

# Raw milk exec eyes post in Trump’s FDA

California dairy CEO, who has recalled products over bird flu fears, says he’s been encouraged to apply.

By SUSANNE RUST

Mark McAfee, the California raw milk producer who has been at the center of several bird-flu-related product recalls, says a transition team for Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has encouraged him to apply for a position at the Food and Drug Administration.

McAfee, chief executive of Fresno-based Raw Farm, told The Times that he has complied with the request and applied for the position of “FDA advisor on raw milk policy and standards development.”

The recent raw milk recalls were the result of positive tests for H5N1 bird flu among McAfee’s cows. His farms have since been quarantined, and the state has suspended all sales of raw milk and cream. Raw Farm has voluntarily issued recalls for all remaining milk and cream products in stores.

McAfee’s farm is also involved in at least 11 lawsuits stemming from a salmonella outbreak that sickened 171 people in California, and which occurred between October 2023 and May 2024, according to Bill Marler, a Seattle-area food safety lawyer.

When asked about McAfee potentially being tapped for a federal food advisory role, Marler wrote in an email: “Clown Car.”

Last month, President-elect Donald Trump announced that he had chosen Kennedy to lead the U.S. Health and Human Services Department, which oversees the FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health and other agencies.

Kennedy has been a vocal advocate for raw milk, and [See [Raw milk](#), A6]



IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

**MATT DAVIS’** company drills a well at Setton Farms in Terra Bella, Calif., in 2021. A new study presents ideas about how worsening subsidence could be slowed or stopped through strategic recharging of aquifers.

# Land sinking at record pace in the San Joaquin Valley

Subsidence caused by chronic overpumping of groundwater has damaged infrastructure, necessitating costly repairs

By Ian James

For decades, a costly problem has been worsening beneath California’s San Joaquin Valley: The land has been sinking, driven by the chronic overpumping of groundwater.

As agricultural wells have drained water from aquifers, underground clay layers have compacted and the ground surface has been sinking as much as 1 foot a year in some areas.

New research now shows that large portions of the San Joaquin Valley have sunk at a record pace since 2006.

“Never before has it been so rapid for such a long period of time,” said Matthew Lees, the study’s lead author.



GARY CORONADO Los Angeles Times

**WATER IS** pumped into wheat fields in Hanford. Aquifer depletion has altered the landscape for years.

The study by Stanford University researchers is the first to quantify the full extent of land subsidence in the San Joaquin Valley, one of the world’s major farming regions, during the last two decades. The collapsing ground has damaged canals, wells and other infrastructure, requiring repairs that in some areas are now in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Under California’s groundwater law, local agencies are tasked with combating the problem as they work toward plans to limit pumping and address overdraft by 2040.

Measurements from satellites have tracked changes [See [Overpumping](#), A8]

# Those food-date labels are set to be simplified

There you are, reaching on your tiptoes in the grocery store to grab the milk on the highest shelf marked with the latest date. It’s worth it, you think, to get milk that will stay fresher longer.

You don’t finish the milk by that date, of course, so you dutifully pour the remainder down the drain the day after.

But that “sell by” label doesn’t indicate when your milk will go bad — it’s to help grocers rotate stock. Your milk was fine. Now you’re back in the store, paying for more.

With the exception of infant formula, date labels on packaged food are not federally regulated or required, leaving it up to manufacturers and the state to determine what labels are necessary.

An old state law suggested putting dated labels on foods to help consumers know when their food has gone bad, instead of confusing, grocer-focused “sell by” labels. A new California law requires them in an effort to reduce the food waste that

To cut waste in California, plethora of phrases will be replaced by just two: ‘use by’ and ‘best if used by’

By SANDRA McDONALD



TERRY CHEA Associated Press

**A NEW** California law bans food items from carrying “sell by” labels, which can prompt people to throw out food that is still good. It goes into effect July 1, 2026.

Californians produce — 6 million tons of it every year, according to the state Department of Food and Agriculture.

The goal of Assembly Bill 660, written by Assembly member Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks), is to bring uniformity and common sense to dated food labels for consumers. Doing so will require grocery retailers and manufacturers to make changes, said Daniel Conway, California Grocers Assn. vice president of government relations.

Between developing new inventory systems, retraining employees and even figuring out which labels need to be adjusted, it’s not a change that can happen overnight, Conway said. The law goes into effect on July 1, 2026, giving grocers about a year and a half.

“Having to wonder whether our food is still good is an issue that we all have struggled with. By strengthening labeling standards, and thus reducing food waste, AB 660 will keep money in the pockets of consumers” [See [Labels](#), A6]

# STRONG QUAKE LEADS TO TSUNAMI SCARE

Northern California coastal residents are told to evacuate after 7.0 temblor. Warning is canceled hour later.

By RONG-GONG LIN II, HANNAH WILEY, JESSICA GARRISON AND NATHAN SOLIS

SAN FRANCISCO — A magnitude 7 earthquake about 30 miles off the Humboldt County shoreline prompted a highly unusual tsunami warning for a wide swath of the Northern California coast Thursday, spurring widespread evacuations before it was canceled an hour later.

The earthquake rattled large parts of the region — from San Francisco and Monterey to as far away as Sacramento, Reno and southern Oregon — providing a stark reminder of how coastal seismic activity can threaten to produce damaging tsunamis under the right circumstances.

Many reported terrifying shaking in and around the Eureka area, with bottles of alcohol shattered behind one bar, but there were no immediate reports of major injuries, likely owing in part to the offshore epicenter being so far from highly populated areas. Preliminary estimates indicate the epicenter was about 55 miles southwest of Eureka and 100 miles northwest of Mendocino.

Shaking of this strength is a reminder of the tsunami risk in California — particularly from closer-to-shore earthquakes like Thursday’s that would provide far less warning time to evacuate beaches and low-lying areas.

The National Tsunami Warning Center in Alaska said it issued a warning quickly because there was so little time to get people out of harm’s way if a major tsunami did end up materializing.

Initially, there was no confirmation a tsunami was headed for the West Coast, [See [Quake](#), A10]

## Bay Area prison to shut for good

Federal closure of Dublin site known as “rape club” and six others signals failure by agency. **NATION, A6**

## Two wounded at Adventist school

Officials say shooting on elementary campus in Oroville may have been religiously motivated. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

## UCLA gives Bieniemy the ax

Offensive coordinator exits after disappointing season. Indiana’s quarterbacks coach is hired. **SPORTS, B10**

## Weather

Sunny and warmer. L.A. Basin: 79/53. **B6**

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