant lost capacity to sequester carbon, and concerns that “carbon scoring” will create “winning” and “losing” commodity types or regions. Finally, Farm Bureau opposes AB 2954 because it is not COVID related and given the current budgetary conditions of the state, it’s unlikely that adequate incentives will be available to support growers voluntarily implementing practices. The bill is set to be heard in Assembly Natural Resources Committee on May 13th.

### Pesticides

The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) director has issued an Executive Guidance memo to County Agricultural Commissioner’s regarding pesticide applications near and around homes and schools during the COVID 19 pandemic. The memorandum, which can be read in its entirety at [https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/county/cacltrs/exec/2020/exec\\_20-03.pdf](https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/county/cacltrs/exec/2020/exec_20-03.pdf), states:

- DPR’s schools’ regulations require annual notification by property operators within ¼ mile of all school sites of pesticides that are expected to be used from July 1 of the current year through June 30 of the following year. The notification requirement remains in effect for this coming year. Also, because students are now at home, rather than school, engaged in distance learning, DPR also strongly encourages CACs to have growers provide appropriate notices to nearby residents, to the extent feasible.
- All CACs must strictly enforce all applicable health protections around homes and schools during the COVID-19 emergency (7-days a week). These include:
  - o Pesticide applications are expressly prohibited when there is a “reasonable possibility of

contamination of the bodies or clothing of persons not involved in the application process.”

- o A pesticide may not be applied except in a manner that is careful and that prevents drift.
- o When reviewing an application for a restricted material, the CAC must ensure protection of schools and homes, including denial if advice impacts are a potential, including drift.
- o Follow all label directions requirements.
- Violations that occur near homes or schools constitute a Class A violation and a penalty should be assessed for each person with an acute illness from pesticide exposure caused by the violation.

### Transportation

California’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented undertaking. Providing necessary regulatory relief, especially related to the transportation of commodities, hazardous materials, livestock, or emergency aid involves the coordination of not only California’s transportation and safety agencies, but also those of the federal government. One such example is the Hazardous Agricultural Material Certificate, or HAM Certificate, which was previously called Hazmat Training for Agricultural Employees and offered by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) until 2018.

Existing California law provides an exemption for individuals from the requirement to obtain a hazardous material (HM) endorsement on their driver’s license, including if an individual:

- Is employed in agricultural operation.
- Is driving a vehicle which does not require a commercial driver license and is controlled by a

farmer.

- Is transporting agricultural products or machinery to or from a farm.
- Has completed training meeting the requirements outlined in federal regulation.
- Possesses a verification of training document, commonly known as a HAM Certificate, when operating a vehicle requiring the display of placards.
- Is operating the vehicle at a distance of not more than 50 miles from farm to farm or from point of distribution to point of application.
- Is in possession of a CHP 344, Hazardous Materials Transportation Basic Incident Safety Procedures. For all other individuals, if a driver’s license is required to operate a vehicle, or a combination of vehicles, and placards are required to be displayed, a commercial driver’s license with an HM endorsement is required.

A HAM certificate is valid three years from the date of issuance. Federal regulation requires an individual to participate in hazardous material training at least once every three years. An applicant is then required to provide the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) a valid medical clearance and verify that they are 21 years of age or older. Due to DMV field office closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the appropriate HAM documentation could not be processed. In some cases, this resulted in the expiration of an individual’s HAM certification, or the inability to acquire a new certification from the department.

The state’s efforts to control the spread of the virus, resulted in many operational difficulties for agricultural businesses; especially related to the processing of applications and certification

renewals. Based on feedback from members, Farm Bureau worked with the Newsom administration to secure an extension of the HAM medical certificate to reduce disruptions in the agricultural supply chain during this critical time. On April 16, 2020 Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-52-50, which addressed the renewals of commercial driver’s license hazardous material medical certificates. According to the Executive Order, “holders of current commercial driver’s licenses or certificates, whose required medical certificate has or will expire on or after March 1, 2020, the timeframes set forth in Vehicle Code section 12804.9(c), and accompanying regulations, pertaining to possessing a valid medical certificate in order to maintain a valid commercial driver license or certificate, are waived until June 30, 2020.”

Additionally, as of this morning, DMV will also begin to allow HAM certificate applicants to mail the necessary documentation and fee for processing the certification. This is in lieu of requiring individuals to physically go to a DMV field office. The mailing information and required documentation is included for reference below:

#### **DMV – Issuance**

**2570 24th Street M/S G204  
Sacramento, CA 95818**

1. A carbon copy of the HAM Certificate (DL 267) \*Remind the driver to keep a copy of the certificate with their driver license.
2. A completed, readable Health Questionnaire (DL 546) for non-commercial drivers.
3. Check or money order in the amount of \$12.00 made payable to "DMV".

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## FAIR FROM PAGE 1

Buyers, both past and new, will need to register as a buyer on [www.stockshowauction.com/register](http://www.stockshowauction.com/register) either in advance of the sale or during, then they can login during the sale and place bids, add-ons and receive notifications if they get outbid. Merced County Fair livestock staff will be available to answer questions at [livestock@countyofmerced.com](mailto:livestock@countyofmerced.com) or (209) 722-1421. Additionally, step-by-step instructions have been posted on the fair's website ([www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits](http://www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits)).

"Agriculture has long been the backbone of the Merced County Fair and while today's world with COVID-19 is prohibiting us from having our annual fair, it won't stop us from holding a sale for our hard-working 4-H and FFA exhibitors. I look forward to their innovative outreach in securing buyers for our new virtual livestock sale," said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair.

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Farm Bureau is appreciative of this extension and associated processing flexibility. We will continue to work with the administration on future issues impacting our agricultural community.

### Water

An Environmental Defense Fund sponsored measure to create a pilot program administered by the Department of Conservation to provide grants to groundwater sustainability agencies and others to facilitate the conversion of idled irrigated agricultural land due to actions taken supporting the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act was amended this week. AB 2642, (Rudy Salas, D-Bakersfield) would require the Department of Conservation to

There is already one local business stepping up to support the exhibitors in the Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Sale. Dr. J.L. Byerly D.V.M. owner of Sierra Gateway Veterinary Clinic has donated \$10,000 towards add-ons to support those exhibitors who do not receive adequate bids on their projects.

Dr. Byerly said he "is hopeful that our community will help to support our 4-H and FFA exhibitors in buying their animal projects or placing add-on bids. It is a real call to action for our agricultural community to step up for our youth in Merced County."

Additionally, the fair's non-profit foundation, Friends of the Merced County Fair has committed to covering the costs of the online sale platform, as well as all sale commissions – so every dollar spent by buyers will go directly to the students.

"We are so grateful for Friends of the Merced County Fair who

establish and administer a program named the Multibenefit Land Conversion Incentive Program for purposes of providing grants to groundwater sustainability agencies, counties, or other specified entities designated by groundwater sustainability agencies, or counties, for the development or implementation of local programs supporting or facilitating multibenefit land conversion at the basin scale. Farm Bureau has been working with EDF to address concerns that have now been addressed in this week's amendments. Farm Bureau is in support of this measure.

### Waste

AB 2959 (Calderon-D), seeks to make amendments on language that was carefully negotiated and

have always greatly supported our annual auctions and through this latest act of generosity – it will put every dollar bid during the virtual sale into the pockets of these kids to use to recoup their animal project expenses and invest in their next project or save for school," said Burrola.

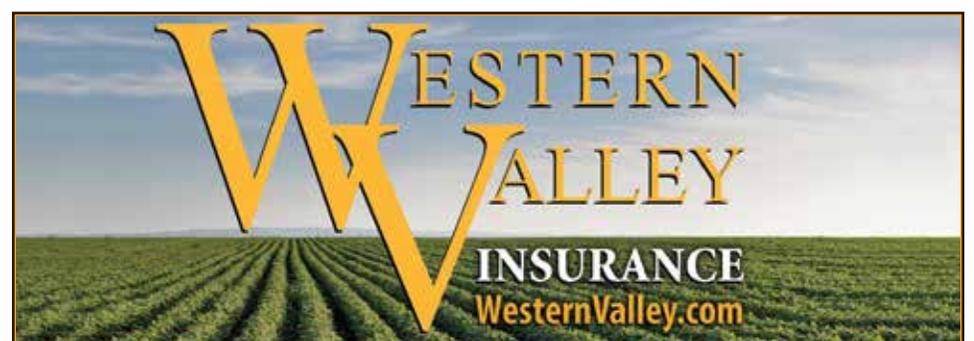
Merced County Fair 4-H and FFA exhibitors who submitted animal projects will be contacted by the Livestock Department regarding the virtual sale with more details and resources. Exhibitors will need to continue feeding and caring for their animals and marketing to secure buyers, just like they would if their animals were going to the traditional auction. The Merced County Fair has put together exhibitor information sheets by species and an extensive Q&A so they can better understand the new sale process. These resources are available at [www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits](http://www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits). More information such as step-by-step

instructions on how to upload their project for the online sale will be posted in the coming weeks. These details are also available on the SSA website at [www.stockshowauction.com/auctions](http://www.stockshowauction.com/auctions). Additionally, the Livestock Department will be available to assist with online registration and address questions at [livestock@countyofmerced.com](mailto:livestock@countyofmerced.com) or (209) 722-1421.

Each year, the livestock competition at the Fair helps to create the next generation of men and women in agriculture and by participating, 4-H, FFA and Independent students not only have the opportunity to showcase and sell their animal projects, they also learn responsibility and gain agribusiness experience. While this year looks different, the life and business skills gained through these experiences – and even more so with the adaptation to an online sale – will continue to serve these youth.

sponsored by the Farm Bureau in the 2017-2018 legislative session, AB 3036 (Cooley). This bill would specify that haulers that are moving byproducts for animal feed and exist outside of franchise hauling agreements may no longer source from restaurants, grocers or other retail food establishments. While the sponsors, franchise haulers, specify this is merely clean up, Farm Bureau has argued

that this was no the intention of AB 3036 and would disrupt existing distribution channels for animal feed. Additional draft language has been circulated to potentially expand this prohibition to warehouses, cold storage, wineries and potentially processing facilities. This bill is set to be heard in Assembly Natural Resources Committee on May 13th; Farm Bureau will likely oppose.



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# By-Product Management Practices on California Dairies

By Jennifer Heguy, UCCE Merced, Stanislaus & San Joaquin Counties &

Ed DePeters, Department of Animal Science, UC Davis

By-product feeding is a common practice on California dairies. From a recent survey, California dairies reported feeding 58 unique by-products; 89% of dairies that responded to the survey fed by-products. In addition to quantifying by-products fed on dairies, we also

wanted to gauge how by-products are being managed.

Most dairies sent by-products out for nutrient analysis (Figure 1), but frequency of analysis varied (Figure 2). Very few dairies (n=7) sampled a feedstuff upon arrival at the farm for nutrient analysis. Almost half of responding dairies waited for a problem to arise before a by-product feedstuff was sampled for analysis. That may pose an issue with some by-products due to the highly variable nature of what's being delivered to dairies. Figure 3 shows the visible quality difference of almond hulls sampled from two neighboring dairies and depicts the importance of sampling. The sample to the right has fewer sticks and shells and has larger sized hulls. Talk with your nutritionist to determine if more frequent sampling makes sense for your farm for those feedstuffs that can vary in nutrient composition and/or physical components (debris pictured in Figure 3, for example).

When a by-product was not analyzed, most dairies (80%) relied on their nutritionist to determine the values. The top five concerns when feeding by-products were reported as: availability (82%), quality of material delivered (69%), variability in load quality delivered (50%), molds, yeasts, other undesirable products (47%), and variability in load moisture content (43%). Question was "select all that apply", so percentages do not add up to 100.

By-product feeding on dairies can reduce ration costs, extend other commodities that are in short supply, and recycle otherwise "wasted" nutrients. Work with your nutritionist to ensure you're getting the best value from your feedstuffs, both in terms of getting what you paid for and value in the ration.

To see more results from the survey, please visit: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/CEStanislausCo/files/323974.pdf>

# Massive Northern California reservoir project scaled back to reduce costs

By Paul Rogers, *The Mercury News*

An ambitious plan to build the largest new reservoir in California in 40 years to supply water to homes and businesses from the Bay Area to Los Angeles, along with Central Valley farmers, is being scaled back considerably amid questions about its \$5 billion price tag and how much water it can deliver.

Sites Reservoir is proposed for construction in remote ranch lands in Colusa County, about 70 miles north of Sacramento. The reservoir, originally designed to be four times as big as Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in Yosemite National Park and nearly as big as San Luis Reservoir between Gilroy and Los Banos, received more money than any other project two years ago from a water bond passed by state voters during California's historic drought. But supporters still haven't found enough to pay all the construction costs.

So, late last month, the agency planning the reservoir, the Sites Project Authority, issued new plans. Although Sites is among the most high-profile water projects in the state, they have gone largely unnoticed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Under the new approach, the price tag will be cut roughly 40% from \$5.1 billion to \$3 billion. The reservoir's size will shrink from 1.8 million acre feet to 1.5 million acre feet. Plans to build an 18-mile pipeline east to the Sacramento River to fill the reservoir were dropped in favor of using existing canals. A hydro-power pumping station was cut. And significantly, the amount of water the reservoir is expected to deliver on average, known as the "annual yield," was

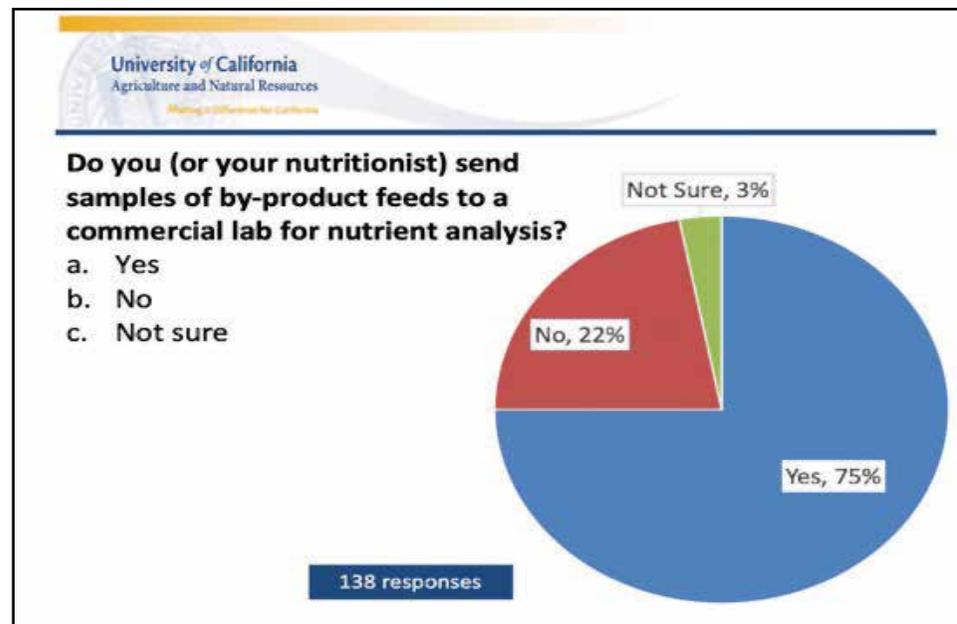


Figure 1. Are by-products analyzed for nutrients?

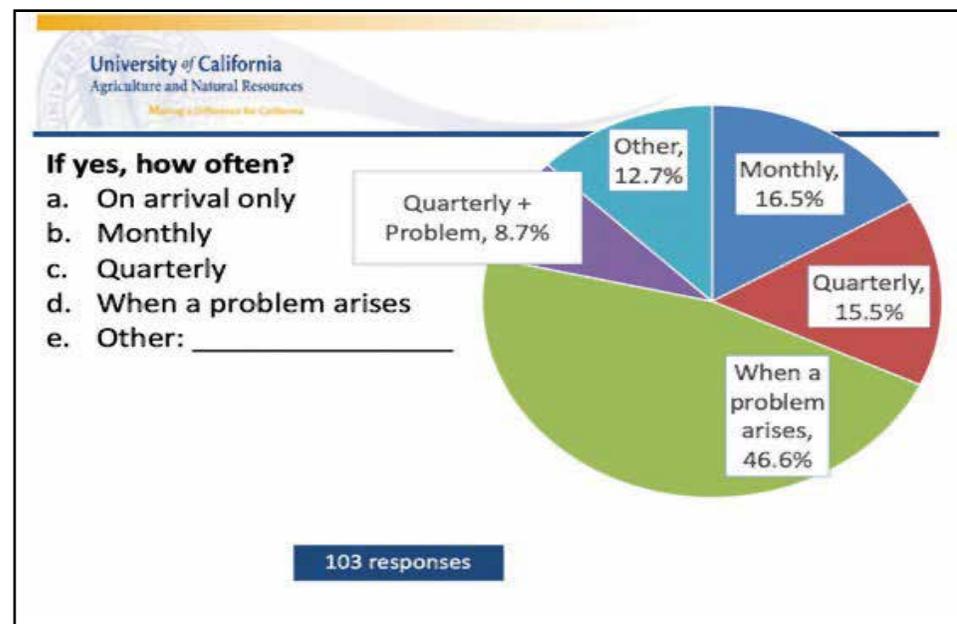


Figure 2. How often are samples analyzed?



Figure 3. Visible quality difference between two samples of almond hulls.

## COUNTY FROM PAGE 1

guidance included an opportunity for qualifying counties to possibly open more businesses quicker by submitting a readiness plan — a process Merced County began immediately.

By approving a letter of support for Merced County to move through that process, the Merced County Board of Supervisors checked off one of several steps.

The supervisors unanimously approved the letter, but some stated it should go further. “The letter isn’t as pointed or direct as I would like it to be,” Supervisor Daron McDaniel said. Still, he noted the progress is in the right direction.

Before the county can move forward, it must also obtain a letter of support from area hospitals, complete certain forms and participate in a technical assistance call with the State Department of Health. The county has already requested this call, County CEO James Brown said.

Plus, the county must show proof of epidemiological stability — in other words, making active progress toward containing the pandemic.

This includes:

- 1). Having no more than one coronavirus case per 10,000 people in last 14 days.
- 2). No COVID-19 related deaths within last 14 days.
- 3). A daily test capacity of 1.5 per 1,000 residents.
- 4). Plans to protect vulnerable populations.
- 5). Regional ability to accommodate a 35% surge.
- 6). Skilled nursing facilities having more than 14 days supply of personal protection equipment with the ability to order more

## RESERVOIR FROM PAGE 8

cut in half from 505,000 acre feet to 243,000 acre feet.

Backers say the reservoir, which would still be California’s seventh largest, nevertheless remains on track.

“This is a step in the right direction to making this project a reality for the state of California,” said Jerry R. Brown, executive director of the Sites Project Authority.

Public Health Director Dr. Rebecca Nanyonjo-Kemp said at the special meeting she feels the county is “on track” to have its readiness plan approved.

### MERCED COUNTY RESIDENTS, OFFICIALS FRUSTRATED

While some retail operations and businesses were able to reopen Friday under certain parameters, a great many small businesses like hair salons, gyms and others remain shuttered.

Thus, calls from some residents and officials have pleaded for the local economy to reopen faster. Some have even asked Merced County do defy the state’s orders, as some other counties recently have.

“At what point does the cure cost more than the pandemic?” asked Supervisor Scott Silveira. “It’s a horrible position to be in.”

Multiple public comments at the special board meeting, submitted via email or voicemail, made clear the state’s recently loosened restrictions are not enough for many residents and business owners.

“COVID-19 has turned my world upside down,” said one Los Banos hair salon owner, whose business is still excluded from reopening. “The cold hard truth is my business cannot last months without me working behind the chair.”

McDaniel requested the board to either approve or discuss an emergency declaration at next Tuesday’s meeting, given the state of the economy.

“I think at this time, we are in an economic state of emergency in Merced County,” he said. “I think the whole state is.”

Brown, no relation to the former governor, was hired last month after previously working as general manager of the Contra Costa Water District, where he oversaw expansion of Los Vaqueros Reservoir.

Making the project more affordable, he said, will increase the likelihood that water agencies will contribute — from farmers in the Sacramento Valley and San Joaquin

County officials Friday were receptive to reopening pleas, but also urged caution.

“We are in a challenging position as a county trying to meet the needs of our local businesses, while still following the direction of the state,” said Brown. The county’s resources are limited, and it should remain in the state’s good graces while looking ahead to much-needed reimbursements and supplies, he said.

McDaniel said he’s concerned about the county’s inability to protect the business licenses of those who open before receiving the green light.

Mercy Medical Center President and CEO Chuck Kassis weighed in during public comment. He said existing precautions are what have kept the community safe, and urged preventative coronavirus measures like social distancing to continue.

### UPDATED HEALTH ORDER

Merced County Health Officer Dr. Salvador Sandoval updated the local health order Friday to reflect recent state guidelines.

Parks and cemeteries are now permitted to reopen with limitations, although park picnic areas, playgrounds and indoor facilities in parks must remain closed. Baptisms are all allowed to resume too, with modifications.

Preventative medical appointments, including routine dental services, are now allowed statewide too.

### LATEST CORONAVIRUS CASES

Meanwhile Merced County coronavirus cases rose to 163 Friday. Of those, 69 residents are actively sick, 91 have recovered and three have died.

Valley to urban users like the Santa Clara Valley Water District in San Jose, the Zone 7 Water Agency in Livermore, and the Metropolitan Water District in Los Angeles, all of whom have expressed interest. So far, 21 agencies have put up \$27 million for planning and studies. Another \$19 million is due by Oct. 1.

“We took to heart what people told us and said we need to take a

“We do have some very ill patients that are hospitalized at the moment,” Nanyonjo-Kemp said. “We are not expecting positive outcomes for some of those individuals.”

Nanyonjo-Kemp said while coronavirus deaths and the number of infected persons in the county remain relatively low, a surge is anticipated.

Multiple county officials noted a surge occurred after social distancing efforts decreased over Easter weekend. They stressed caution over holding gatherings during Mother’s Day weekend. Several outbreaks clustered into households have resulted in entire families becoming infected, Nanyonjo-Kemp said.

In one case, nine people were infected in a single Merced County house, resulting in two hospitalizations and two other households being exposed, she said.

Nanyonjo-Kemp said the turnaround time for test results has lately improved. Also, following the new COVID-19 testing site that opened at the Merced County Fairgrounds on Monday, another site is expected to open in Los Banos soon.

Less than a week in to the new testing site operating though, it is having issues with registration, on-site security and a lack of awareness of who’s responsible for what duties, Nanyonjo-Kemp said. “I’ll be frank,” she said. “Our eastern side testing site has not been easy.”

Nanyonjo-Kemp said state and local Office of Emergency Services officials have stepped in to work out the kinks, at her behest.

In California as of Friday, there are 62,247 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 2,541 deaths.

step back and re-evaluate this,” he said. “We’ve developed a right-sized project that is affordable and buildable.”

But the changes highlight how difficult it is to construct huge new water projects in California, even as the state heads into a dry summer following a disappointing winter rainy season.

“All of us have done something  
**SEE RESERVOIR ON PAGE 10**

## RESERVOIR FROM PAGE 9

like this in our lives,” said Jay Lund, director of the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences. “You go out on the market and see how big a house or car you can buy at first, but then when you sharpen your pencil and do the finances more seriously, you decide you can only afford something a little smaller.”

Environmentalists were more blunt.

“To me it just shows it’s a project that’s struggling to pay for itself,” said Ron Stork, a senior policy advocate for Friends of the River, a group that opposes the project.

The changes will delay the start of construction from 2022 to at least 2023, although planners say they still hope to finish by the original date of 2030.

“The probability of it happening at this price is much higher,” Lund said. “But the probability of any major new water project is always small in California.”

There are several reasons, he

noted.

First, many of the best locations for dams are already taken. Second, environmental laws like the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act mean rivers can’t be dammed, wiping out fish and other wildlife, as they were generations ago.

Finally, it’s hard to fund them. Not only did California voters pass Proposition 13 in 1978, requiring a two-thirds majority to raise most taxes, but in 1986, former President Reagan changed federal law to require states to pay a greater share of the huge costs of building dams to curb federal spending.

The idea for Sites has been around since the 1950s. Politically, it has a big advantage: It would be an “off-stream” reservoir. Instead of damming a river, a remote valley 10 miles west of the sleepy farm town of Maxwell would be submerged, the water held in by two large dams and up to nine smaller “saddle dams” on ridges.

The reservoir would be filled

**SEE RESERVOIR ON PAGE 12**



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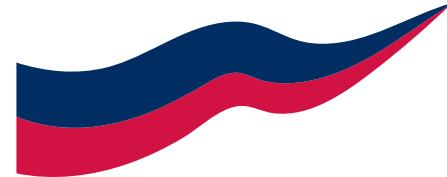
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# Our New Normal

By Danette Toso, *Executive Director, Mariposa County Farm Bureau*



As the clock struck midnight on December 31, 2019, I was excited and optimistic that 2020 would be an amazing year for all of us. I envisioned a renewed strength and dedication to our personal and professional lives, with some added prosperity to boot. The year started out on a good note, and we were looking forward to an exciting new decade.

The old saying, “Be careful what you wish for” comes to mind

in these wild and crazy times! The last couple of months have been exciting to say the least..... Exciting, tragic, wild, scary, depressing, shocking, frustrating, confusing, educational, and now, encouraging. We are seeing grocery store shelves filling up as the panic has subsided and people are coming to terms with the pandemic, and how to deal with everyday life. We keep hearing that this is our new normal, I refuse to accept this as my normal. I am confident that the virus will dissipate, and the masks, gloves and social distancing will soon be a thing of the past. Have you noticed that it’s very hard to smile at people wearing masks? There is something important for the soul to making eye contact and smile at people.

As we begin to re-open our small businesses and restaurants, I will be shopping locally as much as possible. I encourage everyone to support our community whether it is dining out, visiting salons, shopping at our wonderful, eclectic

stores in Mariposa County or supporting a 4-H or FFA member. With the closures of county fairs, our kids will need support with their project animals more than ever.

The Mariposa County Farm Bureau is dedicated to our agricultural youth programs. The scholarship program and Bud Swift Memorial Carcass Contest are on track for this year. The scholarship applications have been judged, and the steers have been weighed. We will not let this virus keep us from supporting these hard working, dedicated, determined kids!

I am confident that we will get back to normal with stories to tell future generations, and an education that will last a lifetime. As always, I encourage farmers and ranchers to invite friends, neighbors, and family members to join the collective voice of the Farm Bureau. Together, we can make our organization and the Mariposa community stronger than ever, one member at a time.

## Message from Merced YF&R

By Sarah Baskins, *District 9 State Representative – Merced, Mariposa, Merced Counties*



Although our Merced Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) are feeling the effects of COVID-19, they have remained focused and optimistic for what is to come when our lives return to normal.

With Governor Newsom’s Shelter-in-Place order being released in March, our YF&R was forced to postpone their March Spring Planning meeting. During this time, we planned to discuss upcoming meetings, socials, and events. However, in the meantime, Merced YF&R is actively planning a Fall Regional Mixer with Fresno-Madera YF&R for the month of October. Our hope is to share with YF&R members from all over the state what Merced, Madera, and Fresno county has to offer. We hope to end the night with music entertainment, dinner, and dancing. Yet, until notice from Governor Newsom has been released, further details have yet to be advertised.

During the month of April, Merced YF&R assisted in a few tasks with efforts of giving back

and showing appreciation. Together with Fresno-Madera YF&R, we participated in helping serve families in need by distributing dinner in Fresno County. Additionally, Merced YF&R donated dinner to our local Fire Department, and Hospital. Aside from food donations, we gave back and showed appreciation by donating blood with the American Red Cross and sending thank you cards to our Essential workers. We are eternally grateful for our Frontline Workers, our Farmers, Ranchers, Dairymen and all the helping hands in-between. We look forward to gathering again – remembering to never take for granted our health, friends and family, our livelihood, and the agriculture we have been blessed with. Stay safe and healthy!

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American Farmland Trust

# Almond Growers Wanted for Cover Crop/Compost Trial

*American Farmland Trust*

Cover crops and compost applications have been shown to provide various soil health benefits, including improved soil tilth, increased water retention and water use efficiency, increased soil organic matter, and reduced dust, crusting, and erosion.

The American Farmland Trust is seeking a grower(s) to help us implement a five-year field trial to measure the impacts and benefits of cover cropping and/or compost applications to soil health. The trial involves planting a cover crop and/or applying compost to a small portion of the orchard

(treatment plot), and leaving a portion not planted to a cover crop, or not composted (control plot). Additional management practices may be considered, if desired. Funds to support management costs can be provided. The grower must be willing to allow soil sampling and host several demonstration sessions in the orchard. **No management changes are required to participate in this project.**

**If you are interested in participating or have more questions,** please contact Paul Lum (707) 480-1893; Plum@farmland.org

## RESERVOIR FROM PAGE 10

by diverting water from the Sacramento River — California’s largest river — in wet years, and releasing it in dry years for farms and cities, along with fish and other species in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

The project has multiple challenges, however.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife, which must issue permits, said the original plan would take too much water out of the Sacramento River, harming salmon, steelhead and other species. That’s in part why planners reduced the annual yield in the revised plans.

Then there’s money. Sites’ planners, who are mostly political and farm leaders in the Sacramento Valley, asked the Brown administration for \$1.6 billion from Proposition 1, a bond passed in 2014 by voters. They got half, \$816 million. They also were awarded a \$439 million loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They also are seeking at least \$1 billion in other federal loans, and \$1.2 billion from water agencies that would buy the water.

But Sacramento Valley farmers already have groundwater and

senior water rights. And because many grow low-value crops like rice, they can’t afford a project that is too expensive.

Silicon Valley and Los Angeles may be interested. But they have alternatives, like building local reservoirs, expanding recycled water and conservation, and cleaning contaminated groundwater, which may be cheaper.

“People are already saving water for rough periods,” Stork said. “That’s why this project is probably in trouble.”

To get the state bond money, the project must lock in 75% of its outside funding and finish its draft environmental studies by Jan. 1, 2022.

If built, Sites would be the largest new reservoir in California constructed since 1979, when the Army Corps of Engineers completed construction on the 625-foot high New Melones Dam on the Stanislaus River near Jamestown, in the Sierra Foothills of Calaveras County at a capacity of 2.4 million acre feet.

“It’s a steep hill to climb,” Lund said. “But it’s not as steep at \$3 billion as it would be at \$5 billion.”



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**Calling all Merced County Partners!**

In light of all youth livestock shows being cancelled due to the pandemic, a few local patrons have come together in an effort to create an event that will engage and support our local kids showing livestock. We have partnered with a company called Virtual Stock Show who has made a platform that allows youth to upload videos of themselves and their project animals all in the comfort of their own backyards. The videos will then be judged and placed by professional livestock judges and winners get buckles and banners! The date of our "Shelter-In Showdown" will be June 8th.

We are so excited that this is coming together for the youth of Merced County and we are asking our fellow local business owners for their support in this event for the kids. A show of this scale is costly, but we know that the hearts of our community members are even bigger. We are attempting to not charge the kids for entry fees, order buckles and banners and attempt to keep all the dollars going out and coming in local.

If you find it in your heart to donate, checks can be made out to the American Legion, Post 83 (please be sure to put "Shelter-In Showdown" in the memo). All donations are tax deductible and can be dropped off or mailed to American Legion at the address above. They can also be dropped off at Cen-Cal Tire World 1021 W. Main St. Merced, or if you call one of our Coordinators, they can pick up from you as well! Please have donations in by May 20th, 2020 so we can have everything ready for the kids. All businesses and individuals will be recognized on the "Shelter-In Showdown" website.

We invite you to call us with all your questions about this new virtual livestock show territory and with inquiries if you have your own kids with show animals that they would like to showcase. You can also follow some of the kids helping to put this together on Instagram at @shelterinshown.

Thank you for your time and for supporting all our local kids!

Troy Ewing - Coordinator (209)201-1107

Joslyn Petersen - Coordinator (209)777-9788

Gene Harrill - American Legion, Post 83

# A Heartbreak for Children: When the County Fair is Canceled

By Dionne Searcey, *The New York Times*

The stomach-flipping thrill of riding the Zipper on the midway. The funnel cakes with powdered sugar melting on the fried dough. The shave ice. The sweet, smelly medley of hay, dirt and manure drifting from the barn.

Mia Achziger, 12, loved everything about the Clark County Fair in Washington State. From the minute she left the fairgrounds last year, she had been looking forward to going back. She was eager for judges this summer to view her two goats, Kurt Russell and Sam Elliott, and her 1,000-pound cow, Bell.

But last week officials decided to cancel the fair, adding it to the long list of annual summertime events — held so dear they practically are American traditions

— that have been scrapped because of the coronavirus pandemic.

In some areas, fairs have been pared back with the elimination of midway rides and games. Elsewhere, longtime attendees who build their summer schedules around local fairs are waiting to learn whether they will carry on.

Even the presidential candidates are among those waiting for a decision about the Iowa State Fair, which with its giant butter cow, deep-fried Oreos and hordes of voters has become an integral part of the political campaign. Iowa officials said last week they would wait until June to decide whether the fair would open.

For rural children in local 4-H  
**SEE CHILDREN ON PAGE 14**

## Pesticide Safety Webinars



This webinar series, presented by the UC Integrated Pest Management Program, will provide participants who successfully complete course(s), Continuing Education (CE) units for the 2020 calendar year. Topics include how to find and use PPE during COVID-19, proper use of respirators, practices for keeping pesticides out of water, and how to properly read and follow a pesticide label.

### Who Should Attend?

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### Dates

Webinars will be offered Tuesdays from 3-4 pm via Zoom

<b>May 12</b> PPE and COVID-19 English	<b>May 19</b> Respiratory Protection English	<b>May 26</b> PPE and COVID-19 Spanish
<b>June 2</b> Respiratory Protection Spanish	<b>June 9</b> Pesticides in Water English	<b>June 16</b> Label Reading English
<b>June 23</b> Pesticides in Water Spanish	<b>June 30</b> Label Reading Spanish	Visit our website for additional dates

Continuing Education hours will be available through California Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR).

### Registration

Registration is only online. For details and to register, visit [www.ipm.ucanr.edu/events](http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu/events). Includes a certificate of completion.

### Questions

Contact us by email at [pesticidesafety@ucanr.edu](mailto:pesticidesafety@ucanr.edu)

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## CHILDREN FROM PAGE 13

and National FFA Organization clubs, the fair cancellations are a particularly painful blow. They have been tending their animals for months to prepare them for their turns in the ring at livestock shows.

“It’s really frustrating that I will be missing out on all of my showing, and I won’t be able to have fun with all of my friends,” said Mia, a seventh grader who lives in La Center, Wash. “I have made some of my best memories at the fair.”

Leaders of local farm clubs are trying to make up for the losses by hosting online livestock shows, asking children to submit photos and videos of themselves displaying their cows, sheep and goats. The children are filmed walking their animals and pointing out their features, which judges must scrutinize through a computer screen.

“I don’t think anything will ever take the place of a live livestock show — the sights, the sounds,” said Ryan Rash, a popular livestock judge who has been donating time on children’s virtual shows. “But in this time of crisis, it’s all the kids have to look forward to.”

Mr. Rash, an executive director for Texas Junior Livestock Association, is accustomed to running his hands down the side of cows to size up their fat content and to grasping the legs of sheep and goats to check for muscle definition. Now, he can only scroll back and forth through images to compare animals’ body shapes. It is laborious, he said, and presents new challenges.

“Just like on body builders, you can see muscles pop, but not being able to put your hands on animals — it’s different,” said Mr. Rash, who also co-hosts the podcast “Beyond the Ring.”

Clubs have offered virtual contests for showmanship or on the market potential of their

livestock raised to slaughter. Some have added costume and TikTok competitions and contests that require children to show off their barns in the spirit of the MTV show “Cribs.”

In one of the videos, a child introduces her barn with a cartwheel.

In another, Jacob Meads, who belongs to the North Carolina 4-H livestock program, shows off Buckeye, Little Dude and Third Chance — a lamb wearing a coat who has a ball in his pen “so he don’t get bored.”

Virtual livestock shows are not a perfect replacement, but officials say they help reward children for their hard work.

“It’s not just the activity of raising an animal,” said Jennifer Sirangelo, the chief executive of the National 4-H Council. “These shows are critical to developing outcomes for youth. That sense of belonging and recognition is really important.”

County and state fairs are often the crowning moment in a circuit of spring livestock shows, where children are judged on their presentation skills as they walk animals around the ring or display the girth of ones they are hoping to sell.

Brylie Jackson, 9, has worked every afternoon with her crossbred steer, Reveille, to get him to stop hiding in the hay.

“He’s stubborn like me,” said Brylie, a fourth grader from Carlisle, Ohio. “I just tell him to listen and tell him if he does listen, we’ll do good.”

Worried that her cow might catch the coronavirus, she kept him in a stall apart from her family’s herd and fed him away from the other animals.

“I thought if we separated him and if we take good care of him, he’ll be fine,” she said.

She has participated in the

Virtual Cattle Battle but is still waiting to hear if the Jackson County Fair will be canceled.

Emma Helsinger, 9, said she was disappointed she did not get to show off her pigs, Luke and Leia, in the ring after training them for months. Luke, in particular, was stubborn at first but she found ways to reward him.

“When he does a good job,” she said, “we would give him a belly rub.”

Emma has entered virtual shows in Ohio, she said, noting that the downside was waiting days for results. In the ring, judges announce awards almost instantly.

Mackenzie Odom, 9, from Columbia, N.C., will not know the outcome for her goat, Mr. Eyelashes, until the end of May. Last year, she won second place for showmanship at the Tyrrell County 4-H Livestock Show.

“I talked to my goat,” she said, explaining her training methods. “I told him to believe in himself.”

Mia, the seventh grader, had entered shows in Washington and Oregon to ensure that by the time the county fair arrived her animals would be accustomed to crowds.

She has known Kurt Russell since he was born. For the past four months, she has watched him zip around the yard until he pants like a dog. She has been careful to exercise him and Sam Elliott daily to develop the wide chest and big rump the judges like to see on Boer goats, a South African breed known for its brown head and white body.

“Some people have old treadmills, and they put their goats on them,” Mia said. “I have not done that. I just tend to walk them around and run with them.”

She believes that her goats would have fetched a good price at the fair but was most looking forward to profiting on her investment in Bell, a hefty Angus cross. She spends hours with the cow every day,

washing him, tending his coat with a giant hair dryer and brushing him, careful to comb his hair the opposite direction from which it grows to make him look fluffier. She feeds him apple-flavored horse treats and tolerates him licking her jeans.

“I don’t know why — he just does it,” she said.

Mia was intimidated by Bell’s size at first — he was already 700 pounds when she bought him — but the two have reached an understanding.

“He always seems excited to come up to the gate and play with me,” she said.

Mia first heard about the coronavirus in February, but back then it seemed so far away. No cases had been reported near her hometown. Later that month, her school volleyball tournament was canceled because of the virus, and then so was her first livestock show of the season. The rest were canceled, too.

“I was so sad,” she said.

Mia has found an upside to participating in virtual shows: She can film herself with her animals any time instead of having to rise early in the morning to prepare them. But getting the animals to calm down can be difficult when they are distracted by herdmates mooing or baaing in the distance.

And she has noticed that some of her rivals have found new ways to fudge their entries, adding extra fluff to their cows’ coats to make their bodies appear meatier. Some entrants use cooling rooms to stimulate hair growth — a tactic that judges could easily sniff out in person by touching the cow’s body.

Mia knows she is not likely to profit from the sale of her animals this year, a lesson her mother, Jamie Achziger, said was important.

“This year has taught her the downside of farming,” Ms. Achziger said. “There are bad years where nothing seems to go right.”

**San Jose to Merced Project Section  
Draft Environmental Impact Report/  
Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) Outreach Update**

Due to public health and safety requirements concerning COVID-19, in-person open houses and staff office hours for the Draft EIR/EIS have been changed to online and/or teleconference meetings. Please check the Authority website ([hsr.ca.gov](http://hsr.ca.gov)) for the latest information.

Visit the San Jose to Merced Draft EIR/EIS Open House Website

[www.MeetHSRNorCal.org](http://www.MeetHSRNorCal.org)

In-lieu of in-person meetings, this website will be available through the end of the the 45-day public comment on June 8. Visit at your convenience to access the Draft EIR/EIS, review maps, watch videos, and learn how to provide comments on the Draft EIR/EIS. All materials that would have been shared at an in-person open house will be available on the open house website.

**Live Q&A Webinars**

May 11, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
May 14, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.  
May 18, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

**Staff Office Hours**

May 11, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
May 20, 12:00 – 3:00 p.m.  
May 27, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

- Join Authority staff for a Q&A session via webinar.
- For details visit: [MeetHSRNorCal.org/webinar-information](http://MeetHSRNorCal.org/webinar-information)
- Interpretation will be available in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.
- **Note:** Verbal comments on the Draft EIR/EIS will **not** be accepted during Q&A webinars but can be submitted in writing via the [online comment submission form](http://online comment submission form).
- If you need help navigating the Draft EIR/EIS, schedule a 15-minute phone conversation with Authority staff to answer your questions.
- Sign up here: [MeetHSRNorCal.org/office-hours](http://MeetHSRNorCal.org/office-hours).
- **Note:** Conversations with Authority staff will **not** be recorded and comments on the Draft EIR/EIS will **not** be accepted during staff office hour appointments.

**Accessing the Draft EIR/EIS**

Facilities intended to make printed copies of the Draft EIR/EIS available for your review may be closed in compliance with coronavirus public health and safety directives. The Draft EIR/EIS is available to view or download from the [Authority's website](http://Authority's website) and the San Jose to Merced [open house website](http://open house website). See the [Authority's website](http://Authority's website) or call 800-455-8166 for information about obtaining a copy of the Draft EIR/EIS.

**Interpretation & Translation Requests**

All interpretation, translation, and reasonable accommodation requests must be made to the Title VI Coordinator 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting date.

Todas las solicitudes de interpretación, traducción y acomodaciones razonables deben hacerse al coordinador de título VI 72 horas antes de la fecha programada de la reunión.

所有口譯、筆譯，以及合理遷讓的請求，均須於約定會議日期之前 72 小時內向第六專區官員提出。

Ang lahat ng pagpasa ng wika, pagpapaliwanag o anumang makatwirang hingi ay kailangang ipasa sa title VI coordinator 72 oras bago ang iskeddyul ng pulong.

통역, 번역, 적절한 편의 요청은 정해진 회의 날짜로부터 72 시간 전에 타이틀 VI 코디네이터에게 신청해주시요.

Tất cả dịch vụ thông dịch, biên dịch, và những yêu cầu tiên nghi hợp lý phải được gửi cho Title VI Coordinator 72 tiếng đồng hồ trước ngày họp lịch hẹn.

O ni talosaga mo ni fesoasoani i lau lava gagana e talau o na faia ma faa'o'ina mai i le ofisa o le Title VI Coordinator i le 72 itula a'e le'i faia ni fono ua faafuaina.

All requests for reasonable accommodations must be made three working days (72 hours) in advance of the scheduled meeting date. For assistance, please call the San Jose to Merced Project Section helpline at (800) 455-8166 or the Authority's TTY/TTD number at (916) 403-6943.

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MARIPOSA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
966-2456  
MARIPOSA COUNTY FARM ADVISOR  
966-2417  
MARIPOSA COUNTY FARM BUREAU  
742-5875

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FAIRGROUNDS FOUNDATION  
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PALMER TRACTOR  
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966-5914  
VALLEY PACIFIC PETROLEUM  
948-9412  
YOSEMITE GLASS & WINDOW INC.  
966-3292

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722-3552  
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722-7086  
SCHOETTLER TIRE  
723-1823

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DIAS CONSTRUCTION, INC.  
634-9601  
M-MIG CONSTRUCTION  
631-6017

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J M EQUIPMENT CO INC .  
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761-4441  
RUCKER REAL ESTATE  
722-6532  
VALLEY REAL ESTATE SALES, INC  
854-1000

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667-1038  
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392-6905  
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704-1790

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585-8633  
DUTCH DOOR DAIRY  
648-2166  
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GUERRERO FARM LABOR  
492-0408  
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854-6325  
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632-1385  
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658-5943  
MARCIEL & CO  
777-0911  
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394-7981  
MODERN DAIRY  
722-7452  
MODESTO DAIRY SUPPLY  
669-6200  
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384-8494  
DICKEY'S PUMP SERVICE  
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387-4500  
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394-7949  
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394-7945  
DOS PALOS COOP GIN  
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GUSTINE DRAINAGE DISTRICT  
854-6782  
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722-5761  
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883-8205  
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# Qualifying for Social Security as a farmer or rancher

The following information is provided by Nationwide, the #1 farm and ranch insurer in the U.S.\*



For many Americans, Social Security makes up a sizable amount of their income in retirement. In 2018, 63 million Americans received approximately one trillion dollars in Social Security benefits, with a majority of those funds going to retired workers.<sup>1</sup> However, due to the way in which many farm operators utilize the tax code to adjust their income, many farmers run the risk of not qualifying for Social Security retirement benefits.

## What does it take to be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits?

For any individual to qualify

for Social Security retirement benefits, they must have earned a minimum amount of either wages or net profit for a given year (or quarter). Individuals earn one credit per quarter in which an annually-set minimum required wage or net profit is achieved. For 2019, the minimum earnings per quarter are \$1,360.<sup>2</sup> Individuals can earn up to four credits per year, making the total minimum earnings equivalent to \$5,440 for 2019. To qualify for future benefits under Social Security, an individual must have earned 40 quarters (or, 10 years) of wages or net profits. If an individual does not have at least the 40 required earned credits, they

will not be able to collect Social Security retirement benefits.

## Your farm business structure matters

For those individuals that own and operate a farm as either a C-corporation or as an S-Corporation, it is highly likely they will already be paying themselves wages. Any wages of \$1,360 per quarter (or, \$5,440 per year) will receive their max of four credits for benefit calculations. For those farmers that run their operation through an LLC or are filing their taxes as a sole proprietor under a Schedule F return, credits will be earned on net farm income. Net farm income in excess of \$5,440 per year will result in four credits being earned. However, farmers who utilize tax deductions and expenses that result in an income loss for the tax year (reported on a Schedule F IRS tax

form) should be aware that this action will result in zero credits being earned for that tax year.

Who pays the Social Security tax is another key issue. Individuals employed by an employer will have 6.2%<sup>3</sup> of their pay withheld for Social Security tax and 1.45%<sup>4</sup> withheld for Medicare tax, while the employer pays the other half of the total tax. For many farmers, these two taxes will both be paid by the individual, generally referred to as self-employment tax, for a total of 15.3%. It's important to note that any wages above \$132,900<sup>5</sup> will not be assessed the 12.4% tax and will only be subject to the additional Medicare taxes.

Get the most out of your Social Security benefits. Register for one of our online webinars at [www.nationwide.com/cfbf](http://www.nationwide.com/cfbf) to learn more or call Nationwide for help at 855-863-9636.

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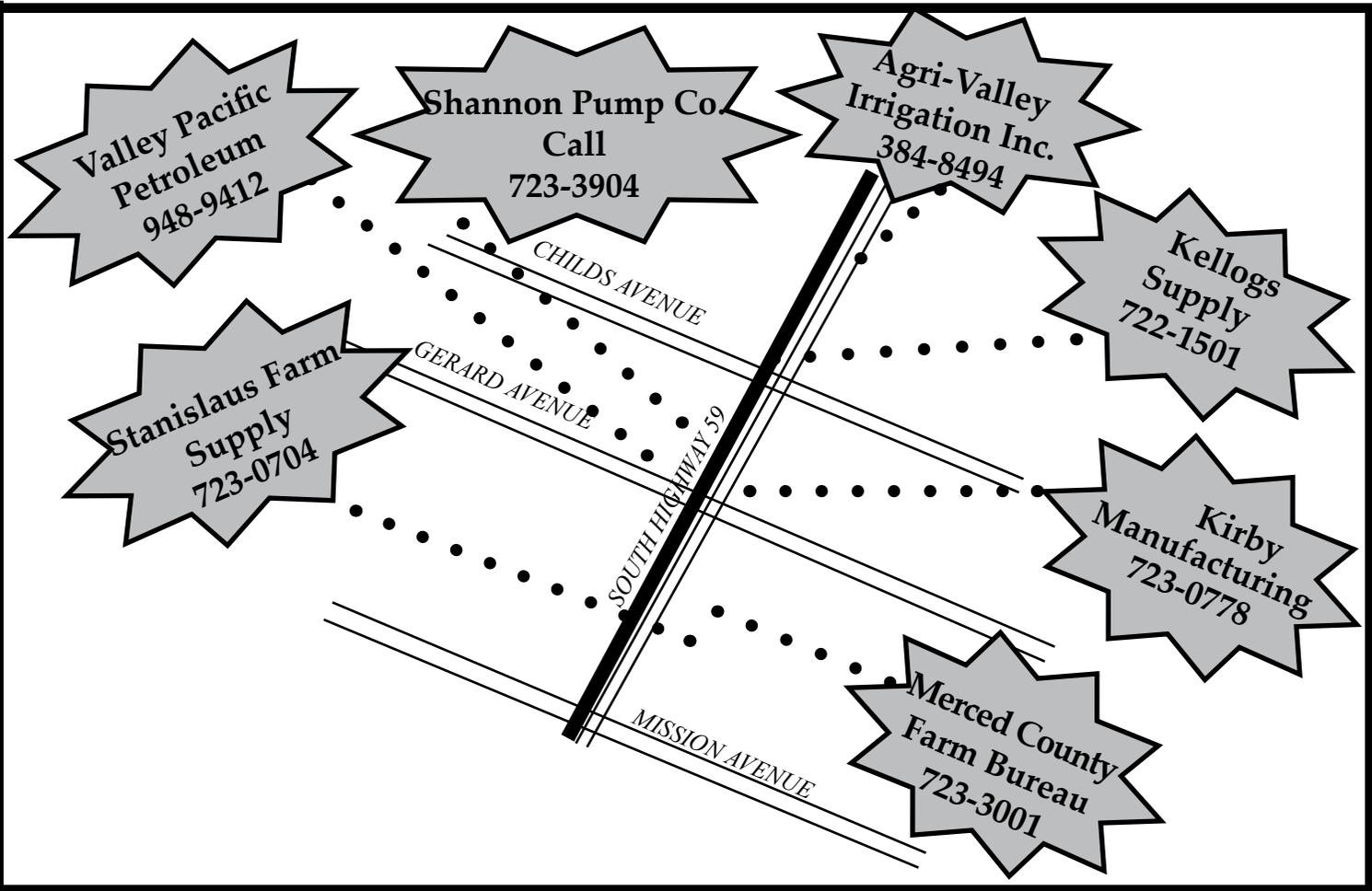
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CAL FARM & HOME  
209 358-1554

## FAIR FOOD FROM PAGE 4

It takes place every Friday in May, plus expanded dates in June from 11:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m. May 8, 15, 22 and 29; June 5, 11-13..

**Fair Food Friday's is a drive-thru, pick-up only event.**

Just enter the Merced County Fairgrounds from 11th Street and follow the directional signage, then you will exit onto Childs Avenue. You must remain in your vehicle the entire time.

### The Fair Food Line-Up

Indulge on your fair food favorites such as corn dogs, kettle corn, Ices, cinnamon rolls, funnel cakes and more at a special pandemic

pricing! This event is cash only; except for one vendor noted below.

### Pricing

Corn Dogs.....\$5  
 Kettle Corn.....\$6 Small bag and \$10 Large bag; \$7 Caramel  
 Icee in souvenir cup with straw 32 oz.....\$5  
 Cotton Candy.....\$3  
 French Bread Pepperoni Pizza.....\$5  
 Funnel cake w/powdered sugar.....\$8  
 Funnel Cake w/ fruit and whip cream.....\$9  
 Funnel Cake w/the chocolate, fruit, whip cream.....\$10  
 (6) Pack Frozen or Hot Cinnamon Roll with frosting on the side.....\$25

AMIDST ADVERSE CONDITIONS,  
PLEASE KNOW YFC IS STILL WORKING  
TO SERVE ITS MEMBERS.



# WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.

YOSEMITE FARM CREDIT REMAINS  
AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH ALL YOUR  
AG FINANCING NEEDS.

<p>MODESTO <b>209-527-1900</b></p> <p>TURLOCK <b>209-668-3422</b></p> <p>PATTERSON <b>209-892-6136</b></p>	<p>MERCED <b>209-383-1116</b></p> <p>LOS BANOS <b>209-827-3885</b></p> <p>OAKDALE <b>209-847-7021</b></p>
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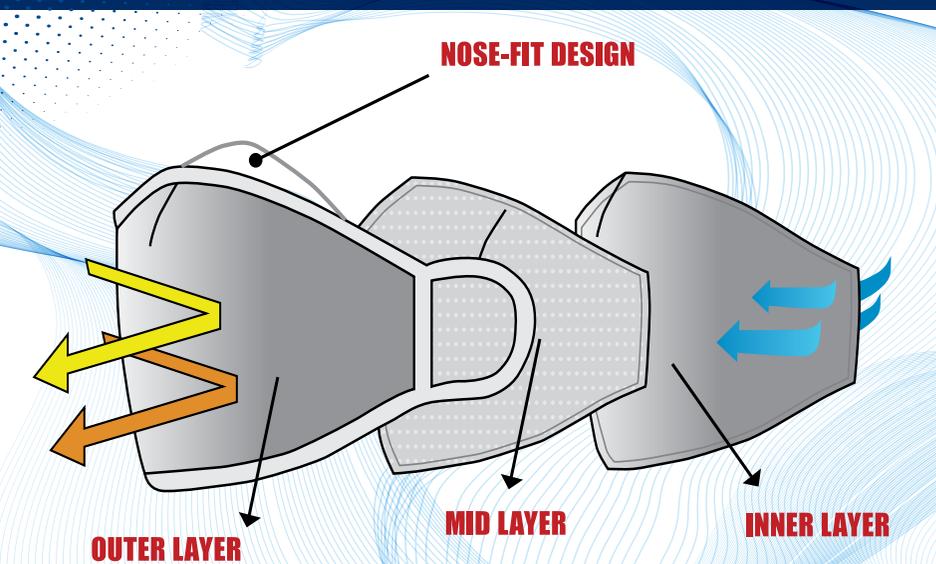

YOSEMITEFARMCREDIT.COM


# ADD YOUR LOGO

**NON MEDICAL USE  
FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY  
100% POLYESTER  
WASHABLE  
REUSABLE**

## FABRIC MASK

MODEL: 3LSM



**NOSE-FIT DESIGN**

**OUTER LAYER      MID LAYER      INNER LAYER**

SIZE: OSFM  
COLOR: BLACK

**NON MEDICAL USE FABRIC MASK**

**WE DO NOT CLAIM THESE MASK WILL PREVENT ILLNESS OR COVID-19**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

\* Hand wash with soap and warm water before using. \* Lay flat to dry. \* Adjust the mask to fit your nose and mouth then position loop behind ear. \* Hand wash with soap and warm water after each use

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800-320-4625

MADE IN VIETNAM







## EAR SAVERS

ADJUSTABLE FACE MASK TENSION RELIEVER

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Attach each end to mask ear loops and wrap around the back of your head.

**CONTENTS**



**X2**

**EXAMPLE (MASK NOT INCLUDED)**



**WASHING INSTRUCTIONS**

Hand wash with soap and warm water • Lay flat or hang to dry

Not a replacement for social distancing practices as outlined by the CDC. The CDC recommends wearing a cloth mask in public settings where other social distancing practices are difficult to maintain.

## PRICES INCLUDE FREE SHIPPING

QTY	2-49	50-149	150-249	250-499	500-999	1000-2499
PRICE	\$6.99	\$4.99	\$4.49	\$3.99	\$3.69	\$3.49
DONATION AMOUNT	\$1.00/unit	\$1.00/unit	\$0.75/unit	\$0.40/unit	\$0.37/unit	\$0.35/unit
ADD LOGO	\$3.49	\$3.49	\$3.29	\$2.99	\$2.79	\$2.49

EAR SAVER 2 PACK \$2.99

To help those in need in this difficult time, The Hat Source will donate the amount listed to the charity of your choice shown below.

## CHARITIES








The Hat Source • Phone: (800) 320-4625 • Fax: (209) 357-8869 • [www.thehatsource.com](http://www.thehatsource.com)