

People & Places

Too much of a good thing in California

Joe Valente keeps orchards, vineyards growing despite quirky weather

By JULIA HOLLISTER  
For the Capital Press

LODI, Calif. — Joe Valente dealt with drought for years; now he’s got just the opposite problem. The vineyard and orchard manager for Kautz Farms has water — too much of it — on his mind. “The old adage is ‘Save it for a rainy day,’ but how do we save all this rain for the dry days? After five years of drought here in San Joaquin County, we are currently at double the amount of rainfall that is average for this area,” he said.

It’s not just the rain that has created problems. A levee break has flooded parts of the operation. “In some areas of the vineyards and orchards, the water depth has been up to 5 feet deep. We have lost approximately 100 acres of almonds because of the flooding of the fields,” Valente said. “Even though grapes can tolerate flood waters compared to almonds, we are very concerned with the length and depth of water in the vineyards.” The levee is along the Mokelumne River, which flows from Comanche Reservoir. Making repairs has been a challenge because the levee is inaccessible to trucks. “We have used approximately two thousand 2,000-pound sandbags and put them in place with excavators,” he said. “The break in the levee



Courtesy of Joe Valente

Lodi vineyard and orchard manager Joe Valente says water — too much or too little — has been a problem for San Joaquin growers.

Western Innovator

Joe Valente

Hometown: Lodi, Calif.

Age: 57

Family: Wife Claudia, two grown children, three grandchildren

Hometown: Lodi, Calif.

Occupation: Vineyard and orchard manager at Kautz Farms overseeing approximately 3,500 acres of winegrapes, cherries and almonds.

Quote: “I have a passion for agriculture and we in agriculture need to tell our story, whether it is to third-grade students, high school students, teachers, local government representatives, state legislatures and those in Washington, D.C.”



is approximately a half-mile from our vineyards on a neighbor’s property. We have all been working together to repair the levee break, because the water is not only affecting the neighbor but also our vineyards and orchards.”

Despite his many responsibilities, Valente continues to be active in many agricultural organizations. He serves on numerous boards and committees, including the North San Joaquin Water Conservation District Board, California Farm

Bureau, San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, San Joaquin Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education, North San Joaquin Water Conservation, the San Joaquin County Fair, Lodi Winegrape Commission Research Committee, Lodi Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Committee, Spray Safe Committee and Tokay High FFA Advisory Committee. Bruce Blodgett, executive director of the San Joaquin County Farm Bureau, recognized Valente’s contributions. “Joe Valente has been a tireless volunteer for agriculture,” he said. “Whether it’s in the Lodi area with his work on the chamber ag committee, wine grape commission or the local water district, you will see Joe attending so many meetings to represent agriculture. In the

county his work on our board and committee, as well as being a fair board member, means Joe is always in motion and moving onto the next meeting. It’s great to have volunteers with this kind of energy and time to serve our industry.” There is more than heavy rainfall to challenge farmers. “There has always been several factors that influence our operations and our prices: supply and demand, weather and legislation and regulations,” Valente said. “In the coming years, California agriculture will be facing the challenges of a change from a 60-hour work week to a 40-hour work week. This will impact all of our employees and this could also affect the crops that we grow. We will be looking at more mechanization or crops that are less labor intensive.”

Calendar

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Through Saturday April 8

86th Idaho FFA State Leadership Conference. College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls. [www.idahoffa.org/conferences-conventions/](http://www.idahoffa.org/conferences-conventions/)

Saturday, April 8

Community Food System Gathering. 9 a.m.-noon. Broadway Commons, 1300 Broadway St., Salem, Ore. A healthy community begins with a healthy food system. Everyone involved in creating the Mid-Valley Food System, including farmers, gardeners, food processors and eaters are invited. The purpose is to give all stakeholders in the Mid-Valley food system a chance to network and discuss pressing issues with their peers. The event will also feature a keynote address about “The Future of Oregon’s Agricultural Land” from Nellie McAdams with Rogue Farm Corps. It will conclude with an optional tour of the Salem Saturday Market. Cost: Free. Website: <http://bit.ly/2mZy2oy>

Goat Seminar. 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. 7211 40th Ct. NE, Olympia, Wash. Learn about goat healthcare and nutrition, along with a short session about packgoats. Cost: \$25 public; \$7.50 4H/FFA. Website: <http://edelweissacresobers.com/>

Tuesday, April 11

Oregon Ryegrass Seed Growers Commission. 6-8 p.m. Cascade Grill Restaurant, 110 Opal St. NE, Albany, Ore. The meeting will involve preparing the budget for the coming year. [www.ryegrass.com](http://www.ryegrass.com)

Do Your Kids Want the Business? Planning for Yes or No. 7:30 to 9 a.m. Hayden’s Lakefront Grill, 8187 SW Tualatin-Sherwood Road, Tualatin, Ore. Presented by Steve Bennett, Farleigh Wada Witt and the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. 800-859-7609, <http://bit.ly/2h3k8Ck>

Wednesday, April 12

Exploring the Small Farm Dream. 5-8 p.m. OSU SOREC Research Building Library, 569 Haley Road, Central Point, Ore. This three-session course provides an excellent framework to help new farmers assess their skills and interests, learn the realities of farm business ownership, and become connected to local resources. The aim is to help those thinking about small-scale commercial farming

learn what it will take to start and manage a farm business, and decide whether that is something they really want to pursue. \$50 per person, \$75 for two from the same farm. Website: <http://bit.ly/Jackson-SmallFarmDream>

Local Meat Marketing and USDA Processing Workshops. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Expo Center, 45224 284th Ave. SE, Enumclaw, Wash. Workshops will focus on market demand for local meats, economics and processing options to help determine what is best for your livestock enterprise. Contact: Patrice Barrentine at King County Agriculture Program at Patrice.Barrentine@kingcounty.gov or (206) 477-1556. Cost: Free. Website: <https://goo.gl/forms/JENmH-1PAWkQZDaH2>

Thursday, April 13

Oregon Mint Commission budget hearing. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. White Buffalo Bistro, 4040 Westcliff Drive (Exit 62 I-84), Hood River, Ore. Any producer of Oregon mint oil has the right to be heard on the commission’s budget for next year.

Saturday, April 15

Oregon Women for Agriculture 30th annual auction and dinner. 5-9 p.m. Linn County Fair & Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Road E, Albany, Ore. Website: [owaonline.org](http://owaonline.org)

Wednesday-Friday April 19-21

National Organic Standards Board meeting. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, 1550 Court Place, Denver, Colo. During meetings, the board listens to public comments, discusses agenda items and then votes in a public forum. Website: <http://bit.ly/2gKsKgb>

Thursday, April 20

Four-Part Farm/Ranch Succession Planning Workshop. 6-8:30 p.m. Canby High School, 721 SW Fourth Ave., Canby, Ore. A free four-part workshop on succession planning with one-hour personal counseling sessions for your family after each workshop. Light dinner 6 to 6:30, workshop 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Course 1 on April 20 is an Overview of Farm Succession planning. Course 2 on May 4 is Goal Setting for You and Your Family, Course 3 on May 18 is Getting Organized, and Course 4 on June 1 is Passing on Management Roles. RSVP required. Organized by Clackamas Small Business Development Center and Rogue Farm Corps. Cost: Free. <http://bit.ly/2opTHQo>

Oregon Processed Vegetable Commission. 7 p.m. Oregon Farm Bureau Building, 1320 Capitol St. NE, Salem, Ore. A public hearing will be held to receive comments

of the commission’s 2017-18 proposed budget and the assessment rates for the 2017 crop year. Members of the public are welcome to present their comments, either orally or in writing. Written comments must be submitted before April 20.

Friday-Saturday April 21-22

Second Annual Horsedrawn Vehicle and Equipment Auction, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Yamhill County Fairgrounds, 2070 NE Lafayette Ave., McMinnville, Ore. Preview starts at 8 a.m. both days. Auction benefits the Youth Educational Scholarship Foundation. [www.pacificoverland-expo.com](http://www.pacificoverland-expo.com)

Saturday, April 22

Local Meat Marketing and USDA Processing Workshops. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Carnation Farms, Carnation, Wash. Workshops will focus on market demand for local meats, economics and processing options to help determine what is best for your livestock enterprise. Contact: Patrice Barrentine at King County Agriculture Program at Patrice.Barrentine@kingcounty.gov or (206) 477-1556. Cost: Free. Website: <https://goo.gl/forms/JENmH1PAWkQZDaH2>

Map & Compass Workshop. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. University of Idaho Extension Office in Kootenai County, 1808 North Third St., Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. The program features 2-3 hours indoors interpreting various natural resource maps, followed by field activities using magnetic compasses. Those wishing to participate should pre-register by Friday, April 14, at the University of Idaho Extension office in Kootenai County. Cost: \$10. Website: [www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar](http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry/calendar)

Saturday-Tuesday April 22-25

California FFA State Convention. Fresno Convention & Entertainment Center, 700 M St., Fresno, Calif. Website: [www.calaged.org](http://www.calaged.org)

Monday, April 24

Oregon Blueberry Commission. Noon. Chemeketa Events at Winema, 4001 Winema Place NE, Salem, Ore. A public hearing will be held on the commission’s proposed budget for the next fiscal year. For information, call 503-364-2944.

Thursday, April 27

Growing Forest Mushrooms workshop. 6:15-8:45 p.m. The workshop will cover techniques for growing a variety of edible forest mushrooms, including oyster and shitake mushrooms. Kootenai County Fairgrounds, Building 2, 4056 N. Government Way, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Cost: \$15 by April 21. Website: <http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry>

Friday, April 28

Forest Edibles workshop. 1-5 p.m. This workshop will cover the range of edible non-timber products that can be harvested from forests. Kootenai County Fairgrounds, Building 2, 4056 N. Government Way, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Cost: \$15 by April 21. Website: <http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/forestry>

Saturday-Sunday April 29-30

Oregon Ag Fest. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Oregon State Fairgrounds, 2330 17th St. NE, Salem, Ore. Ag Country activities, a petting zoo, pony rides, toy tractor races, a craft and garden show and family entertainment make for a fun and informative day. A ranch breakfast is served on Saturday from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$6. Sunday Ag Fest hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Ag Fest cost: Free for 12 and under. \$9 for 13 and older. Free parking. <http://oragfest.com/>

Thursday, May 4

Four-Part Farm/Ranch Succession Planning Workshop. 6-8:30 p.m. Canby High School, 721 SW Fourth Ave., Canby, Ore. A free four-part workshop on succession planning with one-hour personal counseling sessions for your family after each workshop. Light dinner 6 to 6:30, workshop 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Course 2 on May 4 is Goal Setting for You and Your Family, Course 3 on May 18 is Getting Organized, and Course 4 on June 1 is Passing on Management Roles. RSVP required. Organized by Clackamas Small Business Development Center and Rogue Farm Corps. Cost: Free. <http://bit.ly/2opTHQo>

Wednesday-Thursday May 10-11

Managing for Resilience: Northwest Grazing Conference 2017. 8 a.m.-7 p.m. Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate, Pendleton, Ore. Featured speakers are Kit Pharo and Fred Provenza. Pharo, cattle breeder and owner of Pharo Cattle Co., says, “The most profitable cow-calf producers that I know of have a low-input, grass-based program with very efficient, low-maintenance cows. These are also the happiest producers I know of.” Provenza, professor emeritus at Utah State University, is part of the BEHAVE team. BEHAVE principles, based on 30 years of research: If we understand how animals learn, we can train the animals to fit the landscapes instead of changing the landscape to fit the animals. Cost: \$227 by April 14, \$267 after. Website: <http://bit.ly/2kpT9yb>

Thursday-Saturday May 11-13

87th Washington FFA State Convention. Washington State University,

Pullman. [www.washingtonffa.org/calendar/](http://www.washingtonffa.org/calendar/)

Thursday, May 18

Four-Part Farm/Ranch Succession Planning Workshop. 6-8:30 p.m. Canby High School, 721 SW Fourth Ave., Canby, Ore. A free four-part workshop on succession planning with one-hour personal counseling sessions for your family after each workshop. Light dinner 6 to 6:30, workshop 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Course 3 on May 18 is Getting Organized, and Course 4 on June 1 is Passing on Management Roles. RSVP required. Organized by Clackamas Small Business Development Center and Rogue Farm Corps. Cost: Free. <http://bit.ly/2opTHQo>

Family Business Charters. 7:30 to 9 a.m. BridgePort BrewPub, 1313 NW Marshall St., Portland. A family business charter sets forth the essential rules, obligations, and responsibilities relating to ownership and management of the business, as well as the family values that will help sustain the business for future generations. Presented by A. Jeffery Bird, Lane Powell PC and the Austin Family Business Program, Oregon State University. \$40 per person. 800-859-7609, <http://bit.ly/2gPuLyy>

Saturday-Sunday May 27-28

Alpaca Shearing Day and Sale. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Alpacas of Oregon, 21345 SW Aebischer Road, Sherwood, Ore. Join Easy-Go Farm at Alpacas of Oregon and take a break from the Memorial Day Winery Tours to watch the alpacas get their annual haircuts. Get up close, hand feed them and handle their luxurious fleece. Shearing Day is Saturday. On Sunday, learn to felt an alpaca gift. Phone 503-348-6954 to reserve a spot. \$25-\$75 covers your materials and instruction. Hand-spinners, knitters and other fiber artists will find fleece and yarn. Visitors can chat with four long-time livestock breeders who’ve raised llamas, horses, sheep and goats. [www.easygo-farm.net/AOOMemDay](http://www.easygo-farm.net/AOOMemDay)

Thursday, June 1

Four-Part Farm/Ranch Succession Planning Workshop. 6-8:30 p.m. Canby High School, 721 SW Fourth Ave., Canby, Ore. A free four-part workshop on succession planning with one-hour personal counseling sessions for your family after each workshop. Light dinner 6 to 6:30, workshop 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Course 4 on June 1 is Passing on Management Roles. RSVP required. Organized by Clackamas Small Business Development Center and Rogue Farm Corps. Cost: Free. <http://bit.ly/2opTHQo>

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Correction

A March 24 story, “China boosts apple exports to U.S.,” correctly reported the volume of Chinese apple production as 43.8 million metric tons annually but incorrectly reported the equivalent in 40-pound boxes as 24.1 billion. The correct figure is 2.4 billion.

The Capital Press regrets the error.

Correction policy

Accuracy is important to Capital Press staff and to our readers.

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