

California Farm Bureau's government affairs team is at the Capitol, advocating for farmers, ranchers and agriculture's future. Here are some key issues Farm Bureau is focused on this week.

May 6, 2022

Agricultural Employment

The Assembly Judiciary Committee approved [AB 2182](#) (Wicks) on May 3 by a 7-2 vote. AB 2182 imposes new requirements on employers to not discriminate against, and offer accommodation to, employees with vaguely-defined "family responsibilities." Farm Bureau opposes as such ambiguities inevitably lead to some employees abusing the program and employers who incur the litigation expense.

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Forestry & Wildfire

Wildfire and Livestock Update

Ranchers in Placer, Nevada, and Yuba Counties, along with UC Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and the County Agricultural Departments from these three counties, have established a Disaster Livestock Access Program to facilitate livestock and human safety before, during, and after wildfire and other emergencies.

Evacuating livestock from commercial ranching operations may not be possible in the event of a major incident, due to scale of operation. Sheltering-in-place may be the best and safest alternative. Safe access by trained and qualified ranch personnel is critical to livestock welfare, firefighter safety, and public safety. The geographic scope of this project aligns with the CALFIRE administrative unit for the region (Nevada, Placer, and Yuba Counties).

Livestock Access Passholders may be permitted into evacuation zones, or other restricted areas, to provide feed, water, medical treatment, and other care to commercial livestock.

Qualified Commercial Livestock Operator: For the purposes of this program, a commercial livestock operator is defined as owning/managing 50+ head of livestock (including in utero, e.g., 25 bred cows), 100+ poultry or rabbits, or 50+ beehives that reside in Placer, Nevada, or Yuba County for at least a portion of the year, or a person who, through an agreement with that owner of livestock, has authority and is responsible to oversee the care and well-being of the livestock. This program applies to commercially raised species of livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, poultry, rabbits, llamas, alpacas, and bees. "Commercially raised" means the livestock are raised as part of a business.

Application for Registration: To enroll in the program, a Commercial Livestock Operator must provide contact information, APNs and/or physical addresses of grazing sites, general season(s) of use, livestock description and count, and other information by completing the online form at

<https://surveys.ucanr.edu/survey.cfm?surveynumber=37083>. If you need assistance completing the online registration, contact Dan Macon at (530) 889-7385 or dmacon@ucanr.edu.

Mandatory Training: A new Commercial Livestock Operator must complete an initial 4-hour training, which will be held in June at the UC Sierra Foothill Research and Extension Center in Browns Valley. If you received a pass in 2021, you would need to complete a 1-hour virtual training session currently under development.

For more information contact Dan Macon, UCCE Livestock and Natural Resources Advisor (Placer-Nevada-Sutter-Yuba) at dmacon@ucanr.edu or (530) 889-7385.

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Wildfire and Forest Resilience Taskforce Meeting

The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Taskforce met on Thursday May 5, 2022, in Santa Rosa at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. The meeting began with a tribal blessing by Melissa Elgin, Tribal Council Secretary of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

James Gore, Sonoma County Supervisor District 4, and Secretary Wade Crowfoot from California's Natural Resources Agency (CRNA) kicked off a substantive discussion highlighting the need for regional leadership, so that state or national standards do not dictate local resource strategies. The North Coast Resource Partnership was held up as a gold standard for a collaborative working group that is addressing specific regional wildfire and watershed needs.

Taskforce Director Patrick Wright presented a Director's Report that focused on some of the recent landscape level block grants being made by federal and state agencies, including the previously discussed North Yuba and Stanislaus watershed projects announced by USFS. Also, CRNA's 30x30 framework was referenced as an important tool to provide lands management strategies. The Taskforce is tracking all of its actions and has made every item available for public view. If you want to view the status of the 99 different action items, you can view the Taskforce's progress [here](#).

Director Wright discussed how the Taskforce is building a Forest Data Hub, and a common reporting platform so that local, state, and federal projects can be tracked on the same metrics. The goal is to measure progress on reaching the 1 million acres treated strategy, but there are challenges because of how different agencies track and report their work. At a regional level, this common platform would allow collaboration between state, federal, tribal, and private parties (utilities, land-owners) to leverage fuels treatments planning and delivery. By November, the Taskforce hopes the reporting platform will be complete so that the treatment picture becomes clearer. The data hub hopes to capture information about different forest stand indexes, and other resilience metrics so that grant making can get better at targeting the highest priority projects.

Next, the Taskforce staff debuted a Taskforce specific website that is going to launch in June 2022 that will include links to the progress tracker, including project specific details. The website will feature content that explains the science behind forest health and management activities, as well

as a monthly roundup of edited materials. Clearly, the website will help to provide promotional and marketing support to the Taskforce to help explain to the public and stakeholders how billions of taxpayer dollars are being spent on wildfire mitigation.

Karen Mouritsen, the California Director for the Bureau of Land Management said that BLM completed 38 projects since 2019 focused on high-risk lands and communities to do fuel reductions near roadways and critical infrastructure. She said BLM received an additional \$2 million in the 2022 federal budget, for a total of \$11 million, but that BLM also leveraged \$18 million in CAL FIRE grants, too. Through their Good Neighbor Agreements, they hope to collaborate with adjacent lands to ensure projects are extended to as much scale as possible.

The Taskforce then launched into two panels, the first of which featured speakers from the North Coast Tribal Leadership & Governance, the North Coast Resource Partnership, Napa RCD, and Tehama RCD. Then, the Regional Partner Panel featured speakers from the Cultural Fire Management Council, Fire Forward, the Karuk Tribes, Redwoods Rising, Intertribal Indigenous Stewardship Council, and the Mid Klamath Watershed Council. Both panels focused on the vital need for regional stakeholders to collaborate in order to accomplish landscape scale wildfire risk reduction, and to encourage healthy, resilient forests.

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Forest Health Grants

California announced \$98.4 million in forest health grants today at the first in-person meeting of Governor Newsom's [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force](#). In conjunction with the Taskforce meeting and events throughout the state for Wildfire Preparedness Week, CAL FIRE announced \$98.4 million in grants for landscape-scale, regionally based land management projects to restore the health and resilience to existing and recently burned forests throughout California, while enhancing long-term carbon storage.

CAL FIRE's Forest Health Program awarded [22 grants](#) to local and regional partners implementing projects on state, local, tribal, federal, and private lands spanning over 55,000 acres and 14 counties. Fuels reduction and prescribed fire treatments funded under these grants are aimed at reducing excess vegetation and returning forest and oak woodlands to a more fire-, drought-, and pest-resilient condition. You can view the awarded projects [here](#).

Several projects include work within landscapes severely burned in recent wildfires. Three projects located in Plumas and Lassen counties will restore and reforest approximately 24,000 acres burned in the 2021 Dixie Fire; another project targets 1,990 acres located in the headwaters of the Wild and Scenic North Fork Eel River that burned in the 2020 August Complex; and finally, 1,690 acres burned in the 2020 North Complex Fire in Butte County will be reforested.

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Transportation

Earlier this year, CAFB joined a large coalition to support [AB 2406](#) (Aguiar-Curry – D). This bill would prohibit an intermodal marine equipment provider from imposing per diem, detention, or demurrage charges on an intermodal motor carrier and beneficial cargo owners. Under ordinary circumstances, these fees are designed to encourage the efficient use of containers. However, during our recent and ongoing port congestion crisis, late charges have been imposed on California businesses by international ocean carriers even when containers cannot be returned due to circumstances not within the control of the importer, exporter or trucker. Agricultural exports including almonds, pistachios, dairy products, wine, and walnuts have been severely impacted by the recent COVID-19 pandemic and resulting port complications. In 2019, California agricultural exports totaled \$21.7 billion, which was an increase of 3.4% from 2018. A University of California Davis report analyzed the effects of the 2021 supply chain gridlock and resulting shipping container shortage on California agriculture. Because of the shortage of containers, California's containerized agricultural exports declined by an estimated \$2.1 billion, about 17%, from May to September 2021. While detention and demurrage fees have increased across the globe, ocean carriers are charging two to ten times the fees in Los Angeles and Long Beach versus other major ports worldwide. The bill would help alleviate the pressure that these fees put on California businesses and attempt to address one of the many issues facing our ports. This bill has passed out of the Assembly and moves to the Senate.

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Water

The first California Farm Bureau Water Forum was held this week with approximately 50 county Farm Bureau members in attendance. Those in attendance had the undivided attention of Department of Water Resources Director, Karla Nemeth and State Water Resources Control Board Chairman, Joaquin Esquivel for nearly three hours. The townhall type format allowed for an incredibly productive exchange of key issues, ideas, questions and answers for Farm Bureau members and for Director Nemeth and Chair Esquivel. Additionally, members of the California Water Commission and key legislative policy committee consultants heard firsthand from real world “boots on the ground” California farmers and ranchers about the challenges of dealing with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, unimpaired river flows, water quality issues, water rights curtailments and more. The event proved to be insightful for key Sacramento water policy makers and may provide a good model for future forums. Farm Bureau appreciates all those that took advantage of this opportunity.

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Wildlife

Department of Fish and Wildlife recently released a [depredation report](#) that occurred at the end of April. A USDA Wildlife Specialist responded to a report of a wolf sighting near livestock in Southern Lassen County. Upon arrival, a 300 lb. calf carcass was discovered near where the wolf sighting

occurred. After an investigation, tooth scrapes were found on both hind legs and the left flank of the carcass. The location and size of the bite marks was consistent with wolf depredation, and the report reflects that this loss is a confirmed wolf kill. In addition to eyewitness observation of wolves in the area, wolf tracks were found near the carcass and collar activity placed LAS09F in the area that same day.

Members may be aware that CAFB has been working for several months with the Department and fellow stakeholders on last year's budget allocation for the [Wolf Livestock Loss Compensation Grant Program](#). The \$3 million allocation aimed to compensate ranchers for wolf related losses. The pilot would provide funds and reimbursement for 1) direct loss due to wolf depredation, 2) pay for wolf presence (negative impacts on cattle due to stress), and 3) reimbursement for efforts to deter wolf/livestock interaction (i.e., fencing). CAFB lead the small subgroup in hopes of drafting a program that would benefit our members and compensate them accordingly. In March, the Department stopped all progress on these efforts, deciding to restructure the workgroup at an undetermined date. In the interim, the Department released a temporary program in order to meet their fiscal responsibilities laid out in last year's budget. This program is in no way comprehensive, and only issues reimbursement for confirmed and probable wolf losses. Farm Bureau remains an active participant and continues to advocate for farmers to be reimbursed for all impacts that the increasing number of predators in the state have on their livestock. If you need any help with the form, or have any questions about the program, please reach out to Farm Bureau staff.

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