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DECEMBER 2026 Volume 45 • Number 12

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- Keynote Luncheon: What's Ahead for the Global Wine Industry: Wine economist Mike Veseth explores the climate, economic and identity challenges facing the global wine industry and how it can adapt to a changing world. (separate registration fee)
- The State of the Industry: Get the latest insights on winegrape supply, market trends, consumer demand and opportunities for growth.
- AI in the Vineyard: Explore how artificial intelligence can support vineyard operations and improve decision-making.
- The Changing Wine Market: Examine evolving distribution channels, business strategies and new ways to connect with consumers.
- Winemaking Innovation: Discover modern approaches to winemaking, including sparkling wine production and new techniques.

Join industry experts and colleagues January 26–28 in Sacramento to exchange ideas, ask questions, explore approaches to challenges in your own workplace and gain insights to help navigate what's ahead.

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2027 World Ag Expo® "We Believe in Growing" Scholarship Application Now Open

Applications are now being accepted for the World Ag Expo "We Believe in Growing" Scholarship, presented by Coast Counties Peterbilt. For nearly 20 years, the scholarship has helped Central Valley students pursue higher education and prepare for careers in agriculture.

High school seniors from Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Kern counties are encouraged to apply. Applicants must plan to attend a four-year college or university and pursue a degree in agriculture. Two students will each receive a $10,000 scholarship, awarded in $2,500 annual installments over four years. Applications must be submitted by Jan. 20, 2027.

"Coast Counties was honored to continue the legacy of the 'We Believe in Growing Scholarship' last year," said Curtis Crisp, general manager of Coast Counties Peterbilt. "We were incredibly impressed by all of the finalists, which made it really hard to make our final decisions. We're excited for the opportunity again this year and will continue to support the students in our community in their efforts to achieve their educational and career aspirations."

To qualify for the scholarship, students must graduate from high school during the 2026-2027 school year and submit a completed application, two letters of recommendation and a copy of their high school transcripts.

"Helping students pursue careers in agriculture is one way we can make a lasting impact beyond the show grounds," said Jerry Sinift, CEO of International Agri-Center®. "We're grateful to work with Coast Counties Peterbilt to support local students and the future of agriculture."

The scholarship application is available online at https://bit.ly/WAEScholarship. Completed applications should be mailed to: Coast Counties Peterbilt, "We Believe in Growing" Scholarship, 15243 Road 192, Porterville, CA 93257, Attn: April Tolson.

Scholarship recipients will be announced in early February and recognized during World Ag Expo®, Feb. 9-11, 2027, in Tulare, California.

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18 Is Precision Agriculture Worth the investment for the Average Farmer?



20 Same Farms, Different Answers: When Nitrogen Pollution Estimates Don't Add Up. Central Valley Study Offers Tools for States Seeking Certainty Around Surplus Nitrogen.



22 Scientists from UC Agriculture and Natural Resources conduct research in every county in California. That extensive body of knowledge is well represented in a recently published state-of-the-climate report, funded by the state Legislature. California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment offers a detailed appraisal of climate stressors weighing on regions across the state and prepares communities for what to expect in the future. The report is intended to inform climate resilience projects and guide local planning ahead of worsening climate impacts.

29 The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announced $16,450,000 in voter-approved Proposition 4 funding through the Invasive Species Council of California's (ISCC) Invasive Species Grant (ISG) Program. CDFA, on behalf of the ISCC, will award grants ranging from $250,000 to $1 million to fund invasive species prevention, eradication and control efforts throughout California. Concept proposals are due by 5 p.m. January 8, 2027



30 Dairy manure compost on almond orchards reduces certain emissions. Placing dairy manure compost on almond orchards can reduce the release of the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide by about 35% while increasing or maintaining crop yields, according to new research from the University of California, Davis.

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CDR Fights for America's Honey Producers After USDA Leaves Beekeepers Out of $8 Billion Harvest Fuel Relief Program

CDR petitions the USDA to include commercial beekeepers in the $8 billion Harvest Fuel Relief Program and adopt a per-colony payment model.



Left to Right: Shane Cassell, Lisa R. Fussell and Dave Westervelt in front of the CDR vendor booth in Reno, NV.

"Honey producers aren't asking for special favors, they are asking for fair, consistent recognition under a program built to offset rising diesel costs."
— Shane Cassell

News Provided By Crop Disaster Recovery, LLC

Crop Disaster Recovery LLC (CDR) has formally petitioned the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to stop leaving commercial beekeepers behind and ensure honey producers are included in the newly launched $8 billion Harvest Fuel Relief (HFR) Program.

On November 17, 2026, CDR submitted a formal petition and client endorsements to Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins, Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator William Beam, and Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs Jamie White. The filing demands that the USDA explicitly recognize commercial honeybee and honey-producing operations as eligible specialty crop producers and establish a fair, per-colony payment methodology that reflects the real-world diesel costs of commercial apiaries.

Announced on October 19, 2026, the $8 billion HFR program, alongside President Trump's October 5 Executive Order 14435 temporarily suspending the 24.4-cent-per-gallon federal diesel excise tax and dyed diesel highway penalties, was created to protect American agriculture from surging fuel expenses during the 2026 crop year. However, because the USDA's initial HFR rollout relies on a national per-acre payment formula tied to planted acres for Title I row crops (such as corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, rice, and sorghum), mobile beekeeping operations have been effectively cut out of the program.

"Commercial beekeeping is one of the most diesel-dependent sectors in American agriculture, yet honey producers have been left on the sidelines while Title I row crops are fast-tracked for January 2027 payouts," said Director of Client Relations, Shane Cassell at Crop Disaster Recovery LLC. "We are currently attending the 2026 CSBA (California State Beekeepers Assoc.)/AHPA (American Honey Producers Assoc.) Joint Convention in Reno, NV and speaking to attendees, Beekeepers don't measure their farms in planted acres, they measure them in honeybee colonies and thousands of highway miles hauling hives across state lines for honey production and vital crop pollination. Leaving honey producers out ignores the essential role they play in keeping our entire agricultural supply chain running."

A Pattern of Inconsistent Treatment

In its petition to the USDA, CDR highlighted a troubling pattern of inconsistent federal treatment toward the beekeeping industry. While honey was previously included in the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program, it was excluded from Assistance for Specialty Crop Farmers (ASCF). CDR is urging federal officials to end this inconsistency and deliver equitable relief under the Harvest Fuel Relief Program.

Unlike stationary row-crop farms, commercial apiaries are inherently mobile agricultural operations. Beekeepers incur massive fuel expenses both directly, operating heavy-duty

See America's Honey Producers next page



America's Honey Producers

continued from previous page

trucks, trailers, and equipment to move colonies between summer and winter yards and pollination contracts and indirectly through rising per-mile freight charges paid to third-party haulers.

CDR's Four-Point Plan for Beekeeper Relief

To ensure honey producers are fairly compensated without delaying relief, CDR's petition outlines four specific requests for the USDA:

1. Explicit Eligibility: Formally confirm the eligibility of commercial honeybee and honey-producing operations whose primary agricultural asset is the honeybee colony.

2. Full Fuel Expense Recognition: Account for both direct fuel purchases by apiary operators and documented fuel-related transportation costs paid to third-party haulers, with safeguards against duplicate compensation.

3. A Per-Colony Payment Methodology: Develop a tailored payment rate in consultation with commercial beekeepers rather than relying on planted acreage formulas.

4. Regulatory Transparency: Clarify any statutory or administrative barriers affecting honeybee operations and outline how they will be resolved.

In addition to the petition, Crop Disaster Recovery LLC is submitting a separate technical proposal to the USDA recommending a per-colony payment rate backed by agricultural Extension budgets, actual client fuel cost comparisons, and bills of lading demonstrating sharp per-mile increases in hauling rates.

Call to Action for Honey Producers

While Title I crop payment rates are set for release this month ahead of estimated January 2027 direct deposits, the USDA is still finalizing payment methodologies for specialty crops and non-Title I commodities. CDR is urging commercial beekeepers nationwide to make their voices heard and join the fight for inclusion.

Honey producers can support this effort by:

• Submitting Fuel Cost Records: Following USDA guidance for non-Title I producers, beekeepers should send documentation of their increased 2026 diesel and hauling expenses directly to HarvestFuel@usda.gov.

• Connecting with CDR: Commercial apiaries seeking assistance with documenting fuel losses or adding their operation to the industry endorsement effort can contact Crop Disaster Recovery at bees@cropdisasterrecovery.com.

"Honey producers aren't asking for special favors, they are asking for fair, consistent recognition under a program built to offset rising diesel costs," added Shane Cassell-Director of Client Relations.

About Crop Disaster Recovery LLC (CDR):

Crop Disaster Recovery LLC specializes in helping commercial beekeepers, specialty crop growers, and agricultural producers navigate complex federal assistance programs, document operational losses, and secure the relief funding necessary to sustain their businesses.

What Happens After the Sale? The Real Value of Customer Relationships in Agriculture



By Gillian Christie, CEO Christie & Co

Selling a piece of agricultural equipment may take weeks or months. The relationship that follows can last decades.

For farmers, purchasing machinery is a significant investment, and its value becomes clear over years of operation. When equipment needs servicing during planting or a critical part is unavailable at harvest, the relationship with the dealer can matter as much as the machine itself.

Research reinforces the importance of what happens after a sale. A 2024 U.S. agricultural equipment brand-loyalty survey reported by Farm Equipment found that 63% of participating farmers considered themselves brand loyal. Parts availability, dealer repair service and knowledgeable product specialists were among the leading factors that could influence a decision to switch brands.[1]

A farmer may not purchase another tractor, implement or specialized machine for years. But that does not mean the business relationship should remain inactive until the next buying decision.

Follow Up With Purpose

A thoughtful follow-up is more than a courtesy call or another sales opportunity. It is a chance to understand how equipment performs under actual field conditions and whether it meets the customer's expectations.

Did the machine accomplish what the farmer needed? Were there unexpected challenges? Could training, maintenance guidance or additional support improve the experience?

These conversations provide valuable feedback for dealers and manufacturers while demonstrating genuine interest in the customer's success. They can also reveal opportunities to improve products and services.

Let Customers Tell Their Stories

Farmers often want to know how equipment performs for other growers facing similar conditions.

Rather than requesting a general endorsement, invite customers to describe their experience. What problem were they trying to solve? Why did they select the equipment? How has it performed?

With permission, these experiences can become case studies, short videos, trade publication contributions or educational materials that help other farmers make informed decisions.

The strongest testimonials are specific, credible and grounded in actual results. The Federal Trade Commission's endorsement guidance reinforces the importance of genuine customer experiences and avoiding misleading claims.[2]

An honest account can communicate something advertising alone cannot.

Create Opportunities to Grow Together

Customer relationships can also lead to valuable collaborations.

A manufacturer, dealer and grower may have complementary knowledge worth sharing. Together, they could organize field demonstrations, contribute to educational articles, develop practical case studies or participate in agricultural events.

These activities allow farmers to learn from one another while giving participating businesses opportunities to reach relevant audiences.

The key is mutual benefit. Growers should receive meaningful value for contributing their time, knowledge or access to their operations, while dealers and manufacturers gain practical feedback and credible educational content.

Keep It Real

After more than 33 years of working with businesses and entrepreneurs, I have learned that strong relationships are built through consistent actions, not simply good intentions.

I have long followed a simple philosophy: Keep It Real.

In business, that means listening to customers, keeping promises and taking a genuine interest in their experiences. It also means being willing to hear what did not work.

Equipment may require adjustments, expectations may differ or service may fall short. How a business responds to those situations can reveal more about its values than any promotional message.

A testimonial should reflect what a farmer actually experienced, not what a company hopes to promote. A collab-



oration should provide value to everyone involved rather than simply creating another marketing opportunity.

That consistency between promises and actions is what builds brand trust.

The Relationship Is the Opportunity

Agricultural businesses invest considerable resources in developing products, generating leads and closing sales. Maintaining the connections they have already established deserves attention, too.

A satisfied customer may recommend a dealer to neighboring farmers, share useful feedback with a manufacturer, purchase parts or services, or participate in an educational collaboration.

As businesses prepare for a new year, consider reaching out to customers you have not spoken with recently. Ask how their equipment performed this season, what challenges they encountered and whether there is an opportunity to work together.

You may discover that some of your most valuable business opportunities are already within your existing customer relationships.

Because a sale is a transaction.

What happens afterward determines whether it becomes a lasting relationship.

Sources

1. Farm Equipment, "Dealers Play a Role in Farmer Brand Loyalty," August 1, 2024. https://www.farm-equipment.com/articles/22670-dealers-play-a-role-in-farmer-brand-loyalty

2. Federal Trade Commission, FTC's Endorsement Guides: What People Are Asking. https://www.ftc.gov/business-guidance/resources/ftcs-endorsement-guides-what-people-are-asking

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SCAN ME

An Overview of Biostimulants

Joy Hollingsworth, UCCE Tulare Table Grape Advisor

Biostimulants are a broad category of products that are used to enhance agricultural production. Although there has been an increasing interest in these products in recent years, there is still not a very good understanding of what they are and how they work. Part of the reason for this is because biostimulants are hard to define. The Plant Biostimulant Act of 2025 defined them as "A substance, microorganism, or mixture thereof, that, when applied to seeds, plants, the rhizosphere, soil, or other growth media, act to support a plant's natural processes independently of the biostimulant's nutrient content, including by improving nutrient availability, uptake or use efficiency, tolerance to abiotic stress, and consequent growth, development, quality, or yield." This is similar to the definition that was used in the 2018 Farm Bill, although there are some slight differences.

Another reason that biostimulants can be difficult to understand is that the category contains a wide range of substances which work in different ways. Some of the most common types of products are made with seaweed or algae. Humic and fulvic acids are other examples, but there are many additional types of products available on the market as well.

Although biostimulants are not new products, they are newly coming into common usage. The lack of a universal definition has made regulations challenging and therefore has been patchwork across the United States. Without consistent regulations, it is difficult for growers to be able to trust products, especially when there are so many to choose from, with many different claims. Fortunately, there have been recent efforts to define and regulate biostimulants on both a national level and state level.

Another important thing to consider when choosing a biostimulant product is to make sure to read the product labels carefully. Although many have broad claims, try to make sure you are choosing a product which addresses an issue that you have. For example, a product that claims to improve water penetration is not going to be much help on a sandy soil which is naturally well-drained.

There are many research papers published on biostimulants, but the reported results have been somewhat inconsistent. Also, most of the work has been done on annual crops and there are fewer papers written on table grapes. One problem that we see is that year-to-year variations in weather conditions affect crop growth. Also, with perennial crops such as grapes, effects seen one year can be the result of something that happened the previous year. This is why multi-year studies are so important. With that in mind, I have begun testing out different biostimulant products this year. It is too soon to share results, but I do hope to continue testing products for multiple years. Feel free to reach out to me if you are interested in learning more about these products.

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The most effective farm technologies bring together scientific research, practical engineering and knowledge gained directly from farmers.

This is especially true in weed control. A system may perform well under controlled conditions, but growers need to know how it will respond to variations in weed species, plant height, moisture, crop clearance, field contours and treatment timing.

As herbicide resistance continues to complicate weed management, researchers and growers are considering tools that affect weeds through physical rather than chemical means. Electric weed control is one such option. University of Minnesota Extension describes it as a process in which high-voltage electrical current creates resistive heat as it moves through the plant, rupturing cells and killing or severely suppressing the weed.[1]

The Science Inside the Plant

Plants contain water and dissolved minerals that allow them to conduct electricity. When an electrified applicator contacts a weed, resistance generates heat within the plant tissue. Cellular water vaporizes; cell membranes rupture and the resulting damage can extend toward the root system. USDA-supported researchers are evaluating this process under commercial field conditions.[2]

Unlike an herbicide, electric weed control does not depend on a chemical active ingredient or specific site of action. It can help manage weeds that survive earlier herbicide applications while supporting an integrated program that combines chemical and nonchemical practices.[3]

Research also shows that performance varies by weed species and field conditions. A study published in Weed Technology found that results were strongly related to plant height and moisture content at the time of treatment. When weeds already contained seed, electrocution reduced seed viability by 54 to 80 percent among the species evaluated.[4]

A more recent study assessed weed electrocution across 13 site-years. Control differed by species and location, but researchers concluded that the technology could serve as one component of integrated weed management for late season escapes in soybeans.[5]

Where Field Experience Becomes Essential

Weed size, plant structure, moisture content and root reserves can influence treatment. Dew may improve conductivity; mature weeds may require different power settings than smaller plants and some perennial or rhizomatous weeds may require another pass.

For over-the-canopy applications, weeds must extend above the crop so the applicator can contact them while maintaining clearance from the plants growers want to protect. Applicator height, angle, voltage, current and operating speed may need to be adjusted as conditions change.

These practical considerations become clearer through operating the equipment in different crops, climates and fields and through listening to the farmers who use it.

A System Shaped by Farmers

The LASCO Lightning Weeder grew from the intersection of electrical knowledge and direct farming experience.

Kevin Olson, President of LASCO, began working with electric weeders in 1979 while farming in Grand Forks County, North Dakota, and working as an electrical contractor. After repairing early machines used by potato and sugar beet growers, he acquired several units and began renting them to soybean and edible bean producers across the Midwest. Their experiences helped identify what electric weed-control equipment needed to accomplish under commercial conditions.[6]

Growers needed an applicator that could accommodate different crops, operating widths and field contours. They also needed adjustable electrical output and safeguards that would prevent the system from operating unless the machine was moving and properly grounded. These requirements helped guide the development of the current Lightning Weeder.

The commercial system uses LASCO's Electric Discharge System to deliver electrical energy directly to weeds through an adjustable copper applicator bar. A PTO-driven brushless alternator supplies

See Chemical-Free Weed Control next page



Chemical-Free Weed Control

continued from previous page

power to the bar through high-voltage cables.

The applicator is available in widths from 11 to 40 feet and can be front-mounted or operated as a pull-behind. Hydraulic height adjustment helps maintain crop clearance, while an optional tilt feature allows the bar to follow slopes and variations in field contours. The system requires a tractor with at least 120 PTO horsepower.[7]

Operators can monitor and adjust voltage and current through a digital touchscreen. Safety interlocks require the grounding coulters to remain in contact with the soil and the machine to be moving before electrical power can engage.

Adding Another Tool to Weed Management

Chemical-free weed control does not require abandoning every existing practice. Crop rotation, cover crops, herbicides, cultivation, field sanitation, harvest weed-seed control and electricity can each contribute to a broader strategy.

Electric weed control may be particularly relevant when resistant weeds survive earlier applications, when late-season escapes threaten to replenish the seedbank or when organic and regenerative operations need a nonchemical treatment. Because an over-the-canopy system does not require cultivation, it can address weeds without another soil-disturbing pass.

Before using an electric system, growers should consider their most difficult weed species, crop clearance, treatment window, tractor compatibility and the acreage that must be covered. A field demonstration or rental period can help determine whether the equipment is appropriate for a particular operation.

Science establishes how electric weed control works. On-farm experience determines how that knowledge is translated into reliable equipment and practical field use. As growers face resistant weeds and pressure to reduce chemical dependence, both will be important in shaping the next generation of weed-management tools.

For more information about the LASCO Lightning Weeder and its Electric Discharge System, visit www.lightningweeder.com.

Is Precision Agriculture Worth the Investment for the Average Farmer?

Smarter Technology. Greater Efficiency. Stronger Bottom Line.

By Joe L. Neyer III
California Farm Equipment



Precision agriculture is no longer just a buzzword — it's a growing part of modern farming in California. From GPS guidance to variable-rate applications, today's technology can help farmers use inputs more efficiently, reduce costs and increase yields.

But with new equipment and software systems coming at a cost, many farmers are asking the big question: Is precision ag really worth the investment for the average farm?

The Potential Benefits

Precision agriculture can deliver real advantages. GPS auto-steer reduces overlap and saves fuel. Variable-rate technology applies the right amount of seed, fertilizer or chemicals where needed, not across the entire field. Drones and satellite imagery help monitor crop health and identify problems early.

Together, these tools can help increase productivity, lower input costs and make operations more sustainable — important benefits in today's challenging environment.

Know Your Operation

The key is to match the technology to your farming operation. For larger acreage, the payback can be quick. For smaller farms, it may take longer, but the benefits can still be significant when used strategically.

Consider your goals. Are you looking to reduce input costs, improve yields, or save time? Start with the areas where you can get the biggest benefit, such as GPS guidance, variable-rate applications or better field data.

Understand the Costs

Precision ag can require a sizeable upfront investment. Equipment upgrades, software subscriptions and training are real costs. However, many farmers find the increased efficiency and reduced waste help justify the expense over time.

Start Small and Learn

If the full suite of technology seems overwhelming, start with one tool. GPS guidance is a great place to begin. It's relatively easy to implement and can quickly show benefits in the field.

Work with your local dealer, attend field days, and learn from other farmers who have made the transition. Take advantage of demonstrations and local support.

Precision Ag Checklist

- ☑ Define your goals (increase yield, reduce costs, save time).
- ☑ Start with one area (GPS, variable rate, or monitoring).
- ☑ Consider the total cost (equipment, software, training).
- ☑ Use trusted dealers and proven solutions.
- ☑ Track results and measure the benefits.
- ☑ Expand gradually as you see value.

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Same Farms, Different Answers: When Nitrogen Pollution Estimates Don't Add Up

Central Valley Study Offers Tools for States Seeking Certainty Around Surplus Nitrogen



An almond orchard is harvested in Manteca, California. Almonds are among the crops a UC Davis team assessed for nitrogen surplus differences among different datasets. (Gregory Urquiaga/UC Davis)

by Kat Kerlin

To reduce nitrogen pollution stemming from synthetic fertilizer and livestock waste, California's Central Valley relies on five datasets to estimate surplus nitrogen. However, most parts of the United States use just one or two datasets — the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural survey and census — to estimate nitrogen surplus.

Using the Central Valley as a "living laboratory," a University of California, Davis, research team coordinated by postdoctoral researcher Baibaswata Bhaduri compared these five different datasets and found that each produced significantly different results. The range of uncertainty was so wide, it could reshape which crops and regions receive priority for groundwater protections.

Their study, published this week in the journal Nature Sustainability, offers ranges for surplus nitrogen in everything from tomatoes and nectarines to corn and grapes. Growers worldwide can look to these estimates for guidance in the absence of local data.

"Our paper confirms the approach that California nitrogen policy is pursuing," said corresponding author Thomas Harter, a Cooperative Extension specialist and professor in the UC Davis Land, Air and Water Resources department. His research in 2012 called attention to the problem of nitrogen groundwater pollution and helped set the stage for California's nitrogen management strategies.

"We're saying, be cautious," said Harter. "Inevitably, between the various existing datasets, there can be large differences with respect to surplus that could rearrange the shape of your map and where you want to prioritize your conservation efforts. We must take into account the uncertainty in current data about fertilizer use and harvest. Improving data accuracy by engaging with farmers is critical."

In addition to USDA's survey and census data, the study compared the following datasets from the Central Valley: grower-reported records on the total nitrogen applied and crop yields, now annually reported by each farm under California's recent nitrogen tracking policy; UC Davis Cost and Return Studies, which provide expert estimates of crop-specific fertilizer rates and yields; and the California Department of Food and Agriculture's annual crop-specific acreage and harvest records, which county agencies have collected and reported each year since the early 1900s.

The same farm or crop could appear to need less mitigation under one dataset and more under another, the report said.

"The Central Valley is not a rare place with a rare problem," the authors wrote in the study. "It is one of the few places with enough data to see a problem that single-dataset assessments carry everywhere, unseen."

"Disagreement between datasets is not just a limitation; it reveals where our knowledge is weakest," said Bhaduri. "Understanding those differences is essential to improving nitrogen assessments and ensuring that groundwater protection decisions are scientifically defensible and fair to the farmers and communities affected."

Additional co-authors include Kenneth Miller of Formation Environmental LLC, and Giorgos Kourakos of UC Davis.

The study was funded by the California State Water Resources Control Board and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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UC ANR experts highlight solutions, interconnected stressors in milestone climate report



"Wildfire impacts on water quality still remain extremely understudied," said Christina Richardson. Burned vegetation and debris can have literal downstream effects on water. Photo by Elena Zhukova

California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment provides sweeping analysis of impacts on ag, water and wildfire

Scientists from UC Agriculture and Natural Resources conduct research in every county in California. That extensive body of knowledge is well represented in a recently published state-of-the-climate report, funded by the state Legislature.

California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment offers a detailed appraisal of climate stressors weighing on regions across the state and prepares communities for what to expect in the future. The report is intended to inform climate resilience projects and guide local planning ahead of worsening climate impacts.

A number of experts affiliated with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources provided research and guidance for the report. Contributors include Mark Bolda, Edith de Guzman, Safeeq Khan, Prakash Kumar Jha, Max Moritz, Tapan Pathak, Erik Porse, Christina Richardson, Aaron Wilcher and Grace Woodmansee. Many other UC ANR experts contributed to the report.

UC Merced Professor Safeeq Khan was coordinating lead author and UC Cooperative Extension specialist Tapan Pathak, based at UC Merced, was a lead co-author on one of the nine regionally based reports that comprise the statewide assessment. Their report focuses on the Sierra Nevada – a region deserving special attention for its natural resources."The Sierra Nevada region is the critical water and ecological resource for the whole state," said Pathak, emphasizing that changes to this region can ripple across California.

The report addresses several challenges in the Sierra Nevada region, but according to Khan, water scarcity is at the top of the list.

"The single biggest threat to our agriculture is the loss of our surface water supply, more specifically, our mountain snowpack," said Khan.

In writing the report, Khan and Pathak were careful to address those sobering realities with candor, while offering examples of developing solutions. Khan hopes to see the report used as a guide for identifying high-risk areas for study.

"Climate reports often leave people feeling helpless and discouraged, but I want readers to go past the headlines and pay attention to all the adaptation and mitigation work happening throughout the state," Khan said.

To provide more details on the regional report and insight into resiliency efforts, Pathak and Khan are hosting a Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley Climate Summit on the climate change assessment. The event will be held on Nov. 30 between 9:30 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. at the Dr. Vikram and Priya Lakireddy Grand Ballroom on the UC Merced campus. Attendees can register online.

In addition to the Sierra Nevada report, several UC ANR scientists contributed to the Central Coast report, including Christina Richardson, a UC Cooperative Extension specialist in coastal hydrology based at UC Santa Cruz.

The report highlights her research on the relationship between wildfires and water quality, demonstrating the interconnectedness of climate stressors. Burned vegetation and debris can have literal downstream effects on other constrained resources, like drinking water supplies and coastal habitat.

"We generally have a much better understanding of individual climate stressors than of how they interact cumulatively," Richardson said. "The reality is that we live in a world where these impacts are co-occurring."

This statewide assessment is valuable, Richardson said, because the publication puts climate stressors in conversation with one another, applying an interdisciplinary lens – a hallmark of UC ANR's research. Her colleague, UC Cooperative Extension specialist Max Moritz, a fire regime scientist based at UC Santa Barbara, contributed to the same regional report.

Richardson is hopeful the assessment will help allocate research funding to examine emerging, interrelated climate threats.

"Wildfire impacts on water quality still remain extremely understudied," Richardson said. "We need more data to inform adaptive management and, ultimately, resilience of our water resources."

Richardson encourages Californians to review the regional report for their part of the state to better understand the climate stressors likely to play out in their lives.

"This is written for anyone who has a say in how we manage our resources and plan for future resilience," Richardson said. "That includes community members across California who could benefit from reading the report."


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.....www.powerlandequipment.com

Presision Air Systems Inc
.....www.precisionairsystems.com

Quality Machinery
.....quality-mc.com

Quinn Company
..... www.quinncompany.com

Rubicon Equipment
.....www.rubiconequipment.com

San Joaquin Tractor
..... www.sanjoaquintractor.com

Sonsray Machinery
..... www.sonsraymachinery.com

South Kern Machinery
.....www.kernmachinery.com

Tractor City Inc
..... www.tractorcityinc.com

Trailer Superstore
.....www.pjtrailers.com/stores/trailer-super-store/

Valley Forklift Inc
.....www.valleyforklift.com

Valley Tractor
.....www.valleytractor.com

Wilkinson International
.....www.wilkinsoninternational.com

Manufacturers

McIlroy Equipment
.....www.mcilroyequipment.com

Nikkel Iron Works
.....www.nikkelironworks.com

Smith Welding & Machine Shop
..... www.smithweldingshop.com

Farm Shows

Antique Farm Show
..... www.antiquefarmshow.org

Colusa Farm Show
..... www.colusafairgrounds.com/colusa-farm-show/

World Ag Expo
.....www.worldagexpo.com/

Federal Government

Army Corps of Engineers
.....www.nwpl.sec.usace.army.mil

Bureau of Land Management
..... www.blm.gov

Farm Service Agency
.....www.fsa.usda.gov

National Weather Service
..... www.weather.gov/

Organizations

Almond Board of California
..... www.almonds.com

California Assn. of Winegrape Growers
..... www.cawg.org

California Cattlemen's Association
.....www.calcattlemen.org

California Dairy Research Foundation
.....www.cdrf.org

California Farmland Trust
.....www.cafarmtrust.org

California Poulty Federation
.....www.cpif.org

California Raisins
.....www.calraisins.org

California Rangeland Trust
.....www.rangelandtrust.org

California Strawberries
.....www.californiastrawberries.com

Associated Equipment Distributors
.....www.aednet.org/

Real Estate

Valley Real Estate
..... www.valleyre.net

State Government

Department of Agriculture
..... www.usda.gov

Department of Conservation
..... www.consrv.ca.gov

Department of Food and Agriculture
.....www.cdfa.ca.gov

Department of Pesticide Regulation
.....www.cdpr.ca.gov

Department of Water Resources
.....www.dwr.water.ca.gov

Syntentic Grass

Synthetic Grass Solutions
.....www.SGSfresno.com

Weather

National Weather Service
..... www.weather.gov/

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CDFA Now Accepting Applications for Invasive Species Grant Program

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) announced $16,450,000 in voter-approved Proposition 4 funding through the Invasive Species Council of California's (ISCC) Invasive Species Grant (ISG) Program. CDFA, on behalf of the ISCC, will award grants ranging from $250,000 to $1 million to fund invasive species prevention, eradication and control efforts throughout California. Concept proposals are due by 5 p.m. January 8, 2027.

in November 2024, California voters approved Proposition 4, a $10 billion climate bond designed to safeguard communities and natural resources from climate change. The bond allocated $300 million to support climate smart agriculture initiatives, including $20 million dedicated to addressing Invasive Species. Public comments received during CDFA's April 2026 public review process were incorporated into the program guidelines.

The ISG Program will prioritize projects that restore and protect California's biodiversity and ecosystem health while preventing the spread and establishment of invasive species. Preference will be given to targeted, time-sensitive efforts that address specific species, expand prevention and response activities into new areas and strengthen regional or statewide capacity. Successful projects will help reduce the ecological, economic and public health impacts of invasive species and deliver meaningful benefits to disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations across California.

"Protecting California from invasive species is critical to safeguarding animal health, plant health, environmental health and food security," said CDFA Secretary Karen Ross. "These grants reflect California's commitment to innovation and proactive action. By investing in research, technology and local partnerships, we are equipping communities with the tools they need to address invasive species before they can cause significant economic and environmental harm."

Eligible applicants include California-based public and private colleges and universities, local, state, federal and tribal government entities, nonprofit organizations and commodity groups. To qualify, both the project lead and the lead institution must be located in California.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 2026

8-10: The Almond Conference Bold Horizon's 2026 will take place at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center in Sacramento. The Almond Conference, hosted by the Almond Board of California, is the biggest almond industry event of the year — drawing approximately 4,000 almond growers, handlers, processors, and researchers from around the world. Learn More and Register Today! → https://almonds.com/almond-conference.

29: International Conference on Smart Agriculture and Climate-Resilient Farming, Santa Clara, California by American Society for Engineers, Researchers and Doctors. This event focuses on innovative practices and technologies in smart agriculture and climate-resilient farming.

JANUARY 2027

26-28 2027 Unified Wine and Grape Symposium. Every January, the Unified Wine & Grape Symposium trade show is home to over 650 suppliers to the wine and grape industry. With thousands of industry professionals attending and over 700 booths, the Symposium is the largest wine & grape industry conference and trade show of its kind in North America. SAFE Credit Union Convention Center, Sacramento, CA.

FEBRUARY 2027

2-4: 62nd Annual Colusa Farm Show. The Granddaddy of all Farm Shows! For six decades, the Colusa Farm Show has been the one stop shop event for agricultural professionals, farmers, and rural enthusiasts. Explore the latest innovations in farm equipment, technology, and services. Connect with industry experts, farmers and ranchers. Discover new products and services to enhance your agricultural operations. Website: www.colusafairgrounds.com farmshow@colusacountyfair.com Phone: 530-458-2641.

9-11 2027 World Ag Expo. More than 1,200 exhibitors display the latest in farm equipment, communications, and technology on 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space. Free seminars focus on a variety of topics important to dairy producers, farmers, ranchers, and agribusiness professionals. World Ag Expo® is a can't miss show for anyone in Ag. Contact info@farmshow.org, 559.688.1030, 1.800.999.9186.

To list your special event in California Farm Equipment send details to CFEM, PO Box 1128, Visalia, CA. 93279. or email to: info@cfemag.com.

Dairy manure compost on almond orchards reduces certain emissions

UC Davis, UCCE research can help close agricultural loop, promote conservation



An almond tree bloom during the research on how dairy manure compost affects yield, soil health and emissions. Photo by Adolfo Coyotl, UC Davis

By Emily C. Dooley

Placing dairy manure compost on almond orchards can reduce the release of the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide by about 35% while increasing or maintaining crop yields, according to new research from the University of California, Davis.

The findings offer California's two largest agricultural industries a path toward increased sustainability while maintaining fertilizer use and offering a secondary use for manure.

"This is a really important study because it potentially impacts such a large percent of the milk produced in California and the country," said Deanne Meyer, a Cooperative Extension specialist in livestock waste management. "The supply chain wants food with a smaller footprint or a cleaner footprint, and this research is really the first actual data we have that shows how valuable compost is to the crop."

The research examined how dairy manure compost affected yield, soil health and emissions during a 4-year study of 480 trees on 40 acres of a commercial almond orchard in the Central Valley.

Hotter and drier but happier

Four treatments were applied: A control plot with no nutrients given, a compost only application, an irrigation system containing fertilizer known as fertigation and a combination of both compost and fertigation, said Adolfo Coyotl, a soil biogeochemist and doctoral student in the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources.

"Since the experiment started, every subsequent year was hotter," Coyotl said. "It was drier. There was less moisture, less precipitation year after year and the conventionally fertigated trees suffered. But the fertigated trees that had compost added were resilient. All the trees that received compost grew faster as well, compared to the trees that didn't receive compost. Maybe they're happier in their environment."

Holding on to nitrogen

The manure compost, which was rich in organic nitrogen and carbon, reduced nitrous oxide by 35% compared to trees that were only fertigated, data showed.

"It's surprising because you would think that if you have more total nitrogen, you should see more emissions," Coyotl said. "More inputs means higher outputs."

It's possible that the carbon in the manure helped microbes in the soil hold on to the nitrogen, benefitting the tree, rather than letting it escape into the air as nitrous oxide, Coyotl said.

He is working to understand the microbial mechanisms involved and how the biology was altered in hopes of being able to recreate the effect. "This is a work in progress," he said.

Bolstering the loop

It's also a furthering of an existing agricultural loop. Once almonds are harvested, the hulls are sold and used in animal feed on dairies. The manure compost adds to the circle, helping to meet soil and growth needs of the trees.

"They already cycle nutrients from one to the other and this study allows us to cycle the nutrients back to where they came from," Meyer said about the two industries.

The research is part of a national Dairy Soil & Water Regeneration project examining conservation practices in a typical dairy forage production system. In all, eight research institutions in major dairy-producing regions are participating. The findings will be submitted to journals for publication at a later date.

William Horwath in the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources and Sat Darshan Khalsa in the Department of Plant Sciences at UC Davis contributed to the research, as did Nicholas Clark, a Cooperative Extension advisor with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources.



Soil biogeochemist Adolfo Coyotl in an almond orchard taking soil samples. Photo by Eleonora Beier, Stanford University



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