



FARM BUREAU SAN DIEGO COUNTY

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NAGATA NAMED 2021 FARMER OF THE YEAR

Farmer founder of program raising millions in scholarship funds for farm worker's children

The San Diego County Farm Bureau (SDCFB) recently named Neil Nagata, a third generation Oceanside farmer who is a leading agriculture advocate for both growers and farm workers, the 2021 Farmer of the Year. The guest of honor will be celebrated in October at SDCFB's annual Farmer of the Year event with his family, friends, and the agriculture community.

SDCFB annually recognizes special people who support San Diego farming in unique ways. The Farmer of the Year award is presented to an active or retired farmer who has had a positive impact on our industry, is active in the community beyond agriculture, and has represented the agricultural industry at media events and public hearings to back the farming cause.

Nagata is President of Nagata Bros Farms, with over 30 years' experience in fresh fruit, vegetable, and strawberry substrate/hydroponic production and research. He also grows blueberries, blackberries, and cherimoya. In addition to his growing experience, Nagata is an expert in many aspects of agriculture and biological science, including field and commercial research and production. Nagata is an invaluable asset to the farming community through his negotiations with governments, regulators and businesses.

He served as the President of the San Diego County Farm Bureau from 2017-2019, and has been a board member since 2008, working with regulators and legislators to support fruit and vegetable production in the United States and Internationally. In addition to his work with SDCFB, Nagata has also been involved with many other agricultural associations.

Nagata has also played a vital role in farm worker advocacy. Nagata joined the Strawberry Commission in 1991 and since then has served as a board member and past chairman of their organization. Nagata is the founding president of the non-profit California Strawberry Growers Scholarship Fund, providing scholarships for children of California strawberry farm workers. During the past 26 years, over \$2 million has been raised and gifted to farm worker's children.

The San Diego County Farm Bureau is a non-profit organization supporting the more than 5,700 farms within the county. Top crops include: ornamental trees and shrubs, bedding plants, color and herbaceous perennials, cacti and succulents, indoor flowering and foliage plants, avocados, vegetables, lemons, livestock and poultry products, oranges, cut flowers, and fruit trees. In the state, San Diego ranks #1 in nursery product sales, is the top leader in the sale of flowers, foliage and avocados, and ranks 12th in the sale of agriculture. In addition, San Diego County has more certified organic growers than any other county and is home to 45 certified Farmers Markets. The mission of the Farm Bureau is to foster San Diego agriculture through education, public relations, and public policy advocacy in order to promote the economic viability, sustainability, and community building of agriculture. For more information, visit our website www.sdfarmbureau.org.