



Riverside County

AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

Do You Know The New Hand Weeding Rules?

By now, most California farmers are aware of recent legislation banning unnecessary hand weeding activities. The law, which applies to hand thinning and hand hot-capping as well, results from farm labor and management’s attempt to eliminate prolonged hand weeding activities which may contribute to a high incidence of back and lower extremity injuries in workers.

Although the legislation doesn’t ban hand weeding altogether, it says that an employee may not weed in a stooped, kneeling or squatting position either with short-handled or long-handled tools. It does, however, permit hand weeding in the following situations:

- ❖ If an employer can show that hand weeding is necessary because there is no readily available, reasonable alternative (e.g. no long-handled tool) suitable and appropriate to the production of the commodity.
- ❖ If the hand weeding is only occasional or intermittent and incidental to a non-hand-weeding operation. (To be “occasional or intermittent,” hand weeding must be limited to 20% of an employee’s weekly work time.)
- ❖ If the high-density plants are spaced less than 2 inches apart when planted.
- ❖ If the agricultural or horticultural commodity is grown fields or greenhouses, which have been registered with the County Agricultural Commissioner as organic.
- ❖ If the agricultural or horticultural commodities are seedlings.
- ❖ If the horticultural commodity is grown in tubs or planter containers with openings not exceeding 15 inches.

The legislation further requires employers to supply gloves and kneepads, as necessary, to their hand-weeding employees and provide job training in accordance with company Injury and Illness Protection Program guidelines. Employees doing hand weeding that is not occasional or intermittent must also be given an additional 5 minutes on top of the authorized 10-minute rest period for every four hours worked (i.e., their rest-break time is 15 minutes instead of 10 minutes).

Cal/OSHA will be enforcing this legislation primarily by investigating complaints. Its interpretation of the regulation’s language will determine whether a citation, either general or serious, is warranted. To cite an employer, Cal/OSHA will have to prove that employees were engaged in hand weeding activities in violation of the regulation. And, to avoid fines that could total thousands of dollars, a cited employer must justify that the use of hand weeding, hand thinning, or hand hot-capping was required due to the unsuitability of the use of long-handled tools or of other alternate means of performing the work.

Article review by Robert P. Roy, President/General Counsel, Ventura County Agricultural Association

Inside This Issue...	
News in Brief	3
From Milk on the Farm to Calcium in the Bones	4
Farm Facts	8

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News in Brief...

YOUNG FARMERS' GROUP WORKS TO ALLEVIATE HUNGER

With a goal to raise more than 2 million pounds of food, a California farmers' group kicks off its annual food drive to commemorate today's (Tuesday's) observance of Hunger Awareness Day. The California Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee donates food, money and time to food banks around the state. The rancher who's chairing this year's drive says farmers are dedicated to do all they can to meet the needs of hungry Californians.

PROGRAM SEEKS TO BOOST RURAL HOME OWNERSHIP

More rural families could achieve their goal of home ownership, through a pilot program announced yesterday (Monday). Rural residents in California and five other states will have the opportunity to participate in the pilot program. The U.S. Agriculture Department said loan guarantees from its Rural Development agency allow a home-financing firm to offer fixed-rate construction loans to eligible people. The program could begin operating by midsummer.

Welcome New Members Continued

Jerry Perkins
Rosemary Putman
Silvia Quiroz
Jarod Salas
Daniel Saldana
John Schirner
Eric Seeley
Christine Spada
John Stinson
Linda Symmonds
James Throne
Rachelle VanBurkirk
Gretchen Wagner
Barbara Wertheim

YEAR'S FIRST CASE OF EQUINE WNV REPORTED

It killed more than 200 horses in California last year, and West Nile virus has begun showing up in horses earlier this year. The California Department of Food and Agriculture said yesterday (Wednesday) that a 3-year-old mare in Plumas County is recovering from the state's first confirmed 2005 case of equine West Nile virus. State officials say this case was found a month earlier than last year's first case, and they urge horse owners to vaccinate their animals.

STATE FAIR TO HONOR CFBF ADMINISTRATOR GOMES

The longtime administrator of the California Farm Bureau Federation will be honored as the 2005 Agriculturalist of the Year by the California State Fair. George Gomes will receive the award this summer. The state fair said it chose Gomes because of his "enduring commitment" to California agriculture. He joined the Farm Bureau in 1987 after serving as chief deputy director of the state Department of Food and Agriculture.



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DAIRY MONTH ACTIVITIES FOCUS ON NUTRITION

Nutrition is the focus for dairy organizations as they commemorate National Dairy Month during June. The Dairy Council of California notes that the federal government's revised "food pyramid" encourages adults to consume three servings of dairy foods each day. The council has created a Web site (at www.mealsmatter.org) that provides personalized meal planning along with recipes and nutritional information.

MUCH NEW MILK PRODUCTION HEADS OVERSEAS

As American dairy farms boost milk production, more than half the additional milk heads to overseas markets. The Milk Producers Council in Chino says the long-term growth in dairy exports has been remarkable. Last year alone, U.S. dairy exports increased 39 percent. The value of the nation's dairy exports reached nearly \$1.5 billion.



JUNE / JULY

2005 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- * Jul. 13th - 6:30pm, RCFB Board of Directors meeting, Sizzler Restaurant, Banning.
- * Jul. 21st - 8:30am, TMDL meeting, EMWD Headquarters, Perris.
- * Jul. 27th - 8:00 - 2:00pm, Water Symposium, Perris Fairgrounds, Perris.
- * **Note - There will be no Board meeting in August.**
- * Aug. 18th - 2:00pm, Budget Review Committee meeting, Farm Bureau office, Moreno Valley.

From Milk on the Farm to Calcium in the Bones


Children at the Romoland Elementary after school program took part in a special project being conducted this year by UC Cooperative Extension in Riverside County. This Farm to School Project is a partnership between 4-H Youth Development Program, Youth Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (Youth FSNEP) and Project Courage (an after school program implemented by Riverside County Office of Education).




In the afternoon of May 18, 2005, over thirty children from Project Courage gathered in the courtyard outside the multipurpose room ready to start their 4-H business meeting. The children had voted last week to name their 4-H club "The Helping Hands 4-H Club". After saying the pledge of allegiance and the 4-H pledge, the meeting began. They voted on the by-laws. Eager hands went up in the air. They all wanted to make a motion and second the motions. Learning about parliamentary procedure is part of the 4-H experience.


Once the business meeting was over, the group was ready for a Youth FSNEP activity. Jeanne Lothridge, 4-H Program Representative, read the storybook





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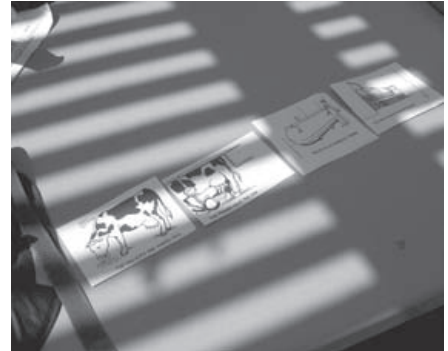
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"Cow" by Jules Older, from Reading Up the Food Guide Pyramid curriculum. The children thought it was funny that a cow has 4 stomachs and that a cow can cough up half-digested food to chew again, and thus the term "chewing the cud". When Jeanne read about the different kinds of dairy cows: the Holstein, the Guernsey, the Brown Swiss, one child asked, "Is that where you get Swiss cheese?" Another child wanted to know if chocolate milk came from the brown cow. By the time the book was finished, they found the answers to their questions.

Several activities followed. One was the food mover from Eating Right Is Basic curriculum. The children had to place in correct sequence the flow of milk from a cow to a tank truck. Another follow-up activity was to learn about the different types of milk available in the grocery store. They compared the amount of total fat and calcium in whole milk, reduced fat milk, low fat milk and fat free milk. They also compared the amount of total fat and calcium in ice cream and yogurt, and learned about "sometimes" and "anytime" snacks. Finally, they learned that dairy products are a good source of calcium and got to see the bone models: normal bone versus calcium depleted bone. It was an educational afternoon after all!



(Submitted by Chutima Ganthavorn, NFCS Advisor-UC Cooperative Extension, Riverside County. For more information call 951-683-6491 x223 or email cganthavorn@ucdavis.edu)



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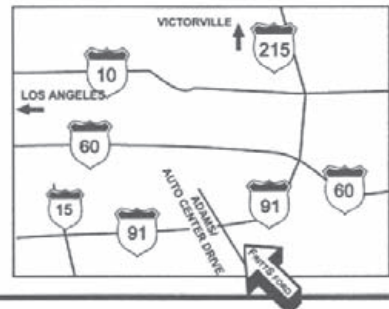
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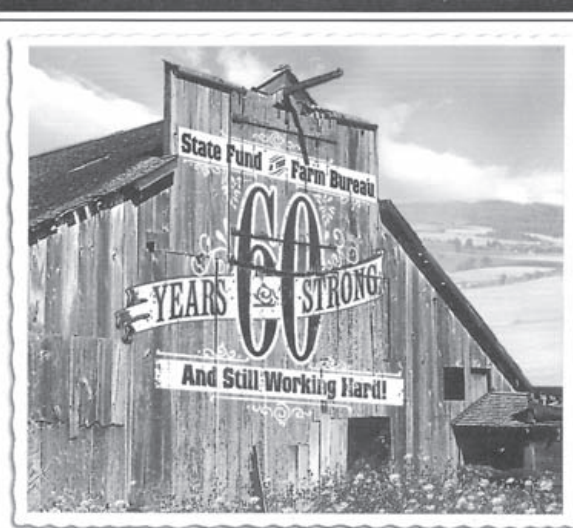
FARM FACTS

Surveys show that American children get about one fourth of their vegetables in the form of either french fries or potato chips.

The best pencils are made from incense-cedar trees and get their start in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. More than 2 billion pencils are used in the United States every year. A typical pencil can draw a line 35 miles long.

What will kids wear to school this year? It's likely jeans and a T-shirt. It takes 24 oz. of cotton to make a pair of jeans and 8 oz. to make a T-shirt.

Children who participate in school gardening projects are more likely to taste new foods and enjoy healthy fruits and vegetables, reports a Farm Bureau spokesman. Twenty percent of California's 8,300 schools are currently involved in gardening — a good way to teach kids that the hard work of farming pays off in tasty rewards.



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