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The History of the national, state, and county Farm Bureaus

*By Rebecca Fischer*



**S**ometimes even the biggest things started off small. The American Farm Bureau Federation is a good example

of this; it was formally ratified in March of 1920, stemming from an increasing number of state Farm Bureaus, which had in turn had stemmed from the growing number of county Farm Bureaus. These small county Farm Bureaus got their start through acts like the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Hatch Act of 1914, which helped establish the Agriculture Extension services through universities. The purpose of these Extension services was to provide education for farmers.

In the beginning, the American Farm Bureau Federation states that, “The county Farm Bureau, or occasionally smaller units called parishes, initially served a social and educational function. But as the farmers met, they realized the broader potential of the new organization.” Farmers

needed more than social and educational opportunities—although those are important too—they needed advocacy and leadership opportunities as well.

According to cfbf.com, the California Farm Bureau Federation was founded on October 23, 1919 in Berkeley when 32 delegates met to form the organization. By 1949, Calaveras County joined CFBF by founding their own branch of Farm Bureau. At the time, Calaveras County Farm Bureau had 85 members. Today, it has a total of 332 agricultural and sustaining members combined.

A lot has changed over the last century, and there’s a lot more change to come.

Farm Bureau has recently began to grow a subcommittee called Young

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Farmers and Ranchers to help agriculturalists between the ages of 18 and 35. The California YF&R is for anyone, “involved in production, banking, business, and many other areas of the industry. Young Farmers and Ranchers develop leadership skills while volunteering time as active, vital members of the county Farm Bureaus.”

Like the county Farm Bureaus all those years ago, Young Farmers and Ranchers committees have been forming all over California. There’s a few young folks here in Calaveras County who have established their own committee of the YF&R: the Gold Country YF&R. While still based in Calaveras, this YF&R has a goal of spreading out to neighboring Amador and Tuolumne counties.

If you think about it, the Gold Country Young Farmers & Ranchers made history last October simply by a few young people coming together to try and make it happen. Right now, it’s just a fledging organization, like the California Farm Bureau was in 1919. In a hundred years, with the help of dedicated members, it’ll surely grow into something big, too.

## FAST FACTS:

**Morrill Act of 1862:** Also known as the “Land-Grant College Act of 1862,” the Morrill Act provided grants of land to states to finance the establishment of colleges specializing in agriculture and mechanic arts. Named after Vermont Congressman Justin Smith Morrill, it granted each state 30,000 acres from each of its congressional seats. Funds from the sale of the land were used by some states to establish new schools; other states turned the money over to existing state or private colleges to create schools of agriculture and mechanic arts (“A&M” colleges).

**The Hatch Act of 1887:** Gave federal funds to state land-grant colleges in order to create a series of agricultural experiment stations, as well as pass along new information, especially in the areas of soil minerals and plant growth. Named for Congressman William Hatch, who chaired the House Committee of Agriculture when the bill was introduced. Many stations founded under the Hatch Act later became the foundations for state cooperative extension services under the Smith-Lever Act of 1914.



## Meet Mike Williams, Calaveras County Wildlife Specialist

I was born and raised in Chico. After graduating from Chico State University, I began working for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a Scientific Aide. I was working in the Fisheries Department trapping Salmon on the Sacramento River. In 2015 I got hired with USDA Wildlife Services, my first assignment was on the Tejon Ranch in Southern California where I began trapping feral swine for a research project. I transferred to Calaveras County in 2016 and began working as the County Specialist.

My job requires me to respond to a wide variety of calls for service within Calaveras County. These calls include nuisance wildlife as well as predatory wildlife.

These animals have either caused some type of property damage or threatened the health and human safety of an individual. I generally work alone although there are specialists in the neighboring counties as well as a District Supervisor that will help out if needed.

The mission of USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection service (APHIS) and Wildlife Services is to provide federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist. The Program's efforts help people resolve wildlife damage to a wide variety of resources and to reduce threats to human health and safety.

**If you have questions about wildlife in your area, or have problems with predators stalking livestock, please contact Mike Williams at 754-6504 or [michael.d.williams@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:michael.d.williams@aphis.usda.gov).**

## Gold Country YF&R Fall Updates

Since May, it seems like the Gold Country Young Farmers and Ranchers have been going nonstop! I could go into detail of all we did, but I may focus on just a few highlights.

We had a very exciting time at the Calaveras County Fair 2018, where we had formed a team and issued out several frog jumping challenges to the San Joaquin YF&R, the Calaveras Cattlemen's Association, and the Calaveras Wine Grape Alliance. The CWGA rose to the challenge, and we met at the main stage at the fairgrounds on Saturday, May 19. Even with a disqualification, the Gold Country YF&R still won the challenge, thanks to Amanda Berry's frog, who jumped over 16 feet! The CWGA took their loss with grace, however, and we parted friends. Perhaps there will be another challenge next year...?

Anyway, later that evening, we held a social down at the Ranch House. In exchange for emails by signing up for updates on what the Gold Country YF&R, folks got a free beer! This was done with donations from

Conifer Communications, Tanner Vineyards, and the Calaveras County Fair.

From there we went on to have a very busy month in June. We attended two events, the Solstice Soiree at The Farm Murphys on June 23 and a tour of Locke Vineyards on June 30.

At the Solstice Soiree, Rosemary Giannini, Amanda Berry, and Amanda Folendorf hosted a wine bar. We were able to keep the profits from the wine served, thanks to bottles of wine donated by local wineries Hatcher Winery, Kola Farms, and Chatom Vineyards. Thank you vintners! And thank you to Tina and David for inviting us to come up to their event! It was a wonderful evening, and we were not only able to spread the word about YF&R, we were able to network with a variety of professionals throughout the agricultural community. It was a great opportunity!

The next weekend, a small group of us went out to Locke Vineyards. Rosemary Giannini reported at our last meeting that Kevin Locke gave them a tour that

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## Gold Country YF&R Photo Gallery

You can check out more photos online! Follow us on Facebook at Gold Country Young Farmers and Ranchers or Instagram @goldcountry.yfr

*Photos clockwise from above right:*

*Locke Vineyards Owner Kevin Locke gives a tour of his small vineyard outside of Murphys. Photo by Rosemary Giannini.*

*Gold Country YF&R members and guests Rachel Geisler, Nicolette Ratto, and Brady Dubois listen as Kevin leads them on a tour through his vineyard. Photo by Rosemary Giannini*

*Gold Country YF&R members beside the opposing frog jumping team, the Calaveras Winegrape Alliance, at the Calaveras County Fair 2018. Photo by Mindy Rasmussen Photography.*

*Members happily served wine at the Solstice Soiree at The Farm in Murphys. Photo by Amanda Berry.*

*Opposite page:*

*Gold Country YF&R co-chair Amanda Berry goes for the winning frog jump at the Calaveras County fair in a challenge against the Calaveras Winegrape Alliance. Her team cheers in the background. Photo by Mindy Rasmussen Photography.*



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was like his vineyard, “Small but quality.” Kevin emphasized on his goal of “quality over quantity” with his small vineyard; though they produce less wine than bigger vineyards in the area, they still ensure that their wine is of high quality. He also went over ag tourism in Calaveras County, as well as water rights for farmers. Along with the vineyards, Kevin and his wife Theresa gave a tour of their lavender and other flowers they planted and dried for later use, explaining that they chose those flowers specifically with the purpose of drying them. They also gave members a taste of their wine in their tasting room.

And we’re still not done! We have a potential tour being planned for August, so check out our website and Facebook page for more info!

Also, we’re having our first big fundraiser which we have dubbed the “Brew and Ball Crawl” which will be held Sept. 22 at the Utica Mansion in Angels

Camp. “Brews” from local breweries will be paired with gourmet “Balls” with your choice of meatballs or—you guessed it—fried rocky mountain oysters! There will also be games and music, so it’s sure to be a good time! If you would like to attend, you can buy tickets from any Gold Country YF&R you happen to know, or call 768-8702. Tickets are \$25. Table sponsorships are also available for \$50. If you have branding iron, bring it! We’ll be creating a “Brand Board” featuring local brands, and the board will be made into a hat rack! You don’t have to be a young person to attend! The proceeds are simply meant to help the Gold Country YF&R, so this is an opportunity to help us grow as an organization!

On top of all this, we also nominated Nicolette Ratto to be our treasurer, and she accepted. Congratulations Nicolette!

That’s what the young folks have been up to.

## *Save these dates!*

**August 25, 2018**  
**CCFB Annual Fundraiser BBQ**  
**5 p.m.**  
**Ranch House, Calaveras County**  
**Fairgrounds**  
**101 Frogtown Road, Angels Camp**  
**(see the back of this newsletter for an invitation!)**

**Sept. 22, 2018**  
**Brew & Ball Crawl**  
**5 p.m.**  
**Utica Mansion**  
**1090 Utica Lane, Angels Camp**

**October 9, 2018**  
**CCFB Annual Meeting**  
**7 p.m.**  
**Grange Hall**  
**351 Russell Road, San Andreas**

**December 4-7, 2018**  
**CFBF 100th Annual Meeting**  
**San Diego**



# Announcements

## CCFB 2018 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



*This year, two seniors were awarded the \$500 CCFB Scholarship. On the left, CCFB President Mindy Rasmussen stands with scholarship recipient Ashlynn Maddeaux, a Bret Harte student. On the right, Calaveras High senior Damian Montanez stands with his scholarship reward. Congratulations, Ashlynn and Damian! Good luck in your educational and career endeavors!*



**Would you like to support the Gold Country YF&R?  
Buy a hat! \$20, 768-8702 or goldcountry.yfr@gmail.com**

**THANK YOU TO THE:  
CALAVERAS CATTLEMEN'S  
ASSOCIATION  
CALAVERAS WINEGRAPE ALLIANCE  
AND THE CALAVERAS COUNTY  
FAIRGROUNDS**

**FOR THEIR WONDERFUL  
SPONSORSHIP OF AG DAY 2018!**