



November 16, 2007

Legislative Update

By Teresa Plascencia

FCFB Governmental Affairs Coordinator

February 2008 - Ballot Initiatives: On Feb. 5, 2008, California will hold elections for the presidential primary and ballot initiatives. Initiatives that have qualified are:

Proposition 93: Term Limits

Reduces the total amount of time a person may serve in the state legislature from 14 years to 12 years. Prop 93 allows a person to serve a total of 12 years either in the Assembly or the Senate. Proponents say it will reduce lobbyists' influence by allowing legislators to gain expertise in one venue. Opponents say it's a method for politicians to keep their seats longer. Currently, state politicians have up to six years in the Assembly and eight in the Senate. Those rules have been in place since 1990.

Proposition 91: Gas money

Tightens loopholes in existing law to stop the state from using gasoline taxes for programs other than transportation. State analysts say there will be no revenue or cost effects. Prop. 91 would increase stability of transportation funding and reduce flexibility of state spending, according to state analysts.

Proposition 92: College dollars

Requires minimum funding for schools and community colleges to be calculated separately and differently. Reduces fees to \$15 per unit and limits future increases. Allocates a set amount of Proposition 98 money to community colleges. State analysts predict an annual loss of fee revenues to community colleges of about \$71 million in 2007-08, with unknown impacts later. Opponents of the initiative argue it would break financial ties to public school enrollment, lock in large new state spending with no plan to pay for it, worsen California's budget deficit and expand bureaucracy with no independent oversight. Proponents say it will cut tuition from \$20 to \$15 per class unit, establish a minimum level of state funding, and grant the state community college chancellor more autonomy from the governor.

California Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors will be reviewing the individual initiatives. For more information on all initiatives, visit:

www.sos.ca.gov/elections and click on "Initiative update."

FCFB to host "Water 101" seminar on Dec. 10

The fundamentals of Fresno County's water diversity will be the focus of an educational seminar on Monday, Dec. 10 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Fresno County Farm Bureau, 1274 W. Hedges Ave., Fresno.

The seminar, "Water 101—The Basics of Fresno County Water," will focus on the sources of water for Fresno County; terminology used in water issues; federal, state and local water systems; basic water law; and major issues, such as the San Joaquin River restoration settlement, the Regional Water Management Plan, Irrigated Lands Water Quality Program and west side water supply uncertainty. Speakers include local experts in hydrology, water management and water policy.

The seminar is open to elected officials and their representatives; reporters, editors and news directors; farmers, livestock producers and agribusiness representatives; and community and business leaders. Fresno County's water sources are diverse and the major issues are often complex and hard to grasp.

"Fresno County's water sources cover a wide range, and the issues are just as diverse -- whether it's balancing demands for a limited supply, Endangered Species Act impacts on supply, water meters, groundwater recharge or river restoration," said FCFB Executive Director Ryan Jacobsen.

There is no cost and lunch will be served. Seating is limited. For more information or to RSVP, contact FCFB Governmental Affairs Coordinator Teresa Plascencia at (559) 237-0263 or info@fcfb.org.

A new intern joins FCFB family

This week, Cassie Dellaganna, a junior at California State University, Fresno, joined the FCFB team as an intern. She will assist staff through May 2008.

Dellaganna recently transferred to Fresno State from Cuesta Community College in San Luis

Obispo. Dellaganna has a diverse background in agriculture. She was raised on a small cattle ranch in Templeton that also produced much of its own hay crop. She also was very active and involved in both 4-H and FFA, holding numerous leadership positions.

Dellaganna currently is an agriculture education major with an emphasis in teacher preparation and plans to teach in one of California's vocational agriculture programs.

Dellaganna says, "I am very eager and excited to have this opportunity to work with the Fresno County Farm Bureau. I look forward to meeting and working with the many community members and agriculturalists in Fresno County."

Input sought on forming statewide energy plan

The California Public Utilities Commission is seeking input from the public -- including the agriculture sector-- in the formation of a statewide energy efficiency Strategic Plan for 2009-2020.

Two workshops will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 20 at the Southern California Edison Company's AgTAC facility, 1415 9th St. in Tulare to gather input as to how these programs can be better designed and implemented. The morning session begins at 9 a.m. and is intended for irrigated agriculture energy users. The afternoon session begins at 1 p.m., and is intended for dairy producers. Owners, operators, vendors, manufacturers, and representatives from colleges and universities, and local, state and federal government are encouraged to attend. Lunch will be served.

The CPUC has directed California's investor owned utilities -- working in collaboration with publicly-owned utilities, state agencies, and other stakeholders -- to prepare a single, statewide energy efficiency Strategic Plan for the period 2009-2020. The plan will address all sectors for gas and electricity use -- residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural. The overall goal is to develop recommendations that will help maximize energy conservation, minimize peak loads and minimize program costs through year 2020.

At the workshops participants will be asked to identify the barriers to participation in utility energy efficiency programs, and what factors or trends are now affecting or will affect energy use -- in total and especially during peak demand periods.

To register for the workshop, contact Pete Canessa at: pcanessa@charter.net, or call (805) 547-1130 or (805) 709-4180. The Web site for additional details is: www.californiaenergyefficiency.com.

Drought workshop for farmers planned for Dec. 5

Two workshops designed to prepare farmers for next year's expected drought will be held on Dec. 5 in Fresno and on Dec. 6 in Visalia. The Agricultural Water Management Council is hosting the workshops, which will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 5 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. at the Fresno County Farm Bureau office, 1274 W. Hedges Ave., and on Thursday, Dec. 6 from 9:30- 11:30 a.m. at the Tulare County Farm Bureau office, 737 North Ben Maddox Way, in Visalia. Lunch will be provided following both workshops.

The workshops will help growers plan for the anticipated drought, resulting from water-short weather forecasts and reduced pumping flows from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, as ordered by a federal judge to protect an endangered fish.

Representatives from local irrigation districts will talk about expected water allocations for the upcoming year. U.C. Cooperative Extension representatives will provide planning tools for farmers to use during critical times of the growing season, and will review irrigation practices geared to improve water quality and stretch limited water supplies.

The workshops are free. One hour of DPR Continuing Education credits will be available. RSVP is requested and can be made by contacting the Agricultural Water Management Council at (916) 391-5035. The Council is a non-profit organization that assists farm water districts in managing and using water more efficiently.

USDA issues cotton, corn and sugar beet estimates

**By Cassie Dellaganna
FCFB intern**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has released its latest estimated for the 2007 cotton, corn and sugar beet crops.

Pima cotton production in California is forecasted to be up nine percent at 750,000 bales from last year's crop. It's estimated that 257,000 acres will be harvested to produce an average statewide yield estimated at 1,401 pounds per acre.

Upland cotton harvest is estimated at 600,000 bales. That puts it up five percent from October's forecast; however it's down 23 percent from the 2006 crop. An estimated 194,000 acres of Upland cotton will be harvested with an overall statewide yield estimated at 1,485 pounds per acre.

For the most part, the weather was good during the growing season, but a couple of rain events in October disrupted harvest. Most of the cotton has been harvested, and stalks are ready for plow-down. Modules can now be spotted along the valley roadsides.

Corn for grain production has skyrocketed to 83 percent from last year with an estimated 931,000 tons to be produced. Harvested acreage also is up 73 percent with 190,000 acres. The corn (grain) yield forecast is up to 4.90 tons per acre, which makes that up six percent from last year.

The sugar beet production estimate is not as optimistic as cotton and corn. Sugar beet production is forecasted to be down six percent with about 1.47 million tons to be produced. The harvested acreage is estimated to be at 39,100 tons to produce a yield of 37.5 tons per acre. The fall sugar beet crop in the Central Valley finished in late-September. On a good note, there was a record high sugar content. Planting is ongoing in the Imperial Valley.

Farm-City Week is November 16-22

By Cassis Dellaganna
FCFB Intern

As Thanksgiving nears, families from across the nation will consume everything from turkeys to vegetables and pumpkin pie. But how many of those families stop and think about where exactly that great meal came from?

That is the mission of Farm-City Week. It started back in 1955 when the National Farm-City Council started this educational program "to build interdependence between rural and urban citizens," as stated on the Farm-City Web site. It was planned especially for this time of year, and to include Thanksgiving because of the vast agriculture aspects the holiday includes.

The goal of Farm-City Week has been to provide education to consumers and classrooms across the nation. Farm-City has worked with Agriculture in the Classroom programs to provide activity sheets, teacher packets, placemats and bookmarks to serve as educational tools about the

links between the agriculture industries and the urban cities.

The Farm-City Week Program also offers lots of fun agriculture and Thanksgiving facts like:

* Wisconsin leads the nation in cranberry production. Each year, cranberry producers in the "Badger State" grow more than 300 million pounds of the tart berries.

* Chickens that lay brown eggs have red ear lobes. There is believed to be a genetic link between the two.

* A pumpkin is not a vegetable – it is a fruit! A pumpkin usually weighs between 10 and 30 pounds. Some gigantic award winners have tipped the scales at over 1,000 pounds!

For more information about The National Farm-City Council or Farm-City Week, visit: www.farmcity.org.

This Week's Calendar

- Nov. 13 Fresno Fair Board of Directors meeting; TBR review meeting
- Nov. 14 Chamber Governmental Affairs Retreat
- Nov. 15 Roy Gabriel Memorial Service, Sacramento
- Nov. 16 Ag tractor air quality workgroup meeting

Next Week's Calendar

- Nov. 19 Meeting with Fresno Historical Society, 1:30 p.m., Kearney Mansion
- Nov. 20 Metro Rural Loop meeting, 2:30 p.m., City Hall
- Nov. 21 FCFB Staff Retreat/Planning Session
- Nov. 22-23 Happy Thanksgiving! FCFB office will be closed.

Visit FCFB's Web site at: www.fcfb.org.



Fresno County
Farm Bureau

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