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PROTECTING THE FARMS THAT FEED YOUR FAMILY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Charlotte Mitchell

As I am writing this article for our Spring edition, I am not sure if I can honestly say Happy Spring! From cool days and cold evenings to suddenly hitting 90 degrees, the weather has left some of us wondering what happened to Spring? Even if the season never seemed to have greeted us this year, it's safe to say that we are working towards plenty of farmland conservation regardless.

By the end of Spring 2019, we will have protected another 750 acres of farmland in California's Central Valley. With our intense focus on helping as many farmers and landowners who have an interest in protecting the land as possible, we added a new staff member and then had to create a bit more office space to accommodate her. In February we welcomed Chelsea Molina to our team. Chelsea served the majority of her career with the California Farm Bureau Federation as the manager of the Political Affairs Department and more recently with the California Waterfowl Association as director of development. Chelsea brings a passion for agriculture and deep knowledge of the agricultural industry.



“BY THE END OF SPRING 2019, WE WILL HAVE PROTECTED ANOTHER 750 ACRES OF FARMLAND IN CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL VALLEY.”

Once Chelsea joined us, the small office that served the organization very well for many years became just too small for our four-person team. In mid-April, we moved to a larger and more

accessible location. We hope that when you are going through Elk Grove, you stop to see us, we would be delighted to have the visit.

In this issue we are celebrating the Menghetti family's 100-year-long farming history. As one of only two families in Stanislaus County to have permanently protected their property, Pete and Kathy Menghetti have a special story; they still live on and farm the land that Pete's father bought in 1919. Not many farming and ranching families in California can describe the changes that agriculture has had over the last 100 years. Read on to learn more about the Menghettis and how they protected the land to ensure it will be available to farm for the next 100 years, and beyond.



OUR MISSION

Help Farmers Protect the Best Farmland in the World

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



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Contributors:

- Melanee Cottrill
- Erin Davis
- Charlotte Mitchell

MEET CHELSEA MOLINA



As we work with more farmers and protect more farmland, our team is growing to meet the demand. We are pleased to announce Chelsea Molina as our new Conservation Project Coordinator.

Chelsea has a dynamic style and the experience needed to deeply connect farmers and CFT. A deep connection is paramount to building the trust and rapport required through the

lengthy process of protecting farmland among agency funders, farmers and their family members, and CFT.

“Chelsea has in-depth knowledge of agriculture and the diversity of the participants involved in conservation work. This knowledge will contribute greatly to the overall success of the California Farmland Trust,” said Charlotte Mitchell, CFT executive director. Chelsea will be in charge of conservation easement coordination and helping the CFT project team and landowners with a clear, concise, and orderly transaction process.

Chelsea comes to CFT from the California Waterfowl Association as director of development and prior to that managed the Political Affairs Department of the California Farm Bureau Federation. Thanks to an internship in Washington, DC where she worked on the Farm Bill and agricultural policy, Chelsea has a keen awareness that it takes many contributing parties to succeed in conservation.

Visit www.cafarmtrust.org/our-team/ to learn more about Chelsea and help us welcome her!

WINE STEMS PAINT NIGHT



Join us for a festive Friday night! Watch the sun go down from the picturesque patio at Hannah Nicole Vineyards, while sipping local wine, enjoying appetizers, and painting your own wine stems. You can create your own unique painting, colors on the painting are fully customizable!

Each ticket includes painting, 1 glass of wine, and appetizers. Additional wine will be available for purchase by the glass. This will be an outdoor event, please come dressed comfortably.

Visit www.cafarmtrust.org/events to purchase your tickets today!

WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES... ANOTHER OPENS!



We MOVED! With your help we are growing - more farms, more staff to serve farmers... means we need more space.

Our new office:
9245 Laguna Springs Dr., Suite 110
Elk Grove, CA 95758

A GOOD LIFE

100 Years of Family Farming



“It’s been a good life,” Pete says softly with a wistful smile. He and his wife of 63 years, Kathy, are seated at their oak kitchen table, where they still welcome friends every Friday evening. At 89, Pete’s voice is sometimes so soft his listener has to lean in to hear him, but his blue eyes still light up when he talks about their ranch, which has now been in the family for 100 years.

For Pete, a good life is one spent on the land his father purchased near Modesto in 1919. Not much of a traveler, “Pete was ready to stay at home the rest of his life when he was only 30,” Kathy chuckles with a sly look at her husband. “I pretty much enjoy the ranch, and Kathy’s fixed up the house pretty nice here,” Pete explains with a modest shrug. He and Kathy raised their four children on this farm where Pete has lived his entire life.

Now, 100 years after it came into the family, the farm is still the center of Menghetti family life. Pete and Kathy mark the years not only by the ages of their children, but by the crops they grew. In 1958, the year their second child was born, Pete decided to plow under his year-old grapevines to plant almonds instead. “To heck

with that,” he decided. At that time, Pete was only the second farmer in Stanislaus County to plant almonds.

“PETE AND KATHY MARK THE YEARS NOT ONLY BY THE AGES OF THEIR CHILDREN, BUT BY THE CROPS THEY GREW. ”

“Pete was never afraid to try something new,” says Tim Byrd, CFT Director. Having grown up on the ranch next door, Tim was always treated like one of the family. For Tim, the Menghettis are not only like a second set of parents, but also very intelligent, industrious people who have contributed significantly to agriculture.

Pete started his education at Shiloh Elementary, the same tiny country school his children would later attend. He fondly remembers his school years, mostly because his teacher,



Mrs. Simmons, “didn’t take any sass from anybody. She was awfully fair and square. I really admired her and learned a lot from her.”

It’s clear the trait that Pete admired in his teacher is one he took to heart. He and Kathy have fought for agriculture time and again, not taking any sass from anybody. As Modesto’s population swelled from 30,000 people in 1960 to today’s almost 200,000, the city clawed further into its surrounding farmlands. To slow this urban sprawl, Pete initially joined the Planning Commission, but soon decided he was not cut out for so many meetings. He then worked to get his neighbor, Bill Ulm, elected to the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors in 1973. With Pete and Kathy’s unrelenting support, Bill was instrumental in implementing A-2-40 zoning, requiring parcels to be at least 40 acres in order to protect farms and prevent their subdivision into small ranchettes.

Forty-acre parcels provided a strong start to protect farming, but that wasn’t enough for Pete and Kathy. Tim Byrd describes the Menghettis as “absolutely committed to agriculture, committed to the county, and lovers of our community.” As the Bay Area economy boomed, it created an all-consuming demand for housing. Pete and Kathy were dismayed as they watched the world’s best farmland being decimated to provide housing, strip malls, and parking lots for the nearly 400,000 people who came to live in the county from 1960 to 2010. So in 2007, when the Menghettis found out they could protect the family farm forever from both division and development with an easement, Pete immediately called CFT.

Because Pete and Kathy were so certain that protecting their land was the right thing to do, they approached their neighbors, Bill and Marilyn Ulm, about doing the same. Initially the Ulms were skeptical. But as they saw more affordable housing built nearby in response to the 2009 Great Recession, they ultimately decided it was the right thing to do. “I had to talk to Bill for quite a while to convince him that was the way to go,” Pete recalled. In 2011 the Ulms put their 150 acres in the farmland trust to permanently protect them from urbanization.

Pete and Kathy are still enjoying a good life. They’ve protected 310 acres of the world’s best ag land and were instrumental in ensuring Stanislaus County’s farmland doesn’t become a jumble of ranchette “farms” too small to feed our growing population. But they have more to do. The Menghettis and the Ulms have the only permanently protected farms in Stanislaus County. “I can’t believe more people in Stanislaus County aren’t in the farmland trust” Kathy lamented with a shake of her head. She and Pete hope more people will support farmland conservation because, as Kathy says, “We’re still farming, we’re still eating. And if we want to keep eating, we have to keep our land for farming.” That’s Pete and Kathy: They have spent their lives not just farming, but also promoting and protecting farming as a way of life. They have enjoyed all that farming has offered their family, their friends, and their community.



“WE’RE STILL FARMING, WE’RE STILL EATING. AND IF WE WANT TO KEEP EATING, WE HAVE TO KEEP OUR LAND FOR FARMING”

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS: PRACTICAL AND CONVENIENT GIVING



JON HARVEY, BOARD TREASURER

Would you like to be more strategic about when you make donations to CFT? Are you trying to donate enough to get a tax break, but not quite feeling ready? A donor advised fund (DAF) may be the answer. While the name sounds complicated, don't let it fool you. A DAF is actually a simple way to be more strategic when it comes to charitable giving.

In essence, a DAF is a specialized brokerage account. A DAF is typically set up with major brokerages, and sometimes at a community foundation. Once the account is established, the funds in it are invested in securities – just like in a 529 Plan or

401(k). And like gifts to charities, contributions to a DAF are tax deductible at the time they are made. But unlike a 401(k) or 529 Plan, funds deposited into a DAF are no longer your property; rather they “belong” to the brokerage and are distributed based upon your advice (hence the name donor “advised” fund).

Once you have opened and made a deposit to your DAF, you can take your time in making your charitable gifts. The funds in your DAF can only be used for charitable gifts, but they can be gifted on your schedule. That means you can participate in a giving day to take advantage of matching gifts, make a gift to help a particular campaign that speaks to you, or make a year-end gift to your favorite charities. Whatever you like – your gift, on your schedule.

When Jon and Kitty Harvey were considering their options for strategic giving, they ultimately decided a DAF was the way to go. Jon says, “In our case, a DAF was far more practical than a Private Foundation for stewarding our charitable giving. The DAF allows us a convenient buffer to make charitable donations optimizing for tax purposes, but then direct the funds to various charities whenever we desire in the future.”

To learn more about donor advised funds and other creative ways to give, visit www.cafarmtrust.org/giving

RUFF WOOF WOOF ARF!



That's big dog speak for thank you!

What a day! In just one day, supporters like you came together to raise \$22,000 for farmland conservation. This year was our most successful Big Day of Giving event ever – all thanks to you!



Whether you liked a post on Facebook, shared a video, created a peer-to-peer campaign, made a gift...or just sat back and watched the fun, your support mattered. The funds you raised will go a long way towards protecting farmland today, tomorrow, and forever.

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

E. & J. Gallo Winery

In 1933, brothers Ernest and Julio Gallo set out on what would become a great adventure, when they founded the E. & J. Gallo Winery. From humble beginnings producing just 177,000 gallons of wine in Modesto, to over a dozen wineries selling over 100 brands in 90 countries, E. & J. Gallo Winery has always remained a family company with an unwavering commitment to quality.

From its inception, E. & J. Gallo Winery has sought to turn challenges into opportunities and change into growth. And it has succeeded remarkably well in that endeavor. In 1966, it became the largest US winery by sales volume. And in 1972, Ernest and Julio were featured on the cover of Time Magazine. The company continued to press forward, being named the Best American Wine Producer by the International Wine & Spirits Competition in 2000.

Through all the opportunities and growth, Gallo has remained at its heart a family company, committed to making a difference in the communities where its team lives, works, and plays. The company proudly proclaims: “As a family-owned company, we

believe in the importance of preserving and enhancing the land for future generations to enjoy. Co-founders Ernest and Julio Gallo laid the foundation for our commitment to the environment in the 1930’s and it is still evident today in how we manage all aspects of our business. Adhering to sustainable practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible and socially equitable, we educate and inspire others to conserve and preserve.”

As part of its commitment to preserving the land, Gallo is proud to support many nonprofits – including the California Farmland Trust. Gallo has been a supporter of CFT since its inception. Gallo attorney Tim Byrd was a founding board member and is still on the board today. Tim says, “looking back in 50 years, our grandchildren will undoubtedly point to preservation of our Central Valley farmland, the most productive farmland in the world, as one of our most significant achievements.”

We couldn’t agree more.

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