



ARIZONA AGRICULTURE

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Legislative Leaders Establish Their 2020 Priorities



**By Karen Fann (R-Dist 1)
Senate President**

As we approach 2020, let's take a quick look back at 2019, and the challenges Arizona's rural areas faced. The Legislature faced a daunting deadline to pass a Drought Contingency Plan to make sure our farmers and ranchers had the water they need to thrive, for the next decade and beyond. After weeks of meetings, hearings and votes, we got it done, in a strong bipartisan fashion, and on time.

An entirely new cash crop was created in 2018 in Arizona, as our state was one of the first in the nation to establish industrial hemp cultivation. This past session Senator Sonny Borrelli led the effort to move up the timelines, to make sure our hemp producers could get their crops in the soil. In 2019, the Legislature also facilitated new commercial growth within the agricultural sector, with a bill enabling agritourism activities. Senator Sine Kerr (a dairy

farmer by profession) saw the need to establish a promotion program with the Department of Agriculture to fulfill national egg certification, inspection and grading services at the state level.

The most important work we do at the Capitol is putting together a balanced state budget. We've been hard at work since the summer, meeting with agency heads, listening to constituents and I've been sitting down with my colleagues, to find out what they think should be done to improve the budget. My hope is, by the time we reach Opening Day on January 13, we will be having a conversation between the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Governor's office, to craft the best possible budget for Arizona, including our rural communities. I grew up in rural Arizona, and I've been proud to serve as Mayor of two agricultural communities. I have a strong interest in your well-being, and I hope my second year as Senate President will build upon the successes of my first year. 📧



**By David Bradley (D-Dist 10)
Senate Minority Leader**

Arizona as we know it began with industrious pioneers who figured out how to grow crops and raise livestock in the desert. They knew modern people couldn't exist here without water, so they learned how to utilize, and often fight over, every drop. Arizona's cities and towns couldn't have grown so fast and so big without the nutritious bounty produced by our farmers.

Agriculture is still one of Arizona's strongest economic engines, measured in billions of dollars annually, which is why we advocated for ensuring Arizona's farms have the water resources and infrastructure they need in negotiations for the Drought Contingency Plan that was adopted last session. Our Senator, Lisa Otondo from Yuma, who comes from a multi-generation Arizona farming family, represented agricultural interests well as a member of the committee that traveled the state hearing testimony and developing the plan.

Just as water needs infrastructure to get to fields and faucets, so do Arizonans need infrastructure to live and thrive. This is especially crucial in our rural communities where basic needs like roads, internet and healthcare can be difficult to obtain and maintain.

Last session our Senate Democrats took the unusual step of developing and propos-

ing to our legislative colleagues a full state budget that represented our priorities.

One of those top priorities was a program to offer free tuition to University of Arizona medical students who promise to practice in underserved rural areas for at least two years after they graduate. We recognized that rural Arizona suffers from a dangerous lack of primary care physicians and, fortunately, we found a few friends among our Republican colleagues who shared the urgency and worked with us to get this program funded in the final budget. As a result, 94 medical students will soon be graduating and providing family medicine in Arizona's rural communities.

As we prepare for the 2020 legislative session, we are developing another budget proposal that once again represents our priorities and that addresses the issues Arizonans are facing. It will make investments in the critical infrastructure of everyday life that only government can provide – not just roads and pipes, but services like education, healthcare and helping those in need get back on their feet.

The members of my caucus don't just represent the people of their districts, they consider the needs and best interests of all Arizonans in their decision making. That is why it's important that, if you have a problem in need of a solution or simply want to share your perspective on an issue, you reach out to us. We can better represent you when we hear directly from you so please get in touch at AZLeg.gov or AZSenateDems.com.

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Arizona Farm Bureau Establishes its 2020 Priority Issues

By **Chelsea McGuire**, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Director

Another Policy Development season has come and gone, and once again, we are impressed and grateful for the diligent work of our members. Your interest, expertise, and investment in key policy issues is what makes Farm Bureau's voice so strong. Thanks to you, when we roam the halls of the state legislature or the offices of Washington's capitol building, we can say with complete confidence that our policy represents the will of the entire Arizona agricultural industry.

At its November meeting, the Arizona Farm Bureau Board of Directors approved the following list of legislative priorities to guide the Government Relations Team, as well as our partners in Outreach and Education, as we seek opportunities to embed our policy into legislation and regulation.

Over the next year, we will focus our lobbying and government relations efforts on the following priority areas:

Protecting Agriculture's Access to Water:

We will continue to support agricultural water users as they fight to maintain their historic water rights in the face of ongoing surface water adjudication. (AZFB p. 44)

- We will continue our participation in the Upper Gila River Alliance. We will work with state and federal officials to find a way forward that ends the burdensome and unnecessary litigation against farmers while also providing a clean, safe, and reliable source of water to the San Carlos Apache tribe. (AZFB p. 58-59)
- We will work to find a way forward for wells adjudicated as existing in a subflow zone by assigning a priority date of beneficial use to protect and preserve the water right associated with that well. (AZFB page forthcoming)
- We will work with all parties to find a way to mitigate the losses to Pinal County Agriculture that resulted from Arizona's participation in the Lower Basin Drought Contingency Plan (DCP). We will create programming and build relationships that contribute to the success of the Pinal County irrigation districts' application for federal funding to assist in improving and expanding well infrastructure. (AZFB p. 62)
- In light of the repeal of the 2015 WOTUS rule, we will advocate for a Clean Water Rule that does not impose the same burden on farmers and ranchers. We will work with Arizona's water and environmental regulators to make sure that any state water regulations are similarly clear, logical, and no more burdensome than necessary.

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Our Award-Winning Farmers and Ranchers!

UArizona Beef Herd Undergoes Comprehensive Genetic Testing

Staff Reports

The University of Arizona now has a complete genome description of its academic beef herd after completing a SNP (single nucleotide polymorphisms) typing project this past May at the V Bar V Agricultural Experiment Station in Coconino County.

The goal is to use the extensive data, which is being stored by the Experiment Station's Communications and Cyber Technologies department, to help cattle growers improve production by identifying predictable and specific genetic traits in cows.



By completing a single nucleotide polymorphisms genome typing project on the UArizona beef herd, cattle ranchers can use the data to improve production by identifying predictable and specific genetic traits in their own cattle herds.

Several in the cattle industry see this effort as a positive step forward. "The University has been trying to maximize the relevance of the V Bar V and this effort is both great for the advancement of research, but also has practical applicability for commercial producers in Arizona," said Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse, a cattle rancher with her husband, Andy, in southern Arizona. "It's great to have this support for ranchers and one more reason to appreciate the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences."

"I don't know of any other university that has this," UA Vice President of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension Shane Burgess said. "We're doing what land-grant universities are supposed to do – research that doesn't just get published but is proactively getting into our local economies."

SNPs in genomes affect an infinite number of traits, including milk production, feed efficiency, disease resistance, animal stress, heat and low water tolerance, calving ease, and low versus high methane production.

While the technology has been fully adopted by the dairy industry for the better part of a decade and is commercially available, the expense can be prohibitive.

Burgess and Mitch McClaran, associate director of the Experiment Station Strategy, decided to SNP type the herd to make the data available not only to faculty for research, but to anyone worldwide to enable them to identify how to improve beef cattle production and welfare.

"Progressive Arizona ranchers are integrating it as best they dare, but it's the University of Arizona's job to test the limits and take breeding risks that they cannot rationally take in the private sector," Burgess said. "The worst that happens if we take a low probability, but high return, breeding approach and our hypothesis is wrong, is we start again next year. For a private rancher, they go broke."

Jay Whetten, immediate past president of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, said much genetic research and work has been done within the cattle industry on traits like beef quality and marbling, but "in the process we have lost some good things that cattle had before like finding cattle that do better on less forage or will graze farther from a water source."

"The stuff that (the University of Arizona) is doing is really neat, and we need to get more studies done on these areas," Whetten added. "That's the bottom line. We need more kinds of tests that allow us to be more efficient, but at the same time continue a quality line."

The SNP type profile used by the UA generates 770,000 unique lines of data for each cow, which are associated with a change in how the animal looks, works physiologically and behaves. It is a huge amount of information for any cattle grower to manage, and UA's project will allow individuals to access the research findings without investing their own time and money.

"This is a powerful tool for identification when compared with other methods," said Patricia Stock, director of the School of Animal and Comparative Biomedical Sciences in the UA College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

V Bar V superintendent Keith "Bopper" Cannon, who conducted the SNP typing on the UA's herd of 445 cattle, is glad to see UA utilizing SNP typing as another tool for ranchers to make their businesses more efficient and profitable.

"It's just a new way, that's what I try to tell everybody," Cannon said. "The old way—the way grandpa and dad did it—that got us to where we are today, but this technology is going to take us into the future. That's important because we've got to do more with our animals to feed more people."

Ag Fest 2020 Features New Venue Due to a Big Reveal

By Ana Otto, Arizona Farm Bureau Government Relations Manager



After a full evening of visits with legislators, Arizona Farm Bureau First Vice President John Boelts confers with lobbyist Shelly Tunis on the big issues in agriculture during last year's legislative Ag Fest.

Arizona Farm Bureau's Ag Fest held each January brings together legislators and members as the legislative session kicks off. It is an opportunity to meet or reconnect with elected officials and share with them not only our legislative priorities for the 2020 session, but also highlight the diversity of agriculture across the state. This year's Ag Fest will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at the Arizona State Capitol House Lawn from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Please note the new location and time!

After so many years of holding Ag Fest at the Arizona Department of Agriculture, some have asked what's the reason for changing the venue and timing? As many of you know, the Arizona Farm Bureau will be celebrating its centennial in 2021 and Ag Fest, along with other events, will help kick off that celebration a year from now.

In order to accommodate and plan for Ag Fest in 2021

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Leaders

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**By Russell Bowers (R-Dist 25)
House Speaker**

State Senate President Karen Fann, her husband, Jim, and I recently had the privilege of being invited to visit Rancho del Cielo, better known as the Reagan Ranch – the official personal residence of Nancy and U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

It was impressive for the simple and personal functionality, the beauty of the surrounding meadow, and the oaks that cradle the ranch house and few outbuildings. We were able to walk along the hundreds of yards of Reagan-built fencing, Reagan-laid stone patios, and Reagan-laid linoleum. Nancy had simple “butcher block” Formica, with an avocado stove and fridge, and a hand towel draped over the dish drainer. Their bed was two twin beds zip tied together with a foot bench and cushion on the security phone side to accommodate President Reagan’s feet when he slept, his “Head & Shoulders” brand shampoo still balanced on the top of the 24” square fiberglass shower (just like mine) encased in painted plywood steadied with two 2x4s up to the ceiling to frame the opening and hold up the shower curtain.

The Queen of England may have had a few comparative thoughts about these simplicities, and it was said that when former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev commented on the lack of impressive finery of the place, the reply pointed out that he paid for his with his own money.

I was especially impressed with the tools still hanging in a homemade rack, and his four chainsaws, gifts of his son, that he used regularly, all laid out where he left them when his battle with Alzheimer’s finally forced Nancy to turn the key over to caretakers stating that they would never be back. The tack room was swept, and saddles hung under halters and bridles, and a black and white “winner’s circle” photograph, taken at

Turf Paradise, recognizing an ownership interest in a horse that did well out at Turf, was hanging in a simple black frame. I have a photo like that, same place, different time, of my father, Wes, standing with other owner friends and the trainer, with Sindy’s Echo, smiling.

We had a final meal in the barn, where a chipper and tractor and other needed items rested on flattening tires, thinking of how the President kept hay for the Secret Service’s horse separate from his than of his own horses. “I don’t want my horses on the government dole,” he joked. I couldn’t help but compare his choice of fence mending tools, hoof medicine, and cleaned peanut butter jars filled with screws, roofing nails, and staples to those in my shop and my father’s. I also can’t help comparing his character to others through time and today... learning from mistakes, molding a vision of his service to friends and country, teaching his children, depending on divine help, and recognizing the same.

As we look toward this legislative session, and the hyper-politicized drama that will open soon, I can’t help but think that preserving things simple and true and foundational is important to what we should be doing. When I consider the two-bedroom house that my nine-member family lived in, and how blessed I am by comparison, I wonder – as President Reagan asked the country – will our children be better off than we are? Do they have a chance to be children, or be swallowed in angry agendas and political experimentation?

I hope to see a recommitment to what is simple and true. When I think of what that might mean, I think of people that have their hands in the soil and their faith in God. I close with the old saying, “Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wings, only one thing endures – character.” 🍌



**By Charlene Fernandez (D-Dist 4)
House Minority Leader**

In Yuma, where I was born and raised, the farming community not only drives ours and much of the state’s economy, it is a driving force in our communities. You are the first to extend a hand during times of crisis, to step up for community and charitable causes and to sponsor local events.

Farmers are business people, of course. But more importantly, farmers are givers.

I am proud to represent the winter lettuce capitol of the world. Yuma produces 90 percent of the nation’s leafy vegetables during the winter, and we’d like to keep it that way. Meat, dairy, grains, cotton, a truly outstanding and growing wine industry, nuts and dates and nursery plants are grown and raised throughout the state and provide food for Arizonans, the entire United States plus foreign exports.

But those industries face challenges and risks due to rising temperatures and sustained drought.

Our caucus is committed to work with you to keep our agricultural sector strong and stable for our economic future. That is why we – as part of our historic 2019 Drought Contingency Plan – negotiated significant dollars for research. If we are going to keep employing more than 160,000 people and generating \$23.3 billion a year, we must get smarter and more innovative.

I am also proud to lead a caucus of 29 Democrats, the closest margin in the Arizona House of Representatives in generations. We are committed to working with you on a long-term agenda for Arizona where we:

- Invest in children for a healthy and sustainable future.
- Fight for great jobs and fair pay.
- Protect access to affordable quality healthcare.

- Build sustainable, innovative infrastructure and affordable housing.
 - And protect our air, water and land for generations to come.
- Arizona industries – especially our agricultural industry – cannot work if products can’t get to market.

Our Democratic caucus strongly supports infrastructure investment that keeps roads, bridges, airports and ports of entry throughout our state in good repair. This investment will create jobs and better connect our rural, urban and tribal communities to growth and opportunity.

Additionally, support for Arizona’s agriculture community not only fuels our economy, it contributes to good health and it helps the most vulnerable in our communities. We know that too many Arizonans in lower-income communities live in food deserts and don’t have access to affordable fresh produce.

I hope to work with Republicans to extend and expand the two-year fruit and vegetable incentive program that we authorized in 2018. This program provides matching dollars to SNAP recipients to purchase Arizona-grown fruits and vegetables, including those sold at farmers markets and community grocery sites.

This will be a win-win for all of us and I look forward to discussing the program, as well as the rest of our agenda, with your members during the upcoming session. 🍌

Editor’s Note: Arizona Farm Bureau’s farm and ranch leaders look forward to hosting Senate President Fann, Senate Minority Leader Bradley, House Speaker Bowers and House Minority Leader Fernandez and the rest of Arizona’s legislators at this year’s AgFest in January. Our 14 active Farm Bureau counties will feature their agriculture at various booths out on the Capitol lawn, new location this year. The event begins at 5:30pm and Arizona Farm Bureau’s president, Stefanie Smallhouse, will kick things off.

AG FEST

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changes had to be made to this year’s event including more special event space. However the purpose of Ag Fest continues to remain the same and that is to bring Farm Bureau members and legislators together to talk about the issues impacting agriculture and rural Arizona, as well provide legislators with an opportunity to learn about the diversity of Arizona agriculture.

Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Managers will be working with county Farm Bureau’s to make sure everyone knows how to plan for this year’s Ag Fest. Any questions

may also be directed to Chelsea McGuire at chelseamcguire@azfb.com or Ana Otto at anakennedy@azfb.org. 🍌

Editor’s Note: If county leadership wants to discuss your booth plans with your Outreach Managers contact Ana Kennedy Otto at anaotto@azfb.org, Christy Davis at christydavis@azfb.org, Amber Morin at amermorin@azfb.org or Taylor Rogers at taylorrogers@azfb.org.

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New Study Reveals the Big Contribution Tree Nuts Make in Our State

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

In 2017, 343 Arizona farms produced tree nuts on 21,724 acres; 13,537 acres were non-bearing for a total of 35,261 acres, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture, the most recent Census available. Between 2007 and 2017 the industry acreage more than doubled and more acres are expected. While we see growth in this Arizona agriculture commodity, the even bigger story is the economic contribution tree nuts make in our state and a recent study by Dari Duval, Ashley K. Bickel, George Frisvold, and Stephanie Perez with the Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension fills in the entire picture on this story.

In their study, "Arizona's Tree Nut Industry and Its Contributions to the State Economy," they report, "Arizona's tree nut industry has experienced rapid growth in recent years. Arizona ranks among the top four states in its production of pecans and is one of only three states with commercial production of pistachios. Pecan and pistachio production in Arizona, combined, ranks within the state's top ten agricultural commodities by cash receipts and state cash receipts for tree nuts are poised to increase in coming years. Tree nut produc-

tion contributes to local communities, supporting economic activity and jobs in businesses both directly and indirectly linked to tree nut production."

The study's executive summary further states, "challenges exist around sustainable withdrawal of water resources by a growing industry in groundwater-dependent areas and balancing the livelihoods of rural residents employed in agriculture and agriculture-linked industries with the availability and affordability of groundwater supplies relied upon by residents, agricultural users, and the environment."

The report's analysis covered the tree nut industry's economic contribution to Arizona's economy, including production, investment in new orchards, processing and other activities, and multiplier effects, and presented an overview of the industry, its trends, and water use for tree nut production in Arizona.

What the Study Found

Arizona's tree nut industry directly generated an estimated \$92.6 million in sales in 2017. Cash receipts for pecans totaled \$70 million in 2017, and pistachios generated an estimated \$8.4 million. Additionally, Arizona tree nut producers gen-

See **TREE NUTS** Page 6



A pecan orchard in southern Arizona watered by sprinkler system, UArizona's new study measured water use in terms of dollar of sales per acre foot of water, as opposed to acre feet of water per acre, helping us to understand just how valuable our tree-nut crop is to Arizona's overall economy.

2020 Priorities

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- We will be vocal and active in our participation on the Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation, and Conservation Council. As leaders from across the state work to determine the Arizona's future water management strategies, we will make sure that agriculture's voice is heard.

Taxes:

- We will work to protect agricultural land from being over-taxed by uninformed or overzealous County Assessors. (AZFB p. 92-96)
- We will find opportunities to work with cities and towns who have adopted a sales tax on livestock feed to conform to the state code, which exempts feed from sales

tax. (AZFB p. 96)

Arizona Department of Agriculture:

- We will work to bring the Livestock Loss Board under the purview of the Department of Agriculture in order to provide more meaningful opportunities for compensating and mitigating the damage that predators cause to our livestock herds
- Employees at the Department of Agriculture play a crucial part in our industry and in keeping Arizona's consumers safe. We will advocate for a competitive wage for these employees in order to allow the Department to recruit and keep qualified people for these essential roles.

Removing Transportation Burdens:

- We will continue to support flexible, realistic, and practical rules for hauling

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Farm Bureau Members Honored for Achievements

Arizona hosts some of America's top farmers and ranchers. The Arizona Farm Bureau annually recognizes them for their achievements. The following awards were given out during the Service to Agriculture Awards Banquet during the 98th Arizona Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Litchfield Park.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO AGRICULTURE

Caywood, Predmore and Reinertson

Distinguished Service to Agriculture: Each year the Arizona Farm Bureau selects a person for long-term service to Arizona agriculture. Recipients have served Arizona agriculture for several years, been active in many fields and made often countless contributions to the agriculture industry. This year, the Arizona Farm Bureau Board of Directors selected three worthy recipients.



Tommy and Sammy Caywood were presented with the Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award during the 98th Arizona Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Litchfield Park. The Caywood family have been farming in Pinal County since the 1930s and involved in community and leadership activities from the beginning.



Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse announces Barbara Predmore as one of this year's three Distinguished Service to Agriculture recipients. Predmore founded Alcantara Vineyards and Winery in Northern Arizona and always sees herself first as a farmer, secondly as a winemaker. She was heavily involved in Arizona Farm Bureau leadership from the beginning.



James Reinertson was also recognized as a Distinguished Service to Agriculture recipient this year. Reinertson has spent 42 years serving the agriculture industry in Yuma County as County Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency.

RANCHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Chuck Backus

Farmer or Rancher of the Year: The Farmer of the Year represents individuals or a family in Arizona's agricultural community that are innovative, trend setters or have shown exceptional leadership in an agriculture area. This recognition is considered Arizona Farm Bureau's "Oscar."



Arizona rancher Chuck Backus was selected as Arizona Farm Bureau's Rancher of the Year. Who would think a Nuclear Scientist born in West Virginia would become a cattle rancher in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona and come to contribute so much to Arizona's cattle industry?



FARMER OF THE YEAR AWARD

John Boelts

Farmer or Rancher of the Year: The Farmer of the Year represents individuals or a family in Arizona's agricultural community that are innovative, trend setters or have shown exceptional leadership in an agriculture area. This recognition is considered Arizona Farm Bureau's "Oscar."



Yuma produce farmer John Boelts received Arizona Farm Bureau's Farmer of the Year award for his extensive work in telling the food safety story and so diligently working with local and national media to tell the Arizona agriculture's complex and diverse story.



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Vicki Scott, Terry Bowman and Gil Bowman

Environmental Stewardship Award: Arizona Farm Bureau looks into our backyards to discover what conservation and environmental projects are occurring in agriculture.



The 2019 honoree of Arizona Farm Bureau's Environmental Stewardship Award is Vicki Scott. Scott is seen here with Yuma Farm Bureau President David Sharp (left), Arizona Farm Bureau CEO Philip Bashaw and Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse.



Another set of 2019 honorees of Arizona Farm Bureau's Environmental Stewardship Award is Terry Bowman and Gil Bowman. Terry Bowman and Gil Bowman are seen here with Arizona Farm Bureau CEO Philip Bashaw and Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse.

HERITAGE AWARDS

Introduced in 2006, the Heritage Awards were announced during the Service to Agriculture Awards Banquet. The award, which can be given to an individual or family, was developed by Arizona Farm Bureau to recognize extended service to agriculture.

Additionally, those awarded the Heritage Award are recognized for their significant contributions to their county or state Farm Bureau.



The Anderson family from Maricopa County receive this year's Heritage award on behalf of Lynn and Marge Anderson from Arizona Farm Bureau CEO Philip Bashaw and Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse.



Carl Stevenson receives the 2019 Heritage Award from Arizona Farm Bureau President Stefanie Smallhouse, Pima County Farm Bureau President Jack Mann and Arizona Farm Bureau President Philip Bashaw.

Tree Nuts

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erated an estimated \$12.8 million in sales through tree nut processing and \$1.4 million through other farm related activities such as agritourism and sales of agricultural by-products such as mulch and wood.

The economic contribution of the tree nut industry in Arizona is not fully reflected in the industry's cash receipts. Because growers are investing in new, non-bearing acreage, grower expenditures on orchard establishment and maintenance stimulate additional economic activity within the state not reflected in cash receipts for tree nut commodities sold. In 2017, 38% of the state's total tree nut acreage was non-bearing, 36% for pecans and 44% for pistachios. While this acreage does not generate revenues for producers, it does incur expenses, some of which are fulfilled through local businesses and labor force.

Results show that the tree nut industry's total economic contribution was an estimated \$113 million in gross state product and \$190 million in sales in 2017, including multiplier effects. In total, industry production and investment supported 1,436 jobs, including on-farm jobs, farm proprietors, and jobs in industries supported through indirect and induced linkages. Total labor income supported, including employee compensation and business owner income, was \$73 million.

The Water Issue

Of course, everyone is regularly talking about the water issues in this state and Farm Bureau farm and ranch leadership is addressing ways to mitigate future water shortages. The UArizona economic team drilled down on specific water use in our tree nut industry.

One of the researchers and authors of the study, George Frisvold, pointed out that if you measure water use in terms of dollar of sales per acre foot of water, as opposed to acre feet of water per acre, it helps one understand just how valuable this crop is to Arizona's overall economy.

The study's water points are all below:

- The economic team assessed the water use issue with tree nuts and the follow bullets are directly from the study.

- Total irrigation water use of the tree nut industry in Arizona was an estimated 118,145 acre-feet in 2017. This is expected to rise in coming years as non-bearing acreage matures and enters into production.

- Unlike annual field crops which can be followed in times of drought or limited irrigation water availability, orchards represent years of investment and cannot simply be followed from one year to the next.

- Much of the state's tree nut acreage is in groundwater-dependent areas of the state. As bearing acreage continues to expand, balancing the water needs of a growing industry with water supply sustainability for nearby communities and agricultural producers alike will continue to be an important issue in these areas.

- Compared with other crops in Arizona, average per-acre irrigation water application requirements for tree nuts rank just below the average of 4.4 acre-feet applied per acre for irrigated cropland statewide.

- Gross revenues per acre-foot of water applied for pecans and pistachios are higher than major field crops in the state, when considering both bearing and non-bearing acreage. Considering only bearing acreage, gross revenues per acre-foot of water applied exceed \$1,000 per acre-foot for pecans and \$800 per acre-foot for pistachios in 2017. For comparison, gross revenues per acre-foot for major Arizona field crops ranged between \$200-\$400.

How the Study was Conducted

This study relies on secondary data from the 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture, USDA NASS, USDA ERS, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Administrative Committee for Pistachios, American Pecan Council, and Arizona Department of Agriculture. Economic multiplier effects were estimated using the 2017 IMPLAN 3.1 input-output model for Arizona. 📄

2020 Priorities

continued from page 5

livestock and perishable agricultural commodities and oppose the mandatory use of electronic logging devices and hours of service restrictions on these haulers.

- We will publish an updated version of the Farm Bureau Transportation Handbook to better inform and assist our members.

Preventing Bureaucracy from Inhibiting Progress

- We will continue to fight for meaningful reforms to the Endangered Species Act. (AZFB p. 41-44)

- We will work with NRCS, the Arizona State Land Department, the State Historic Preservation Office and the State Museum to pinpoint the reason for the detrimental backlog of archeological clearances for conservation projects. We will work with our members to facilitate solutions to the backlog so that these essential projects can move forward.

- We will work to help our members protect their operations from unnecessary and frivolous lawsuits.

- We will make a concerted effort to look for opportunities to expand livestock producer access to USDA inspected processing facilities.

Ag Labor:

- AZFB remains committed to visa reform and programs to provide our members access to workers willing to work in agriculture. We will work with our Congressional delegation to amend current efforts to reform the program to ensure these efforts:

1. Provide for a reasonable, competitive wage that does not price employers out of the H-2A program
2. Do not expose farm employers to the extensive additional legal liability imposed by placing H-2A workers under the protection of the Migrant & Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA)
3. Include year round visas in a number that will provide meaningful relief to the ag industry
4. Provide employers with a legitimate guest worker program prior to imposing E-Verify requirements on those employers.

Trade:

- We will urge swift ratification of the US Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) and other free trade agreements.

- We will devote time and resources to exploring new, emerging markets for Arizona agricultural products through continued participation in the Arizona/Mexico Coalition and Western United States Agricultural Trade Association.

Industry Fairness

- We will work with Congress to ensure that regulatory agencies like the FDA do not overstep the bounds of their authority during an investigation. There must be accountability when FDA prematurely releases damaging information about a grower or producer without adequate verification.

- As plant-based meat alternatives and cell-cultured meat options become more popular and more available, we will make sure that traditional agriculture products are competing on a level playing field. We will push for clear and accurate labeling of alt-meat products and place an increased focus on the benefits of traditional animal protein.

For more information, go to www.azfb.org/public-policy. 📄

First Public Vet School in Arizona Gets Accreditation

UArizona recently announced that it received approval from the American Veterinary Medical Association to open the state's first public College of Veterinary Medicine.

Earlier, a Letter of Reasonable Assurance, granted by the AVMA Council on Education was the first step toward full accreditation by the AVMA COE, which will continue to monitor UArizona until its first cohort graduates in 2023.

The program is ultimately about passion and service, and UArizona encourages those interested in applying to the program find more information on their website vetmed.arizona.edu or contact us via email (vetmed@arizona.edu). 📄

Editor's Note: Watch for a full interview article in the March 2020 issue of AA

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Partners, Not Pirates

Arizona Agriculture Continues to Support Rural Arizona's Economic Development

By Philip Bashaw, Arizona Farm Bureau CEO

I was struck with a bitter sense of irony as I read the December 6 article in the *Arizona Republic*, "These 7 Industrial Farm Operations are Draining Arizona's Aquifers, and no one Knows Exactly How Much They're Taking."

For the last several months, the *Arizona Republic* has run a steady stream of articles lauding business and economic growth in our great state. We celebrate the number of people moving here, the California businesses relocating to open shop here, and the new factories opening and providing jobs across Arizona. We at the Arizona Farm Bureau join the chorus of praise for Arizona's economic development.



"One would expect cheers for new growth, but not so much for agriculture, I guess," says Bashaw in his editorial.

Moreover, against the backdrop of the ongoing trade disputes, we have been discussing the importance of free trade and the economic benefits that come from the ability to export Arizona's goods without barriers. Hardly a day goes by without comment on the need for swift passage of the USMCA or new trade agreements with China and Japan.

But in this article, companies who are coming to Arizona, investing in infrastructure, providing jobs, and participating in the very international trade that creates wealth are portrayed not as engines of growth and progress, but as pirates coming to steal our natural resources.

One would expect cheers for new growth, but not so much for agriculture, I guess.

Economic development comes in many forms and some of them are not as flashy as a new car factory, world headquarters or even a data center opening their doors. While I doubt Willcox or Mohave Valley would be in contention to attract the likes of Tesla, Apple or Google their availability of land, water and climate make them ideal areas for the type of economic activity that produces food and fiber for Arizona and the world. As a result, these areas have attracted large and innovative agricultural operations. No different than a more traditional factory or headquarters, the investment these companies make will spur new economic growth as the industries necessary to support these operations move in and provide additional jobs to these rural areas. Their direct tax revenue and the taxes paid by the employees who fill those jobs will help our rural schools and hospitals.

These farming operations will also spur economic prosperity on a global scale. Arizona's climate is so

unique that more than 200 different commodities can grow in abundance and at a level of quality that allows us to trade these products all over the world. That trade with other nations brings in new dollars to these local communities that have largely lagged behind the rest of Arizona in their climb out of the hole left by the Great Recession.

Additionally, much of the agriculture planned has invested thousands upon thousands of dollars in cutting-edge water management technology maximizing conservation of our natural resources. At a recent hearing at the state capitol, we heard one of these companies talk about their due diligence in ensuring their water use would not impact their neighbors and the millions of dollars they plan on investing in water efficiency and even ground-water recharge on their facilities.

It is also important to point out that water, like any other natural resource we make use of in our daily lives, must be developed before it can be put to beneficial use. The infrastructure necessary for the use of water takes years of building and investment. Historically agriculture has led the way in this endeavor. It was the farmers of the Valley that pledged their land as collateral to make the Salt River Project a reality. It was the agriculture industry that developed the infrastructure in Pinal County that has made the population growth in those communities possible over the years. And it was agriculture that

put its allocation of Colorado River water to use when we feared it would be taken by other water hungry states.

The seven companies mentioned in the *Arizona Republic* article have taken the steps to invest in the communities they call home. They provide jobs for residents and participate in the world trade that enriches us all. And as we look toward the future and an ever-increasing global population, it is the agriculture industry who will lead the way in increasing food production to meet the demands of the nearly 10 billion people it's estimated will inhabit our planet by the year 2050.

These companies, and all the agriculture operations like them, that have chosen to invest in and develop the water resources of these communities, should be viewed as partners and welcomed for their investment in our state and contributions to their local economy. 🌾



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