

Today is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_. This is Ken Morgan's Northcoast Ag Report, our lead story is about \_\_\_\_\_ when we return

**RELEASE IMMEDIATE**

Dec. 4, 2017

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**NINE GRADUATE FROM LEADERSHIP FARM BUREAU PROGRAM**

Having each completed more than 250 hours of leadership and development training, traveled more than 5,000 miles and met with nearly 130 elected officials, the Leadership Farm Bureau class of 2017 graduated today **during the 99th California Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in Garden Grove.**

The class members learned about the Farm Bureau organization, California agriculture and effective advocacy through six intensive sessions that included classroom training plus meetings with elected officials in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.; visits with ranchers, timber operators and water experts in Tuolumne County; and a trip to Imperial and San Diego counties focused on agricultural employment concerns and Southern California water issues.

The graduates of the Leadership Farm Bureau Class of 2017 included:

- Christina Beckstead of Atwater, executive director of the Madera County Farm Bureau;
- Jennifer Beretta of Santa Rosa, a dairy farmer at Beretta Dairies and second vice president of the Sonoma County Farm Bureau;
- Mark Chesini of Meridian, director of operations for the Rice Growers Association of California and second vice president of the Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau;
- Jill Damskey of Elk Grove, an account manager for Ag Association Management Services;
- Kelton Fleming of Lodi, owner of Duck Creek Nursery;
- Laura Gutile of Madera, pistachio grower and secretary of the Madera County Farm Bureau;
- **Lindy Keilson of Potter Valley, marketing and membership coordinator for the Mendocino County Farm Bureau;**
- **Ryan Rice of Fortuna, construction manager for Humboldt Redwood Co. and president of the Humboldt County Farm Bureau.**
- Katie Veenstra of Escalon, director of marketing at Gloriann Farms.

**The class represented the 18th group to graduate from the Leadership Farm Bureau program since it was inaugurated in 2000.**

Applications for the 2018 Leadership Farm Bureau class will be accepted through Dec. 15. For information, see [www.cfbf.com/leadership-farm-bureau](http://www.cfbf.com/leadership-farm-bureau).

The California Farm Bureau Federation works to protect family farms and ranches on behalf of nearly 40,000 members statewide and as part of a nationwide network of more than 5.5 million Farm Bureau members.

December 4, 2017

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### **The smart harvest of Christmas trees leads to a healthier forest**

Most California forests have too many trees, so carefully selecting pines, cedars or firs in natural areas to enjoy for the Christmas season is good for the mountain landscape.

"It's a great idea to cut down young trees for fire safety and vegetation management," said [Susie Kocher](#), UC Cooperative Extension forestry advisor in the Central Sierra. "The earlier you do it, the less work it is to manage the trees in the long run."

Kocher lives and works in Lake Tahoe. Every year, she gathers her family and friends to find forest-fresh Christmas trees in the Lake Tahoe Management Area. Of the [18 national forests in California](#), 11 allow Christmas tree cutting with the purchase of a \$10 permit. ([See the list below.](#)) People who own mountain cabins or other forestland may invite family and friends to help thin trees on their personal property, which can then be used for the holiday season. However, never harvest trees on public or private property without permission.

"We have a lot of small trees on public and private forest lands because of fire suppression," Kocher said. "They're all competing with one another and many will ultimately die. A smart harvest of Christmas trees can improve the forest by helping with thinning."

People with permits to cut down Christmas trees in national forests must follow strict guidelines. Follow the same guidelines on private land to ensure a smart harvest. Before chopping down the tree, be sure it is within 10 feet of another living tree, the trunk is no more than 6 inches in diameter and the stump left behind is no higher than 12 inches off the ground. Some national forests limit the harvest to certain tree species.

Despite committing to these guidelines when obtaining a permit, Kocher said she has seen some Christmas tree harvesters make ill-advised choices.

"Some people are too lazy to find a good tree and will cut the top off a large tree," Kocher said. "You can be driving around and see what looks like a poor old Dr. Suess tree, which is what grows from the ugly remnant left behind in the forest."

Such irresponsible Christmas tree cutting has led some forests to discontinue Christmas tree harvesting for personal use.

There has been ongoing debate about whether a fake tree or real tree is more environmentally friendly, but for Kocher, there is no question.

"Fresh real trees are a renewable resource, fake trees are not," she said. "It's an agricultural product. You can contribute to a local farmers' income or you can help thin the forest. Picking and bringing home a fresh tree, decorating it and smelling it defines the season for me. Without it, I don't think it would feel like Christmas."

U.S. National Forests in California that allow Christmas tree cutting with a permit are:

- [Inyo National Forest](#)
- [Eldorado National Forest](#)
- [Klamath National Forest](#)
- [Lake Tahoe Basin Management Area](#)
- [Lassen National Forest](#)
- [Mendocino National Forest](#)
- [Modoc National Forest](#)
- [Plumas National Forest](#)
- [Shasta-Trinity National Forest](#)
- [Six Rivers National Forest](#)
- [Tahoe National Forest](#)

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### **'Real' Christmas trees support farmers and the environment**

Most real Christmas trees sold in California are raised on farms, creating jobs and boosting the economies in rural areas.

That's just one reason UC Cooperative Extension advisor [Lynn Wunderlich](#) encourages the use of fresh-cut Christmas trees during the holiday season.

"This is an age-old debate," Wunderlich said. The [American Christmas Tree Association](#) says that PVC used in artificial trees is recyclable. If a household decorates with the same artificial tree for at least four years, the carbon footprint will be smaller than that of a household that purchases a real tree every year.

But the impact goes deeper. Wunderlich points out that artificial trees are mainly made in Asia. They have to travel a great distance to the U.S. compared to an American-farmed tree, eating up natural resources during transport. "Buy American," Wunderlich says.

Besides, there are the transcendent benefits of real Christmas trees. Farmed trees provide open space and wildlife habitat during the off-season, and fill the home with a natural pine scent during holidays.

Their role in sequestering carbon is aided by a production practice used by many farmers, called "stump culture."

"They use the same root system to regrow another tree, so the trees are regenerated," Wunderlich said. "Trees are replanted regularly in other farming culture. Christmas trees sequester carbon. Nearly a ton of carbon per acre of trees, depending on species and number of trees planted on the land."

While artificial trees end up landfills or energy-intensive recycling plants, live trees are biodegradable. They can be naturally recycled by composting or shredded to use as mulch. Many communities offer curbside pickup in the days after Christmas.

While farmed trees can be purchased on tree lots, home improvement stores, even grocery and drug stores, Wunderlich says a trip to a choose-and-cut tree farm is an enchanting family outing. Many Christmas tree farmers also provide food, crafts, activities and visits with Santa.

"Families can visit the farmer year after year as their children grow, so that's part of the experience," Wunderlich said.

The [California Christmas Tree Association](#) maintains a directory of choose-and-cut Christmas tree farms around state.

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**CFBF PRESIDENT STRESSES NEED FOR LONG-TERM, UNIFIED ACTION**

Securing the future of California agriculture will require consistent, long-term and unified efforts, California Farm Bureau Federation President Paul Wenger said today. Wenger spoke during his annual address at the 99th CFBF Annual Meeting in Garden Grove.

Instant communication as represented by smartphone technology, Wenger said, can lure people into thinking that public policies affecting farms and ranches could be resolved quickly through social media, for example.

But the most effective way to sway public policy, he said, "is long-term, consistent, working with individuals, taking them on tours on farms, supporting them politically, getting them out and educating them about agriculture. It's not fast, it's not easy, but those who work the hardest the longest and invest the most are probably going to be successful."

To influence the debate in a largely urbanized state such as California, Wenger said, means working with government officials, political candidates and elected leaders who may have little if any background in agriculture.

“We have to get out of our comfort zone and start dealing with some people we normally don’t deal with,” he said, adding that he is proud of Farm Bureau’s work in that regard.

After eight years as president, Wenger has served his maximum term in office, and urged Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations to work together for the greater good of farmers and ranchers.

“I appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you here. I do love this organization and everybody that’s out here,” Wenger said. “We have got to continue to work together.”

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#### **CALIFORNIA CROP WEATHER**

**WEEK ENDING: December 3, 2017**

**RELEASED: December 4, 2017**

#### **WEATHER**

A frontal system brought light rains to areas of Northern California early last week. Drier conditions developed mid-week as high pressure built after the passing of the frontal system over most of California. Over the weekend a cold front boundary brought northerly winds as well as light rain and mountain snow and colder conditions from the northwest to central areas of California. The coldest temperatures were recorded along the Northeastern part of the State. The warmest temperatures were recorded along the southeastern interior of the State, where temperatures were reported to be more above normal in comparison to the rest of state.

Temperature highs were in the 50s to 60s in the mountains, 60s to 80s in the valley and along the coast, and 70s to 80s in the desert. Temperature lows were in the 20s to 30s in the mountains, 20s to 40s in the desert, 30s to 40s in the valley, and 30s to 50s along the coast.

#### **FIELD CROPS**

Cotton harvest neared completion. The warmer temperatures accelerated emergence of previously planted winter wheat. Growers continued to prepare fields for fall planting of wheat, barley, and oats. Silage corn grew well and harvesting was ongoing. Black-eyed beans were being harvested and processed. Recent rain helped germinate planted forage.

#### **FRUIT CROPS**

Apple harvest was winding down. Pruning continued in some stone fruit orchards and old orchards were removed and prepared for replanting. Table grape harvest was nearing

completion. Some vineyards were sprayed for weeds. Pears, pomegranates, kiwifruit, and persimmons were harvested. Olive groves were pruned. Navel orange harvest was ongoing. Lemon, grapefruit, mandarin and pomelo harvests continued. Young citrus trees were bagged to protect them from frost.

#### NUT CROPS

Almond and pistachio harvests were complete. Walnut harvest was nearly complete. Soil amendments were applied in orchards.

#### VEGETABLE CROPS

Broccoli, carrots, and lettuce all have excellent stands for the winter season. Fall and winter vegetables were being harvested and available at roadside stands. Strawberries continued to grow at roadside stands. Continued cultivating of organic garlic was ongoing. Fresh onions fields and tomato beds were being prepared for planting. Organic cantaloupe harvest ended. Organic broccoli, celery and spinach fields were growing nicely. Head, leaf, and romaine lettuce for the fall season grew nicely with many fields starting to be harvested.

#### LIVESTOCK

Non-irrigated and foothill rangeland forage quality was improving with some north and central state locations reporting fair to poor conditions. Earlier rains and warm weather stimulated germination and foothill range and non-irrigated fields were showing green. Dairy workers were cleaning out corrals in preparation for winter. Supplemental feeding of cattle was ongoing.