

AGRARIAN ADVOCATE



GROWING FOOD, GROWING FARMS, GROWING COMMUNITIES



CAFF's Farm to School Program Expands

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY KATHRYN SPENCER

CAFF's Farm to School Initiative has been reconnecting children with local food and agriculture in the classroom, on the farm and in the cafeteria since 2001.

Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign, along with the new 2011 Childhood Nutrition Reauthorization Act, has helped Farm to School become a national discussion. CAFF is poised to participate in this conversation, with active Farm to School programs in the Bay Area, Central Coast, Humboldt and Silicon Valley regions. Our Farm to School Initiative addresses the disconnect between schools and farms in three main areas: policy, direct education and connecting farms to school cafeterias.

The educational arm of CAFF's Farm to School Initiative works to deliver engaging, hands-on educational programs

that connect students and their communities with sustainable agriculture to raise awareness about local food systems, the environment, health and nutrition. Our Know Your Farmer program, which brings farmers into the classroom and schoolchildren out on farm field trips, reached 5,000 students in the 2010-2011 school year. At the end of one of these farm field trips, a third grade boy did a little dance on the way back to the bus, smiled big, and said "I LOVED the farm crackers we made! I want to eat more!" Farm field trips like this one to Redwood Roots Farm in Humboldt provide students the opportunity to harvest and taste produce from the field. The impact of this experience is powerful; children witness how food grows, and are exposed to the freshest produce they

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The Community Alliance with Family Farmers advocates for California family farmers and sustainable agriculture.

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Letter from the Executive Director

As we close out the year, what do you remember most about 2011? Here at CAFF, we have much to celebrate. This issue of the Agrarian Advocate highlights CAFF's work in 2011 and our continued dedication to advocate for family farmers and sustainable agriculture.

In 2011, our Farm to School program helped create new markets for farmers. Our Harvest of the Month program (page 1) grew to five counties, providing 350 classrooms with farm fresh produce and curriculum, empowering teachers to take the lead on food and farming lessons for over 12,600 students. We also collaborated with school food service personnel in five school districts to help them source locally.

Our Local Food System program continues to expand the market for local food and connect communities to the farmers who grow their food. CAFF is collaborating with the Bay Area Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility to work with 20-30 hospitals in order to increase the amount of food they purchase from family farms (page 6). In Humboldt, CAFF conducted a CalFresh media campaign and was instrumental in contributing to the incentive program of the North Coast Growers' Association (page 8). CAFF is also helping to establish an Aggregation and Marketing Center (AMC) on the North Coast, which will expand local markets for growers in Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, and Lake counties.

Food safety, water policy issues, and climate change were all part of CAFF's policy work in 2011 (page 10). Through our coalition with the California Climate and Agriculture Network, we helped pass SB 489 (Wolk), a state bill that extended net energy metering to all forms of energy. The California Department of Food and Agriculture has set up a task force (which CAFF is a part of) to review all direct marketing regulations, including farmers markets, farm stands, and CSAs. CAFF has formed a committee of ten CSAs to advise on policy proposals as we proceed.

CAFF has worked with almond growers for over 15 years to help them implement more sustainable growing practices; and this fall, we began to work with Sure Harvest and the Almond Board of California to hold workshops for almond growers (page 11).

We look forward to our upcoming projects and initiatives, and wish you a prosperous 2012!

Diane Del Signore
 Diane Del Signore
 Executive Director

Creating Balance Between Wild and Cultivated Land



Tom Broz, on his farm (Live Earth Farm).

STORY BY **SAM EARNSHAW**

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF **LIVE EARTH FARM**

After years of farming, working, walking and observing the land, one gradually develops a "knowledge of place" and a bond to the landscape. No matter how many times I walk the same path or work the same field, I am always discovering something new, whether it's airflow and temperature variations, differences in drainage and soil types, areas where water seeps and should be left undisturbed, or subtle changes in the vegetation depending on the direction the landscape is facing (exposure to sun).

The longer I farm, the more I recognize that land stewardship is a lifelong learning process, one that requires balancing the many diverse relationships between the cultivated and non-cultivated environments

around us. In the last few years we have been very fortunate to work closely with Sam Earnshaw from Community Alliance with Family Farmers, and Jo Ann Baumgartner, director of Wild Farm Alliance, both of whom bring passion, experience and that necessary understanding of how wilderness and farming are mutually supportive. In this article, Sam describes the collaborative projects we've engaged in here on the farm, and reflects on the importance of the work we are doing. If farmers everywhere could have inspiring mentors like Sam and Jo Ann, I've no doubt that the role of farmers as land stewards would receive a more deserving recognition in society.

- Tom Broz, Live Earth Farm

When you visit Live Earth Farm, you will notice native shrubs, trees and grasses growing in profusion within and around the fields of the crops.

These outgrowths of vegetation are all part of Tom and Constance's vision for a farm that incorporates all of the benefits and values of nature. In more formal terms, they can be called "conservation plantings" and they provide what is known as "ecosystem services." These services include pollination, pest predation, soil stabilization, and weed replacement, among others. That all sounds very scientific -- in fact, nature and biology are at the heart of Live Earth Farm.

In 2007, Tom and Constance began talking with Jo Ann Baumgartner from the Wild Farm Alliance and Sam Earnshaw from CAFF about habitat restoration.

Tom and Constance wanted to increase the farm's biodiversity so that it would not simply be all crops. They were also concerned about areas that were formerly farmed - areas very steep and prone to serious soil erosion. Some of the land management resource options include hedgerows, grassy filter strips and waterways and willow plantings.

Hedgerows can have multiple functions: they serve as habitat for beneficial insects, pollinators and other wildlife; provide erosion protection and

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Celebrating Agriculture

This fall, CAFF held a Photo Contest with the theme of family farming and local food. Participants entered photos in five categories: "Animals," "Farm/Farmscape," "Farmers Market/ Farm Stands," "People," and "Produce." Entries were judged by a panel of professional photographers: Lisa Hamilton, Rachel Schreiber, and Willa Mamet. The People's Choice portion of the contest was held on CAFF's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/famfarms, where all of the entries are currently displayed for viewing. A 2012 "Celebrating Agriculture" calendar features the winning photos.



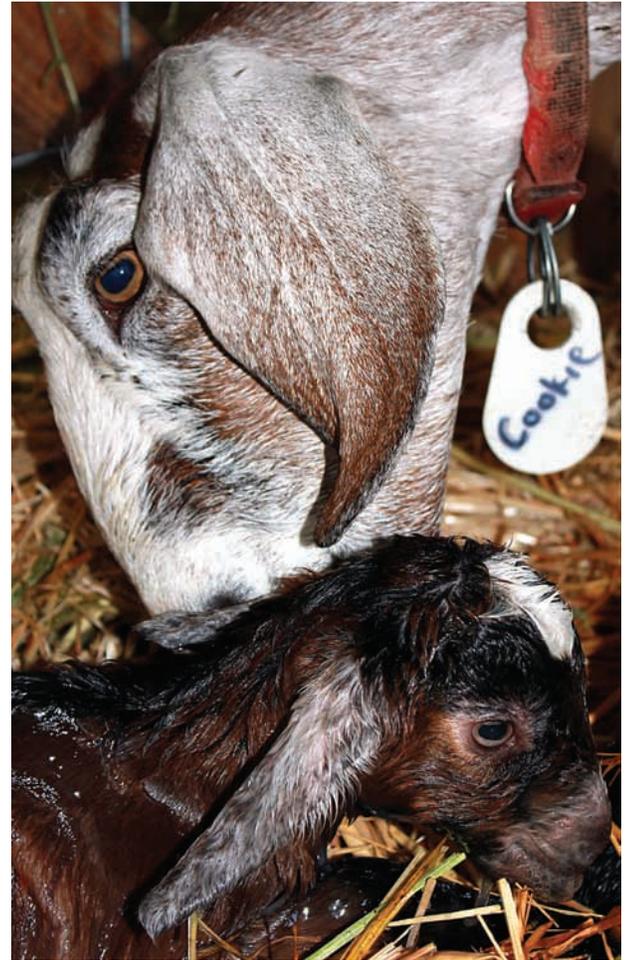
"North Davis Farm Field" by Wes Hardaker, Grand Prize Winner and First Place in the Farm/Farmscape Category



"Pomegranate Perimeter" by Erica Woll, Overall People's Choice Winner and People's Choice Winner in the Farm/Farmscape Category



Untitled by Bill Goidell, First Place, People Category



"First Moments" by Carrie Sendak, First Place, Animals Category



Untitled by Melissa Leady, First Place, Farmers Market Category



Thank you to all participants and judges!
If you are interested in ordering a calendar,
please send an email to contest@caff.org.



Untitled by Tara Luz Stevens, First Place, People Category

Family Farmers Add Nourishment to Hospital Menus



CAFF's Local Food Systems team has embarked on an exciting new project to source local produce in hospitals.

STORY BY ARIANE MICHAS

PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLO FANTI

CAFF's Local Food Systems team has embarked on an exciting new project to source local produce in hospitals. Spurred by board member Dr. Preston Maring, we connected with the Bay Area Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR). PSR coordinates a leadership team of foodservice directors from several Bay Area hospital systems who have been discussing on a regular basis how to build greater sustainability into their operations. Food sourcing is a major focus of their efforts. Dr. Maring determined that if these hospitals combined forces to commit to greater local, sustainable, and organic fresh produce sourcing, then they could have a real impact on both the food chain model and the livelihoods of family farmers. I am pleased to say that with the support of a grant from the Kaiser Community Benefits Program, our team and PSR are now funded to work with 25-30 hospitals in the region to increase the amount of product they purchase from local family farms.

The initial phase of this project involves making a baseline measurement of sourcing practices to determine where each hospital is currently getting its product, and what form that product takes. Another early step is to discover all of the barriers to improved sourcing, so that we can work together with all players in the food chain to dismantle them. Recently, I've had the opportunity to tour the foodservice operations of the UCSF Medical Center and John Muir

campus in Concord. It has been eye-opening to see the complexity of their operations. I gained an appreciation of just how much goes into serving thousands of patients a day, most of whom must be placed on multiple complex and prescribed diets adjusted to their particular health conditions. Foodservice teams also dish up thousands of meals to staff and visitors and usually run catering services for events at their facilities from meetings of ten to dinner for hundreds. It is incredible what they accomplish each day and also a wonderful opportunity to open this market to family farmers.

Already there are some early lessons and the barriers we are setting out to tackle aren't going to be easy to solve. Not surprisingly, food safety is a very large issue. Many small farmers aren't third-party certified for food safety, which prevents them from accessing institutional markets such as hospitals. In addition, labor in hospital kitchens is a high cost. Most rely heavily on pre-cut and washed products. CAFF program staff will be working closely with other stakeholders, including processor-distributors, to develop ways to keep the product segregated and traceable throughout the foodchain.

We're in the early phases now, but farmers and hospitals are both enthusiastic. We've spoken to apple growers in Yolo and Sonoma, and vegetable growers in Brentwood, all of whom are on board to grow and sell product for the hospitals. If we're successful in getting their produce from farm to tray, we will have positively impacted the health of thousands of eaters in the Bay Area and created a model we hope will be replicated around the country. 🌱

Profile continued from page 3

weed control; serve as windbreaks; stabilize waterways; reduce non-point source water pollution and groundwater pollution; increase surface water infiltration; buffer pesticide drift, noise, odors and dust; act as living fences and boundary lines; increase biodiversity; and provide an aesthetic benefit.

Diversity in hedgerow species, especially when using natives, assures a range of attributes, such as multiple kinds of insects and wildlife attracted, positive effects to soil and water resources, and success of individual plants under site-specific climatic and other environmental conditions.

Grassed filter strips and waterways hold the soil, prevent erosion gullies from forming and provide cover for insects, spiders and other small wildlife. Willow plantings on the steepest slopes help to anchor soils in place with their network of extensive roots.

So, with much input from Tom and Sam, Wild Farm Alliance applied for and received a restoration grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to design and implement conservation plantings on many areas of Live Earth Farm.

Tom and the team developed and are constantly refining an overall restoration plan for the whole farm, and together, with help from the Live Earth interns and farm workers, many areas are being planted to trees, shrubs and grasses. These plantings are increasing the biodiversity of the farm: bird life, beneficial insects,

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pollinators, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, the whole range of biological life of a Central Coast mixed evergreen forest and grassland ecosystem with a functioning farm throughout.

The diversity of activities, educational projects, people, crops and events happening at Live Earth Farm is truly inspiring. This diversity carries over into every part of the farm and its activities. The farm is an embodiment of how nature and agriculture can coexist in a healthy and productive way.

This article also appeared in the Live Earth Farm (Com)Post Newsletter. For more information please visit <http://www.liveearthfarm.net/>. 🌱

Humboldt Chapter Update



By **PORTIA BRAMBLE**, *Executive Director of NCGA and CAFF Humboldt Chapter member. With contributions from Laura Marie Hughes, Assistant Manager, NCGA*

In Humboldt County, on the remote north coast of California, we celebrated Local Food Month in September. Here in Humboldt County we have an abundance of local agricultural production with a large variety of products due to the existence of multiple microclimates. With a long history of agricultural production we have developed many crops, from wheat and grains to peaches, sweet corn, dry beans, heirloom apples and unique varieties of tomatoes. Humboldt County also has a hugely successful and award-winning grassfed beef and dairy industries. This rich agricultural production has allowed us to create a uniquely successful local food system, including thriving farmers' markets that feature farm fresh products all grown within the county lines.

Through a partnership with the local food bank, Food for People (FFP), the North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA) has been participating in a program with Roots of Change, a bay-area based non-profit organization working to develop and support a collaborative network of leaders and institutions in California with interest in establishing a sustainable food system in California by the year 2030. The Certified Farmers' Market Consortium (CFMC) is a CalFresh incentive program, which was implemented in 2011 at all five of NCGA weekly farmers' markets in Arcata, Eureka, and McKinleyville. The local Humboldt County chapter of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers was instrumental in carrying out the first season of the incentive program, providing outreach support and contributing funds raised through various fundraising activities to increase the incentive dollars available to our community.

The incentive program has allowed NCGA to offer additional dollars to CalFresh recipients, who deeply cherish the program. During the 2011 season with the implementation of the incentive program we have experienced a 200%

increase in the number of CalFresh dollars spent at our farmers' markets compared to 2009. In a community where unemployment figures are as high as 20%, every dollar counts. Greg Rhodes, one of two-hundred CSA shareholders at Deep Seeded Community Farm in Arcata, and a weekly shopper at the Arcata Plaza Saturday farmers' market, said recently, "without the ability to use my CalFresh benefits and the incentive dollars to pay for my CSA share I wouldn't be able to afford to provide my family with the fresh fruits and vegetables that I now can."

Because NCGA is a farmer-member organization serving over 100 family farms, we are able to serve the unique needs of our community through direct daily contact with our farmers and a very tightly knit relationship; facilitating a system of weekly payments for Greg's CSA share through NCGA is something you will only find in such a close community. These types of relationships are what contribute to such a vibrant and successful agricultural system on the north coast. Our farmers are also the largest donors to Food for People's 17-pantry network, contributing 76,207 pounds of produce from direct donations and gleaning between September 1, 2009 and October 30, 2010. The produce donated to these pantries is distributed directly to needy households in our community, who value fresh, nutritious, locally-produced foods. The partnership between NCGA and FFP has served both organizations well for many years; joining the larger CFMC partnership has only strengthened and developed the programs NCGA and FFP manage jointly.

Additionally, and timely to FFP and NCGA's efforts, Humboldt CAFF conducted a CalFresh media campaign to remind recipients that their benefits can be used to purchase edible plant starts and seeds. Many people are unaware of this fact and the simple act of gardening can empower a low-resource family to turn hunger and poverty into self-reliance and hope.

Humboldt County is an extremely remote and often isolated part of California, hidden behind what the locals refer to as the "Redwood Curtain." While the tight community bonds that we have formed here give us strength and allow us to prosper despite many obstacles, having ties to the larger local food movement and the support of organizations like Roots of Change with the implementation of the incentive program has allowed us to realize even more of our potential for the growth and prosperity of agricultural productivity. 🌱



Farm to Table Calendar Available

The 2012 Farm to Table Calendar highlights family farms and celebrates the faces and places that feed us. Produced annually by the Humboldt field office, the calendar is undoubtedly the gift to give the foodie in your life! All proceeds benefit CAFF's work in Humboldt County. To order, please visit www.caff.org or call (707) 826-0233.



All photos by E. Christian Wisner www.ecwisner.com

North Coast Chapter Update

By JANUS HOLT MATTHES

This fall brought even more collaborations to CAFF's North Coast Chapter. We teamed up with Sonoma County Farm Trails and California FarmLink on a display at the National Heirloom Exposition, held September 13-15 at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. Our theme was, "Sonoma County Farms Forever." Beautiful produce from member farms drew interest and we had non-stop conversations about the work of our organizations. Well over 10,000 people attended this outstanding event, which will occur again next year. See: www.theheirloomexpo.com.

Wendy Krupnik, vice president of the chapter, was honored by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on Food Day, October 24, for her outstanding work with CAFF, iGrow, and the Food System Alliance.

Our chapter continues to participate in the Sonoma County Food System Alliance. The policy committee is developing a Food Policy Action Plan, modeled after Portland's Mutnomah Food Action Plan, to submit to the county and cities early next year. CAFF's Farm to School director Diana Abellera has brought the Harvest of the Month program to West Sonoma County schools and there is outreach to local growers to supply school needs. A Community Garden Summit was held November 5 in Santa Rosa, and the County Lands for Food project has identified parcels that would be appropriate for community gardens and small to medium scale vegetable and fruit

production. There is considerable interest from local government, agencies, businesses, and individuals in this region. We are proud that CAFF is taking a key role in these discussions at all levels. These revisions to the agricultural zoning ordinance and Williamson Act provisions went to our Board of Supervisors this fall and we will be following this language closely to make sure the interests of family farmers are supported.

We continue to work with planning staff and other organizations on changes in agricultural zoning and Williamson Act rules. We are cautiously optimistic about some of the improvements for small farmers in the version that was sent to Sonoma Supervisors November 15.

North Coast chapter member Rose Roberts of Farm Stewards has been collaborating with Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District to implement a Pollinator Hedgerow program. We received funding from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to design and install pollinator habitats on farms in Western Sonoma County. In two years we have installed over 5,000 pollinator habitat plants on six farms, including CAFF members Gabriel Orchards and Three Ox Farm. We helped Singing Frogs Farm install pollinator habitat plantings that contributed to farmers Paul and Elizabeth Kaiser being awarded the NAPPC Farmer Rancher Pollinator Conservation Award in 2010. 🌱

Policy Update

BY DAVE RUNSTEN

We tracked a series of bills in the Legislature during 2011. Many of the water bills were put off until 2012. The following summarizes the results for the bills that we tracked.

AB 88 (Huffman) would require labeling of genetically engineered salmon in California. It didn't get out of committee but they reserved the right to try again in 2012. Note that there is an initiative proposed for the 2012 ballot that would require labeling of all GE foods.

AB 292 (Galgiani) also died. It would have required the high speed rail authority to pay more attention to the concerns of farmers about the route chosen in the southern San Joaquin valley and its impact on farm land. Gov. Brown appointed some new people to the board of the rail authority and they are apparently trying to resolve some of these routing conflicts.

AB 359 (Huffman) encourages the sustainable management of groundwater resources by requiring, as a condition of receiving a state grant or loan, local water agencies to include a map of prime recharge areas in their groundwater management plans. It requires these maps to be shared with local planning agencies, interested parties and organizations. CAFF supported this bill; it passed and was signed by the governor.

AB 581 (John Perez) sets up mechanisms for California to receive funds from the federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative, should such funds be approved by Congress. It has been enacted.

AB 634 (Huber) allows farmers to kill rodents with carbon monoxide. We signed on at the request of the Farm Bureau, and it passed.

AB 964 (Huffman) passed, and authorizes any person to obtain a right to appropriate water for a small irrigation use. This is an effort to streamline permitting of ponds on the north coast for frost protection for wine grapes. One of the problems that this does not solve is that current law does not allow you to hold the water in the pond for very long if you only have riparian water rights.

SB 237 (Wolk) was our annual bill to direct some cap and trade revenues to agricultural research and adaptation. All such bills have been held pending the implementation of cap and trade by CARB and more general decisions by the



Legislature about how revenues will be spent. We will be running this again in 2012.

SB 471 (Rubio) would limit what you can buy with food stamps by eliminating sodas from the list of eligible foods. New York City has applied to USDA to be allowed to do this and I believe California is waiting to see what happens with that request before this bill proceeds in the Legislature.

SB 489 (Wolk) was the bill sponsored by CalCAN (that's us) to allow all small scale renewable energy sources to come under net metering rules. This bill was prompted by Russ Lester's problems getting his walnut hull biogas operation hooked up to PG&E. The bill passed and was signed. Victory!!

SB 618 (Wolk) allows landowners and local officials to simultaneously rescind Williamson Act contracts and enter into easements allowing photovoltaic solar facilities on the same land. The original intent of this bill was to encourage solar development on very marginal lands, such as on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. It became very difficult to specify such lands; however, a version passed and was signed. We will see how it turns out in practice.

SB 668 (Evans) – Local government: Williamson Act. Authorizes a nonprofit land-trust organization, a nonprofit entity, or a public agency to enter into a contract with a landowner who has also entered into a Williamson Act contract to keep that landowner's land in contract under the Williamson Act, for a period of up to ten years in exchange for the open-space district's, land-trust organization's, or nonprofit entity's payment of all or a portion of the foregone property tax revenue. It was passed and signed by the governor. 🌱

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have tasted in their young lives, leading to changes in the way they relate to their local food system. Our Harvest of the Month Tasting Kit program grew to five counties this year, providing 350 classrooms with farm fresh produce and complimentary curricula, empowering classroom teachers to take the lead on food and farming lessons in the classroom for over 12,600 students. A survey of these teachers found that many of them saw changes in student preferences and eating habits as a result of participating in our Harvest of the Month program. They noted that their students were more willing to try new varieties of fruits and vegetables and that the students gained knowledge about seasonal produce and where their food was coming from. CAFF partnered with 10 family farms in California to provide produce for the tasting kits in classrooms. This partnership is a “win-win” for farmers and CAFF; we get to support family farms by featuring their produce for classrooms, and the farmers know kids will learn about who grew their produce while enjoying every bite!

In our policy efforts this year, CAFF has co-lead the California Farm to School Taskforce, a statewide body that brings together a diverse network of stakeholders who promote and create opportunities to connect schools with their local farms in the classroom, in the cafeteria, and in the community. The taskforce has been leading the charge to break down policy barriers that inhibit farm to school actions, while advocating for dedicated positions within state agencies to support farmers as they sell to schools.

Our other main effort is to create market opportunities and build relationships between farmers and food service programs to facilitate more local food in school cafeterias. Our work with school food service directors through our Technical Assistance Program has grown by leaps and bounds this year. We’ve worked on the ground with five school districts to help them build support for farm to school programs and to bring more local produce onto their school menus.

By using these three strategies with school districts over the long term, Farm to School programs have the ability to truly reform school lunch, decrease childhood obesity rates, and provide viable markets for local growers. Please contact farmentoschool@caff.org to join the effort! 🌱



CAFF's Harvest of the Month Tasting Kit program grew to five counties this year.

CAFF partners with Sure Harvest and the Almond Board on sustainability workshops for growers

The Almond Board of California (ABC) has set forth an ambitious goal in 2012 to triple participation in its California Almond Sustainability Program.

ABC, Sure Harvest, and partners (including UC Cooperative Extension and CAFF), are collaborating to design and implement innovative workshop formats for attracting and providing value to growers.

The first two workshops were held in November at the New Earth Market in Yuba City and the Heidrick Ag History Center in Woodland.

“By sharing their sustainability story in a confidential forum, growers are providing the industry with cumulative real-performance information that can be demonstrated to public policy influencers and buyers of California Almonds,” said ABC’s Gabriele Ludwig.

Look for information about workshops by visiting the Almond Board Web site and <http://caff.org/programs/bio-ag/almonds/>. For additional information or questions, email sustainability@almondboard.com. 🌱



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CAFF'S ANNUAL APPEAL

We invite you to support our work on behalf of family farmers and sustainable agriculture. You'll help to ensure that fresh, local produce remains a constant in our communities, and you can take pride knowing that, with CAFF's assistance, growers throughout the state are improving the environmental outcomes of farming and the food we eat. Together, we are building a better food system throughout the state. Please visit **www.caff.org** to donate to CAFF's annual appeal.

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