

Riverside County AGRICULTURE

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

Our 73rd Year of Publication: Volume LXXIII, Number 7, July 2019.

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training ~ August 20, 2019

**Scientists Decode DNA
Secrets of World's
Toughest Bean**

**PROPOSED CHANGES
TO AGRICULTURAL VISA
PROGRAM**

Why Join Farm Bureau?



**Don't Risk Finding Out If Your Farm Is Under-
insured When You Have A Loss**

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Welcome New Members

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



WHY JOIN FARM BUREAU?

There are many reasons why anyone who is involved in agriculture, both directly or indirectly, should join and retain their membership in the Farm Bureau.

First, the resources Farm Bureau devotes to communications and public outreach are unparalleled and in today's world, outreach to consumers, decision makers, media, and the general public is a must. The California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) has a team of two dozen media experts that work each and every day to inform the public about agriculture and to make sure that agriculture gets a fair shake in the daily press, television, radio, and social media. Second, Farm Bureau has a team of attorneys devoted to protecting water and property rights, ensuring that land use decisions make sense for agriculture and working daily to make certain that agriculture's voice is heard in the judicial branch of government with regard to the enforcement of environmental laws.

CFBF also has another team of attorneys on staff devoted to making sure the decisions made by the California Public Utilities Commission treat farmers and ranchers fairly and these efforts have saved farmers and ranchers millions and millions of dollars. This division also includes experts in labor relations, immigration, and worker safety laws and interfaces with various labor agencies in their decision making in these areas.

In addition, Farm Bureau has an organizational structure and a presence in nearly every county in the state which provides a mechanism for fighting for agriculture on the local and regional levels. This allows the most extensive political action program in the industry with the ability to influence the outcomes of campaigns and help elect legislators and other public officials who are supportive of agriculture.

The price of a Farm Bureau membership is well worth the program of work outlined above. The Riverside County Farm Bureau thanks all its current members for joining and maintaining their memberships and encourages others to join and support our efforts to promote and protect Riverside County agriculture.

For more information about joining the Riverside County Farm Bureau or renewing your present membership, go to www.riversidecfb.com or call us at 951.684.6732.



August 20, 2019
8:00 am - 5:00 PM

Farm Credit
 485 Business Parkway
 Imperial, CA 92251

Who Should Attend

Produce growers, buyers, and others interested in learning about: produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety.

The U.S. FDA's Produce Safety rule requires in § 112.22(c) that for each farm, "At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration." The PSA Grower Training Course is one way to satisfy this requirement; it is the only course currently recognized by FDA.

'A Berry Good Project'



"A Berry Good Project," a free downloadable book geared toward third- to fifth-grade students, is now available from Feeding Minds Press.

The book helps students understand farmers' choices related to pest management. It also introduces students to careers in agriculture, including Extension agent and strawberry farmer.

"Children's books are powerful tools to help students understand where their food comes from," said Christy Lilja, executive director of the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. "Engaging and accurate books about agriculture help children learn that food doesn't just 'come from the store.'"

Feeding Minds Press developed the new book with support from sponsor Nichino America.

"We're pleased to help the Foundation's important agricultural literacy goals," said Jeff Johnson, NAI president. "Stories are a great way to introduce young students to new concepts. The publication of 'A Berry Good Project' is exciting and we hope to follow it with another."

A summary of the book is below.

"Plants just grow, right? I mean, they're everywhere. How much work can it be?"

When Rowan's class is put in charge of the strawberry field this year, he thinks it will be all sweet reward. However, he quickly learns that humans aren't the only ones around that love strawberries. With the project's success on the line, Rowan's class must think fast how to save the strawberry crop."

Feeding Minds Press is a children's book publishing venture from the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. Learn more at feedingmindspress.com. Email inquiries may be sent to info@feedingmindspress.com.

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Scientists decode DNA secrets of world's toughest bean

Research offers hope for feeding Earth's expanding population as the climate changes ~ Jules Bernstein

UC Riverside scientists have decoded the genome of black-eyed peas, offering hope for feeding Earth's expanding population, especially as the climate changes.

Understanding the genes responsible for the peas' drought and heat tolerance eventually could help make other crops tougher too.

Black-eyed peas are small beans with dark midsections. They've been a global dietary staple for centuries due to their environmental toughness and exceptional nutritional qualities, such as high protein and low fat. In sub-Saharan Africa they remain the number one source of protein in the human diet.

A genome is the full collection of genetic codes that determine characteristics like color, height, and predisposition to diseases. All genomes contain highly repetitive sequences of DNA that UCR Professor of Computer Science and project co-leader Stefano Lonardi likens to "hundreds of thousands of identical jigsaw puzzle pieces."

Lonardi described the process of figuring out how the jigsaw puzzle sequences fit together as "computationally challenging." In order to do so, Lonardi's team assembled the genome many times with different software tools and parameters. Then they created new software capable of merging these various genome solutions into a single, complete picture.

With the success of this project, the black-eyed pea joins only a handful of other major crops whose genomes have been fully sequenced. The team's work on the project was published in the June issue of *The Plant Journal*, where it was featured as the cover story, and Lonardi's free software can be downloaded online.

Research on black-eyed peas, a legume also known as cowpea, started at UC Riverside more than 40 years ago. But cowpeas' presence in Riverside predates the university by about 200 years.

"The cowpea has been here supporting people since early colonial times," said project co-leader Timothy Close, a UCR professor of botany and plant sciences. "It's nice that we've brought this plant with so much local history up to state of the art for scientific research."

This is the first high-quality reference genome for the cowpea. Work on it began three years ago, made possible mainly by a \$1.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation, or NSF. An additional \$500,000 NSF grant also supported the computational efforts.



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A clue to the complexity of the project is the size of the research team. In addition to Close and Lonardi, the many other UCR scientists on the team included María Muñoz-Amatmán, Qihua Liang, Steve Wanamaker, Sassoum Lo, Hind Alhakami, Rachid Ounit, Philip Roberts, Jansen Santos, Arsenio Ndeve, and Abid Md. Hasan. Additional team members inside the U.S. came from UC Davis, the Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute in California, the National Center for Genome Resources in New Mexico, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Iowa. International team members came from Finland, France, Brazil, and the Czech Republic.

As with humans, there are differences between individual cowpeas. Knowing which genes are responsible for qualities in individuals such as color, size, or pathogen resistance will help breeders develop new varieties even better able to withstand external challenges.

"Having the genome sequence helps scientists make decisions about the choice of parent plants to crossbreed in order to produce their desired progeny," Close said.

One of the cowpea traits that scientists are now trying to understand is its remarkable ability to recover from drought stress.

"We're trying to figure out why cowpeas are so resilient to harsh conditions," said Close. "As we move into a world with less water available to agriculture, it will be important to capitalize on this ability and expand on it, taking the lead from cowpeas to guide improvements in other crops that are vulnerable to climate change."

Proposed changes to agricultural visa program show promise, farm leader says

As farmers in California and elsewhere around the country try to cope with chronic employee shortages, the president of the California Farm Bureau Federation said administrative changes to the current H-2A agricultural visa program could be one element of a solution, while Congress continues to work on broader legislation.

The U.S. Department of Labor announced plans to modernize and improve the existing H-2A agricultural visa program, which allows people from certain countries to enter the United States temporarily for on-farm jobs.


"We're encouraged by the administration's efforts to improve the H-2A system," CFBF President Jamie Johansson said. "We continue to analyze the full proposal, but our initial reading shows that it would streamline certain aspects of the program and expand it to include additional forms of agriculture, such as reforestation work."


More California farmers have begun using the H-2A program, he said, but added that it has generally not been flexible enough for many of the state's crops and commodities.

"When we asked Farm Bureau members earlier this year to tell us how they are addressing employee shortages, only 6% of the farmers who responded to our survey said they were using H-2A," Johansson said. "Changes proposed by the administration may increase that proportion, but farmers also need wider improvement to immigration laws that can only be addressed through congressional action."

Farm Bureau and other organizations continue working with members of Congress on solutions that would provide legal status to current farm employees in the U.S. while further enhancing the agricultural visa program to include a portability mechanism.

"Ultimately, immigration laws need to accommodate employees and their immediate family members who are in the country now, plus allow future employees to enter the U.S. and move from farm to farm for employment," Johansson said. "We will continue to pursue that goal with Congress and the administration. H-2A reform is only one piece of the puzzle."



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Don't risk finding out if your farm is underinsured when you have a loss

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

Insuring to the accurate value of your home, buildings, equipment and inventory is an important consideration when reviewing your insurance coverage needs. Here's why: If you have a major loss and your property is not properly valued, your claim reimbursement could fall short of your expectations and put you in a bind. In the event of a major loss, this might even create a serious financial shortfall.

Studies show that a large percentage of homes and farm buildings in the United States are underinsured. So we recommend discussing this with your insurance agent to ensure you're keeping your property values up-to-date.

Request a consultation

If your insurance agent has not been to your farm or ranch in a year or more, ask for an in-person visit to verify your values. Current values are determined by a number of factors, including the cost of construction in your specific region.

You'll want to be sure your values are based on current information as well as forecasts. If you've acquired new equipment or land, or expanded your operation, this is a good time to make sure everything is covered.

Consider automatic adjustments

Ask your agent if he or she offers a policy that automatically adjusts for changing values. The AgriChoice® farm insurance policy offered by Nationwide includes a provision known as automatic construction cost. This means that, at each renewal, your home valuation is automatically adjusted to reflect current building costs in your zip code.

Nationwide has been protecting agriculture for more than 100 years, including commercial agribusinesses. For more information contact your local Nationwide agent or visit nationwide.com/business/agribusiness.

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In the event you have been impacted by an event, contact Nationwide day or night to report a claim by calling 1-800-421-3535. We are here to help you get your home back in order and we work with local authorities on all events.

Nationwide offers the following tips for homeowners to help protect from contractor/repair fraud:

§ Request an itemized written estimate for any proposed work from contractors.

§ Be wary of estimates that seem wholly unreasonable. Nationwide will provide compensation for reasonable estimates for the correct method of repair. Policyholders can call and ask us about an estimate.

§ Beware of profiteers and fraudulent contractors. Contact your local Better Business Bureau or the California Department of Insurance if you have any concerns with a contractor you may decide to use for repairs.

§ Avoid paying any upfront fees and be wary of cash deposits. One common scam is to show up with equipment to perform the work, promise to return in a few hours and never come back.

§ It is always a good idea to take pictures of any damage before repairs begin.

§ If you have any questions, call the Nationwide claims hotline at 1-800-421-3535 or your local agent immediately.



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PRIZES

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Grand Prize - \$1,000
First Place - \$500
Second Place - \$250
Third Place - \$100
Honorable Mention - \$50
(six winners)

Budding Artists
(ages 13 and younger)

First Place - \$250
Second Place - \$100

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

Snap a photo of any subject that celebrates California agriculture, such as:

- Fresh food—plated or in the field
- Rural scenery
- Animals, crops and harvests
- Life, work and family on the farm or ranch

Any amateur photographer who is a member of a county Farm Bureau in California or a contributing member of the California Bountiful Foundation can participate. Join at www.cfbf.com/join or www.californiabountiful.org.

To enter:

Submit up to five print or high-resolution digital photos. Enter online or postmark by Sept. 30. See rules for details or call 916-561-5550.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

There will be no Board meeting in July or August. The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 11, 2019, beginning at 5:30 p.m. at Russo's Italian Kitchen in Banning.

New methods, law aim to reduce rural crime

Crimes of theft, vandalism and trespassing plague rural California. Farmers and sheriff's deputies use a number of techniques to combat rural crime, combining new technology with tried-and-true information sharing. Recently signed state legislation creates a new crime category—grand theft of agricultural property—and invests fines collected from those crimes into rural crime-prevention programs.

Data can help grape growers forecast crop performance

Decisions that grape growers make could have a 25-year impact on their vines, and computer engineers want to give farmers better information to guide their choices. Professors from Purdue University in Indiana have been working with California winegrape growers to help them adopt new technology. The project includes harnessing data growers can use to forecast how their decisions might affect the long-term performance of their vineyards.

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