



## **SJR Restoration Scoping meeting to be held Aug. 29 in Fresno**

A public scoping meeting will be held next week in Fresno to gather public and stakeholder input on topics that should be addressed in the environmental review of San Joaquin River restoration efforts. The meeting will be Wednesday, Aug. 29, from 6 - 8:30 p.m. at the Piccadilly Inn, 4961 N. Cedar Ave., Fresno.

The federal Bureau of Reclamation and the CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) will prepare a Program Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (PEIS/EIR) for the San Joaquin River Restoration Program. The scoping meeting is part of that process to help identify topics to be covered in the joint EIR. The San Joaquin River Restoration Program will be implemented by five agencies: Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the CA Department of Fish and Game and DWR.

The Restoration Program is the result of a 2006 settlement by the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Commerce, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Friant Water Users Authority that ended an 18-year lawsuit. The Settlement is based on two goals: (1) to restore and maintain fish populations in "good condition" in the main stem of the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River; and (2) to reduce or avoid adverse water supply impacts to all of the Friant Division long-term contractors.

Scoping meetings also will be held in Tulare, Los Banos and Sacramento. Written comments on the scope of the environmental document are due on Sept. 21, and should be sent to Margaret Gidding, Bureau of Reclamation, 2800 Cottage Way MP-140, Sacramento, CA 95825-1898. For additional details, call: (916) 978-5104; email: [mgidding@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:mgidding@mp.usbr.gov); or visit: [www.restoresjr.com](http://www.restoresjr.com).

## **Delta smelt hearing was held in Fresno**

A four-day evidentiary hearing was held this week in U.S. District Court in Fresno to determine what actions should be taken by the State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project to better

protect Delta smelt, an ESA-listed fish species. A range of actions have been proposed, with potentially serious impacts on water deliveries in the coming months, according to the Association of California Water Agencies.

U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Wanger is expected to rule soon on interim actions to protect the fish. His ruling could impact water deliveries to Fresno County's west side, which depends on surface water from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. Earlier this year, water deliveries were seriously in question due to pumping restrictions because of the Delta smelt. This issue, complicated by the dry winter, has generated uncertainty about next year's water supply for areas dependent on Delta water.

## **Drought contingency planning underway**

The state's major water agencies and associations are surveying the water community concerning contingency planning for possible water shortages and drought.

The Association of California Water Agencies reports that workshops are scheduled around the state in September and October to address this issue, with the focus on reviewing and updating water shortage contingency plans and preparing to implement them if necessary.

## **State Legislature approves budget**

*Williamson Act funding is included so far*

It was a long time in coming, but California now has a state budget approved by the Legislature. On Tuesday, the State Senate approved the budget with the understanding that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger would veto a significant amount of funds to help balance the budget. As of *Friday Follow-Up's* deadline, the Governor had not yet signed the budget.

At question for most of agriculture is the fate of the land use tool -- Williamson Act subvention funding for reimbursements to counties. The Williamson Act provides landowners with a reduced property tax obligation in return for keeping it under contract to remain in agriculture and open spaces and not be sold for other uses. Counties with land under Williamson Act are reimbursed by the state for their

participation. The state budget includes \$39 million for reimbursement funds.

Previously, the Governor had indicated he may line-item veto Williamson Act funds. If the reimbursements are not funded, counties will be forced to discontinue their participation in the Act. The agricultural community is urging the Governor to keep funds for this program intact.

### **FACT Leadership Development Program application deadline is Aug. 31**

Fresno County Farm Bureau's Leadership Development Program is accepting applications to be part of the 2007-08 Class V. The deadline to apply is Friday, August 31.

The Future Advocates for Agriculture Concerned about Tomorrow (FACT) Leadership Development Program provides community leaders with a comprehensive eight-month program highlighting specific issue areas in agriculture. Both agricultural and non-agricultural, community-minded people are encouraged to apply.

Beginning on Oct. 8, class participants will meet once-a-month for a day-long seminar to discuss current issues in food and fiber production. The Class will meet one day a month (on Mondays) from October through June (excluding December.)

As part of the curriculum, FACT offers a balanced, factual presentation of several issue areas specific to agriculture, such as air quality, land use planning and urban encroachment, water quality regulations and water supply development, organic farming, biotechnology crops, international trade, agricultural labor issues and the economic viability of agriculture. The class sessions use a combination of lectures by noted experts and field trips.

Tuition for the program is \$300 per person. Scholarships may be available. Applications are available online at: [www.fcfb.org](http://www.fcfb.org) or by calling (559) 237-0263.

### **Social Security mis-match briefing to be held Sept. 12**

A management briefing on the Social Security mis-match issue will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 12, from 8 to 10 a.m. at the CATI Conference Room, California State University, Fresno, 2910 E. Barstow Ave.

The briefing, which is co-sponsored by California Farm Bureau Federation, FELS, AgSAFE and CATI, will be presented by Michael C. Saqui and Anthony P. Raimondo, of Saqui & Raimondo Counselors to Management.

The briefing will cover:

- Dealing with the Department of Homeland Security's Safe Harbor Regulation
- I-9 Procedures
- Protocols for DHS or ICE Audits and Raids
- Strategic Planning for Agricultural Operations through Guest Worker Programs

Due to space constraints, attendance is limited. To make a reservation, call (559) 278-4405. There is no cost to attend.

### **Ag Boosters Barbecue tickets are available**

Tickets are now on sale for the 30th Annual Ag Boosters Barbecue, which will be held on Sunday, Sept. 9 from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Rancho Vista del Rio (Borba Ranch), Highway 99 and the San Joaquin River.

After 30 years, the Ag Boosters Barbecue has become a fall tradition for supporters and friends of the Ag One Foundation and CWA, raising more than \$560,000 with event proceeds benefiting students and programs in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology at Fresno State and CWA's educational efforts. Since 1979, Ag One has provided some 2,900 students with over \$1.9 million in scholarships and grants, and nearly \$5 million is endowed with the Fresno State Foundation. Additionally, CWA uses the funds raised by the BBQ to help tell the story of California agriculture through education, legislative programs and by giving nearly \$100,000 in scholarships annually.

The event features live and silent auctions, CWA's County Store, cheese, olive oil, wine and sausage sampling, homemade desserts, the Fresno State Jazz band, a raffle and door prizes. In addition, the winner will be drawn for Ag One's "Fantasy Vacation" raffle, featuring a choice of destinations.

Tickets cost \$50 per person with a table of 10 available for \$450, before Aug. 31. Tickets can be purchased from the Ag One Foundation office at (559) 278-4266 or from any CWA or Ag One member.

### **Almond pasteurization goes forward**

Citing the need to ensure public health, federal officials this week announced plans to proceed

with requiring California-produced almonds to be pasteurized beginning Sept. 1.

The California Almond Board, which represents more than 6,000 growers, had requested the pasteurization plan be delayed until March 1, 2008, to ensure that the state's 10 custom pasteurizing operations are properly certified and have enough capacity. More than 400 million pounds of almonds are expected to need pasteurization following this season's harvest if the forecasted 1.3 billion-pound crop becomes a reality.

### Mini-watermelon Field Day set for Sept. 6

A field day for growers interested in raising mini-watermelons will be held on Thursday, Sept. 6 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Kearney Ag Center, 9240 S. Riverbend Ave., Parlier. The field day is sponsored by the U.C. Cooperative Extension Service.

The field day will provide information about cultural practices in the production of personal-sized watermelons, including virus control, weed management in organic and conventional operations, insect management, and a tasting of different varieties.

The meeting is free and two hours of continuing education has been requested. For details, contact Richard Molinar, UCCE farm advisor, (559) 456-7555.

### An apple a day...

A lighter, but good quality apple crop is expected this year.

The California Apple Commission newsletter reports the California apple industry is predicting 3.0 – 3.1 million fresh apples. Although production is down from last year, it is the first year in which growers reported replants and grafting to newer varieties. Within the next two years, it's anticipated the overall fresh number will move up to reflect the new trees. Varieties planted include: Gala, Fuji and Granny Smith.

### U.S. ag exports are strong through midyear

Trade in U.S. agricultural products is strong in 2007, and it appears likely that strength will continue as the year progresses, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Data for sales through the first half of 2007 and contract indications for the rest of the year

suggest that the U.S. is setting yet another agricultural export record in 2007 — for the fifth year in a row and for 32 successive quarters on a year-over-year basis, according to the AFBF report. Given the pace of business to date, 2007 exports are likely to top \$80 billion, compared to \$70.9 billion in 2006 and only \$53 billion as recently as 2002. *(As reported in Drovers.com)*

### A smile for the week...

Only in America.....can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.

Only in America.....do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

Only in America.....do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries and a DIET coke. *(What's wrong with that?)*

Only in America.....do banks leave both vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.

Only in America.....do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

### Next Week's Calendar

- Aug. 27** CA Farm Water Coalition Board meeting, 10 a.m., Sacramento
- Aug. 28** Fresno Fair Education Committee, noon, Fairgrounds; Fresno Fair Board of Directors, 4 p.m., Fairgrounds
- Aug. 31** Fresno Ag Roundtable, 7 a.m., Marie Calendar's Restaurant, Cedar and Shaw avenues; FACT applications are due.

### This Week's Calendar

- Aug. 20** Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee
- Aug. 22** CFBF meeting in Sacramento
- Aug. 24** Kerman Rotary presentation; Ag Center meeting

Visit [www.fcfb.org](http://www.fcfb.org)

Fresno County  
**Farm Bureau**

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