



WINTER 2020

# LEGACY

*Connected by  
our vision*

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GOODBYE**

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**PROTECTING THE FARMS THAT FEED YOUR FAMILY**



## ARE YOU “ALL-IN”?

*By CFT President, Jon Harvey*

I grew up in Southern California without much agriculture in sight. However, I was fortunate to discover an interest in farming and ranching land use practices, economics, and challenges at a point in my life, where I could appreciate the implications of what I was learning and play a role in facilitating the conservation of farmland and farm enterprises.

My grandfather, taken in as an orphan, grew up on a farm in Nebraska. The long days of hard work and ingenuity in growing corn and soybean led him to come West, become a licensed professional engineer, and start a pipe fabrication business in Montebello, California. After my dear grandparents passed away, the farm in Nebraska was passed onto my Mother and Uncle. The farm was managed from a distance with the help of a farm management company and a tenant farmer. I helped them communicate with the farm management company and the tenant farmer, as well as interpreting the crop and financial reports. That process opened my eyes to the malaise of government programs and middlemen, but more importantly, the distance of the farmer from the overall enterprise and decision making, at least as it pertained to my family's operation.

Fortunately, in 2007, I met a farmer who started a small fruit orchard in 1976 in Brentwood. As we were working through the regulatory issues he was experiencing with the county, he invited me back to learn more about his farming practices. I saw how he was “all-in” with

his family; running sales, farm operation, purchasing, managing and providing worker housing, post-harvest processing, and being a father who was present in his daughter's lives. I was intrigued and humbled by the extraordinary abilities of this farmer. He was like many of our family farmers. He even tapped into my engineering experience in helping design and build a new packing line and cold storage facility. I experienced a richness in business acumen, problem solving, productivity and stewardship of the land that made a strong positive impression on me. I started looking for ways I could help sustain and promote local agriculture and found the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust (BALT).

A few years after joining the BALT board, we recognized the benefits in consolidating our work with other like-minded land trusts. The Executive Directors for BALT and the Central Valley Land Trust paved the way for the two boards to combine and form a stronger organization and vision; what we now know as the California Farmland Trust (CFT).



The staff at CFT has subsequently grown to four full-time professionals who are doing exceptional work on a modest budget. I am proud to be a member of a Board of Directors with diverse experience in farming, management, legal and finance. Much like the farmer from Brentwood, we are “all-in” and well positioned with a great team, solid financials, and a humble nature in our working environment to address the opportunities and challenges going forward. I hope you will join us in supporting the extraordinary farms in our beautiful State.



### OUR MISSION

Help Farmers Protect the Best Farmland in the World

### CURRENTLY SERVING

Sacramento, San Joaquin, Contra Costa, Stanislaus, Merced, and Madera counties



#### Directors:

Ron Dolinsek, Rocklin  
Denny Jackman, Modesto  
Ryan Jacobsen, Fresno  
Jim Jorgensen, Rocklin  
Theresa Kiehn, Modesto  
Larry Ruhstaller, Stockton  
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Chelsea Molina | Conservation Director  
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Ed Nishio  
Emily Rooney  
Ann Veneman  
Paul Wenger  
Becca Whitman

#### Contributors:

Jon Harvey  
Charlotte Mitchell  
Chelsea Molina  
Aundrea Montzingo  
Katie Otto

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Charlotte Mitchell

I recently came across an article about a Gallup Poll on Americans' views on various business and industry sectors, and for the first time in 20 years, farming and agriculture moved to number one, with a 69% positive rating, with the grocery industry, restaurants, and computer industry rounding out the top. Farming and agriculture had the biggest change in image rating amongst the top six sectors. Gallup contributes this change to the Coronavirus pandemic and the significant disruption that has occurred to the supply chain for many products. With seeing empty store shelves, Americans' have expressed a greater appreciation for the work in farming and agriculture and a level of trust that farmers will continue to grow food even in times of a pandemic and uncertainty. While not surprising to many of us who work in the agricultural sector, it continues to emphasize the increased importance of the collective work of what is happening in the industry.

Speaking of collective work, CFT has also spent most of the year focusing on collaborations and ways we can do our part to ensure farming remains viable.

We are fortunate in California to have land that, with a little sunshine and water will grow more than 400 different commodities – many of which end up on our tables. CFT is unique in being the only land trust in California exclusively focused on farmland and over the course of this past year, we've really focused on the land we're protecting. It's important that the land we protect, is viable now, as well as in 50, 75 or 100 years. That means water access is important, the lands position relative to nearby easements or potential developments is a consideration, how the farmer views their operation growing or evolving is another factor, and the list goes on. In a perfect world we would love to ensure all farmland continues to grow the food we all enjoy; however, we aren't naïve to the inevitable need for housing and development. To that end, we have also started to collaborate with some family foundations and others, to explore what farmland protection means to them.

In addition, we have collaborated over the past year with our friends in agriculture education to ensure our youth get a glimpse of how important farmland land is, particularly in California. The *Orange You Glad We Have Farmland* project was truly a labor of love and we're excited to see the reactions and impression it



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makes on audiences of all ages – 3% of all the land in the world is all we have to grow food. It is a daunting reality, and one that leaves many people valuing the work of our farmers. In addition, we have brought on two new Trustee Council members from two of the leading ag youth organizations, California Future Farmers of America and California Young Farmers and Ranchers to collaborate with us and represent the next generation.

We also spent a good portion of the year, looking internally. Our board and staff, collaborated with consultants to explore our internal financial operations to ensure we can monitor our easements in perpetuity – which is the basic role of a land trust. Our board takes our mission, as well as their fiduciary responsibilities very seriously and it was a valuable process that will help guide CFT for decades to come. In 2021 we hope to use that tool as we revise our strategic plan that will guide our work for the next few years.

In the spirit of collaboration, I also want to take a moment to invite YOU to collaborate with us. Join CFT in protecting farmland, our food supply, family farmers and agriculture. We need your help to protect more farmland and the farmers who are working to put the food on your table this holiday season and everyday in-between. Join us on December 1, for Giving Tuesday and make an online gift, or use the envelope enclosed in this issue of Legacy to make an end of year, tax-deductible donation that protects farmland.

Despite all the challenges of 2020, like many of you, we've made the most of it. Our mission is important and will continue to find ways to collaborate, work together and develop meaningful partnerships moving forward.

I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season and a 2021 with a lot of hope and prosperity.

## CFT APPOINTS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

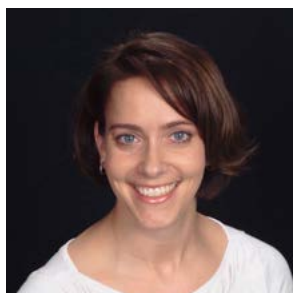
With a passion for preserving California's farmland, California Farmland Trust (CFT) is proud to share the appointments of two new board members.



### Ryan Jacobsen

Ryan Jacobsen resides in Fresno, where he currently serves as the CEO of the Fresno County Farm Bureau. He is the first board member to serve the organization from Fresno County.

When commenting on his appointment to the Board, Jacobsen shared "Our state's farmland is more than just dirt. When combined with California's water, sunshine and people, it feeds millions upon millions of families every single day. It's a national resource worth promoting and protecting."



### Theresa Kiehn

Theresa Kiehn is the Acting President and Chief Executive Officer of AgSafe. Her career also included a tenure with the Great Valley Center, where she supported the formation of the Central Valley Farmland Trust.

"I had the unique privilege of working with the founders of the California Farmland Trust when I first began my career," shared Kiehn. She added "Their dedication, passion and drive left a huge impression on my life, which encouraged me to incorporate the principals of farmland conservation into my choices as a member of our agricultural community. I am honored to be joining the California Farmland Trust in an official capacity and doing my part to ensure the legacy of California agriculture continues into perpetuity."

## THANK YOU GEORGE AND TOM

We want to extended a very sincere and heartfelt thank you to CFT Trustee Council member, George Gomes and CFT Board member Tom Rogers, who both recently concluded their service with CFT.



### George Gomes

George Gomes joined CFT Trustee Council in 2012. Gomes is a widely recognized leader within California's agriculture industry. Having served as both the Undersecretary for the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) as well as the administrator

for the California Farm Bureau Federation, collectively Gomes contributed more than 26 years of keeping family farms in business. Gomes has extensive knowledge, expertise and passion which helped to guide many of CFT's effort and direction over the years. We are incredibly grateful for George's contributions to CFT over the years. George will be greatly missed on the Trustee Council, but we wish George and Ella well, as they continue to enjoy retirement, grandchildren and hunting!



### Tom Rogers

Tom Rogers joined the CFT Board of Directors in 2019. As a third-generation farmer in Madera, Tom brought extensive knowledge and expertise to the Board and organization. Rogers knowledge of Madera county agriculture was helpful during monitoring season,

and his aptitude and interest in agriculture policy aided in guiding CFT. Tom and his wife, Linda recently moved to South Dakota. Tom was an enthusiastic and insightful board member who provided valuable contributions to CFT as well as many other agriculture organizations. We are grateful for his service to the organization and wish he and Linda the best in their next chapter.



## 16,708 ACRES AND GROWING!

The California Farmland Trust is pleased to share that Simon and Christine Vander Woude, have donated a conservation easement on their property in Merced. The Vander Woude's nearly 65-acre parcel of farmland is currently planted in field crops for their dairy operation. Their property compliments the existing 34 easements and more than 11,000 acres, that will forever remain in agriculture in Merced County.



## ARISMAN, BERETTA AND WHITMAN APPOINTED TO TRUSTEE COUNCIL

California Farmland Trust recently announced the addition of three new members to the organization's Trustee Council. The Trustee Council provides CFT with valuable insight and feedback regarding industry trends, policies and opportunities. For a full listing of Trustee Council members visit the website.



**Mia Arisman**

Mia Arisman currently serves as the California Association, Future Farmers of America (FFA) State Secretary. As a State FFA Officer, Mia and her team spend a year learning about California's diverse agriculture industry and share their knowledge with the more than 95,000 youth California FFA members. In addition, Mia provides insight to industry leaders on how to engage with the next generation of the agricultural workforce. Mia shared "I'm excited for my role promoting the conservation and protection of California agriculture to my peers and learning how to make this diverse industry better for future generations."



**Jennifer Beretta**

Jennifer Beretta resides in Santa Rosa and serves as the Assistant Herdsman for her family's dairy operation. In addition, she serves as the First Vice President for the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, is the current Young Farmers & Ranchers (YF&R) State Chair, is a local 4-H leader, Holstein Club President and is on the Dairy Advisory Board for the Sonoma County Fair. "As a Trustee Council member, I look forward to creating a better partnership between CFT and YF&R and learning more about conservation opportunities for agriculture," Beretta expressed.



**Becca Whitman**

Becca Whitman is the Senior Manager for Community Relations, and Executive Director for Food For Families for Raley's. Becca has built her career on creating successful partnerships and currently leads Raley's community giving efforts in supporting causes that make significant impacts, including California Farmland Trust among many other agricultural organizations. "It's an honor to serve as an advocate for California Farmland Trust and help protect the farms that feed our families," shared Whitman. "So much of our health and happiness is based on the food we eat, and it's incredibly important to me and Raley's that we grow healthy communities in partnership with our farmers," Whitman added.

## TRUSTEE COUNCIL AND FFA TOUR



With the addition of three new Trustee Council members, CFT organized an industry tour to acquaint them with our landowners, fellow Trustee Council and Board members. In addition to Trustee Council member Mia Arisman, CFT also hosted the rest of the California FFA State Officer team on the tour. We kicked-off the day with breakfast and walking the group through our *Orange You Glad We Have Farmland* activity. From there, the group met easement holder and farmer, Tom Ulm to discuss his agriculture conservation easement and farming operation. Joining us was fellow Trustee Council member, past president of the California Farm Bureau Federation, and local farmer Paul Wenger, who discussed issues facing agriculture today and the need for younger generations to help in finding solutions to those issues. The group then received a crash course in "Planning 101" with CFT past president and retired Stanislaus County Planning Director, Ron Freitas who provided an overview of a county's general plan and its role in farmland protection. The day concluded with a tour lead by Gordon Heinrich of a Heinrich Farms, a local walnut huller and dryer. Trustee Council member and former USDA Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman also joined the tour and added to the valuable discussion. It was a great day of collaboration.



## CONNECTED BY OUR VISION

Like many of you, for the California Farmland Trust, 2020 has not gone according to plan. Frankly, it's felt at times like we're assembling a giant jigsaw puzzle – having to pivot and try new practices and strategies to see how the pieces fit together, during uncertain times. Fortunately, we are nimble, we like a good challenge and have focused on our mission and the parts and pieces that make it relevant and worthwhile. Like a good puzzle, those pieces simply fit together.

You see, the corners of our puzzle are the foundation of CFT – protecting farmland, preserving family farms, and promoting agriculture education. Our corners are our farmers and the farmland they choose to protect forever; the families who are ensuring their legacy will continue with the next generation and our educational efforts that plant a seed about the importance of protecting our natural resources. Those corners anchor our work and are a constant reminder of our efforts.

Beyond the corners, are the edges, which are the people. In the spring issue of *Legacy* and the early months of summer on social media, we focused on the board, committee and Trustee Council members, staff, sponsors, and volunteers. Each of these people make CFT thrive. They carry tremendous passion and responsibility for our mission. Much like the edges of a jigsaw puzzle, the people who support CFT are weaved throughout our work and connect us.

We all know, the middle pieces brings the puzzle together and is often the most complex part of the puzzle, but the reason we picked it in the first place. For CFT, the middle is representing vision for the future and YOU.

What is your vision for the future of agriculture and food and how we will we feed our families? Does your vision include a concrete California, where farmland is paved over for housing, commercial and retail property? Does your vision include empty grocery store shelves that are not the result of logistical challenges, but supply and demand obstacles?

Of course, that is not your vision. Your vision, much like ours, is a California that continues to lead the nation and the world, with a safe, abundant supply of nutritious food. Where we have opportunities to go to farmers markets and buy produce from a multi-generation family farm in our community. Knowing that when we go to our local grocery store the choices and varieties will be abundant, because of the efforts of our farmers and the agriculture industry?

We share the same vision, and as 2020 comes to a close, we ask you to continue to be a part of our puzzle and our vision for the future with a tax-deductible year end donation to California Farmland Trust. Your support enables the vision we share, to become a reality.

There are many ways to give, consider using the enclosed envelope to make a donation, or join others on December 1, during Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving by making a gift online at [www.cafarmtrust.org](http://www.cafarmtrust.org) and click the donate button.

While many things in 2020 seem like scrambled jigsaw puzzle pieces, if you step back, and focus on the goal of what you're trying to do, what your foundation is, and how it connects, then the vision will become clear. We hope you continue to remain piece of our puzzle and a part of our vision.

**“WE SHARE THE SAME VISION, AND AS 2020 COMES TO A CLOSE, WE ASK YOU TO CONTINUE TO BE A PART OF OUR PUZZLE AND OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE WITH A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE YEAR END DONATION TO CALIFORNIA FARMLAND TRUST. YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES THE VISION WE SHARE TO BECOME A REALITY.”**



## CHECK THESE CHARITABLE ITEMS OFF YOUR YEAR END LIST

The end of the year is a time of reflection and anticipation. It is also a time of deadlines. Here are some important charitable matters to consider before the last day of December.

### ☒ IRA DISTRIBUTION

- If you are 59½ or older, you can take a distribution from your IRA and then make a gift to California Farmland Trust without penalty. If you itemize your deductions, you can take a charitable deduction for the amount.
- If you are 70½ or older, you can give any amount up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to the California Farmland Trust. You will not pay income taxes on the transfer. If you are 72 or older, you can use this transfer to satisfy your required minimum distribution. (Note: The RMD requirement has been waived for 2020, per the CARES Act signed into law on March 27, 2020.)

*To do: We must receive your gift by December 31, for your donation to qualify this year. If you have check-writing privileges on your IRA, please mail your check by December 15, to allow time to process your gift.*

### ☒ DONOR ADVISED FUND (DAF)

Contribute to a donor advised fund and enjoy a tax savings on that amount when you itemize. A DAF allows you to make a charitable contribution to California Farmland Trust, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend additional grants from the fund over time.

*To do: Complete the contribution by December 31. You do not have to designate the funds this calendar year to receive the tax benefits.*

### ☒ DIRECT GIFTS OF STOCKS

You may enjoy two tax benefits with a gift of appreciated stock: Avoid paying taxes on the appreciated value and qualify for an income tax charitable deduction based on today's market value, when you itemize.

*To do: Complete all transfers by December 31. This includes electronic transfer, hand-delivery of the securities or mailed stock and stock power (mailed separately for security).*

### ☒ GOOD END-OF-YEAR PLANNING

Check these off your to-do list to end the year on an organized note.

- Update your will or living trust. Ensure that your designations are still appropriate, and your charitable intentions are noted.
- Review your retirement plan beneficiaries. Assess your named beneficiaries to ensure you've considered your loved ones and favorite causes.
- Review your life insurance policy. If you have a policy that is no longer a significant piece of your estate plan, consider making a gift by assigning ownership to the California Farmland Trust or making us the beneficiary.

We encourage you to contact your financial advisor for the options that work best for you. If you are interested in learning more; maximizing your tax benefit while supporting the permanent protection of farmland, we are happy to help. Please feel free to contact Katie Otto at (916) 687-3178 or [kotto@cafarmtrust.org](mailto:kotto@cafarmtrust.org).



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Giving Tuesday  
December 1, 2020

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Visionary

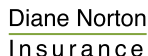


Heritage



Sustaining

Guardian



97% of every dollar donated goes directly to farmland conservation.  
Make a gift today at [cafarmtrust.org](http://cafarmtrust.org)