

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**OFFICERS**

**President**

*Michael David Fischer, Jr.*

**1st Vice President**

*Mindy Rasmussen*

**2nd Vice President**

*Stuart Mast*

**Treasurer**

*Lyn Norfolk*

**DIRECTORS**

*Eloise Fischer*

*Mark Fischer*

*Tim Folendorf*

*Daryl Giannini*

*Norm Hertlein*

*Steve Kafka*

*Libby Rader-Kassick*

*Amanda Berry*

**CFBF FIELD REP.**

*Gary Sack*

**DISTRICT 12**

**DIRECTOR**

*Joe Valente*

**YF&R REP.**

*Nick Ferrari*

**STAFF**

**Manager**

*Toni Ann Fischer*

**Media Outreach**

**Coordinator**

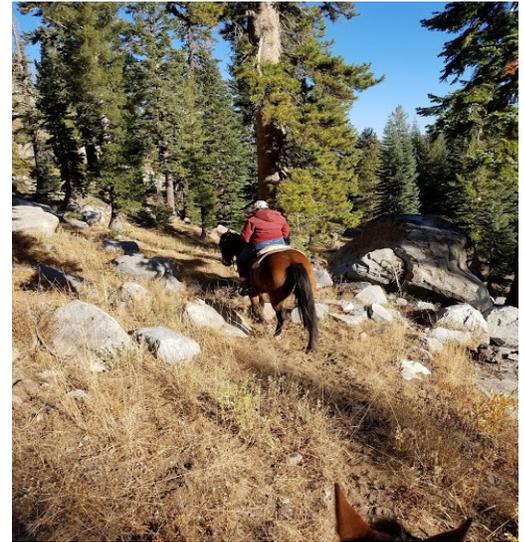
*Rebecca Fischer*

**The History of Grazing  
in the National Forests**

*By Rebecca Fischer*

**M**y grandmother Eloise—some of you may know her—rode into Underwood with a black string-up tote bag carrying her camera, white board, and clipboard strapped securely to her saddle. As we were gathering the cattle out of Underwood to drive them to the gathering pasture across the highway, my grandmother and I paused in a meadow so she could measure the grass. It is familiar territory to her, and it is for me, as well. I went up often as a child to help gather cattle occasionally, my toes freezing in my pink lace-up boots, even though I was wearing two pairs of socks.

However, I've only been helping on a more serious level for just the past couple years, whereas my grandma has been doing this for almost 50 of the 119 years the Forest Service has regulated the grazing in the Stanislaus National Forest. The



*Photo by Rebecca Fischer*

drought hasn't been easy for us to deal with, and it certainly was a little dry up there the past couple years, but taking some of our cattle up to the mountains gave our pastures a much-needed break for a couple months.

It was another drought that sent ranchers up to the mountains with their cattle in the first place, many years ago. I'm told that in 1876, the McQuaide family acquired some land near Forest Creek, and every summer, they would leave the main ranch and head on up. And other ranchers began to follow suit. Some of the ranchers would even take 1600 or more head

**Table of Contents**

Grazing in National Forests.....1  
 Announcements.....4  
 Bark Beetles.....6

up. Back then, they didn't have the luxury of cattle trucks, so they had to spend a couple days driving the cattle up on horse-back. Fences were not nearly as common, either, so the cattle often "drifted" but the ranchers always knew whom the cattle belonged to. Just thousands of cattle, drifting around with no fences; very different to how it is today.

The U.S. Forest Service came into being after that, in 1891. According to their website, they technically began to regulate the livestock grazing in 1897, but it wasn't until 1905 that the Stanislaus National Forest became part of the U.S. Forest system. California Governor Pardee appointed E.T. Allen as the State Forester on July 12, 1905 and official policy was published, and has since then been updated over the years. It was then they began to regulate and limit the number of cattle ranchers could take up to the cattle allotments.

In an interview in February 1976 with Tone Airola by the Calaveras Historical Society, he states, "Each place had their gathering pasture where everybody brought his cattle—everybody's cattle went in and then they separated their cattle—after it became Forest Preserve, then [the Forest Preserve] said, 'well, now you see, we'll have to give you an allotment of so many head of cattle.' So you told them how many you had and they said, 'Okay, then, we'll have to give you that many.' Then on to the next fellow, 'what do your cattle run?' (So and so, right beside you) They'd say, 'okay, we already gave him his permit for certain places—how many cattle are you wanting? We have to put a limit on it 'cause we don't want this place overstocked.' So that way they got [the amount of cattle] way down."

The ranchers still used to take many of their cattle up, and sheep herders even took their flocks up, as well (which, of course, caused some friction between the cowboys and the sheep herders, who never seem to get along as they competed for rangeland).

In 1924, an epidemic of Hoof and Mouth disease swept through the area, and many ranchers were prevented from going to the mountains—and forced to kill their cattle. In April, Congressman John E. Baker made the following announcement: "No stock will be permitted to enter National Forest range,



*Eloise Fischer-Spence measures a meadow in her allotment. Photo by Rebecca Fischer*

unless coming from a free area, together with clean bill of health. This is for the purpose of protecting the livestock interest of California." Many deer had to be killed off, as well, to stop the Hoof and Mouth disease from spreading.

However, they got through it, and soon the ranchers were back to taking their cattle up for the summer. A Stanislaus National Forest brochure published in 1950 claims that there were 62 grazing allotments and ranchers were taking 11,000 cattle annually, and 10,000 sheep to graze the allotments.

My grandmother tells me that over the past few decades, grazing on National Forests in California has been reduced by almost 50%, with a 20% decline since the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan was implemented in 2001. Today, there are only 34 active allotments in the Stanislaus National Forest, managed by about 20 local permittees from Calaveras and other neighboring counties. That's quite a large shift from thousands of cattle in the late 1800s. In the *AgAlert* article "Targeted Grazing



Photo by Rebecca Fischer

Helps Forests, Experts Say” Laura Snell, UCCE Livestock and natural resources advisor in Modoc County, said, “I won’t try to tell you that grazing has been perfect for the last hundred years. But a huge change took place in that time period.”

And she’s right; ranching itself has changed a lot over the years. Snell noted that, “overgrazing is now viewed as unhealthy for both animals and the landscape” and “ranchers now practice rotational grazing, so that they’re not leaving large numbers of cattle in one area for the entire grazing season”.

Consumer trends have changed, too; grain-fed, fatty beef is so *out*, but grass-fed, lean beef is so *in*. I think people tend to forget, though, that in order to have grass-fed beef, ranchers need to have access to grass.

What hasn’t changed is pasture is as needed today as it was all the way back in 1876. The U.S. Forest Service website states that, “Many rural communities continue to be dependent upon ranching for their economic livelihood and most of these

*“I won’t try to tell you that grazing has been perfect for the last one hundred years. But a huge change took place in that time period.”*

*-Laura Snell*

ranches rely on federal land grazing, either on BLM managed lands or on National Forests, for at least a portion of the grazing”. Calaveras County is one of those many rural communities, and raising livestock is still one of our top ten agricultural productions. Ranchers in Calaveras County and others, like my family and me, depend a great deal on those allotments in the Stanislaus National Forest for grazing, and will continue to be in need of them for a very long time. ❖

# Announcements



## Hey! Ag Day is March 16, 2017!

Are you interested in becoming a presenter? Contact Toni Ann Fischer at [calcofb@aol.com](mailto:calcofb@aol.com) or (209) 772-2830.

## California Farm Bureau Federation

### 98th Annual Meeting 2016

When: December 4 - 7

Where: The Hyatt Regency Hotel  
Monterey, CA

#### CCFB Delegates

Michael David Fischer, CCFB President

Stuart Mast, CCFB 2nd Vice President

#### CCFB Alternate

Steve Kafka, Board of Director member

On October 11th, Calaveras County Farm Bureau's Annual Meeting was held at their regular meeting place, the Grange Hall, 376 Russell Road, San Andreas, CA.

Officers and Directors for the coming year were elected:

President Michael David Fischer, Jr.

First Vice-President Mindy Rasmussen

Second Vice-President Stuart Mast

Treasurer Lyn Norfolk

Directors: Steve Kafka, Amanda Berry, Eloise Fischer, Tim Folendorf, Mark Fischer, Darryl Giannini, and Libby Rader-Kasick

Honorary Director: Norm Hertlein

Several Bylaw Amendments were adopted. Refreshments were served at the conclusion of the meeting.

*Have a story you'd like to share?*

*Write to us!*

We want to hear from you! Whether you're a cattle or sheep rancher, a bee keeper, a wine-grape grower, a crop farmer (walnuts, olives, tomatoes, oranges, potatoes - you name it), CCFB wants to know what's going on in your neck of the woods here in Calaveras County. Give us an update on the wine-grape industry. Tell us how your cattle are fairing the drought. Share a favorite recipe with us. Shine a spotlight on some locally grown and raised foods and home goods, like honey, vegetables, essential oils, wine, fresh meat, eggs, cheese, the list goes on and on.

Are you a high school ag student or teacher? We want to hear from you too! Give us an update on how the school farm is doing, what FFA conventions you've been to, what events or dinners you're hosting.

We care about what is happening in the agricultural industry of Calaveras County. So if you have some important information to share, please contact us at: [calcofb@aol.com](mailto:calcofb@aol.com) or call (209) 772-2830.

*Welcome, New Members!*

**May:**

Craig Tinsley - Cattle

**July:**

Pete Zimmer - Cattle & Goats

Dave Fleming - Cattle & Hay

**August:**

Lisa Steffes - Goats, Pigs, & Chickens

**September:**

Matthew Wunderlich - Walnuts

**October:**

Steve Knaggs - Walnuts & Tomatoes

Edwin Hoag

Rhonda Atkinson - Cattle

*Give someone the gift of a  
Farm Bureau Membership!*

Don't know what to get that hard-to-buy-for-farmer for Christmas? How about a membership to Farm Bureau! If you have a neighbor or friend who would benefit from a Farm Bureau membership, give them this newsletter. Application for membership is on last page. If you have questions about membership benefits go to: <http://www.cfbf.com/storage/app/media/documents/benefitsguide-wo-codes2016.pdf> or call us at 772-2830.

*Merry Christmas from Calaveras County Farm Bureau!*

## What you need to know about

# BARK

# BEEBLE



As many of you are probably aware, along with a historic drought, California is suffering from an epidemic of bark beetles. Several websites and newspapers have reported that over 66 million trees are dead thanks to these little pests. Most have been varieties of pines, but recently bark beetles have spread into oak trees as well, including here in Calaveras County. In combination to the drought, the bark beetle infestation has turned our forests into nothing but a gigantic pile of dry firewood. However, the very best way to overcome this infestation is to be informed. So, what is a bark beetle, and how are they killing our trees? The CalFire website has a quick summation of facts about bark beetles, and I'll share a few with you that I happen to think are important.

Bark beetles are small black bugs about the size of a cooked piece of rice. They burrow into the bark of trees, leaving behind reddish-brown pitch tubes. Other signs that bark beetles have infested a tree are that the needles or leaves begin to brown, and often start at the top of the tree. If the bark is flaking, or there are many woodpecker holes in the tree, this may also indicate that there are bark beetles present. Usually, a healthy tree can ward off a bark beetle by exuding pitch into their holes, and therefore pushing them out. However, the drought-stressed trees can't produce enough

pitch to get rid of the bark beetles, and so the bark beetles have simply continued to burrow and lay thousands of eggs, producing larvae that eats the trees living tissues. To make matters worse, bark beetles give off pheromones that attract other beetles to the tree. Within two to four weeks, an infestation bark beetles can kill a tree, and move right on to the next.

Bark beetles aren't typically supposed to be problematic; they can help a healthy forest by killing older or weak trees, which clears the forest so young, healthy trees have room to grow. However, the drought has made many healthy trees weak, and as a result, the bark beetle population has exceeded into dangerous territory.

If you suspect, or know, that bark beetles have infested some trees on your property, it is incredibly important to have the tree(s) removed. The trees will eventually rot, and could potentially fall on homes and other buildings, and harm or kill someone. They also pose as a fire hazard. The rottener a tree is, the harder it is to remove, so don't put it off.

If you would like more information, please visit our website [www.calaverasfarmbureau.org](http://www.calaverasfarmbureau.org) and under the "Members Services" tab, click "Bark Beetle Information".