



California Rare Fruit Growers – Central Coast Chapter

September 2019 Newsletter

by Lori Bright

September 14, 2019 Meeting: Bartleson Ranch



Announcement: It's time for many of us to renew our State Memberships!

Another lovely day on the Central Coast. We were lucky enough to spend our time with the Bartlesons. Their ranch, located on the Mesa, was as beautiful as our hosts were gracious. Jan Bartleson greeted us and introduced us to her grandson Stuart Winslow. We all settled in and gathered in the patio of their "Party Barn" for an informative chat with Stuart.



Jan Bartleson tells us a little bit of history



Stuart, the ranch manager, speaks to us on the patio



Stuart answers questions from our CRFG chapter and guests. Photo by Evelyn Ruehr



Chuong and Mo do a great job with the name tags!



Bartleson Ranch map

This picturesque Commercial Fruit Ranch has been donated to Cal Poly. Stu Bartleson conveyed that he is "excited to think that the ranch will help prepare today's students to become tomorrow's Ag industry leaders". Wow, what a great statement from a great guy.



Reservoir on Bartleson Ranch

The Bartleson Ranch has 120 acres of Lisbon Lemons and 80 acres of Hass Avocado. Water has been an ongoing challenge for the ranch. Thirty years ago our winters brought plentiful rains. Now with drought conditions, the ranch needs to rely more heavily on groundwater. This too is a challenge because of some newly developed properties "Up River" that can take a lion's share of that groundwater before it reaches the Bartleson property. The Ranch has 12 wells but as of this writing, (September 2019) only one well is operational.

Stuart gives their mature trees 40 gallons of water per week. He concedes that the Avocados might like a bit more, but at this



Mature trees have 8 emitters each; others vary given the tree's size and age

point he practices deficit irrigation (trees receive just enough water to keep them from being drought stressed).

Fertilization is carried out with granular fertilizers in the Winter and liquid food in the growing season. The liquid feed is done by injection into the irrigation system. In addition, a liquid Mycorrhizal supplement is also added into that system. Stuart has seen great results with the added "Good" fungus, especially with the citrus. Each tree, Citrus and Avocado receives approximately 1 pound of nitrogen per year.

Micro-sprinklers have proved to be inefficient due to wind and so the mature trees are outfitted with eight 1 gallon drip emitters each.

Avocados were "stumped" during drought years which saves one full year of irrigation, but loses two years of harvest.



Lemons are picked every 3 months, sometimes 5 times per year. Avocados are picked once per year.



A house for predatory birds who help combat the squirrels and gophers

Citrus are pruned in October. The

purpose of this is to:

- Thin the interior, allowing for more light penetration
- Remove tall, suckering and crossed branches
- Get skirts up off the ground

As with all crops there are pests that must be dealt with. With concerns of Citrus Greening and its vector the ACP (Asian Citrus Psyllid), multiple sprayings are needed.

When sprayed for one thing, often times another pest rears its ugly head. Stuart has a resolution for eliminating some of that spraying by building a "Washing Station" for the Lemons. Awesome solution!



Wind machines help keep the lemon and avocado trees from freezing

Due to the rolling contours of the property, hard frosts are infrequently a problem. When they are, Stuart enlists the help of wind machines. Not cheap by any means, but when well managed, not prohibitive either.

Cal Poly Professor Dr. Garner joined us and spoke of the partnership here at the Bartleson Ranch. Cal Poly Students learn about irrigation, pest management and crop production with classes taught on site. Dr. Garner's superabundant-student-load shows her to be ever at the top-of-her-game and in high demand. What luck these student have to be partnered with an educator such as Dr. Garner and a generously donated location such as The Bartleson Ranch.



Bee hives are brought in by a beekeeper



Lori strolls along one of the fields of lemons