

President's Message

Our Philosophy

A member reaches out to our Member Services department. This is not the first call and will definitely not be the last. Betty Knatcher's son is terminally ill with stage four lung cancer. Betty is managing his care and juggling his finances, dealing with her own emotions. While she was on the phone with Sonia, she expressed how kind everyone from UnitedAg has been to her and her son during this incredibly stressful time.

She told Sonia that talking to anyone at UnitedAg feels like she is talking to a member of her own family. Everyone treats her with dignity, empathy and patience and she does not feel rushed, overwhelmed or confused. She said that she's called other places, doctor's offices, billing agencies, other insurances, and no one has treated her as kindly as UnitedAg has.

"She said to me that the fact that she can call me and I know her by her name impresses her. It shows that she and her son are not just a number to us." Sonia Roldan, Member Services Manager, UnitedAg.

When Sonia told me this story, I was reminded of a quote by Tony Hsieh, the CEO of Zappos. He said, "Our philosophy is delivering happiness to customers and employers. People may not remember exact-

ly what you did or what you said, but they always remember how you made them feel."

Sonia, and the rest of our team at UnitedAg, live and breathe this philosophy. 2020 has been a tough year for all of us, and making our members feel safe, supported and less anxious is more important now than ever before.

Similar to the culture at Zappos, UnitedAg does not hold our member services reps accountable for call times. We care only whether our rep goes above and beyond for every member. That is how UnitedAg measures a successful call metric. We are here to develop a personal emotional connection with each and every member who calls us, and we are here to create more stories such as Betty's.

During the pandemic, our Health & Wellness Centers have helped

This Issue

CMO Message

Dr. Rosemary Ku reflects on an unusual year

Legislative Updates

Year-end updates from Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP

build connections within the community by being a resource to our members. We added a telehealth service at the centers to supplement the services we provide through Teladoc to match the increase in demand for virtual care. Early on in the pandemic, we realized the need to address our members' behavioral health needs and committed our entire innovation budget to offer these services to our members at no cost.

In his book, *Delivering Happiness*, Tony Hsieh quotes Morpheus from the movie *The Matrix*, "There is a difference between knowing the path and walking the path.

Let's walk the path.

Kirti Mutatkar is UnitedAg's president and CEO



At UnitedAg, we strive to bring innovative healthcare solutions to agribusiness by meeting our members' employee benefits needs, advocating for agriculture with lawmakers, and helping members comply with regulations.



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This newsletter is sponsored in part by



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Looking Back A Strong Year

2020 has been full of obstacles that tested our resilience, resolve and ability to adapt to new conditions. As a society, we will need to overcome some of the greatest challenges we've encountered to date: the COVID-19 pandemic, deeply rooted racial injustice, devastating natural disasters and unparalleled political strife. However, in the face of extreme challenges is also an opportunity for tremendous growth.

At UnitedAg, **our focus has always been to provide the highest level of service and most effective health benefits to our membership.** How we execute that vision through operations and communications has advanced significantly over the last several years. Instead of slowing us down, the events of 2020 pushed us harder to deliver greater empathy and better health to those we serve. The need has never been greater, and we met the challenge head-on by leveraging our community relationships and new technology.

Through our **Ambassador Program**, we've been able to strengthen the lines of communication with our employers. Even without our typical in-person events, we've facilitated constant dialogue on new benefits, engagement strategies and areas for future development through our Ambassadors. They are not just connectors but are also growing leaders in their organizations who help build the UnitedAg of the future.

Further, **we've continued to increase the utilization of our Health & Wellness Centers.** The centers have been instrumental for COVID-19 testing and care, but they are **fundamentally primary care centers.** The providers strive to develop long-term relationships with our membership and help manage chronic conditions and overall well-being in addition to acute health needs like COVID-19 or flu. This growing network of centers is critical for us to ensure access to high-quality providers who understand our members, not just for the current health crisis but also for years to come.

To make UnitedAg even more member-centric, we've added another communication channel through text messaging. Our partnership with ConsejoSano, a bilingual text messaging platform, allows us to

communicate with our membership on various campaigns, including diabetes awareness, preventive health, COVID-19 and mental health. Since the platform is bidirectional, it gives us another tool to learn more about our members' needs, and **we look forward to expanding our interactions through text messaging.**

Instead of freezing our innovation efforts, we continue to push forward. We launched our UnitedAg Innovation Pilot Program (UAIPP) with a subgroup of our employers committed to helping us vet innovative health solutions.

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With the testing efforts and feedback from UAIPP, we **made Spring Health, our behavioral health partner, available to the entire membership** in record time just as the pandemic was ramping up. Also, we completed our first round of biometric screenings with UAIPP employers, which helped identify key areas for improvement in chronic disease and lifestyle management for 2021.

Despite the hardships this year, the circumstances accelerated the development of a stronger healthcare ecosystem built on empathy and technology. Our UnitedAg ecosystem now fosters greater member engagement, more effective communication across various channels and expansion of health benefits for both physical and mental health. Thank you, 2020, for making our UnitedAg community stronger, more unified and better equipped to handle anything in the future.

Rosemary Ku, MD/MBA/MPH is chief medical officer at UnitedAg

California Legislative Updates from Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP

On November 3, 2020, the Presidential Election was held, along with 53 congressional races, 80 Assembly races, 20 Senate races, a recall, 11 propositions and one referendum. While Californians voted overwhelmingly for President-Elect Joe Biden, the down-ballot tells a different story.

The 2018 election resulted in a loss of several Republican seats in the State Assembly, leaving 17 Republicans and a Democrat super-majority of 61. In this election, Republicans were able to protect all 17 seats, fill a vacancy and flip a seat from Democrat to Republican. While this was a positive step towards a more balanced Assembly, Republican margins in almost every district continue to shrink.

The Republicans in the California State Senate were not as fortunate. Before this election, Democrats held 29 of the 40 State Senate seats. The November 3rd election resulted in Democrats flipping two seats, leaving the Republicans with a paltry nine members.

When it comes to ballot measures, California's voters stood their ground on taxes, although with a much smaller margin than we have seen in the past. In a win for agriculture, **Proposition 15 was defeated**, with 52% of voters voting no. Proposition 15 would have amended property tax protections created in Proposition 13 for commercial properties and improvements on those properties. The proponents of Proposition 15 made it known that if passed, they would continue to try and amend Proposition 13's property tax protections, so the defeat sent a strong message that a majority of Californians support property tax protections.

Similarly, voters' **approval of Proposition 22** evidenced the cracks in California's limitations on the classification of independent contractors established by a California

Supreme Court decision and subsequent legislation. Proposition 22 will allow for independent contractors in the rideshare profession with protections such as guaranteed wages.

So, what does this election mean for California agriculture? In some ways, it shows what we already knew: the California electorate is more moderate than the Legis-

lature. With California predicting significant revenue shortfalls for the coming years, we can expect the Legislature to seek new taxes. Other issues like COVID-19, housing, climate change and employee protections will continue to be a priority.

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There are those hoping that a Democratic administration will lead to a tempering of the far-left policies we have seen the past few years, as some priority issues shift to the National stage. The antagonistic relationship between California and the Trump Administration resulted in legislative policies, lawsuits and Executive Orders seemingly to just prove the point that California was different. With Joe Biden as President, this justification no longer exists but provides the opportunity for issues to be promoted nationally.

The 2021-2022 legislative session begins with the swearing-in of the Legislature on December 7. This will give us our first glimpse of how this election has impacted California policy and if voter reactions will lead to more balance or a continued march to prove California is set apart from the rest of the nation.

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From our partners

Are You Compliant?

Anti-Harassment Training Deadline Approaching

Time has come for California businesses with five or more employees to provide anti-harassment training for their employees. California's SB 1343 requires employers to provide one-hour training for non-supervisory employees and two hours of training for supervisors every two years. However, please note that farm labor contractors are the exception to this rule and are required to provide supervisors training on an annual basis to comply with California's Division of Labor Standards Enforcement. The deadline to provide this training to employees is January 1, 2021.

This new regulation makes a few assumptions, such as your business already has an anti-harassment policy in place. If your company does not have a policy created, time is of the essence, and it is urgent to get one established. If you have your policy, it would be an opportune time to review it and ensure it meets current regulatory standards. For policy requirements, view information posted on the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) website.

Employee training is required to include information and practical guidance regarding both federal and state regulations. Additionally, it should include examples of prohibited conduct and provide information on how to prevent abusive conduct and harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Training must be conducted within six months of an individual's hire date and employers are required to retain training documentation, as well as the materials utilized to train

employees for at least two years. Training can take place in a classroom setting, online or in any other effective, interactive format in a language that your employees understand and comprehend. For more information on DFEH, please visit dfeh.ca.gov.

For a successful anti-harassment program, your management team must make this issue a priority within your operation. Investing time into reviewing your company

policy and agency regulations, as well as ensuring you are providing quality training experience with your employees, will demonstrate your commitment to a safe work environment. It is equally important to take employee complaints seriously, complete a timely and thorough investigation and take appropriate disciplinary actions. If you should need guidance or assistance with developing your program, training or incident investigations, please do not hesitate to contact the AgSafe office for help.

Required Information

In addition to ensuring your company policy is compliant, employers are also required to provide their employees with copies of California's DFEH 185 pamphlet, as well as posting the following posters:

- DFEH's "California Law Prohibits Workplace Discrimination and Harassment" poster
- DFEH's "Transgender Rights in the Workplace" poster
- The Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's "Equal Opportunity is the Law" poster

For more information about worker safety, human resources, labor relations, pesticide safety or food safety issues, please visit agsafe.org, call (209) 526-4400 or email safeinfo@agsafe.org.

Theresa Kiehn is acting president and CEO of AgSafe



UnitedAg Programming

While a difficult year for all of us, 2020 brought many positives for our members, including vocational scholarships, a new health initiative and an A1c testing contest. Plus, check out the lineup for next year's HealthChats.

Meet the Vocational Scholarship Recipients

This year, the Agribusiness Education Foundation's (AEF) Vocational Scholarship Program awarded a total of \$4,225 to two deserving UnitedAg members seeking to further their education and specific training in agriculture.

Sandra Bravo of Mann Packing Co., Inc. in Salinas, California, received \$1,725 to complete a certification in the Workers' Compensation Claims Administration.

Petra Mena of V&V Farms, Inc., in Gonzales, California, received \$2,500 to pursue her career in Business Administration. This extra money creates an opportunity for Petra to further her agriculture-based accounting education, which in return impacts our community.



(l-r) Sandra Bravo of Mann Packing Co.; Petra Mena of V&V Farms, Inc.

When asked why she applied for the scholarship, Petra explained that she believes beginning a task is the most difficult part of something. "Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try."

Supporting the professional growth of individuals promotes the growth of agribusiness leadership, ensuring a thriving industry for generations to come.

Congratulations to you both! For more information on the Vocational Scholarship Program, please visit unitedag.org.

As a 501c3 nonprofit, AEF relies entirely on donations, which in turn fully fund our educational programs, including scholarships. Please consider donating at unitedag.org/donate.

A1c IN CHECK Campaign a Success

In recognition of Diabetes Awareness Month in November, we launched a campaign to educate our members about the importance of A1c screenings.

Through a simple finger prick blood test, doctors can monitor blood sugar levels for the previous three months, and it's the first step in diagnosing and treating diabetes.

Routine screenings such as A1c tests are a key part of preventive care. Since prediabetes, the precursor to diabetes, is highly treatable, catching it as early as possible is essential for your overall health.

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HealthChats: New Year, New Topics, New Schedule

Our monthly webinar series brings candid conversations with medical professionals about the health issues affecting our communities.



If you joined us in 2020, we'd love to hear from you! Send an email to membership@unitedag.org with your thoughts, comments or concerns. We're continually working to improve our programming, and your feedback is important to us.

Check out a preview of our 2021 schedule below (all times are 10 a.m. and subject to change). To see the full list and to register, visit unitedag.org/healthchats. We hope you'll join us!

Cancer Awareness

January 21 (En) | January 28 (Sp)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in every four deaths in the U.S. is due to cancer, making it the second leading cause of death in our country. Early detection, vaccines and healthy lifestyle choices can help keep many types of cancer at bay.

Join Dr. Rosemary Ku to learn more about the various types of cancer affecting our communities. Get insight on what factors may put you at a higher risk and learn more about the types of screenings available.

Cardiovascular Health

February 18 (En) | February 25 (Sp)

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the U.S. According to the CDC, one person succumbs to the disease every 36 seconds, and the illness affects everyone—including children.

Tune in to learn more about heart disease, including early warning signs and symptoms. Plus, Dr. Ku will discuss the simple lifestyle changes you can make to lower your risk.

All About Kidneys

March 18 (En) | March 25 (Sp)

How much do you know about your kidneys? These two small organs have a colossal task: filtering the blood in your body every 30 minutes! In addition to removing toxins, they help control blood pressure, stimulate red blood cell production, and even aid bone health!

Unfortunately, more than one in seven U.S. adults live with chronic kidney disease, a disorder in which the kidneys don't function properly, and most of these are undiagnosed.

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Diabetes continued from page 6

Diabetes is a critical topic for our community. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Hispanics are at a higher risk of developing the disease, and 80% of our workforce is Hispanic.

As part of the campaign, we incentivized A1c testing at our Health & Wellness Centers through gifts and a drawing for a Fitbit Inspire HR. We set a goal to administer 100 A1c tests between November 2 – 30. **We surpassed our goal, testing a total of 164 members!**

We also encouraged member companies to enter the employer challenge. Fifteen companies vied to place first and earn one of four prizes.

Congratulations **Babe Farms/BFI Harvesting/Coastal Family Farms, Innovative Produce/Faith Farming** and **Rancho Guadalupe** for placing first, second and third (respectively) in our large-group contest. Congratulations to **Robert Craig Winery** for winning the small-group contest.

Thank you to our sponsors, **Elite Medical** and **SAIN**, for providing the resources and continuous support that made this campaign so successful.

HealthChats continued from page 7

Join us to learn all about your kidneys. Dr. Ku will break down their function, describe symptoms of chronic kidney disease, discuss the factors in your life that may be putting you at risk and much more. Plus, she'll answer all of your questions after the presentation.

Health & Safety at Work

April 15 (En) | April 22 (Sp)

Personal health and occupational health go hand in hand. Tune in to learn more about how your health impacts workplace safety and get tips on how to minimize the risk of injury.

The Truth About Tobacco

May 20 (En) | May 27 (Sp)

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the U.S., and yet, almost 40 million adults still

smoke. Smoking harms nearly every organ, and for those who don't die, many of them live with smoking-related illnesses and disabilities. Chewing tobacco is just as poisonous to our bodies as smoking, though many might not know it.

Join us to hear more about the various effects tobacco has on our health, from the well-known to the lesser-known such as stroke. Learn about the severe impacts second-hand smoke has on the people around us, plus get tips on quitting if you're an active user.

Staff Anniversaries

November - January

We would like to recognize the staff celebrating their anniversaries with the organization. The team ranges from veterans in the field to emerging professionals, and all bring the perspectives and talent that make UnitedAg a leader in the industry.

Thank you all for your hard work, passion and dedication to our members!

Christina Lopez	22
Mayra Orozco	11
Omar Duarte	10
Sonia Aguilar	10
Robby Forste	8
Jaime Gardner	5
Araceli Varela	4
Judy Solis	4
Krista Williams	4
Emily Kirn	2
Mickayla LaBree	2
Aldous Ilagan	1
Bryan Morrow	1
Marvelene Phrakonekham	1
Rosemary Ku	1
Tiffany Narváez	1

New Members

October - November

Billiou Farming
Creekside Logging, Inc.
E & G Logging, Inc.
Exeter Mercantile Co.
Fulldraw Vineyards
JH Wine Consulting
JH Wine Group
Maxwell Irrigation District
MH Venture
Midnight Cellars, Inc.
Myriad Cellars
Storm Brothers, Inc.
Sullivan Drilling, Inc.
Twin Cities Tree Services