

# California Strawberry Commission Update

## UCCE Ventura County

### 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Strawberry Production Meeting

September 12, 2025

Bill Turechek - *VP Research*



# Agenda

## **1. Introduction to CSC**

- a. Brief history & departmental structure
- b. Acreage, volume, and pricing data

## **2. Label Update**

## **3. Monterey County Lawsuit**

## **4. Joint Legislative Action Committee Audit of DPR**

## **5. DPR SprayDays and Santa Cruz Protest**

## **6. Packaging Plastic Regulation**

## **7. Monarch Butterfly Update**

## **8. CSC Research**



# Who is the California Strawberry Commission?

In 1956, the California Strawberry Advisory Board (CSAB) was formed under California law as a pseudo state government agency to represent California strawberry growers

In 1995, the CSAB became the California Strawberry Commission – allowing CSC to engage in “political issues”



The CSC represents the 300+ growers, shippers, and processors in California.

Research

Grower Education

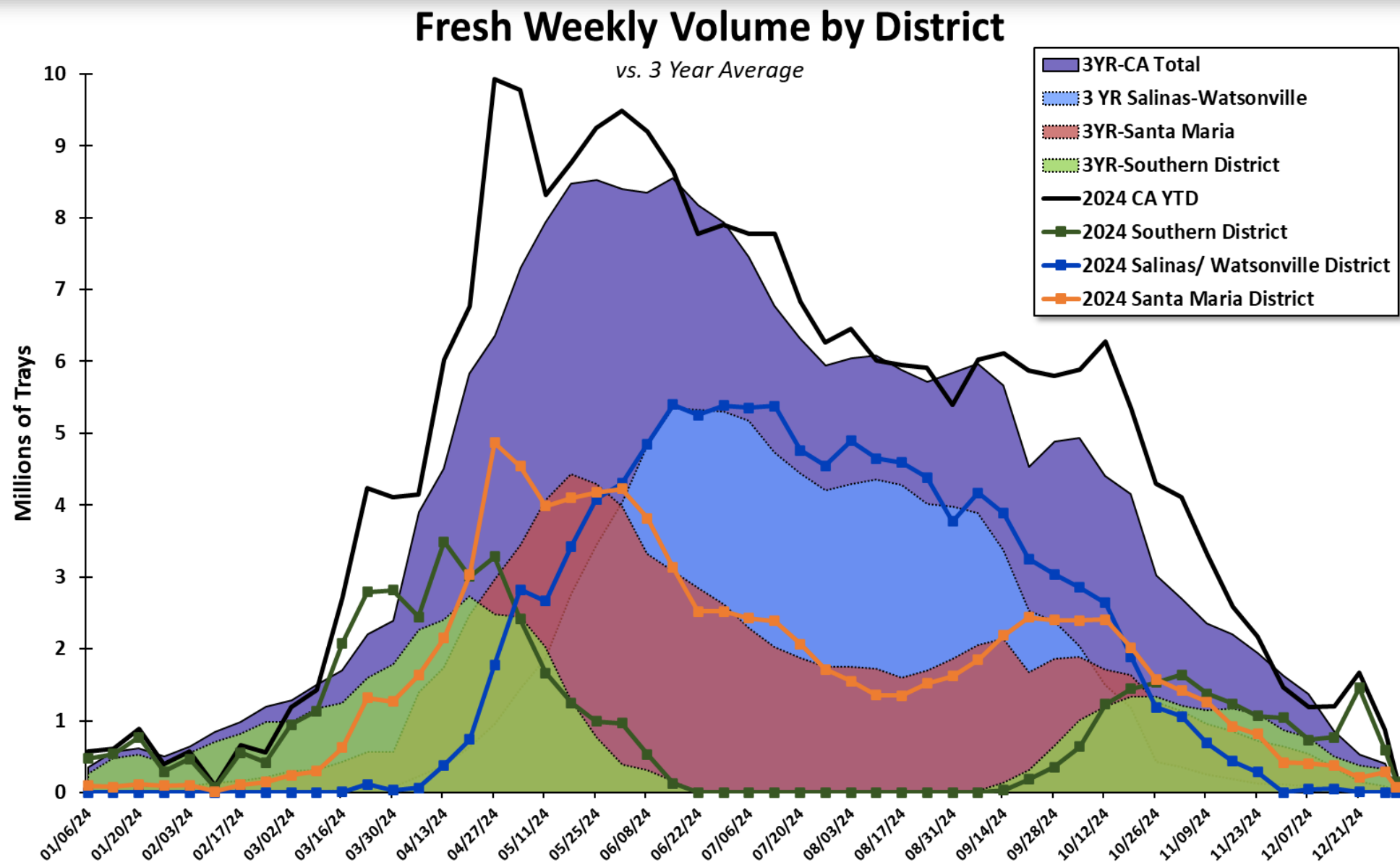
Public Policy

Market Insights

Communications

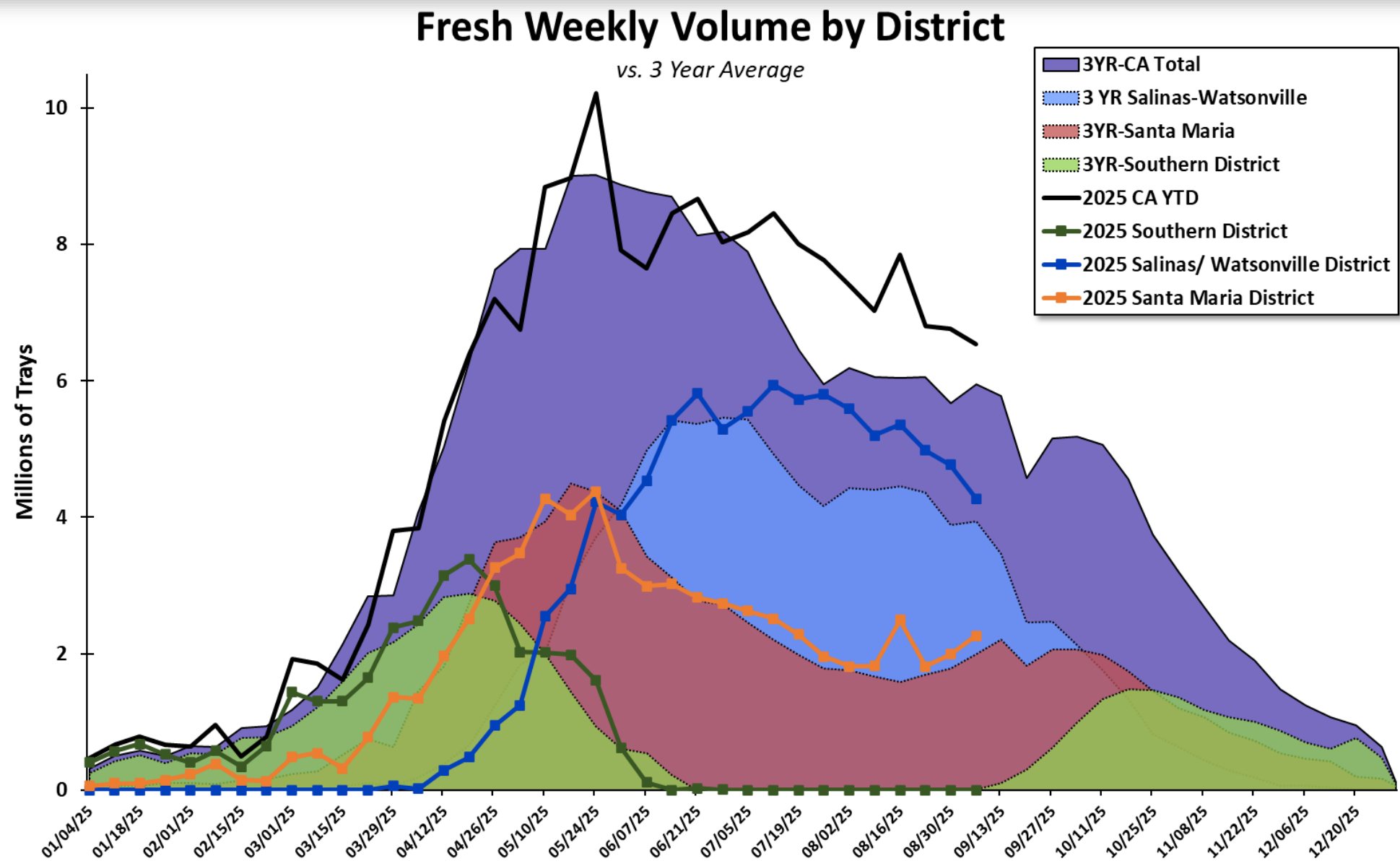


# 2024 Volume Report

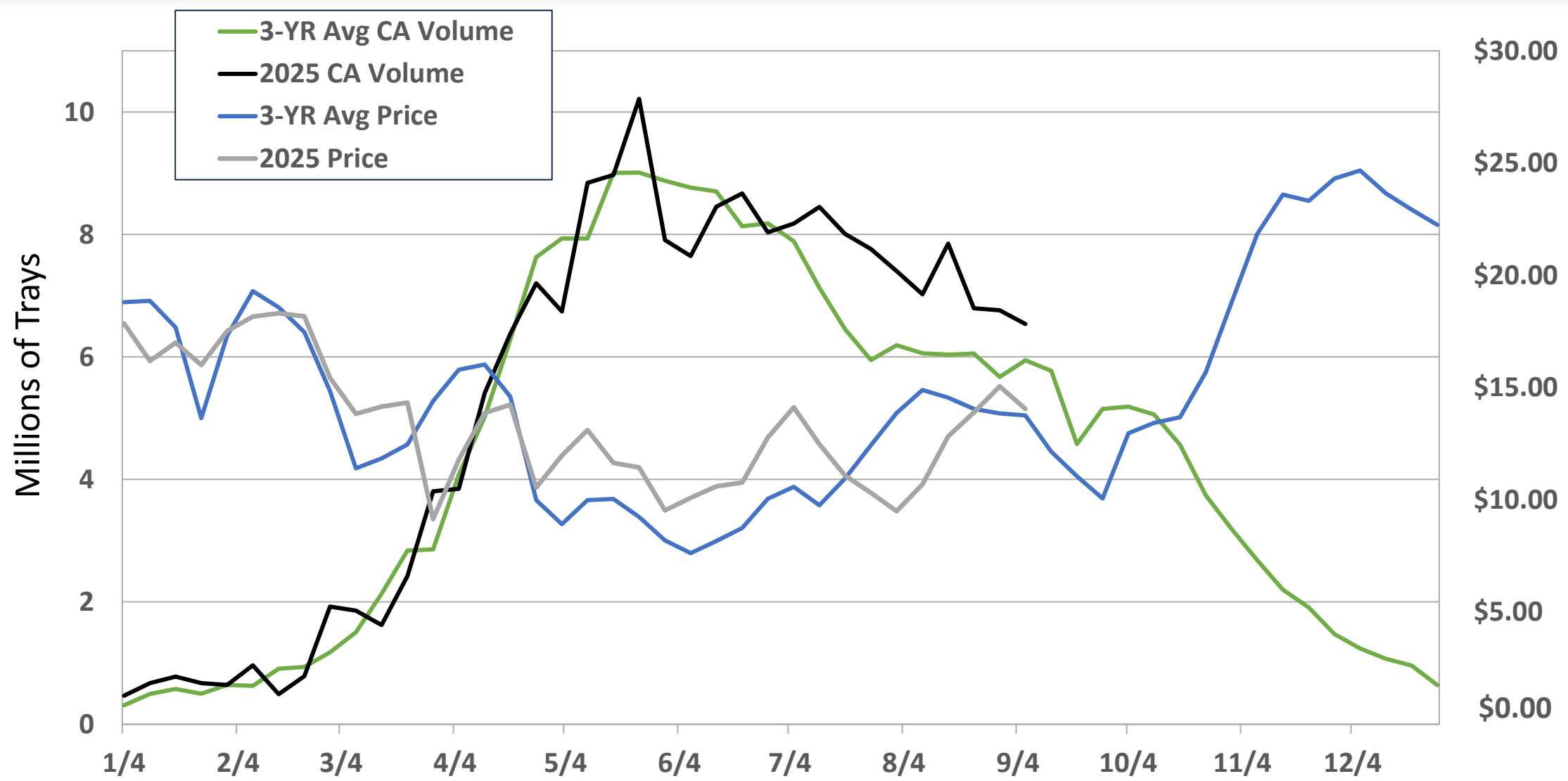




# 2025 Volume Report



# 2025 Volume & Price Report





# Label Update

**Sefina™**  
Inscalis® Insecticide

Allow a minimum of 7 days between applications.

Maximum No. of Applications: 2 applications

Restricted Entry Interval (RED): 12 hours

Pre-Harvest Interval (PHI): 0 days

Effective Date: March 1, 2025

Expiration Date: November 30, 2025

**APPROVED!**

**AVAUN**  
INSECT CO

ed; An ing...

om FMC controls Lygus,  
Section 3 label was  
5

**syngenta®**

**PLINAZOLIN Technology**

**Grp 30; Product expected to have a Section 3 label in 2026/7;  
Can submit for a Section 18 after**



## Monterey County Lawsuit



## JLAC Audit



SACRAMENTO

## Updates

# SprayDays

## Hunger Strike





# Monterey County Lawsuit

## Who sued whom?

- In early April 2024, a coalition that includes the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers, Safe Ag Safe Schools, Center for Farmworker Families, Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, and Californians for Pesticide Reform—represented by Earthjustice—filed a lawsuit against Monterey County's Agricultural Commissioner and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)





# Monterey County Lawsuit



## What did the lawsuit allege?

- The plaintiffs argued that regulators illegally approved permits for the use of fumigants, specifically chloropicrin and 1,3-dichloropropene (1,3-D), near several schools—Ohlone Elementary, Pajaro Middle School, and Hall District Elementary—without:
  - Considering safer alternatives
  - Properly evaluating cumulative health impacts or
  - Providing a meaningful, documented environmental review, as required under state law and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)



# Monterey County Lawsuit

## Court Ruling

- Monterey County judge, Thomas Wills, ruled in favor of the state regulator (DPR), upholding the pesticide permits, finding:
  - The county's Agricultural Commissioner had indeed considered alternatives and environmental impacts.
  - California law allows county officials to issue permits without engaging in lengthy analysis
- This outcome reflects a robust and functioning regulatory system.



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TRENDING TOPICS: [Stable's uncertain future](#) | [Murray Street hurdles](#) | [V](#)



An aerial shot shows the close proximity of fields that use harmful pesticides in their growing process to Alianza Charter School located off Casserly Road in Watsonville. Credit: Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz

WATSONVILLE / PAJARO

## Judge rejects activist claims in pesticides lawsuit but appeal could be forthcoming

# Monterey County Lawsuit

## What comes next?

- Appeal: The plaintiffs have a two-month window to appeal. Their team is currently deciding whether to pursue that route.
- Broader Impacts: The case is already being watched for its potential to set statewide precedent regarding how rigorously agricultural agencies must assess health risks before approving pesticide use near schools



# Monterey County Lawsuit

STATE CAPITOL  
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**Assembly  
California Legislature**

**DAMON CONNOLLY**  
ASSEMBLY MEMBER, TWELFTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
CHAIR, ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY  
AND TOXIC MATERIALS  
AGRICULTURE  
BUDGET  
JUDICIARY  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4 ON  
CLIMATE CRISIS, RESOURCES,  
ENERGY, AND TRANSPORTATION

April 22, 2025

Members  
Joint Legislative Aud  
1020 N Street, Room  
Sacramento, CA 958

Re: Evaluation of pe:

Dear Chair Harabedi

I respectfully reques  
enforcement of spec  
tool in a broader too  
pose substantial hea  
environment. With  
associated increase i  
for the Legislature to  
below is consistent with the Legislature's aims of supporting good governance, efficient use of state funds,  
effective enforcement, and the protection of human health and the environment.

**Background**

In 2023, DPR released a roadmap on sustainable pest management (SPM Roadmap) that expresses the state's  
commitment to accelerating a "transition away from high-risk pesticides toward adoption of safer, sustainable  
pest control practices."<sup>2</sup> To make good on this commitment, California needs to ensure that its state and local  
regulatory bodies—described below—are well positioned to support the safe and judicious use of these  
chemicals, through the enforcement of its pesticide use laws and regulations.

California splits responsibility for the enforcement of pesticide laws between two regulatory bodies: DPR and  
the County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs). At the state level, a pesticide must be registered by DPR before  
it can be sold or used in California. As part of the registration process, DPR must evaluate potential risks

<sup>1</sup> AB 2113 increases, over a four year period, the mill assessment (a fee on the sale of all pesticides sold into the state),  
in order to support the programs of DPR.  
<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Pest Management Work Group and Urban Subgroup. (2023). Accelerating sustainable pest management:  
A roadmap for California. <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/spm-ipm-overview/>.

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already  
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pesticide use near schools





# Update

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highlights  
application  
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recent act

department can "provide Californians with access to information and services."

# Santa Cruz Protest

## Environment rights activists

- Two farmworkers, Nik Altenberg and Omar Dieguez, began a hunger strike in Watsonville, California, with the goal “to force strawberry growers to end organic farming and an end to the heavy pesticide use.” The “growers” include Giant operating conventional fields.

AND THAT'S ALL I HAVE



TO SAY ABOUT THAT.

NEWSLETTER

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About ▾

Log Out

Eng

to protest

Altenberg, Omar Dieguez, Pajaro Valley,



*Omar Dieguez plans to hunger strike for the month of September to protest the use of pesticides near schools in Pajaro Valley. (Nik Altenberg — Santa Cruz Local)*







# Berry Sustainable Packaging

September 2025

Amrith Gunasekara, PhD  
Director of Regulatory Affairs





# What is SB 54?

## Plastic Pollution Prevention & Packaging Producer Responsibility Act

- **EPR, or Extended Producer Responsibility**, is a policy that makes producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products and packaging.

- Targets by 2032: 100% recyclable/compostable packaging, 65% plastic recycling
- **PRO, or Producer Responsibility Organization**, is a

## Why it matters

collective body that producers join to fund and

- Most strawberry growers manage the EPR program, handling tasks like collection, sorting, processing, and paying for the associated costs.
- Design for recycling pressures (labels, inks, adhesives)
- Labeling claims restricted under SB 343 (“Truth in Recycling” labelling law)



# The U.S. PRO – Circular Action Alliance

- Circular Action Alliance (CAA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit PRO dedicated to implementing effective EPR laws for paper and packaging in the U.S.
- CAA was founded by 20 companies from the food, beverage, consumer goods, and retail industries.
- CAA has been approved to be the single PRO in California, Colorado, and Minnesota. CAA was the only PRO to submit an Oregon program plan.



# CAA's Mission

- CAA's mission is to help producers comply with EPR laws, deliver harmonized, best-in-class services and work with governments, businesses and communities to reduce waste and recycle more.

CAA will:

- Meet state-specific regulatory requirements;
- Leverage existing recycling systems and infrastructure; and
- Advance the circularity of covered materials through collaboration with local governments, service providers, and recycling system interest holders.





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## NAW Takes Legal Action Against Oregon Recycling Mandate

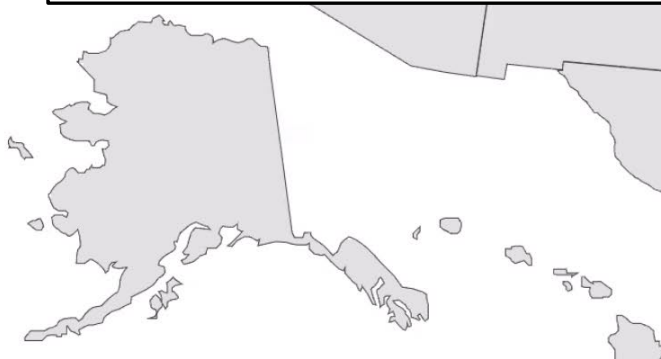
WASHINGTON  
filed a lawsuit  
States District  
Plastic Pollution  
responsibility"  
state's recycling  
viability of the  
chain.

NAW's lawsuit alleges that with this law Oregon unconstitutionally:

- Delegates control over the EPR program, including the setting of fees wholesaler-distributors must pay to a private, third-party group (the Circular Action Alliance (CAA)), with a financial interest in the program without clear rules or oversight.
- Unfairly targets out-of-state producers, disrupts national markets, and tries to control business outside of Oregon—violating the U.S. Constitution's limits on state regulation of interstate commerce.
- Mandates producers sign contracts with a single approved private organization (CAA) giving up their economic freedom and due process rights.
- Subjects producers to fees and rules set by CAA without a real chance to object or appeal or transparency in the process.

### About NAW

The National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors (NAW) is one of America's leading trade associations, representing the \$8.2 trillion wholesale distribution industry. Founded in 1946, NAW includes national, regional, and state employers of all sizes, as well as industry trade associations and stakeholders across every distribution sector. The industry employs over 6 million workers nationwide and accounts for nearly one-third of U.S. GDP. Learn more at [www.naw.org](http://www.naw.org).





# MONARCH BUTTERFLY: PROPOSED LISTING

December 2024





# USFWS: Monarch Listing

- The monarch was petitioned to be listed as a *threatened species* in 2014
- In 2020, it was determined that listing is *Warranted but Precluded* by higher priority listings
  - This finding was challenged in court
- On December 12, 2024, the monarch was ***proposed for listing*** as a *threatened species*
  - A species does not receive full protection under ESA until a final rule has been published





NO MILKWEED /  
SIN CRECIMIENTO  
DE ALGODONCILLO

NORTHERN LIMIT OF MILKWEED /  
LÍMITE NORTE DE ALGODONCILLO

SUMMER / VERANO

SPRING / PRIMAVERA

WINTER /  
INVIERNO

PRIMAVERA Y VERANO

RESIDENT POPULATION /  
POBLACIÓN RESIDENTE

WINTER / INVIERNO

# Monarch Migration

Spring & Fall



## La Migración de la Monarca

Primavera y Otoño

### LEGEND / LA LEYENDA

Overwintering areas		Zona de invernada
Spring breeding areas		Zona de reproducción de primavera
Spring & summer breeding areas		Zona de reproducción de primavera y verano
Summer breeding areas		Zona de reproducción de verano
No breeding area		Sin zona de reproducción
Resident population		Población residente
Potential breeding habitat		Hábitat no confirmada de reproducción
Fall migration		La migración de otoño
Spring migration		La migración de primavera
Unconfirmed migration		Ruta de migración no confirmada



# Monarch Butterfly Migration

**A spike in alerts concerning the monarch butterflies, especially related to their migration to the West coast and fears of their dwindling numbers.**

1. Center for Food Safety (IG): [Fall is here, and monarch butterflies are off on an epic journey](#)
2. The Fresno Bee: [Iconic — and vulnerable — critters to arrive on California's coasts. How to help](#)
3. Fox 11: [Californians urged to report monarch butterfly sightings](#)
4. Temecula Patch: [Where Are CA's Monarch Butterflies? With The Population In Free Fall, A Call To Arms Is Issued](#)
5. Times-Herald & Sunday Times: [The Butterfly effect: Monarch garden helps raise funds for furry friends](#)
6. KRON: [A new study reveals the devastating impacts of pesticides on monarch butterflies.](#)
7. KSNT: [Monarch butterflies' mass die-off linked to pesticides](#)
8. KABC: ["Climate change, wildfires, pesticides and the destruction of habitats have all contributed to their decline."](#)





# Federal and State Threatened Species

Western Monarch Butterfly



West Coast Lady Butterfly



Large Marble Butterfly



Western Bumble Bee



Franklin's Bumble Bee



Crotch's Bumble Bee



Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee



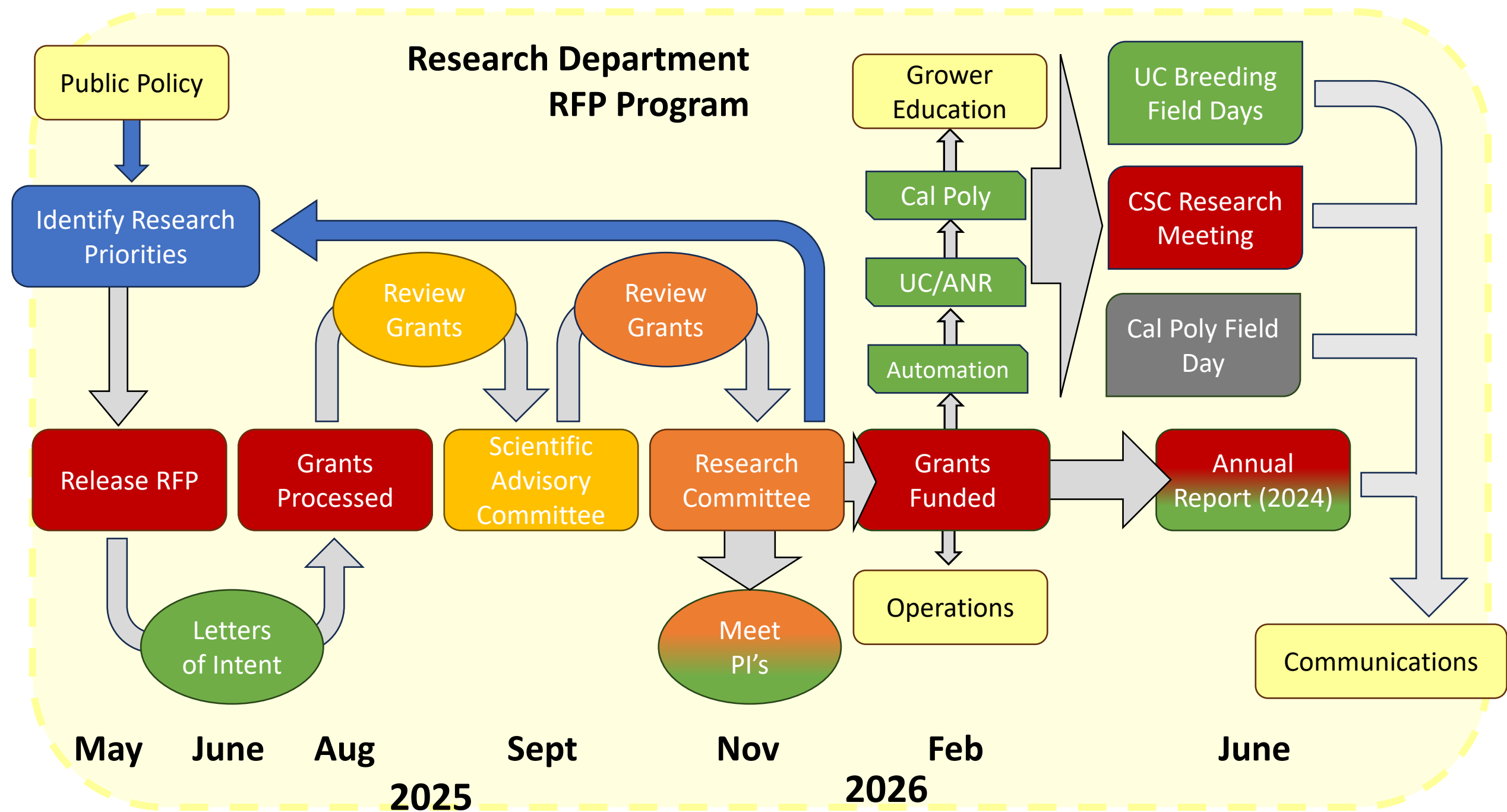




# CSC Research

Kevin Gee, Chairman of the Research Committee

CALIFORNIA  
**STRAWBERRY**  
COMMISSION





# UC Davis Strawberry Breeding

'UC Surflin'



Short Day  
Early fruiting & yield  
**Fusarium Resistant**

'UC Monarch'



Short Day  
Exposed fruit  
Small plant canopy  
**Fusarium Resistant**

'UC Golden Gate'



Day Neutral  
Early to midseason  
Excellent shelf-life  
**Fusarium Resistant**

'UC Keystone'



Day Neutral  
Mid-to-late season  
High marketable yields  
**Fusarium Resistant**

'UC Eclipse'



Extreme Day Neutral  
Summer plant  
Large Fruit  
**Fusarium Resistant**





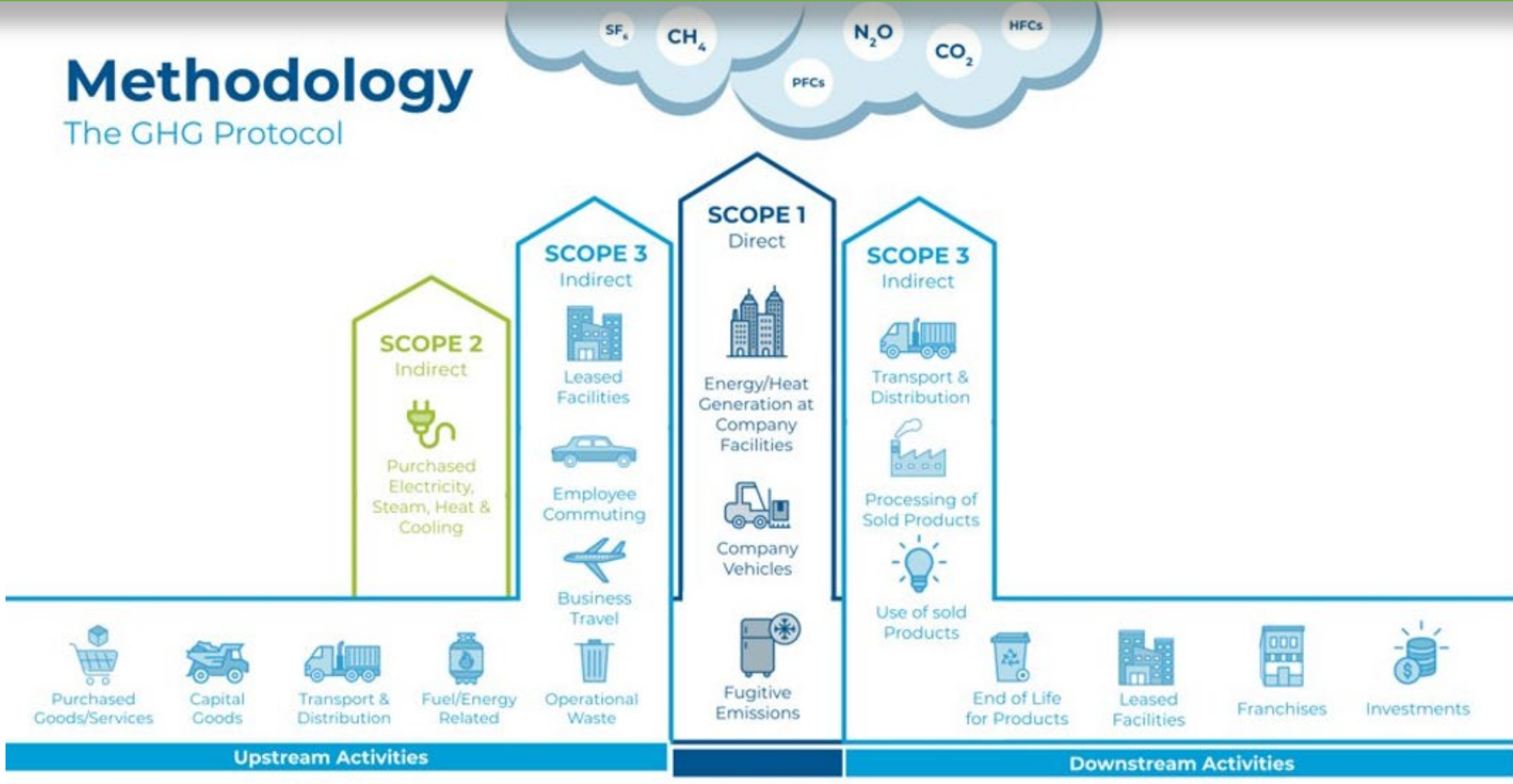
# Cal Poly Strawberry Center

Gerald Holmes, Shashika Hewavitharana, Mohammad Aghaee, John Lin

Pathology | Entomology | Automation



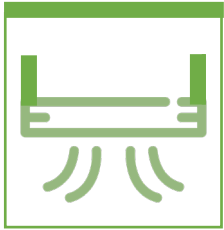
# Life Cycle Analysis (GHG Emission Accounting)



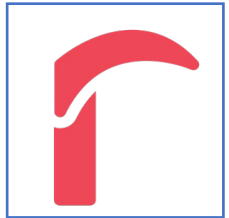
# Automation Projects: 2017-2025

**Green = Available & Red = Pending**

## Non-Chemical Pest & Disease Control



Optimized Bug Vacuum



Weed / Runner Mechanical Remover

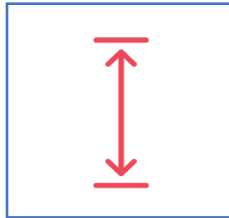


Cost Effective UVC

## Enhanced Pest & Disease Control



Optimized Spray Rig



Equipment Operator Aid

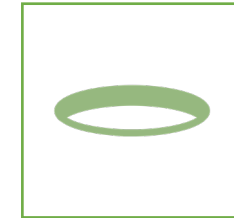


Lygus Bug Monitor

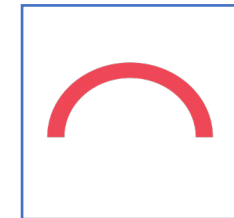
## Workforce Efficiency & Safety



Decapper



Cross Hole Puncher / Burner



Hoop House Arch Remover



# Pollinator Trial





# Pollinator Trial





# Acknowledgements

- **California Strawberry Commission**

- *Andrew Molinar, Erika Escalona, Gabriel Sacher*
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- *Rick Tomlinson, Chris Christian, Gurpreet Chohan*

- **Automation Team @ Cal Poly**

- *John Lin, Genki Konda, Aiden Fischer, Brendan Holt*

- **Cal Poly Strawberry Center**

- *Gerald Holmes, Shashika Hewavitharana, Mohammad Aghaee, Alison Stevens, Kyle Blauer, Samantha Simard*

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- *Mitchell Feldmann, Glenn Cole, Allison Krill-Brown, Elias Marvinney*







THANK YOU

