

CAPAY VALLEY HARVEST

Vol 1
Issue 2

A newsletter from farms & ranches around the Capay Valley Region

Sept.
2005

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE CALENDAR

September 1: CVV Ag Task Force, 7-9 p.m., Esparto Library.

September 3: Capay Valley Regional Farmers' Market, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Esparto Park.

September 11: A Day in the Country, 3-6 p.m., Yolo Land Trust, Timothy Ranch, (530) 795-3110.

October 1 & 2: Hoes Down Harvest Celebration, Full Belly Farm, Capay Valley, (800) 791-2110 or www.hoesdown.org.

October 1: Capay Valley Regional Farmers' Market, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Esparto Park.

October 1: Fiber on the Farm, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., West Valley Alpacas, Esparto, (530) 662-8630 or www.westvalleyalpacas.com.

October 6: CVV Ag Task Force, 7-9 p.m., Esparto Library.

October 27: Farm City Banquet, 4:30- 9 p.m., Woodland Chamber of Commerce, Yolo County Fairgrounds, (530) 662-7327.

October 30: Taste of Capay, 12-4 p.m., Capay Valley Vision, Taber Ranch, (530) 787-3353.

November 3: CVV Ag Task Force, 7-9 p.m., Esparto Library.

November 5: Capay Valley Regional Farmers' Market, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Esparto Park.

Harvest, Hustle, & History by Paul Muller

Harvest season is upon us in the Capay Valley-Esparto Region. The months of August to October are marked by weary, bleary eyed, or exhausted looks from farmers and farmworkers as they hustle to bring in the results of a year's work and planning. Harvest is the culmination of plenty of sweat, teamwork, skill, historical knowledge, and investment. The planting, nurturing, watering, or pruning of crops yields to a single-mindedness that has no rest until the last "bushel" is in the barn, the bills have been paid, and what remains is securely tucked away. Then it's time to begin the groundwork for next year's cycle and start the process all over again.

Harvest has always been a primary preoccupation of those who live from the land. Native Americans in the Capay Valley spent a great deal of time gleaning the abundance that existed in a climax oak woodland ecosystem. Their gathering, drying, and storing of summer surplus helped to determine their well-being in the winter months. The small farmers who settled in the Guinda area, for example, had by the turn of the century three fruit packing sheds that sent peaches, apricots, and plums to the East Coast of the U.S. via rail, using ice to keep the fruit cold on its long journey.

That period saw nearly 4000 acres of fruit trees planted within a 10-mile radius of Guinda. The resulting economic activity supported a church, a school, two blacksmith shops, a butcher shop, a harness shop, a lumberyard, hotel, and stables. The harvest supported a vibrant

and vital community. The towns of Capay and Esparto were much the same and until about 15 years ago supported a bank, gas station, lumberyard, a great hardware store, two grocery stores, restaurant, and bars.

For complex reasons, much of this community economic infrastructure has disappeared. The bounty of a good crop harvest was often met with low prices. The economic center for work or trade moved as the automobile allowed greater distances between where one lived and where one shopped. Scale changed—farms got bigger, technologies got bigger, and the buyers of farm commodities got bigger. Like many rural areas, as the numbers of those engaged in agriculture shrunk, farm support businesses disappeared and main streets withered.

Many would dismiss reflecting upon this history as nostalgia where we can't and wouldn't want to go back. We certainly need to go forward. Sewing the seeds of a healthy diverse rural economy or community is a new venture. Like a successful harvest it requires investment, hard work, compromise, knowledge, and strategies for capturing more of the value of what we already do well. It requires a diverse economic foundation where more local dollars are generated and captured locally.

As your local farms move through their harvest, we see farm success as an important ingredient for healthy, vital Capay Valley communities.



Capay Valley Grown is a project of Capay Valley Vision, a local, nonprofit organization. For more information, visit www.CapayValleyVision.org or call (530) 787-3353.

PROFILES

Photo by Temra Costa



Frances Burke, a long time grower in the Capay Valley Region, has operated Cache Creek Nursery for twenty-five years. A variety of organically grown vegetable starts and native plants are produced at her nursery in Rumsey, CA.

Cache Creek Nursery

2815 Rumsey Canyon Road

Rumsey, CA 95679

(530) 796-3521

www.cachecreeknursery.com

Our Farm

Cache Creek Nursery uses organic, conventional, and sustainable production practices. Frances Burke offers a large selection of organically grown heirloom vegetable plants for the backyard grower, California Native plants for revegetation, and drought tolerant, low maintenance perennials selected for Northern California gardens.

Distribution of Product

You can come out to Cache Creek Nursery to visit and purchase plants for your garden. Just in time for fall planting, the Fall Plant Sale is the entire month of October, and features a 20 percent off discount on all plants. Cache Creek Nursery also sells their plants at farmers' markets in Davis and San Rafael and to local stores.

Joys of Farming

"One of the best aspects of Cache Creek Nursery is running my own business and being able to spend my workday outside. I find a lot of satisfaction in producing a useful product and one that people enjoy. Another wonderful part of my business is selling directly to my customers at local farmers' markets. I meet and talk to all kinds of people and receive immediate feedback. This way I can continually improve my product and my business."

FreeHeart Farm

24203 CR 22

Esparto, CA 95627

(530) 787-4444

www.FreeHeartFarm.com

Our Farm

Using conventional production practices, FreeHeart Farm cultivates Non-Pariel, Butte, and Carmel Almonds as well as Chandler and Hartman walnuts on just over 37

acres. The farm includes the original 1929 "Sears and Roebuck Kit" farm house. In addition to wholesale and retail products, the farm grows a variety of fruits and vegetables including figs, pears, peaches, apples, plums, and citrus.

Distribution of Product

Eight-five percent of FreeHeart Farm's production is sold on the wholesale market to top purchasers such as Rottaviel Orchards, Blue Diamond, and California Almond Growers. The remaining production is turned into Larry's candied almonds and retailed directly to consumers via the internet, mail order request, and at several wineries located throughout Northern California. Larry's almonds come in eight ounce packages and six flavors: Milk Chocolate, Dark Chocolate, Chocolate Jordan Almonds, Dark Chocolate Truffle Almonds, Mint Chocolate, and Cinnamon Vanilla Coated Almonds. Our nuts are great with a glass of wine or just as a snack.

Joys of Farming

"We enjoy the lifestyle of farming; being outdoors and working hard to see the fruit of our labor."

Photo by Temra Costa



Larry and Lynn Rolston, relative newcomers to farming in the Capay Valley Region, have operated FreeHeart Farm in Lamb Valley for eight years, where they produce almonds, walnuts, and Larry's candied nuts—delicious almonds covered in a flavored chocolate wrap or a crunchy Cinnamon Vanilla coating.

Haag Farm

16200 Road 87

Esparto, CA 95627

(530) 787-3603

www.walnuts.us

Our Farm

Using transitional to organic, IPM, biodynamic, sustainable, and insecticide-free production practices, Haag Farm has one permanent employee and ten seasonal employees. You will find delicious walnuts grown on seventy acres of pristine land in Esparto. Haag Farm grows six varieties of green, red, and tan shelled and unshelled walnuts. Walnuts are harvested for over four months throughout the year and are retailed year-round.

Distribution of Product

Haag Farm distributes its products through wholesalers such as Diamond and Mariani. Consumers can also purchase products from Haag Farm via mail order, the internet, retail, and deliveries.

Joys of Farming

"One of the best aspects of farming is all the skills and know-how that are called for, ranging from accounting to biology, from construction to mechanics, and sleep!"

Photo by Temra Costa



Jim and Claire Haag, long-time growers in the Capay Valley Region, have operated Haag Farm for over twenty-five years. A variety of walnuts are grown at Haag Farm in Esparto, CA.

in agriculture



Tom Frederick and Pam Welch, 25 year residents of the Capay Valley Region, have operated Capay Valley Vineyards since 1998. They produce premium wines and offer tours of their winery in Brooks, CA.

Photo by Temra Costa

Capay Valley Vineyards

#1 Ranch Road

Brooks, CA 95606

(530) 796-4110

info@capayvalleyvineyards.com

Our Farm

Using conventional and sustainable farming practices, Capay Valley Vineyards cultivates wine grapes on 15 acres of land. Tom, originally from Gloversville, NY and Pam, originally from Bippus, IN, produce a variety of wines at Capay Valley Vineyards. Wine lovers can enjoy Syrah, Viognier, Tempranillo, and Cabernet Sauvignon from Capay Valley Vineyards.

Distribution of Product

Capay Valley Vineyards distributes about half of their wines through wholesalers, such as Villa Italia in San Francisco and Serendipity in Texas. Locally, consumers can find Capay Valley Vineyards' wines through retailers such as Nugget Markets, Corti Brothers, Sacramento Natural Food Coop, Davis Coop, Valley Wine, The Corner Store, and Esparto Supermarket. In addition, the wines are available directly from the winery. Consumers looking for an evening of fine dining can enjoy Capay Valley Vineyards' wines at local restaurants such as Morrisons, Thai Recipes, and in the Bay Area at Delucchi, Pomelo, Lafolie, and Angelino's.

Joys of Farming

“Here at Capay Valley Vineyards, we enjoy following the whole process through the seasons, from dormant plants to harvesting the grapes, to wine production. When we hold the bottle of wine in our hands, we know we have touched every vine that contributed to that bottle. We enjoy spreading the word about Capay Valley and Yolo County.”

TASTE OF CAPAY

Benefit Dinner & Auction

Sunday, October 30, 2005

12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Taber Ranch

\$40 advance tickets

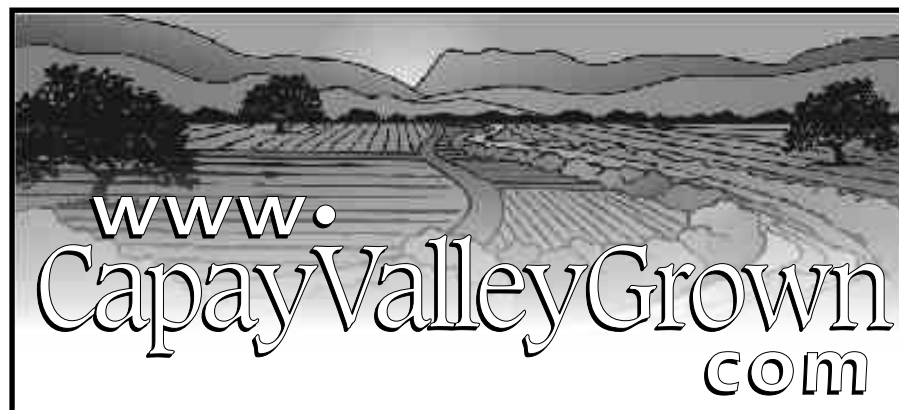
\$50 at the door



Join us for a special meal featuring food grown on farms and ranches from around the Capay Valley Region. The afternoon will also feature a ranch tour, auction, and music.

All net proceeds benefit Capay Valley Vision, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and its work to strengthen agriculture in western Yolo County.

For more information, call (530) 787-3353.



Capay Valley Agriculture & Wildlands: A Natural Balance

by Jennifer Drewitz & Barbara Fleck

"A love of the land, a managerial presence in rural and remote areas, years of experience and a concern for native plants and animals are all common elements among farming communities." (Farming with the Wild by Daniel Imhoff)

Capay Valley landowners are actively sustaining agriculture and natural resources with the support of the Yolo County Resource Conservation District (YCRCD). Together, they are improving water quality, preventing soil loss, and increasing wildlife friendly space.

"By working with our neighbors, we avoid outside regulatory enforcement, maintain local control, and create a positive atmosphere for dialogue," says Paul Robins, YCRCD Executive Director.

As fellow stewards of the land, YCRCD partners with landowners within a given watershed (where all the water drains into the same waterway—a

creek or river) to discuss natural resource issues and to coordinate plans to address those issues. Within the Capay Valley, YCRCD works closely with the Cache Creek Watershed Stakeholders Group, a local grassroots organization, to develop healthy watershed practices including:

- Ponds to capture sediment in irrigation or winter storm runoff and to provide habitat for wildlife.
- Hedgerows (rows of trees and shrubs) to attract beneficial insects that feed on agricultural pests.
- Invasive weed control to decrease competition with crops and increase native wildlife habitat.
- Streambank erosion control to improve water

quality and prevent land loss.

The YCRCD and many Capay Valley farmers and ranchers also work closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to access federal, state, and local resources. These partnerships combine financial, technical, and skill resources to solve natural resource problems in a way that benefits both farmers and the environment. In the end, farming that sustains the environment is profitable and serves the interests of all involved.



This pond north of Guinda illustrates one practice used to help catch winter storm runoff while simultaneously creating habitat for wildlife.

CAPAY VALLEY GROWN FARM & RANCH PARTNERS

B-Z Bee Pollination, Inc.

Honey (530) 787-3044; www.BZ-Bee.com

Bloom Ranch

Almonds, Walnuts, Pistachios, Mandarins, & Peaches (530) 796-3357; www.bloomranch.com

Blue Heron Farm/Dream Gourds

Organic Oranges, Walnuts, Tomatoes, Figs, & Decorative Gourds (530) 796-3799

Cache Creek Nursery

Organic Vegetable Starts, California Natives, Perennial Shrubs, & Herbs (530) 796-3521; www.cachecreeknursery.com

Capay Canyon Ranch

Organic Red Flame Grapes (530) 662-2372

Capay Valley Vineyards

Wine (530) 796-4110; www.capayvalleyvineyards.com

Circle K Ranch: Walnuts (530) 796-2216

Fiddler's Green Farm

Farm Mixed Organic Produce (530) 796-2184

FreeHeart Farm

Almonds, Candied Almonds, & Eggs (530) 787-4444; www.freeheartfarm.com

Full Belly Farm

Mixed Organic Produce & Natural Wool (530) 796-2214; www.fullbellyfarm.com

Gold Oak Ranch: Mandarins & Walnuts

Good Humus Produce

Mixed Organic Produce, Dried Fruit, Jams, Jellies (530) 787-3187; www.goodhumus.com

Haag Farm

Walnuts (530) 787-3603; www.walnuts.us

Hatanaka Farming

Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Melons, Peppers, Squash, Onions, Pumpkins (530) 787-4970

III Docs Almond Ranch

Almonds (530) 796-4141

Lamb Valley Farm: Citrus

Live Oak Farm

Olive Oil, Mixed Organic Produce (530) 796-4084

Manas Ranch/Double Bar O Angus Ranch

Peaches & Grain-fed Beef (530) 787-3228; www.manasranch.com

McDonald Orchards

Almonds, Walnuts, & Honey (530) 796-3821

Murphy Ranch

Natural Beef Cattle & Cowsterns

The Old Green Go

Apricots, Plums, Asian Pears, Melons, Oranges (530) 796-3855; webaker@ucdavis.edu

Oldani Family Farm

Oranges, Pistachios, Apricots, Plums, Figs, & Persimmons (530) 796-4143; coldani@yolo.com

Riverdog Farm

Mixed Organic Produce (530) 796-4100; www.riverdogfarm.com

Rumsey Farms/Dos Brujas

Herbal Products Nuts, Oranges, Herbs, & Herbal Cosmetic Products (530) 796-3060

Taber Ranch

Almonds & Olive Oil (530) 796-4983

TS Ranch: Beef Cattle (530) 796-3755

West Valley Alpacas

Alpacas & Alpacas Fibers (530) 662-8630; www.westvalleyalpacas.com

Winter Creek Ranch

Organic Walnuts (530) 796-3723; www.wintercreekranch.com

Where to Find Capay Valley Grown Products in Yolo County

Stores

- Cache Creek Mini-Mart, Brooks
- The Corner Store, Guinda
- Davis Food Co-op
- Java Station, Esparto
- Nugget Market, Woodland and Davis
- Town & County Market, Winters

Farmers' Markets

- Capay Valley Regional Farmers' Market, Esparto
- Davis Farmers' Market
- Woodland Farmers' Market

Farm Stands

- The Corn Patch, Capay
- Full Belly Farm Stand, Guinda
- Manas Ranch Farm Stand, Esparto
- West Valley Alpacas Store (by appt.)

**Some farms and ranches are open for direct sales, feel free to contact them to find out more about getting their products.*