



Farmer Newsletter

A newsletter made especially for farmers of the Inland Empire!



In this issue...

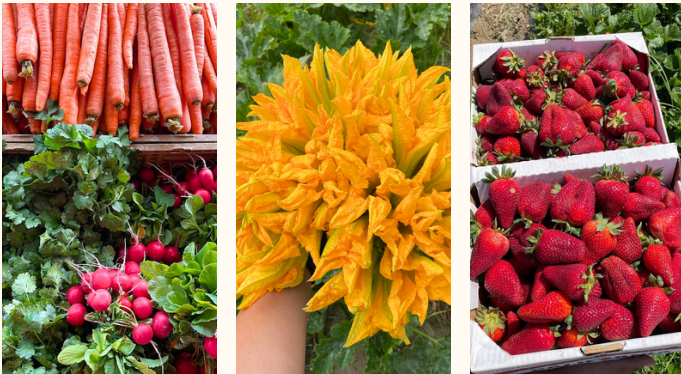
Meet farmer Ezequiel of Family Farms Chino, learn about an upcoming egg production workshop and a farmer appreciation day, see funding opportunities, identify some facts about cover crops, & protecting your plants from the sun!



Ezequiel



Ezequiel Chavez is a multi-generational farmer born into and raised by a family of farmers whose knowledge of cultivation goes too far back to count. Ezequiel says, "I don't know how far I can go back. All I know is that my family has been farming for so many generations." Ezequiel began farming on ½ acre over 23 years ago and has since expanded his operation to 12 acres in production, where he grows seasonal vegetables and strawberries.



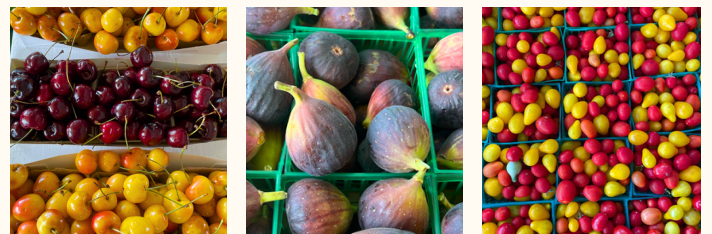
Farming is not an easy job. The days are long, the work never ends, and farmers are constantly adapting to new challenges, but Ezequiel takes pride when he sees his crop standing robust, the culmination of his hard work and nurturing. He is happy to provide fresh fruits and vegetables of great quality the community can enjoy. During strawberry season, Family Farms also offers a U-Pick experience to the public. This year, they were recognized by Congresswoman Norma Torres for their high-quality, flavorful strawberries in honor of National Pick Strawberries Day. **If you are interested in supporting your local farmer, visit Family Farm's Produce Stand at 13406 Cypress Ave, Chino, CA 91710.**



Ezequiel hopes to continue the farming family legacy through his wife and children, who are very involved at the farm and help with planting, harvesting, outreach, and managing sales at the family farm stand. His work days are long, starting at 3am and finishing at 7pm, but the long day's work is satisfying knowing that he is able to provide for his family through farming.



Staff in our Sustainable Agriculture team started working with Ezequiel at the beginning of this year, when we conducted soil testing at his farm to help him learn more about the quality of his soil and how he could improve it. We also connected Ezequiel with financial and technical support opportunities through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. He is now the proud owner of a new, more energy-efficient tractor, courtesy of the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Ezequiel says he is impressed by how fast technology and tools have progressed from when he first started farming, "I started with a push mower, and now I have machinery and tools that make the job easier."



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

California Underserved and Small Producer Grant Program (CUSP)

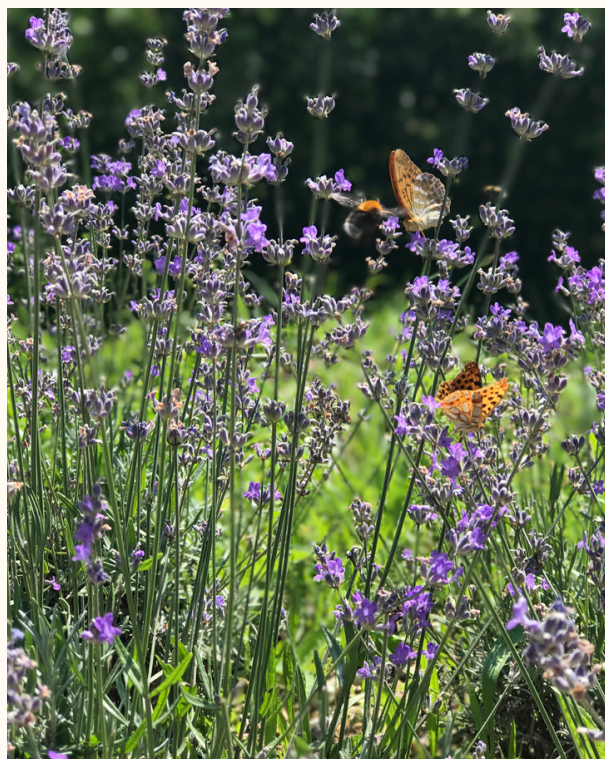
We are excited to announce that **IERCD was awarded \$1,100,000 from the CDFA 2023 CUSP Grant Program to administer a Drought Relief Direct Farmer Grant.** Through this program, we will provide direct relief funds to support small and socially disadvantaged producers recovering from drought impacts, such as increased water costs and crop loss due to water availability. These will be reimbursement grants for eligible expenses. **We intend to offer four award tiers (\$2,500, \$5,000, \$10,000, and \$20,000)** to provide direct funds at the level most appropriate for each applicant. More information and application links will be available at iercd.org. **The first round of applications opens October 2023!** For questions, email us at CUSP@iercd.org.



Wild Farm Alliance (WFA)

Wild Farm Alliance received funding from the California Department of Food and Agriculture to support California farmers in completing conservation plans for their farms. Interested farmers can work with WFA to create one of the following types of plans: **Beneficial Bird Habitat Plan, Pollinator Habitat Plan and Carbon Farm Plan.** Together, they will assess your farm's natural resources and concerns, identify multiple opportunities for improvements and prioritize plans for the best outcomes. **The completed plans will include some of the following: a) an overview of your objectives, b) your current farm conditions, c) a timeline for planting, d) site preparation, e) plant lists, and f) maintenance.** The plans will help you be better prepared when applying for assistance with state and federal agencies such as CDFA and NRCS. Some of the many practices that could be outlined in the plans include: **Hedgerows, Windbreaks, Riparian Buffers, Grassed Waterways, Filter Strips, & Field Borders.** If you are interested in working with Wild Farm Alliance to create a conservation plan, **please complete the interest form at the link below and they will be in touch.** **Complete the Interest Form Here:**

www.wildfarmalliance.org/july_enews_2023#NewsChart



Plant Health & Productivity Tips

COVER CROPS

Improve the Health of Your Soil and Manage Weeds with Cover Crops!

- Cover crops are one of the cornerstones of sustainable agriculture. They add organic matter, suppress weeds, provide habitat for beneficial insects, and improve nutrient availability! Planting a cover crop on a fallow garden bed or farm field is a classic organic gardening technique to help limit weed growth. Good news is that multiple types of cover crops can be planted throughout the year! Your local Urban Agriculture/Small Farms Advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension has prepared a fact sheet for more information on this topic. **Check it out here:** iercd.org/sustainable-ag



Summer Gardening Tip - Sunblock for Plants!

We all know it's important to apply sunscreen before heading outside, especially on a sunny summer day. But did you know that plants can get sunburn too? While you can't protect them with your sunscreen lotion, there are other ways you can prevent sun damage in your garden!

- Prevent sun damage by selecting native plants and plants that are adapted to the light conditions of the area. If you will be transplanting established plants, avoid moving them into significantly more sun than they are used to.
- Apply a 3 to 6 inch layer of wood chips or other biodegradable material around the root zone of the plants. Leave a few inches space from the plant stem or tree trunk to discourage pests and prevent diseases such as crown rot.
- Put up some shade fabric over shorter plants, or wrap the trunk of at-risk trees, when they are getting too much sunlight. For your trees, you can apply a coat of white indoor latex paint diluted with equal parts water to any areas that are not receiving enough shade from the tree's canopy.
- Proper pruning also helps in sunscald prevention: never prune more than 20% of the canopy in one year to maintain sufficient shade for the bark.

For more information on this topic, visit GrowOrganic.com



UPCOMING EVENTS

CDEFA Small Flock Egg Producers Workshop

Join the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) for a day to learn all about chickens, biosecurity, poultry diseases, egg quality and requirements to sell eggs in CA. Participants will experience a one-of-a-kind workshop experience. The day will be filled with workshops all about chickens and other egg laying fowl as well as hands-on activities to help drive home your learning experience. Participants will learn everything from raising a happy, healthy flock to candling eggs to requirements to sell eggs in CA.

Register for the workshop through EventBrite:
www.eventbrite.com/e/small-flock-egg-producers-workshop-tickets-610147677127

Thursday, September 21st 9:30am-2pm
San Bernardino Registrar of Voters
777 E. Rialto Ave San Bernardino, CA 92415



IERCD Second Annual Farmer Appreciation Day

Join us for our annual Farmer Appreciation Day Event Thursday, October 12th, from 4 -7 pm to celebrate and thank all the hardworking farmers and ranchers who plow, sow, grow, and harvest to feed our communities in honor of National Farmer's Day. The event will feature free food, door prizes, farmer-to-farmer networking, a conservation workshop, grant application assistance, and more!

Thursday, October 12, 2023 4pm-7pm
Location: Don Gaspar's Farm
7050 Schaefer Ave Chino, CA 91710

