

## "The more things change, the more they stay the same..."

### ***Rural Issues***

**Then ...** 1919 -- Easton-Oleander Farm Bureau Center members identified community projects to consider, including soil fertilization by means of cover crop, extension of jack rabbits by means of local drives and shoots, and organization of fire protection.

**Now...** *In 2007, use of cover crops is common place, jack rabbits are fairly well controlled in most areas (thanks to coyotes!) but the struggle to continue to provide adequate rural fire protection continues.*

### ***Agricultural Labor***

**Then...** 1919 -- Fresno County Farm Bureau began cooperation with the Valley Fruit Growers' Association for the purpose of increasing efficiency in the distribution of seasonal farm labor, particularly during the tree and vine pruning season, the peach harvesting season and the raisin harvesting season.

...1975-77 -- Farmers start to see a call for political action on illegal immigration. Despite the concern for potential labor shortages, the labor force remained steady; adequate for the harvest of perishable commodities.

... 1981-- In a *Fresno Bee* article, FCFB President Don Rosendahl said he lost half of his boysenberry crop this year because he couldn't find enough workers to pick his fruit.

**Now...** *In 2007, FCFB members still struggle with having an adequate labor supply for their labor-intensive crops; hence the ongoing efforts to develop a federal temporary worker program.*

### ***Urban Sprawl***

**Then...** ... 1908 -- A *Fresno Bee* article reported that since 1974, the City of Fresno has annexed more than 14,000 acres, some of which was prime farmland. That same article said, "A recent article in the Washington Star said the U.S. is losing agricultural land so rapidly that the country's current level of \$33 billion in food exports could shrink to zero by the year 2000."

... 1998 -- FCFB, along with the Chamber of Commerce, Building Industry Association of Central California, American Farmland Trust and Fresno Business Council, came together to develop a strategy to protect agriculture while accommodating urban growth. Called, "The Landscape of Choice," focuses on the tenants of good planning and unified growth strategy that balances farmland preservation, environmental protection, economic vitality and livable cities.

**Now...** *According to a May 2001 report by the Agricultural Issues Center of the University of California, the state lost approximately 500,000 acres of farmland to urban development between 1988-1998. California has urbanized an agricultural land base over the last 10 years equivalent to the size of Orange County. Every single minute of every day, America loses two acres of farmland.*

### ***About membership in Farm Bureau***

#### ***Then and now...***

"The diminishing percentage of population on the farms and the complexities of the problems make it all the more essential that we must have all farmers in Farm Bureau. We need them for their advice and also to be sure that decisions arrived at have resulted from the best thinking of a cross-section of all farmers."

*George Wilson, President of the California Farm Bureau Federation  
in his address at the 1952 Annual Meeting*