

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

It's been an autumn of transitions for Farm Bureau of Ventura County's leadership team.

Farm Bureau directors elected new officers at the September board meeting. They are Danny Pereira,

president; Will Terry, first vice president; Ted Grether, second vice president; Chris Sayer, secretary; and Jason Cole, treasurer. Danny takes over as president from Scott Klittich, who served ably in the role for two years and remains on the board.

And during the October meeting, the board appointed Melinda Beardsley Wiseman to fill the vacancy being created by the resignation of director Katie Brokaw, which takes effect Dec. 31.

On behalf of the membership, I want to thank Scott and Katie for their service to the organization. We're all glad Scott is sticking around, but Katie will be sorely missed. And I want to welcome Melinda as our newest director. She's been on the ballot during each of the past two board elections, and has displayed a real passion for the organization. In case you're wondering about her background, here's the bio we printed in the program for this year's annual meeting:

Melinda Beardsley Wiseman is the fourth generation of a family involved in agriculture in Ventura County for more than 100 years. She is the granddaughter of Robert Beardsley Jr., founder of Beard-

sley & Son, Inc. a family-owned fertilizer dealer specializing in conventional and organic fertilizers, custom blending and tractor application since 1935. She is the daughter of Tom Beardsley, current owner-operator, and is the company's vice

president of sales and operations. She is a graduate of UC Santa Barbara with a bachelor's degree in economics and a minor in English. Melinda holds a qualified applicator license from the Department of Pesticide Regulation. Before joining the family business, she was employed with an investment firm, managing more than \$100 million and responsible for all investor relations. Melinda lives in Somis with her two daughters.

Sadly, Tom Beardsley passed away on Sept. 20. We extend our condolences to the family, and are honored by Melinda's acceptance of our invitation to join the Farm Bureau leadership team. We have no doubt she will do Tom's memory proud.

Ag supervisor training program takes off

About a dozen agricultural employers have taken advantage of the opportunity to enroll their front-line field supervisors in a new training program being conducted this fall at Ventura College. Titled the Agriculture Supervisor Leadership Development Program, it consists of 46 hours of instruction spread over 10 weeks, and is intended to provide supervisors the skills to understand and effectively communicate with employees of different personalities, languages and backgrounds, along with effective administration of procedures and rules.

The class is at capacity, with 35 employees enrolled. Instruction began Nov. 6, and is being provided by Annika Forester. Annika's previous positions include Director of Grower Education with the California Strawberry Commission, Manager of Field Expertise at Reiter Affiliated Companies, and Senior Training Specialist at Harry and David. Some of her recent clients include the California Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program, Cal Poly Strawberry Center, Hartnell College Agricultural Business and Technology Institute, and the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement.

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We're supporting the [Agriculture Supervisor Leadership Development Program] ... as a promising method for addressing a common problem in the agricultural workplace — conflicts between field supervisors and the employees they oversee.

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UC recognizes needs of county livestock producers

By Matthew Shapero

There are nearly 1 million acres of rangeland in Ventura County, of which 200,000 are grazed. Rangelands support a host of services to the broader ecosystem (water storage and filtration, wildlife habitat, carbon storage) as well as provide the primary forage base for the county's livestock industry. For generations, our ranchers have worked to sustainably manage these rangeland ecosystems while providing a quality, safe agricultural product. Increasingly, however, the county's livestock industry has faced new sets of ecological, economic, and regulatory challenges that complicate this work.

In September, the University of California Cooperative Extension hired me to fill the role of area livestock and range advisor. The ultimate goal of my program will be to assist producers to successfully navigate the challenges that they face in Ventura County. My

program will provide relevant, science-based information and will develop an applicable and progressive research program to respond to the questions and needs of the local clientele. Future research and education will benefit livestock operators through:

- Addressing animal health issues that will increase the welfare and productivity of livestock.
- Promoting rangeland management practices that benefit both the land and the ranching operation.
- Facilitating conversation between community stakeholders in order to achieve responsible management.
- Improving animal genetics and performance, ranch profitability and ecological sustainability.

I've devoted my first few weeks to familiarizing myself with agriculture in Ventura County. I have met with representatives from Ventura County Resource Conservation District, the

include responding to water quality regulations on grazed rangelands in the Ventura River watershed, and engaging with cattlemen, the County Planning Division, and Co-LAB on the wildlife corridor ordinance that county is developing.

Looking ahead, my future research and education program will be shaped by local needs and concerns as I come to know them better. From my discussions with ranchers thus far, however, some potential directions include 1) how to address copper deficiency in commercial beef cattle herds; 2) examining how crop waste and byproducts from row-crop agriculture might be more effectively and efficiently fed to commercial cattle; 3) demonstrating how stockmanship and herding can improve the range resource and water quality; 4) expanding the use of prescribed fire for vegetation management; and 5) exploring how local ranchers might benefit from a direct-to-consumer marketing model.

I am most pleased to be in Ventura County and am looking forward to the opportunity to serve the agricultural community here. My main work these first months is to get to know local producers. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or comments or an invitation to visit you on your farm or ranch. I can be reached by phone (805-645-1475), email (mwkshapero@ucanr.edu), or in person at our office in Ventura (669 County Square Drive, Suite #100).

— Matthew Shapero is the University of California Cooperative Extension's Livestock & Range Advisor for Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties.



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This conference is being held by the North American Raspberry & Blackberry Association in cooperation with the University of California Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ventura County CoLAB, the U.S. Forest Service-Los Padres National Forest, have attended Ventura County Cattlemen's board of director meetings, have visited with ranchers and producers throughout the county, and – starting in November – will regularly participate in meetings of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County's board of directors.

Two local issues affecting agriculture that I've already started working on

Notes from the CEO *Cont'd from page 1*

Annika is working under a contract with the college, which is providing the classroom space. Farm Bureau is serving as fiscal agent, responsible for invoicing, collecting and tracking tuition payments, and reimbursing the college for instructional costs using those funds.

We're supporting the course because we regard it as a promising method for addressing a common problem in the agricultural workplace – conflicts between field supervisors and the employees they oversee. All too often, such conflicts can escalate, generating formal complaints and inviting legal and regulatory action. Better training should enable supervisors to avoid such problems in the first place, or to recognize and address them before they get out of hand.

On a related note, the Farm Worker Resource Program Advisory Committee – established to help the county develop a program to serve the needs of local farm workers – has begun meeting. It is being convened and supported by staff in the County Chief Executive Office, and because it is a formally constituted committee appointed by the Board of Supervisors, it operates under the state's open meeting and public record acts. Agendas are posted 72 hours before each meeting and can be accessed, along with meeting minutes and videos, at www.ventura.org/farmworker-resource-program-advisory-committee.

Farm Bureau nominated four members of the eight-member committee to represent agriculture: Yissel Barajas, Ellen Brokaw, Dave Murray and Danny Pereira. The other members of the Committee, nominated by MICOP, are Jessica Arciniega, with the Agricultural Labor Relations Board; Natalie Ospina, with California Rural Legal Assistance; Juvenal Solano, MICOP; and Lucas Zucker, CAUSE. Ellen and Lucas are co-chairs.

The first three meetings largely dealt with information gathering, including instruction on the Brown Act, reports from members of the committee on the characteristics of the farm worker community and on services currently available, and reports from the county Human Services Agency on the option to house the program within that department.

The committee is now ready to begin designing the program, starting with a review of the goals and moving on to determining staffing requirements and best location. Those goals, according to the board resolution establishing the committee, are as follows: Building trust and relationships with local farm workers, employers, advocates and related agencies; promoting Ventura County as a first-choice destination to work in agriculture and helping to attract farm workers to Ventura County; informing farm workers about their existing labor protections; providing assistance in navigating public agencies; and seeking resolution to workplace issues.

Given the widely divergent perspectives present around the table, the committee's task is a tough one, but the discussions so far have been respectful and informative. We were skeptical of the need for such a program from the beginning, as I made clear in my comments during the public hearing. But the industry's interests are being well-represented during the process, and I'm hopeful that the final product will be a program that benefits agricultural employers as well as their employees.

— *John Krist is chief executive officer of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Contact him at john@farmbureauvc.com.*

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TICKETS & DISCOUNTS

Farm Bureau members qualify for discounts on admission to many of Southern California's most popular theme parks and other attractions. To take advantage of any of these special offers, drop by the Farm Bureau office at 5156 McGrath St. in Ventura. You can also place an order and pay by phone, and have the tickets mailed to you. For more information, contact Farm Bureau at (805) 289-0155. Have your membership number handy. We accept Visa and MasterCard.

Aquarium of the Pacific, Long Beach; Adult (12+ yrs) \$20.95 (save \$9); Child (3-11 yrs) \$15.95 (save \$2). Valid thru 12/31/17. Closed 12/25/2017.

Cinemark & Rave Theatres — All Cinemark, Century & Rave locations; Platinum Super Ticket. Valid any regular movie anytime. Regular price up to \$12, you pay \$9.25 (save \$2.75). Additional premiums may apply for specially priced films and/or events priced higher than normal box office. No expiration on physical tickets only.

Knott's Berry Farm — Buena Park. Adult (12+ yrs) \$42.50 (save \$32.50); Junior (3 to 11 yrs) or Seniors (62+ yrs) \$39.95 (save \$5.05). Valid thru 12/31/2017. — 2018 Season Pass +1 Day Admission in 2017, Purchase by 1/7/2018. E-Ticket only \$92. (Includes: unlimited visits in 2018 w/no blackout dates. Discounts on selected food, merchandise and the Knott's Hotel, early ride time on select rides during summer & exclusive offers & events throughout the season. Not valid for Knott's Scary Farm, special ticket events or park buyouts.)

Regal Entertainment Group — All Edwards & Regal locations. No expiration date on physical tickets only. — Premiere Unrestricted Ticket, valid ANY showtime, \$9.25. — Unlimited Movie Pack: 2 Unrestricted Tickets and \$10 Gift Card, \$28.50. (Surcharge for IMAX, RPX, 3-D films & 4DX films, premiere or luxury seating locations or select theaters.)

San Diego Safari Park — Escondido. Physical ticket exp. 12/31/17. E-ticket valid at least thru 6/27/18. Adult (12+ yrs) \$45 (save \$7); Child (3 to 11 yrs) \$37 (save \$5). Includes Africa Tram, all shows and exhibits.

San Diego Sea World — Adult (10+ yrs) Single Day Ticket \$66.50. Child (3-9 yrs) Single Day Ticket \$66.50. Valid thru 12/31/18.

San Diego Zoo — Physical ticket exp. 12/31/17. E-ticket valid at least thru 6/27/18. Adult (12+ yrs) 1 Day Pass \$45 (save \$7); Child (3 to 11 yrs) 1 Day Pass \$37 (save \$5). Both Adult & Child 1 Day Pass includes Guided Bus Tour, Kangaroo Bus & Skyfari Aerial Tram. Valid thru 6/27/18.

Six Flags Magic Mountain — Valencia. General admission (3yrs+) \$54.95. Valid thru 9/9/18.

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FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

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