



Remember: Coffee Talk meeting set for tomorrow, Dec. 14

Fresno County Farm Bureau will hold a Coffee Talk meeting with Supervisor Phil Larson on Friday, Dec. 14 at 7:30 a.m. at K&C Donuts in Easton.

The informal Coffee Talk meetings provide Farm Bureau members and others a chance to get up-to-speed on current local issues. Coffee and snacks are provided. There is no cost, and this meeting is hosted by the Central Region. To RSVP or for additional details, contact FCFB at (559) 237-0263 or email: info@fcfb.org.

FCFB's Water 101 was well attended

Elected officials, farmers, water industry representatives, reporters and business leaders were on-hand Monday to learn more about Fresno County's diverse sources of water and complex water issues at the Fresno County Farm Bureau's "Water 101 -- The Basics of Fresno County Water" workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to provide a comprehensive overview of Fresno County's major water sources – the Kings and San Joaquin rivers, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and groundwater – as well as to provide background information about the myriad of issues involving this most important resource.

A common theme among the speakers was the need to strive for a diversified water portfolio and not to rely on only one source or management tool to meet the county's urban and rural needs.

Rep. Jim Costa briefly outlined efforts to develop a regional water plan to address the long-term water needs for the San Joaquin Valley region, including Fresno County. "A plan will help us figure out how to use all of the water management tools in our toolbox" to maximize a limited supply and to address long-term concerns, said Rep. Costa.

"We have to be in this together as a region if we are going to solve our long-term water supply issues," he added.

Several of the speakers explained the conjunctive use approach of using surface water to

help supplement and recharge the underground aquifer. "We can't continue to pump from the underground without putting some [water] back," said Fresno Irrigation District Manager Gary Serrato. He discussed the city of Fresno's recharge basins, called Leaky Acres, and explained how surface water from the Kings and San Joaquin rivers are used at that site to help percolate into the groundwater supply, which is the major drinking water source for the city. Both the cities of Fresno and Clovis now are using treated surface water to supplement their use of groundwater.

Sarge Green, a consultant with the California Water Institute, describes the groundwater aquifer as "our retirement account," which constantly needs to be refilled to help prepare for the future. The "driver" for groundwater recharge in Fresno County is the Kings River, Green said, describing the make-up of the soil structures and hydrology in the county and how recharge occurs.

City of Fresno's Lon Martin focused on the conservation component and the important role it plays in stewardship of a limited resource. "The conservation mindset is sinking in," Martin said, reporting on the decrease in per capita water use among Fresno residents from 329 gallons/per/day in 2002 to 289/gallons/per/day in 2006. Martin described water conservation as the "cheapest" new water supply, and the important role it plays in a well-rounded water management program that includes storage, groundwater recharge and water banking.

For the county's west side, which depends on surface water imported from the Delta, chronic water shortages have been commonplace for some time because of environmental restrictions on pumping water from the Delta. The already-limited supply was made even more uncertain this summer because of additional pumping restrictions to protect the Endangered Species Act-listed Delta smelt.

FCFB Director and Riverdale-area farmer Dan Errotabere reported preliminary water supply projections are pointing to 10-30 percent under dry conditions and 20-45 percent supply with average precipitation this winter, due to the legal action on the smelt. Errotabere said even water transfers from the

typically water-abundant northern California may be compromised because of the pumping limitations. "Hopefully the big picture will be taken into account [as to what is at stake]," he said. "If we don't get started soon, we'll be in a crisis mode for a long time."

Additional speakers included Mike Wade, of the California Farm Water Coalition, noted water law expert Chris Campbell, Mario Santayo, of the Friant Water Authority, Kathi Wood, of the California Water Institute, and Parry Klassen, of the Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship.

Because of the interest in this workshop, a similar seminar is being planned for February.

Air Board hears concerns with proposed truck emission rules

A proposal to require older diesel trucks to be phased out could have a big impact on farms and other transportation-related components of the agricultural sector.

Discussions were held recently with the State Board of Food and Agriculture and on-going meetings with California Air Resources Board staff are focused on proposals to require older diesel on-road truck engines to be upgraded and/or replaced to help reduce emissions.

The proposal by the Air Resources Board would require trucks weighing more than 14,000 pounds to be replaced or upgraded. Farm and trucking groups say that in some cases, the trucks could have to be replaced twice, at considerable cost.

The agricultural industry groups involved in the discussions have expressed concerns to the ARB from farmers and agricultural-related business owners regarding the estimated costs to comply. Many of the affected ag-related businesses can pass those increased costs on to their customers – mainly farmers and ranchers. Producers, though, do not have the ability to pass increased costs along to their buyers, as farmers and ranchers are price-takers, not price-setters. In essence, some farmers would end up paying twice—for their own costs to comply and those passed-along costs from other businesses.

A detailed letter from several ag industry groups – including FCFB-- was sent to the ARB outlining the major concerns on behalf of farmers, ranchers and agricultural business owners. The January issue of *Agriculture Today* will have a more thorough review of the proposals.

Report says gene flow not likely to impact environment

Gene flow from genetically modified crop plants to their wild plant relatives will have little overall impact on human health or the environment, predicts a team of researchers in a report released Wednesday by the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology.

Gene flow -- the movement of genes from one plant population to another -- has always occurred naturally but has drawn particular attention during the past 10 years, as genetically modified crop plants have moved into commercial production.

"Regulatory requirements and market standards that are specific to crops developed using biotechnology have resulted in much closer monitoring of gene flow than has been done in the past," said plant scientist Kent Bradford, a co-author of the report and director of UC Davis' Seed Biotechnology Center.

"Gene flow within a given crop can result in economic impacts for specific markets but these can be managed through proven strategies that make it possible for genetically modified crops and non-biotech crops to co-exist."

The contributing scientists describe in the report the biological traits that are being imparted to both biotech crops and non-biotech crops, and the ramifications each has for gene flow. They discuss the potential for the inadvertent mixing of seeds or other genetic material from a given plant with a shipment of other seed or grain, and examine isolation and segregation methods for preventing such unwanted gene flow.

The full text of the paper, "Implications of Gene Flow in the Scale-up and Commercial Use of Biotechnology-derived Crops: Economic and Policy Considerations," is available online at <http://www.cast-science.org>.

Dairy Program honored with Governor's environmental award

The California Dairy Quality Assurance Program (CDQAP) received California's highest and most prestigious environmental honor, the Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award last month.

The "Environmental and Economic Partnerships" award recognizes exceptional leadership in building public-private collaborations to

help conserve California's resources and to protect and enhance the environment.

The CDQAP comprises 17 regulatory agencies, dairy organizations, environmental advocacy groups and the University of California. The partnership offers classroom and on-farm assistance in meeting regional, state and federal environmental regulations.

Farm Bureau membership makes great gift

Looking for the perfect holiday gift for the hard-to-buy-for person on your list? Consider giving your loved one or friend a gift membership to the Fresno County Farm Bureau.

As a member of FCFB, your family member or friend will receive our monthly newsletter, Friday Follow-Up, information regarding agricultural issues, CFBF's California County, CFBF's AG Alert, and benefits and discounts from local businesses. Most importantly, their membership will provide support to Fresno County agriculture!

For more information regarding Farm Bureau membership, please visit our website at www.fcfb.org, or contact FCFB Membership Coordinator John Migliazzo at (559) 237-0263 or via email at johnm@fcfb.org.

Christmas Holiday Fun Facts – farm-wise

Do you need something to talk about at upcoming Holiday parties? Dazzle your friends and co-workers with this trivia:

- Californians will consumer 12-to-14 million turkeys during the Thanksgiving/Christmas holiday season.
- It takes about 20 weeks to raise a bird to 30 lbs, and consumes 10-14 gallons of water during that time. That 30-pound bird will become a 24-lb turkey in the market.
- Fresno County had more than 3.8 million turkeys in production in 2006, worth more than \$47-million. This includes birds raised conventionally and organically, and heritage type of breeds.
- Water needed to grow other foods we may consume at Christmas time include:

- Lettuce for a salad—3 gallons to grow one cup of lettuce
- Whole wheat dinner roll – 7 gallons to grow the wheat for one roll
- Broccoli—11 gallons for one serving
- Oranges – 14 gallons to grow one orange
- Brown rice—16 gallons to grow 1 ounce of rice
- Almonds -- 80 gallons to grow one ounce of almonds
- Your typical Christmas cookie – about 48 gallons (including flour, sugar, egg, butter, almonds)

Farmers use the water to grow the crops, but the consumer is the ultimate recipient of that water in the form of food and fiber products.

Next Week's Calendar

Dec. 17 CA Farm Water Coalition Board of Directors meeting, 10 a.m., Sacramento

This Week's Calendar

Dec. 10 Water 101 Seminar

Dec. 11 FCMP Advisory Committee meeting; KJWL interview on ag; Big Fresno Fair Board of Directors meeting

Dec. 12 EOC Rural Collaborative; Bee Working Group meeting; Fresno Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs Committee

Dec. 14 Coffee Talk; ARB meeting



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Fresno County
Farm Bureau

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