



Riverside County

# AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

A private, nonprofit organization serving farmers throughout Riverside County since 1917



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These photos are of young people that Farm Bureau and members like you helped support at this year's auction.

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

## **Connecting the dots between farm and plate**

Courtesy of Ag News, American farm Bureau Federation.

It's play time! The enhanced version of "My American Farm," the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's online interactive education program, will be launched in January 2011 at the American Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting. One of the top goals with this new version was to create more games and activities for kids to learn from and enjoy.

The Foundation has expanded the original five games in "My American Farm" to 12 and added educator resources, family activities, videos and loads of other new features.

"We've more than doubled the activities and resources available on [www.myamericcanfarm.org](http://www.myamericcanfarm.org)," said Curtis Miller, the Foundation's director of education. "I believe we've also made the website more appealing for kids, as well as their parents and teachers."

The games and activities are targeted to students in grades three through five.

Young visitors to the website are expected to go straight to such games as "Ag Across America," "Finders Keepers," "Harvest This!" and "Farmers Market Challenge" by click-

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ing on the featured game or any of the game icons in a “slider” menu in the middle of the home page. Scrolling over a colorful game icon reveals a detailed description of that game. The site also has a “Games” link at the top of the screen that takes users to a games page.

Previously, upon completing the game, kids could print a certificate after earning 100 points. In the updated version of “My American Farm,” kids now get a reward to place in a “Passport to Sustainability,” as well as a point total.

“We realized we could do more to keep kids playing and learning,” said Miller. “The passport entices them to go through all of the games.”

For each game, kids can click on at least four other links: 1) the “Did you know?” link, which gives more information about agriculture; 2) “Download an Awesome Activity,” something like “Car Trip Ag Bingo” that kids can do on their own or with their friends or family; 3) “Watch a cool video,” which takes them to video stories from the public television show “America’s Heartland”; and 4) “Cast your vote,” which lets kids weigh in on such topics as what kind of farm they would have if they were farmers.

“It’s just one more teachable moment after each game is completed,” Miller explained, “one more opportunity to help kids connect the dots between what happens on the farm and how it results in food on their plates.”

Parents may be more apt to click on the “Fun Family Activities” link at the top of the homepage. The link brings up the instructions for numerous activities such as building a rain gauge, which they can do with their kids to build on what they may be learning at school.

Under the Educator Resources tab, the site suggests games by curriculum areas that educators may need to cover. Farmer and rancher volunteers who want to use “My American Farm” during their visits to classrooms can also select activities by agricultural topic, such as how farmers care for the land.

Miller emphasizes that all of the games and other activities on “My American Farm” are “subject-matter focused and agriculturally themed,” meaning that each activity helps teach subjects such as math, science, social studies, language arts and health by using agricultural themes.

Miller also likes to point out that all of the resources on “My American Farm” are free—a fact made possible by the sponsorship of Pioneer, a DuPont Business. Pioneer pledged nearly a year ago that it would do-

nate \$500,000 over three years to support the project.

“None of these updates and upgrades would have been possible without Pioneer’s support,” said Miller. Plus, it’s really exciting to be able to provide this resource to kids, their families and educators at no cost to them. We hope that the result is it will become widely used.”

To get the word out about “My American Farm,” the Foundation will send direct mail to educators, work to get the attention of education bloggers and attend national education, library and agriculture literacy conferences in addition to the site launch at the AFBF annual meeting. Several state Farm Bureaus also feature “My American Farm” on their websites, and there is a “My American Farm” kiosk at the Boise Zoo in Idaho.

“The Foundation has put a lot of thought and work into making this a great resource for educators, as well as parents, and making it fun for children to explore,” Miller said. “So, we want to make sure it gets out there so kids—and maybe a few adults too—learn from it.”

The Foundation will present the new version of “My American Farm” at the 2011 American Farm Bureau annual meeting in Atlanta, Ga. Attendees can check out the program’s games, videos and activities at kiosks that will be available throughout the Tradeshow floor and in the Foundation booth, Jan. 8-10. Visitors to the booth will receive “My American Farm”-themed giveaways.

## DWR Releases Initial 2011 State Water Project Allocation

Sacramento -The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today announced an initial allocation of 25 percent of requested deliveries to its State Water Project (SWP) contractors for calendar year 2011.

The initial allocation is a conservative delivery estimate and will be adjusted as hydrologic conditions develop during the winter. Nonetheless, 25 percent is a much-improved figure from last year’s initial projection of only 5 percent, the lowest since the SWP began delivering water in 1967.

Following three consecutive drought years, 2010’s persistent spring storms allowed DWR to increase the initial 5 percent allocation to 50 percent.

The 25 percent initial allocation for 2011 represents 1,043,034 acre-feet, compared with the maximum allowable 4,172,126 acre-feet in water deliveries that SWP contractors requested.

However, the allocation at this time of year is a conservative estimate. As winter progresses and the Department has a clearer picture of water conditions, the allocation can be increased. If average precipitation continues, the final allocation will likely be raised to 60 percent of requested amounts.

This season’s early conditions are much improved over last year. California’s precipitation to date stands at 165 percent of average, which is 20 percent of average for the water year (October 1-September 30). October precipitation was 250 percent of average.

The SWP’s principal reservoir, Lake Oroville in Butte County, is at 47 percent of capacity, 76 percent of average for this date.

Initial SWP allocation reflects carryover storage levels in the state’s major reservoirs and federally mandated environmental restrictions on water deliveries from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to protect endangered fish species.

SWP water is distributed among 29 long-term contractors who serve more than 25 million Californians and about 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland.



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# Take extra care when digging a trench or excavation

By Mike Klimenko, Farm Bureau Group Manager

Trenching and excavation are hazardous activities and not things that farmers and ranchers generally do very frequently. But there are times when these projects are necessary for such things as installing an underground irrigation system.

Trenches are usually deeper than they are wide and the walls may become unstable and collapse on top of workers. With daily site inspections, good planning, hazard education and safety training, most of the danger can be eliminated.

Cave-ins may occur when dirt, sand and rocks collapse into the trench. These materials can engulf, injure or kill workers in the trench. Soil can be very dense and heavy, and when it engulfs workers, it can break bones, immobilize and restrict breathing, or suffocate them outright.

As one might expect, cave-ins present the greatest risk. Causes for cave-ins include inadequate shoring, misjudgment of soil condition and defective shoring materials, placing heavy loads or equipment near the excavation site, lack of technical knowledge, or incorrect orders. There's also the possible failure to evaluate changing weather conditions.

Anyone whose work requires them to work in or around a trench should be aware of the hazards so they are not involved in or cause an accident to happen. To protect workers from cave-ins, protective systems such as shoring, sheeting, shielding, sloping and benching should be installed.

## Factors that influence the kind and amount of shoring include:

- \* Depth of trench-Protective measures must be taken for trenches between 5 and 20 feet deep. If there's a possibility of soil movement, even in shallower trenches, it must be shored. A registered professional engineer must design the protective system for excavations over 20 feet deep.
- \* Soil classification-The more liquid the soil, the more it must be protected from cave-ins.
- \* Change in weather conditions-Trenches safely sloped or shored in dry weather can become very hazardous when wet. Even hard-packed soil can become unstable after a rain.
- \* Heavy loads in the area-Nearby structures such as buildings, curbs, trees, utility poles, and farm equipment can put added stress on trenches and excavations. Heavy equipment should never be operated or parked next to a trench.
- \* Vibration-Trenches near a roadway or where other operations can create vibration should have shoring or sloping designed for those conditions.

The California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) requires a competent person to daily inspect the trench or excavation for possible cave-ins, failures of protective systems and equipment, hazardous atmospheres, or other hazardous conditions and to ensure that workers can quickly get in and out of the trench if a dangerous condition is noted and stop all work until the problem is corrected. An inspection must again be made after a rainstorm or any change in conditions that could weaken the trench.

Assumptions can lead to accidents, so be prepared for safety on a trenching site. For more detailed information visit the Web site maintained by Cal/OSHA at <http://osha.gov/SLTC/trenchingexcavation/index.html>.

Since 1943, Farm Bureau and State Fund have been business partners. When your policy comes up for renewal, if you are not insured with State Fund, please be sure to get a quote in our Farm Bureau Group Program. For more information, call toll-free at (800) 773-7667, or check the State Fund Web site at [www.statefundca.com](http://www.statefundca.com).



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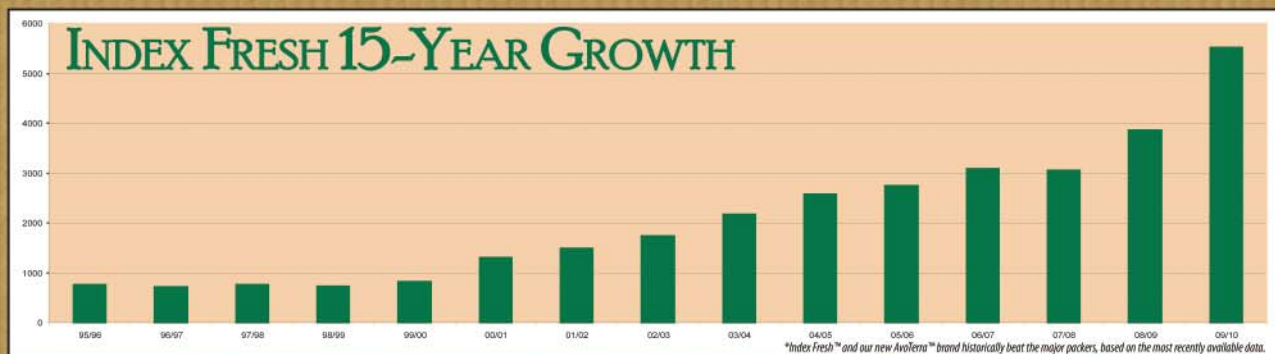
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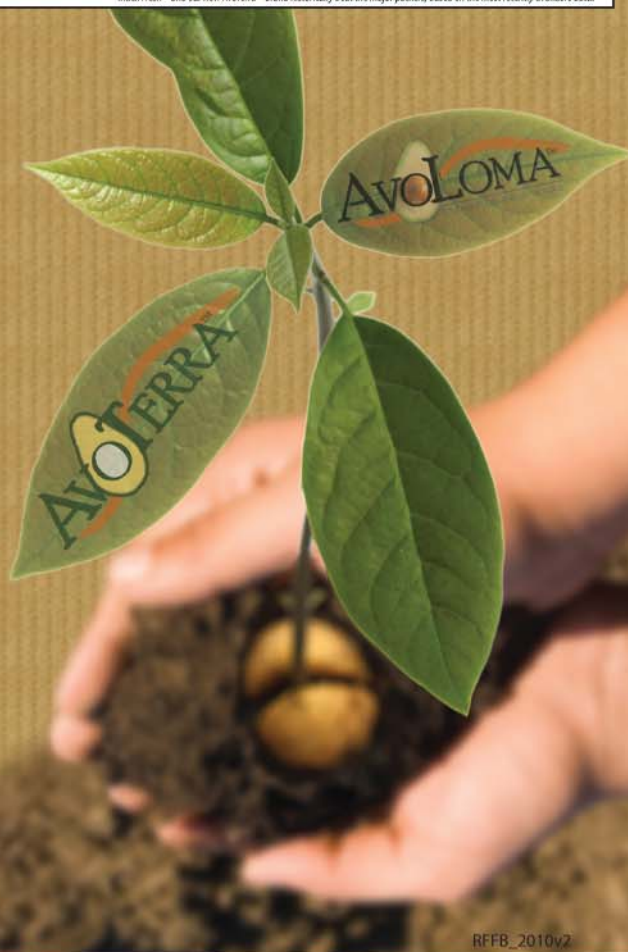
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### 2010 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- \* December 24th and December 31st – the RCFB office will be closed to observe the holidays.
- \* January 11th – RWQCB meeting in San Diego – 9:30 am at the RWQCB office.
- \* January 12th – RCFB board meeting beginning at 5:30 pm - Farm House Restaurant, Banning.
- \* January 17th – the RCFB office will be closed to observe the MLK holiday.
- \* January 19th – LE/CL TMDL meeting – 9 am at the EVMWD office.
- \* January 20th – RWQCB meeting for the San Jacinto Watershed – 9 am in the RCFB office.
- \* February 9th – RCFB Board meeting – 5:30 pm at the FarmHouse Restaurant, Banning.

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