

Let's get to know each other

Come for a virtual farm visit and have a chat

If you live in one of California's great cities, you rarely get to rub shoulders with farmers or ranchers. We don't tend to hang out at the bistros of West Hollywood or in SOMA cafés.

Everyone enjoys the fruits of our labors, though. We bet you'd enjoy getting to know us, too, as real people – hard-working, innovative, interesting individuals. We'd sure like to get to know you better.

Farmers have become a rare breed. In the early 1900's, roughly 80 percent of the population worked in farming. Today, that has dwindled to around two percent. No wonder most folks know very little about modern farming. There aren't many farmers left! And that trend continues.

Family farming is alive and well in California



Family rice farmers Tom and Steve Butler

Yet, farms still abound throughout the state! What's more, nearly all of California's farms are multi-generational family farms. From all backgrounds and cultures, our farm families care for the land, the environment and their local communities. We work, live and raise our families on our farms, looking after them so that our great grandkids can take up the tradition. We genuinely want you to know who we are and what we do. And, it's high time we learned more about you, too.

In 2008, several farm groups got together in Lodi, California, to discuss the need for farmers to do a better job of talking with our customers, and who better to tell the story of farming than us – your food producers!

And so the seed was planted for KnowACaliforniaFarmer.com. It is a content-rich, robust and highly interactive website that will change daily with farmers uploading our own photographs, video stories and blogs. All have commenting functionality to allow you – the consumer – to have conversations with us, the folks who grow your food, fiber, flowers and other ornamental horticultural products.

Farmers are social creatures

Farmers love the new social media world. Because some of us live in remote locations, our social circles have historically been limited to our local communities. Social media allows us to build friendships with other farmers across the country –

even across the world. And now we are starting to connect with non-farmers via social media, too. We're learning a lot through meaningful conversations. So are our new friends!

An estimated 80,000 farmers in California produce more than 400 food crops, including nearly half of all U.S.-grown fruits, nuts and vegetables. Across the nation, American families eat our products, some of which are produced *only* in California. Lucky are the families who have access to it all – fresh from the farm – right in their backyards. No lengthy stays in cold storage. No long haul refrigerated transportation. Just tasty, fresh goodness. And, at some of the lowest prices in the world!

Until it's gone



Family rice farmer Charley Mathews

But that luscious abundance is at risk of disappearing. California's farming families struggle with onerous rules and regulations that increase our costs and erode our ability to earn a living by farming. Many of our neighbors are looking across state lines for more farm-friendly regions to relocate their businesses. Without them, citizens of California will come to rely on food imports produced without the same oversight on food safety. Together, we can work to ensure California regulators don't cause us to move away or quit farming completely.

Meet some California farmers. See how we turn California sunshine, cool breezes and a love of growing things into some of the world's best food. Hear our stories. Ask questions. Share opinions. Have a conversation. Visit us at KnowACaliforniaFarmer.com.