Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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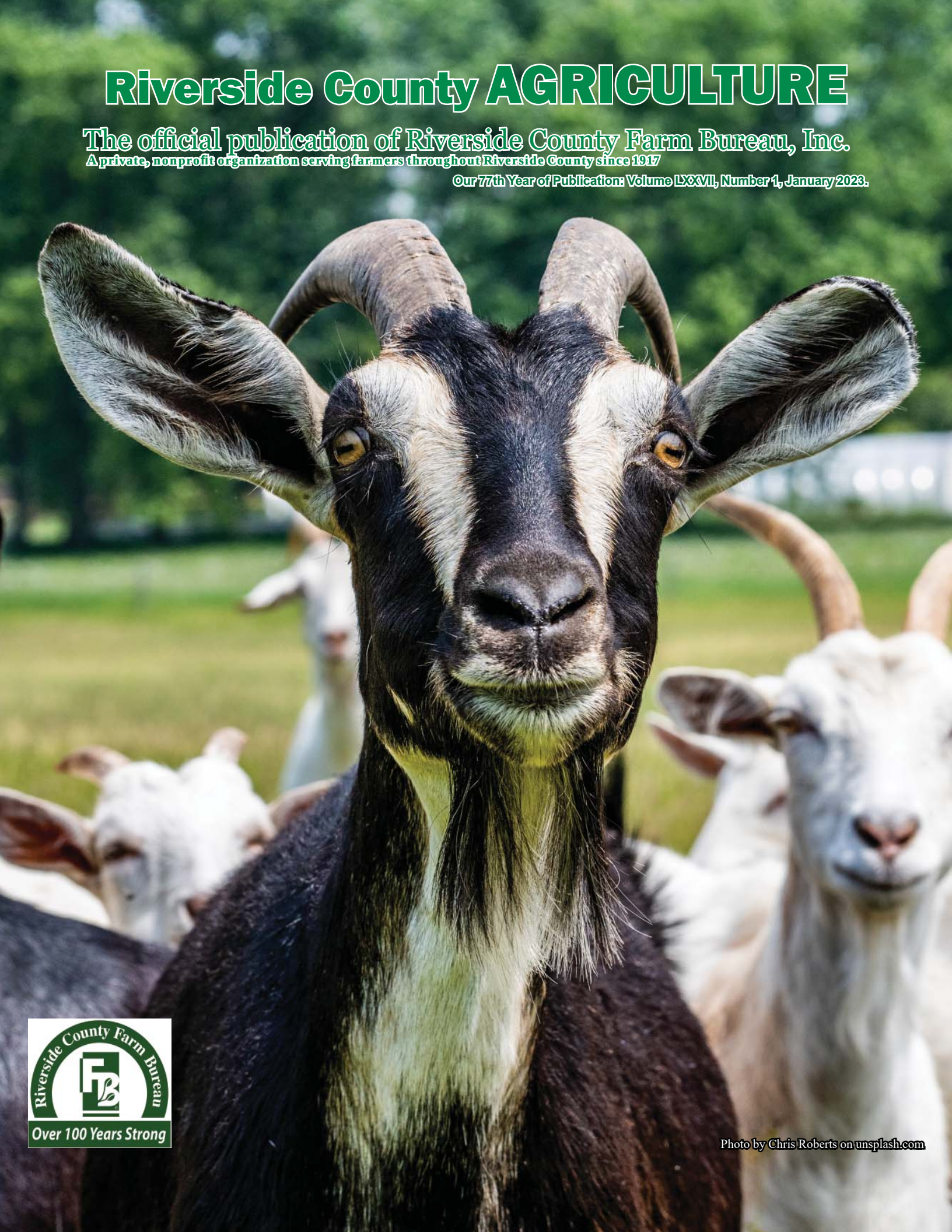

Photo by Chris Roberts on unsplash.com

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Inside this Issue...

Welcome New Members

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

Riverside County Sheriff's Agriculture Team (AG Team)

Owner Applied Number

Marking your equipment

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

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

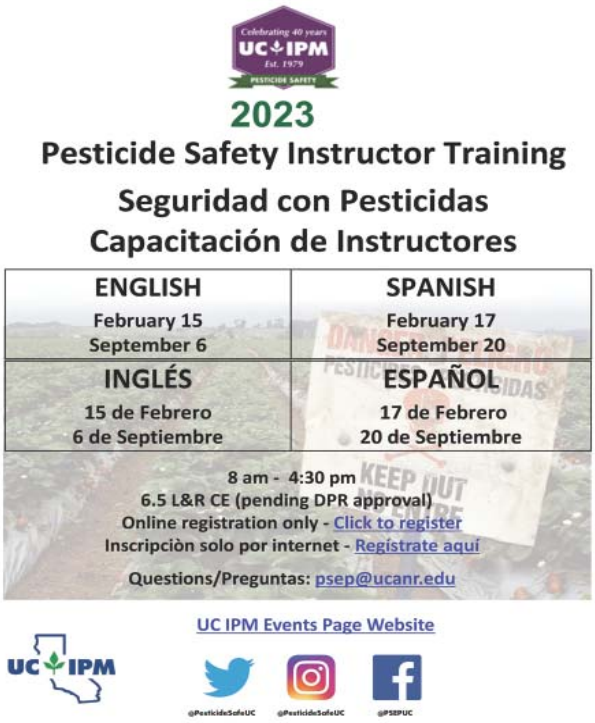
The OAN is a unique number used to protect and identify equipment, tools, vehicles and other valuable items from a ranch, farm, dairy, winery, or any other agriculture related business. It is a 10-digit number that represents an individual agriculture business. Each business will be assigned their own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

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

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

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

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



UCCE Researchers Target Sugar-Feeding Ants, a Key to Controlling Citrus Pests, Disease

Sugar-feeding ants protect pests that infect trees and damage the fruit they bear. Insecticides are often a go-to solution, but may kill beneficial insects in the process, too. Thankfully, Mark Hoddle, University of California Cooperative Extension entomologist and biological control specialist at UC Riverside, together with UCR colleagues in chemical engineering, developed a biodegradable hydrogel baiting system that targets ant populations, which protect sap-sucking pests from their natural enemies. Control of ants allows beneficial parasitoids and predators to greatly reduce pest populations.

Deciding to expand Hoddle's research was a "no-brainer" according to David Haviland, UC Cooperative Extension farm advisor in Kern County.

Haviland is investigating active ingredients that can be effectively used in hydrogel baiting systems. His research builds on Hoddle's use of alginate gels, also known as water beads, soaked in sugar water to control Argentine ants.

"What we're doing in California can benefit places like Florida, Texas, Mexico and beyond," Haviland said.

Sugar-feeding ants are a universal problem as they interfere with biocontrol processes and promote diseases like huanglongbing or citrus greening because there are more vectors to spread disease-causing organisms between trees.

The Hoddle lab conducted two years of orchard research showing that when ants are controlled, the amount of citrus flush infested with Asian citrus psyllid (ACP), a mottled brown insect that vectors the pathogen causing citrus greening, decreases by 75%. Citrus flush refers to newly developed leaves.

"But benefits are not restricted to just ACP with Argentine ant control, as natural enemies destroy colonies of other sap-sucking pests too," said Hoddle. "For example, citrus mealybug infestations on leaves were completely eliminated by natural enemies, 100% control, while densities of fruit infested by mealybugs were reduced by 50%."

The Hoddle lab's success inspired Haviland to consider how this approach will fare in different regions of the state where there are different crops, different pests, and different ant species.

Haviland has worked for many years on solid baits that are effective and affordable for ants that feed primarily on protein, like fire ants in almonds, but successful control measures for sugar-feeding ants that drink their food have been elusive.

"Therefore, we're using hydrogels to essentially turn a liquid bait into a solid, making it effective and commercially adoptable," Haviland said. He and his team are assessing whether active ingredients that undoubtedly work against ants, like thiamethoxam, maintain their effects in a hydrogel system.

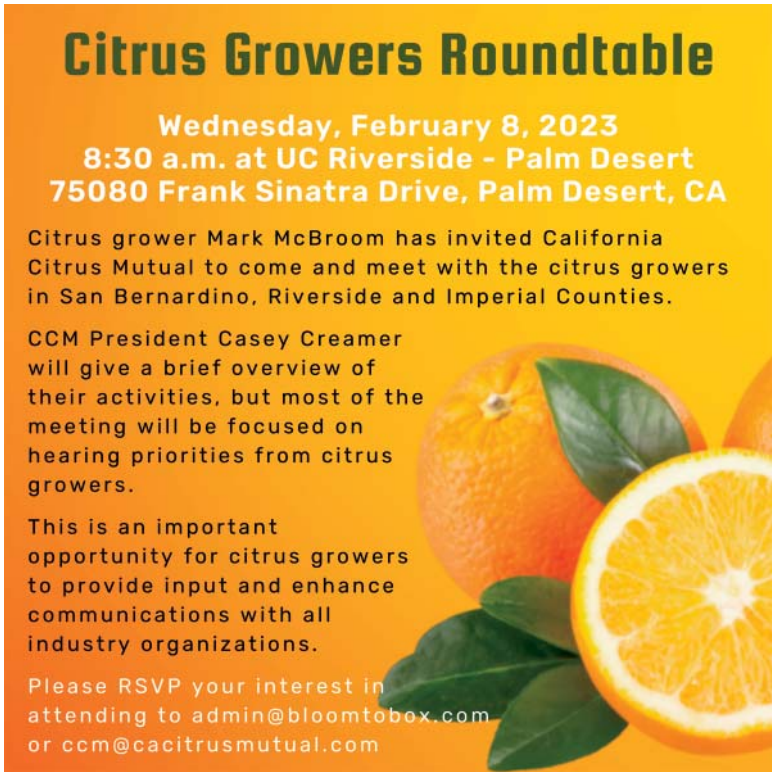
Unlike Hoddle's biodegradable alginate gels, Haviland is relying on acrylamide gels that are similar to the absorbing material you would find in a diaper. These gels are not organic, but are currently accessible on a commercial scale, and have been shown to be effective in wine grapes on the North Coast by Cooperative Extension advisor in Napa County, Monica Cooper. Haviland's current research efforts are focused on citrus, table grapes and wine grapes in the San Joaquin Valley, and on lemons on the coast.

The primary challenge now is navigating pesticide regulations and registration. "This is cutting-edge research," Haviland said, and manufacturer labels for the products being used need to be updated to include hydrogels as an approved use. This process takes time. Additionally, adding new product uses needs to make economic sense for the manufacturer.

Hoddle and Haviland's research can provide data for adding these methods to the product labels.

"If we can show that this tech works against lots of pests, lots of ant species, in lots of different crops across California, hopefully we'll achieve a critical mass of benefits that motivates product manufacturers to make modifications to their labels," said Haviland.

Haviland is hopeful about the process, and said he believes that UC ANR is in a prime position to lead innovation for an issue that requires collaboration among specialists, advisors and the industry.



New interactive web tools help growers cope with climate change

UCCE, USDA California Climate Hub launch CalAgroClimate decision-support tool

Climate and weather variability pose increasing risks to farmers. As world leaders gather in Egypt at COP27 to address the climate crisis, University of California Cooperative Extension and the USDA California Climate Hub are launching new web-based tools to provide farmers with locally relevant and crop-specific information to make production decisions that reduce risk.

"Integrating historical weather data and forecast information with meaningful agricultural decision support information holds the potential to reduce a crop's vulnerability to such risks," said Tapan Pathak, UC Cooperative Extension climate adaptation specialist at UC Merced.

"To provide easy access to high-resolution data in the form of agroclimate tools and information, and to enhance agricultural resilience to climate and weather-related risks, we are launching CalAgroClimate ***(https://calagroclimate.org)***," Pathak said.

Pathak is collaborating on building the decision support tool with partners from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, California Climate Hub, UC Cooperative Extension and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources' Informatics and Geographic Information Systems or IGIS.

"CalAgroClimate has been designed to support climate-enabled decision making for those working in the California specialty crop industry," said Steven Ostoja, director of USDA California Climate Hub. "The USDA California Climate Hub is a proud collaborator on this important initiative to ensure the state's agricultural industry can continue to thrive in a future of climate change."

Shane Feirer and Robert Johnson of UC ANR IGIS designed the interactive tools on the website and Lauren Parker of the USDA California Climate Hub contributed to content organization.An advisory panel composed of colleagues from UCCE and the Natural Resources Conservation Service ensures CalAgroClimate tools are relevant to stakeholder needs.

"CalAgroClimate is an amazing new tool that puts comprehensive past and forecast weather data at any grower's disposal," said Mark Battany, UC Cooperative Extension water management and biometeorology advisor for San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

"California's high-value crops are subject to a myriad of weather-related risk factors; this tool will allow growers to better address both near-term and long-term risks, and in the end grow more profitably," said Battany, who is a member of the CalAgroClimate advisory panel.

Growers and crop consultants can use CalAgroClimate's crop and location-specific tools and resources to help make on-farm decisions, such as preparing for frost or untimely rain and taking advantage of expected favorable conditions.

CalAgroClimate currently includes heat advisory, frost advisory, crop phenology and pest advisory tools.

Heat advisory tool: Extreme heat poses a danger for people, animals and crops. With this tool, users can select location and temperature threshold (e.g. 90 F, 95 F 100 F) based on their crop-specific heat tolerance level and the tool will provide a customized map of heat risk for the next seven days for that location, including the number of consecutive days with temperature above that threshold. Users also can assess overall heat risks across the state for a selected temperature threshold as well. With an early warning about hot temperatures, growers can take steps to reduce risks associated with extreme heat such as providing shade, changing farmworkers' schedules and applying additional irrigation.

Frost advisory tool: Frost risk is a serious issue for many specialty crops across California. Similar to the heat advisory tool, this tool provides a customized map of frost advisory for the next seven days for a user's location, and a forecast of consecutive days with temperature falling below the selected temperature thresholds (e.g. 35 F, 32 F, 28 F). Early warning about cold temperatures can provide growers some time to protect their crops from frost damage.

Crop phenology tool: The scientists have developed a-crop specific and location-specific crop phenology tool to help users keep track of growing degree days accumulations and estimate critical growth stages. CalAgroClimate uses a high-resolution PRISM dataset to provide near real-time crop phenology information to users. This tool will inform growers about how their crop development compares to previous years, which can be helpful in planning activities specific to critical growth stages.

Pest advisory tool: Similar to crop growth, development of certain pests and diseases is controlled by temperature and heat unit accumulations. With the pest advisory tool, growers can keep track of estimated pest generations during the growing season to make pest management decisions.

"We are launching the website with this initial set of tools while working on adding more crop-specific information and several new tools in the near future," Pathak said. "We look forward to getting feedback from growers who use CalAgroClimate to make it even more useful."

ACP/HLB UPDATES

As of December 30, 2022, a total of 142 residential citrus trees have been confirmed positive for Huanglongbing (HLB) in Riverside Co. In addition, the HLB quarantine map includes a recent expansion to the quarantine. These maps can be found on the Citrus Insider website at ***www.citrusinsider.org***.

When moving citrus from, to, or within an HLB quarantine, please review the **HLB and ACP Regulatory Protocols** at ***www.cdfa.ca.gov/Citrus/*** (click onto information for Citrus Growers/Grove Managers) that include the Spray and Move mitigation materials, links to the HLB Pest Risk Mitigation Form, the ACP Free Declaration Form. Please contact the Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's office to submit the required mitigation forms. If you need a pest control or tree removal referral, please contact the Regional Grower Liaison for San Bernardino, San Diego, Riverside and Ventura Counties Sandra Zwaal at ***szwaal2@gmail.com.***

New Educational Materials: Commercial HLB Detection Response Guide

To ensure California citrus growers are well prepared in the event of a potential commercial grove detection of Huanglongbing (HLB), the deadly citrus plant disease that can be spread by the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP), the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program (CPDPP) has developed a response guide for growers to utilize and educate themselves on the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) action plan.

The Response Guide for a Confirmed HLB Positive Detection in a Commercial Grove details the steps taken by CDFA and actions required of the property or grove owner, as outlined in CDFA's Action Plan.

The actions in the response guide represent the most effective tools known to the citrus industry at this time and are meant to protect California's citrus groves and support CDFA's current required regulatory response. While, as of today, there have been no positive detections of HLB in a commercial citrus grove, the CPDPP recognizes the importance of proper preparation.

In addition to the requirements outlined in the guide, growers are encouraged to use as many methods as feasible for their operation in order to limit the spread of the ACP and HLB.

To read or download the response guide, please visit Citrus Insider at https://citrusinsider.org/resources/informational-materials/.

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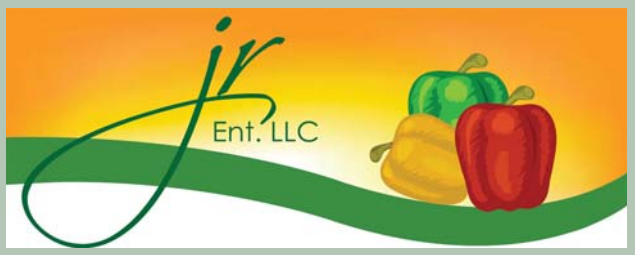

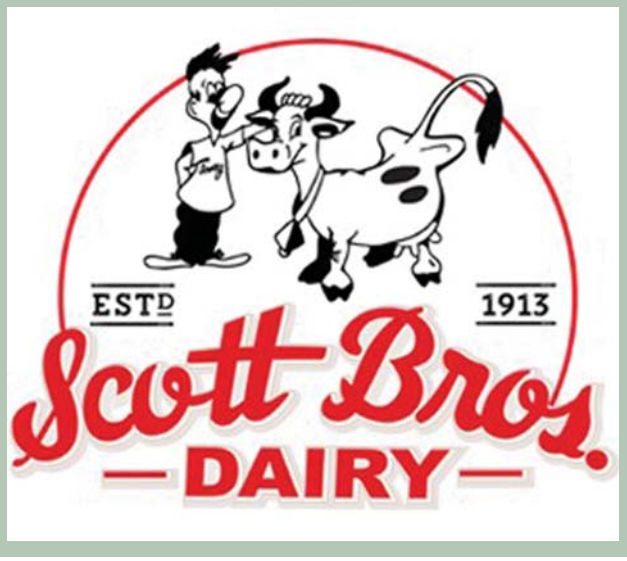

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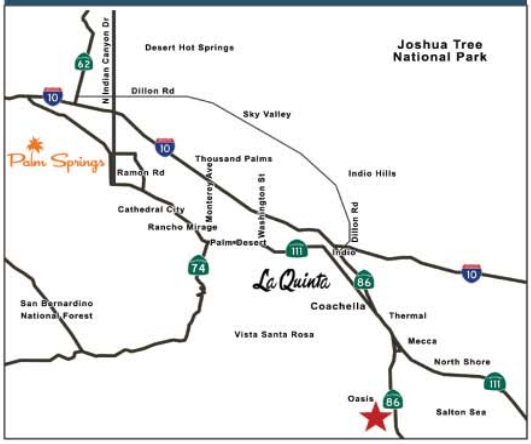

VICINITY MAP

Desert Pacific PROPERTIES, INC. COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

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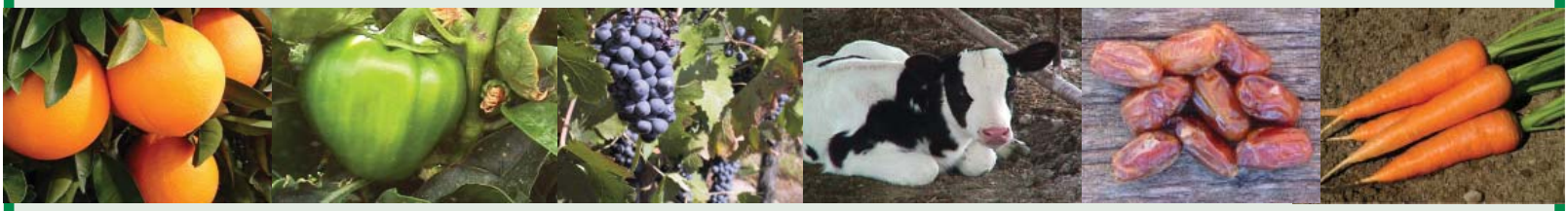

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 8, 2023 ~ 5:30 PM, Riverside County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting. In person at Russo's Italian Kitchen in Banning and via Zoom Conference. Please call our office at (951) 684-6732 for more information.

Food and Farm News

Courtesy of CFBF

California cage-free rule creates financial headaches for egg farmers

California egg farmers say they have been hard hit by costs of going cage-free, as is now required under state law. Many say the demands are causing them to miss out on high current egg prices. John Lewis Jr., president of Farmer John Egg Farm in Bakersfield, said the operation will close at the end of this month because it can't afford $4 million to $5 million in costs to retrofit the farm to comply with the law. Frank Hilliker of San Diego said he is producing about half of his normal eggs because some barns aren't yet compliant.

Farmers, ranchers challenged by rule banning older trucks

Large trucks and buses made before 2010 are now prohibited from operating in California, under a California Air Resources Board rule that took effect Jan. 1. Until this year, an agricultural exemption had allowed pre-2010 big rigs to run up to 10,000 miles a year. Now farmers and ranchers with non-compliant vehicles must abide by a 1,000-mile limit. The market is already saturated with older vehicles retaining little value, and many business owners face steep financial costs to replace them.

Storms, snowpack spur optimism for ample water supply for farmers

A year ago, California's first snowpack survey of the year revealed deep snow measuring 160% of average. Then came the driest January, February and March in more than 100 years. This year the snowpack measured 174% of average on Jan. 3—and ensuing storms dumped another 10 feet of snow in parts of the Sierra Nevada. At last, that may presage a healthy water year for agriculture.

"Farm Bureau Working for You"