



Ripe Blenheim apricots. Photo courtesy of B&R Farms

SBALT NEWS

Outings to enjoy on San Benito County's agricultural lands

By Julie Finigan Morris

Living in San Benito County provides us with a unique opportunity to visit working farms and ranches. For many Californians, it takes hours to drive to areas where you can pick a rare Blenheim apricot fresh off the tree or wander through fields of sunflowers. Due to ongoing rules surrounding the COVID pandemic, many local farms and ranches have adjusted annual field days and farm tours, but that doesn't mean our working landscapes aren't open for business. The new normal is to plan ahead and make reservations. Several local farms also offer online ordering, shipping and curbside pick-up.

B&R Farms on Fairview Road in Hollister is planning to host its popular U-Pick apricot events on weekends beginning in late June. **Swank Farms** on Pacheco Pass is open from 9-1 every Saturday and hosts field trips by appointment. **Apricot King Orchards** on Westside Road sells their Blenheim apricot products at farmers markets and online at apricotking.com, and **Fairhaven Orchards** on Highway 25 offers online shopping for its cherries, nuts and apricots at fairhavenorchards.com, with curbside pick-up M-Th, 10-4.

And don't forget two places where you can reliably stock up on a variety of fruits, veggies and other farm products all season long: **Downtown Hollister Certified Farmers' Market** on Wednesdays 3-7:30 pm and **Pinnacle Organically Grown** Saturday morning farm stand 8-1 at 400 Duncan Ave. in San Juan Bautista.

Wineries are also opening for the summer months and look forward to hosting the public



for tastings and tours. "We are currently open for outdoor reservations and are offering three experiences on the estate. Join us for a wine

tasting, a picnic, or an ATV tour throughout our vineyards," said Amy Vogt of Eden Rift Vineyards. Tastings are exclusively outdoors, with masks and social distancing required when you are not seated at your table.

For a list of open farms, wineries and markets featuring locally-sourced foods, check out the Chamber of Commerce website at www.savorsanbenito.com. Learn more about how SBALT is working to protect San Benito's precious agricultural lands at www.sanbenitolandtrust.org. ■



Drying apricots. Photo by Ron Ross