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AEF Scholarship Program Updates

UnitedAg is pleased to announce the opening of its highly-anticipated scholarship programs for 2024 scholastic year, along with the introduction of an exciting new Internship and Job Placement Program through the [Agribusiness Education Foundation \(AEF\)](#), a 501(c)3 organization.

“Through our expanded scholarship offerings and the launch of the Internship and Job Placement Program, we aim to empower students with the knowledge and experience they need to thrive in the field of agriculture,” said Loretta Brown, Chair, AEF Education Committee.

The two scholarship programs, distinguished by the [Educational](#) and [Vocational](#), officially opened for applications on September 15, 2023. Students interested in pursuing higher education in the field of agriculture are encouraged to apply before the deadline of **December 31st, 2023**. A grand total of \$86,000 in scholarships will be awarded in 2024, an increase of \$11,000 from previous years.

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AEF Programs, Continued

In addition to these scholarship opportunities, UnitedAg is excited to introduce the new Internship and Job Placement Program. This program aims to provide students from AEF with invaluable hands-on experience and career opportunities within the agricultural industry.

Internships

Designed for students seeking a better understanding of California and Arizona agriculture, these internships will offer practical experience in various aspects of the industry.

Job Placement

Geared towards graduates who are eager to kickstart their professional careers in agriculture, this program will connect them with job opportunities in the field.



The Internship and Job Placement Program is a unique chance for students to gain real-world experience and start their careers in agriculture. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting opportunity!

Detailed information and application forms for both scholarship programs can be found online at futureagleaders.org.

2024 WomenAg Leadership Academy Program Updates

We are thrilled to launch the application for the 2024 WomenAg Leadership Academies, a pioneering initiative aimed at empowering and equipping women in the agriculture industry with the skills and knowledge to excel as leaders.

Since its inception in 2016, the WomenAg Academy program has seen over 60 remarkable women graduate and make significant strides in the field of agriculture. Building on this success, program founder Kirti Mutatkar, CEO of UnitedAg is introducing “Foundation” courses for the 1st-year academy participants and “Master” classes for alumni to further develop and enhance their leadership styles.

Leadership is a continuous journey, and the WomenAg Leadership Academies understand the importance of ongoing learning. The in-person courses offer a unique and immersive learning experience, fostering growth and empowerment for aspiring leaders in agriculture. **The application deadline is November 30th, 2023.**

Join us in shaping the future of agriculture. To learn more about the academy and the application process, please contact **Bridget Sanchez** at bsanchez@unitedag.org.



Fourth Quarter Advocacy Update

By Jayson Welter, *General Counsel, UnitedAg*



Each year UnitedAg's Advocacy Committee sets its legislative priorities with input from our membership. This year, we continued to focus on Healthcare, PAGA (which will be addressed in 2024), water, labor and wage issues at the state level and to monitor immigration and H-2A regulations at the federal level. Additionally, after our Committee members were part of a meeting with the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), we decided to also voice our concerns on these issues as well. UnitedAg also relies on strategic alliances both in Sacramento and D.C. with other associations that support agriculture and health care.

This year our Advocacy Committee was active in Sacramento early in the year to raise awareness of the struggles of our community hospitals and healthcare safety net in agricultural communities. Low Medi-Cal rates have forced many community hospitals, like Madera Community Hospital, to the brink of bankruptcy. Advocates like UnitedAg voiced our support for the Governor to put hospital funding into his 2023 Budget, commit the managed care organization tax back to Medi-Cal and to increase Medi-Cal rates. We are happy to say that our efforts and the efforts of many others were successful. However, this is only temporary relief and we need to continue to advocate for better Medi-Cal rates and funding for our rural community hospitals.

As we began the year, there were a number of water related bills that were presented that all had negative implications for our agricultural community. Almost all of these bills died or were significantly amended. This is a relief given the potential harm any one of these bills could have created.

There are two labor bills of great concern that went to the Governor's desk. SB 616 (Gonzalez) attempted to implement a paid sick leave mandate providing seven days/56 hours. However, moderate Democrats successfully amended the bill to five days/40 hours.

Senator Alvarado-Gil tried to compete with this bill by increasing the current sick leave to five days but included provisions that a doctor's note was required for employees after day 3. This attempt failed and the Governor signed the bill expanding sick leave to five days/40 hours to be implemented January 1, 2024. SB 799 (Portantino) attempted to provide unemployment insurance to people on strike after two weeks. This bill would have provided an unequal bargaining advantage to employees during a strike when they would normally be motivated to settle a bargaining dispute. Fortunately, the Governor vetoed this bill.

As mentioned earlier, our Committee became concerned with DPR caving to emotional public and political rhetoric that isn't based on science and in many cases bypasses existing planned scientific studies prior to implementing decisions. We again join others to voice our concerns with products being removed or regulated without scientific study or findings. AB 363 (Bauer-Kahan) was amended to require the Department to re-evaluate neonicotinoids. The bill includes a new provision to prohibit the use or sale of non-ag neonicotinoids starting 2025. The Governor vetoed a similar bill last year by the author noting that a ban circumvents the science based regulatory process at DPR. We continue to voice our concerns that DPR should rely upon scientific studies and findings prior to implementing any bans or limitations on products and hope the Governor will again veto this bill.

Of the more than 2,600 bills introduced this year, the Governor must now act on about 900. He has until October 14 to sign or veto these bills.

For questions about this update or information about other advocacy issues, contact Jayson Welter at jwelter@unitedag.org.





2024-25 UnitedAg Board of Directors Election

Election closes November 30th

As part of UnitedAg's legal compliance, its Board of Directors must stand for election every two (2) years. The Board of Directors are elected by UnitedAg's membership. The Directors must be owners, partners, Officers, Directors, or employees of one or more Member company. As fiduciaries, they have complete fiscal control over UnitedAg and are responsible for all administration and operations.

Consistent with the Bylaws, Candidates for the UnitedAg Board of Directors are nominated by the Executive Committee. The names of the candidates and the participating Member company they represent will be announced in the ballot communications. **Electronic and paper ballots will go out the week of October 23rd to Regular members in good standing.** For more information, please email membership@unitedag.org.

The Board of Directors will be notified of the election results for 2024/2025 after the close of the election and will be introduced at the 2024 Annual Conference.



2024 AgPAC Golf Tournament

April 10, 2024

Eagle Vines Golf Club, American Canyon, CA

Taking place during UnitedAg's 44th Annual Meeting & Conference, "CONNECT", we're excited to announce the 2024 AgPAC Golf Tournament at Eagle Vines Golf Club on April 10, 2024. This 18-hole, par 72 course, located in the beautiful Napa Valley and designed in part by the World Golf Hall of Famer, Johnny Miller, offers breathtaking views of vineyards from every hole, alongside oak and cherry tree groves, and panoramic vistas of Napa's golden hills.

Proceeds from the tournament will go directly to support the AgPAC and UnitedAgPAC, organizations that offer support in electing candidates who champion and advocate for the agricultural industry, while also advancing the industry's interests and views at the state and federal levels.

[Click here to subscribe to updates.](#)



Be On Alert: Wildfire Smoke Protections



While California had a record rainfall this year, it does not allow us to let down our guard regarding wildfire smoke protection. Did you know that in California through July 2023, there have already been 3,880 wildfires, and 95,948 acres have burned?

In 2021, the California Department of Industrial Relations' Occupational Safety and Standards Board adopted a safety standard for outdoor worksites. It applies when the current Air Quality Index (AQI) for airborne particulate matter (PM) is 151 or higher and when employees could be exposed to wildfire smoke. This article will provide an overview of the regulation and some best practices for keeping your workforce safe.

#1 Have A Plan and Reduce Exposure

Employers are required to develop an emergency action plan. This plan must include emergency evacuation routes for all work locations, and the plan should be communicated to your employees.

#2 Monitor Air Quality

The person responsible for your crews working outdoors must check the AQI Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM) forecast before the shift begins and throughout the workday. It is also important to note that the AQI and PM 2.5 levels will fluctuate throughout the day, usually worsening in the afternoon. Therefore, it is critical that the individual responsible for implementing this plan regularly checks the levels.

#3 Have Respirators Ready

Employers are required to provide respiratory protection equipment that filters out fine particles. Respirators must be labeled N-95, N-99, N-100, R-95, P-95, P-99, or P-100 and be approved by the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). If the AQI is 151 or higher but does not exceed 500, respirators must be made available to employees for voluntary use.

#4 Train Employees

One of the most essential elements is training your employees. The following topics must be covered in your training program.

1. The health effects of wildfire smoke.
2. The right to obtain medical treatment without fear of reprisal.
3. How employees can obtain the current AQI (provide them with the website).
4. Share your two-way communication system with workers on how you will keep them updated on changing conditions.
5. Provide complaint respirators, show them how to use and maintain them, and encourage them to use them.
6. The importance, limitations, and benefits of using a respirator when exposed to wildfire smoke.
7. What you will do to protect them from smoke – when you will stop work, when you will move them to another location, etc.

It is highly recommended that all businesses with an outdoor workforce review the Cal/OSHA regulation, which can be found at [dir.ca.gov/title8/5141.1.html](https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5141.1.html).

For additional assistance on developing your Wildfire Smoke Protection Plan or worker training please contact AgSafe at **209.526.4400** or email safeinfo@agsafe.org. AgSafe is a 501c3 nonprofit providing health and safety education to the agricultural community. Since 1991, they have educated over 100,000 employers, supervisors, and workers about these critical issues.



UnitedAg STEPS OUT for Annual Walk To Stop Diabetes

On Saturday, September 30th, the UnitedAg family came together with forty team members, friends, and loved ones to participate in the annual Step Out Walk To Stop Diabetes. The event took place at the beautiful Rainbow Lagoon Park in the City of Long Beach. Organized by the [American Diabetes Association](#), the Step Out Walk is a cherished annual tradition that brings communities together to show their unwavering support for individuals living with diabetes. For UnitedAg, this event held special significance as it honored our members who courageously battle diabetes each day.

The collective effort of our team and participants at the Step Out Walk was truly remarkable. We are thrilled to announce that the event successfully raised over \$100,000, which will be dedicated to advocacy and support for the 37.3 million Americans living with diabetes. Additionally, these funds will drive research initiatives, taking us one step closer to a cure for this prevalent condition. For more information about our involvement in community events or our ongoing commitment to diabetes advocacy, please contact membership@unitedag.org.



Staff Anniversaries (July - September 2023)

Laura Garza	22
Alex Drollinger	22
Kirti Mutatkar	22
Donna Bares	20
Patricia Gonzalez	19
Bang Nguyen	17
Sandra Duenez	13
Gabriela Heredia	10
Jerry Zarate	8
Giselle Benitez	4
Alex Chee	3
Bo Ban	2
Karena Olivarez	2
Justin Sosnowski	2
Marina Albert	1
Craig Angier	1
Jonathan Rivera	1
Ren Santos	1

Welcome to the UnitedAg Family

5 G Farming

Alpha Omega Collective, LLC
 Aweta Americas, Inc.
 B & C Packing, Inc.
 Barkley Ag Enterprises, LLC
 Barkley Company of Arizona, LLC
 Barkley Seed, Inc.
 BL Trucking, Inc.
 C & B Farms Inc.
 Campiz, Inc.
 Central Coast Cooling, LLC
 Central Valley Ag Management
 Colusa Industrial Properties
 Corning Ford, Inc.
 Empire Nut Company
 F&R Ag Services Inc.
 Facilities Management Group
 GreenGate Fresh, LLLP
 Growers Ice Company
 Hacienda Homes, LLC
 Hospitality Technology Services,
 Inc.

Hupp Draft Services, Inc.
 James L. Able Forestry
 Consultants
 Jonathan Cooper
 Lassen Canyon Nursery
 Latin Berry Plants
 Packaging Matters, LLC
 Polymer Pak, LLC
 Post Harvest Technologies, Inc.
 Presqu'ile Winery
 Red Bluff Center, Inc.
 Second Nature Research, LLC
 Shasta Forest Products
 Siller Brothers, Inc.
 Sutter Rice Company
 Toro Petroleum, Corp.
 Tuff Boy Equipment, LLC
 Tyndall Mound Warehouse, LLC
 Western Shasta Resource
 Conservation District
 Wright Brothers Welding &
 Sheet Metal, Inc.



Upcoming Events

Visit our website to register
unitedag.org/events

**OPS Forum: WomenAg
 Leadership Academy Updates**
 October 31 at 9:30 am

**Maximize Your Membership
 with UnitedAg**
 November 1 at 9:00 am

**HealthChats: Diabetes
 Awareness**
 November 16 at 10:00 am



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