



October 19, 2007

## **This Week's Legislative Scene**

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"Card check" bill vetoed - - Senate Bill 180

(Midgen) would have allowed agriculture workers and laborers the use of signed cards (card-check) instead of secret ballots in a union election -- was vetoed over the weekend by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. This was one of the more controversial bills waiting action by the governor.

In his statement, Gov. Schwarzenegger said he has made strengthening workplace protections for agricultural workers one of his top priorities. Those added protections were implemented under existing law without the changes proposed by the bill to the historic Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA). The governor said the changes the bill would have made in the ALRA were unnecessary to continue progress in ensuring a better working environment for agricultural workers.

Additionally, the Governor vetoed SB 650 (Padilla), which was a last-minute alternative to SB 180. SB 650 would have implemented the card-check with a sunset date of five years.

Governor rejects clone label on meat - - Gov. Schwarzenegger also vetoed Senator Migden's Senate Bill 63, a bill that would have required labeling of meat from cloned animals. The governor said it would have required tracking and labeling requirements that were unworkable, costly and unenforceable. Additionally, the necessity for this bill was questionable, as there are so few cloned animals in existence and they are not cloned for meat production but for breeding purposes.

More seats to the air board - - However, Gov. Schwarzenegger did sign into law SB 719 (Machado). This law expands the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District Board membership by four members, two of which are appointed by the governor and not accountable to district residents or elected by constituents. There was no comment released from

the Governor's office regarding his decision. The bill was opposed by FCFB and CFBF

## **Farm Bill Update**

The Senate's Finance Committee on October 4 approved legislation to provide funding for parts of the federal farm bill package.

The Senate is now poised to advance the bill even further next week when the Committee on Agriculture meets to debate the main parts of the farm legislation, which is expected to convene on Oct. 23. Areas such as nutrition, renewable energy and rural development are just a few of the components of the bill.

## **Water Bonds Update...**

This past week, the California Legislature was unable to negotiate a water policy in time to meet printing deadlines for a regular election guide for the Feb. 5 ballot.

However, the legislature could still work out a plan and place a water bond on the primary ballot, as meetings in Sacramento are still taking place. According to the Secretary of State's Office, "If the Governor and the Legislature choose to spend the extra money it would cost to do a supplemental ballot, the Secretary of State would be happy to do the analysis." *To be continued...*

## **Water uncertainty lingers—La Nina conditions forecasted**

While policy makers try to come to grips with planning for long-range water infrastructure, farmers, ranchers, agricultural lenders, food processors and others are trying to plan for the immediate future.

While so much of the state's surface water supply will be determined by this winter's precipitation, for the west side of Fresno County the supply will be driven largely by Judge Wanger's recent court ruling on Delta Smelt protections.

Very preliminary estimations call for a 20-to-45 percent Central Valley Project allocation with average precipitation, and only 10-to-30 percent with dry conditions because of the Endangered Species

Act-driven court ruling. Previous allocations would have been about 55 percent in an average water year and 30 percent in a dry year. These now "normal" allocations are still much below full contract allocations given chronic pumping restrictions in the Delta due to other environmental regulations such as the CVP Improvement Act and water quality regulations.

Although it's still very early, the National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center "suggests" a continuing development of a La Nina condition into early 2008. This condition typically means wetter-than-normal conditions over the Pacific Northwest and drier-than-normal conditions over the southwestern states.

### **We are not alone**

This week, ABC Network News aired a story about the water shortage in Georgia and the South, due to drought conditions and protections for ESA-listed mussel species. Sounds all too familiar. Here is the link to view the story:

<http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=3737083&affil=wfaa>

### **Dairy water quality grants are available**

Central Valley dairy producers can now apply for grant funds to assist with water quality improvement projects. Funded by the Proposition 50 Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program, Western United Resource Development, Inc. is administering the Water Quality Improvement Project, designed to help producers meet the recently enacted Waste Discharge Requirements and make improvements in order to remain in compliance.

This is a cost-share grant. Applications can be found on the WURD website at <http://www.wurdco.com/index.htm> and must be postmarked by Nov. 26.

In addition, Sustainable Conservation is administering a grant program for dairies in the San Joaquin Valley and Tulare Lake Basin to implement and showcase cost effective technologies, management practices and/or infrastructural improvements that reduce impacts to surface and groundwater resources.

The Dairy Water Quality Grant Program, funded by the State Water Resources Control Board, is eligible for dairy farms located in the SJV. The

maximum funding amount is \$150,000, with a minimum funding amount of \$5,000. Matching funds are not required, but will strengthen project fundability. All proposals must be postmarked by Nov. 1 and mailed to: Sustainable Conservation, 201 Needham St., Modesto, CA 95354. Direct questions to: Joseph Choperena, (415) 977-0380 ext. 320.

### **Annual Agribusiness Management Conference/ Awards Luncheon is Nov. 7**

Fresno State's Center for Agricultural Business will host the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Agribusiness Management Conference at the Convention Center Valdez Exhibit Hall on Wednesday, Nov. 7.

This year, the annual event will focus on the volatile housing market, dwindling water supplies, immigration, air quality and food safety. Steven Wood, chief economist for Insight Economics, will provide the general economic outlook, and long-time agricultural legislative representative George Soares will provide the luncheon address.

The registration fee is \$100 (including luncheon) if registered before Oct 27. For more information, contact CAB at (559) 278-4405 or <http://cati.csufresno.edu/cab>.

A highlight of the event is the presentation of the 2007 Agriculturalist of the Year and Ag Business of the Year awards during the luncheon.

The Fresno Chamber's Agriculturalists of the Year recipients for 2007 are Nat DiBuduo, president of the Fresno-based Allied Grape Growers, and Sarkis Sarabian, a diversified farmer and agricultural consultant in the Lone Star area.

The recipient of the Baker, Peterson & Franklin CPA, LLP 2007 Ag Business Award is the Riverdale-based Borba Farms.

Tickets to the awards luncheon only cost \$40. For details, contact the Chamber at (559) 495-4800.

### **Best Management Practices -- Water Quality Workshops set for Nov. 5**

Two free workshops will be offered in Parlier and Riverdale on Monday, Nov. 5, to help growers with best management practices for irrigated lands.

The Kings River Sub-Watershed Coalition will present the workshops. The first will be from 9 a.m.-to-noon at the U.C. Kearney Agricultural Center in Parlier. The second will be the afternoon of Nov. 5

from 1-to-4 p.m. at the Riverdale Community Center in Riverdale.

Updates will be given on the conditional agricultural water discharge waiver program, and the latest information on best management practices technology for stone fruit farm operations will be provided. Continuing education hours are pending. For details, contact KRCD at (559) 237-5567.

### **Student writing contest is underway**

Nov. 1 is the deadline for the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom's 2007 "Imagine this..." Story Writing Contest.

Besides creating more awareness of California's food and fiber production, the contest offers recognition and prizes to student authors, and satisfies Content Standards in English-Language Arts. This year's state winning students will have their stories published in an illustrated book. One state winner will be selected from each grade level and, with their teacher and parents will be honored at an awards ceremony and dinner celebration during National Agriculture Week, March 2008.

All California students are welcome to participate. Past winners have included students from public, private, charter and home schools from all over the state. Entry forms and contest rules can be found at the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom's Web site, [www.cfaitc.org](http://www.cfaitc.org); or (800) 700-AITC or (916) 561-5625.

### **U.S.-produced food preferred**

A recent survey by the California Olive Industry shows that registered dieticians and nutritionists indicate a strong preference for American food, with 66 percent saying that when presented with a choice, they prefer food that was produced in the U.S.

This preference appears to stem from the belief that U.S.-produced food is more highly regulated than other countries, with 79 percent stating that they agreed/strongly agreed that U.S food is more highly regulated than other countries. Seventy-one percent of the American Dietetic Association members said they rated their confidence in the U.S. food supply as either excellent or good.

Eighty-two percent reported that they thought it was important to know what country their food was coming from. And when asked if they read labels to

find out where their food was from, 69 percent agreed/strongly agreed that they did read labels.

Likewise, almost 40 percent of those surveyed say their confidence in the food supply has decreased over the past 12 months. The full survey and all stats and charts can be viewed at: [www.calolive.org/press/releases/downloads\\_200710.html](http://www.calolive.org/press/releases/downloads_200710.html)

### **Local NRCS leader receives national honor**

John Beyer, state air quality coordinator with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Fresno, recently was awarded the prestigious 2007 Department of Agriculture Honor Award for protecting and enhancing the nation's natural resources base and environment. The announcement was made during a ceremony at USDA headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Beyer was cited for his work in successfully pioneering agricultural air quality conservation measures in California that offer technical and policy models to USDA conservationists nationwide.

"John Beyer was called upon to do something new for USDA-NRCS: find ways for California's agricultural community to improve air quality in a way that would satisfy federal and state regulators and was acceptable to producers," said USDA-NRCS State Conservationist Ed Burton.

Beyer's efforts have expanded air quality conservation programs provided by USDA-NRCS. The agency now offers technical assistance controlling wind erosion and odors, reducing rural road dust, converting agricultural diesel engines to cleaner models, increasing the use of conservation tillage, reducing smoke from orchards by chipping rather than burning, and using high-tech chemical sprayers that reduce the release of volatile organic compounds. His work has resulted in 6,000 farmers implementing conservation measures that removed 13,000 tons of emissions from the sky.

The USDA Honor Awards are given to a select few employees each year for notable contributions to the USDA's mission, the nation or public service. "I'd like to thank all of the NRCS employees and our many agriculture partners in the San Joaquin Valley," Beyer said. "I couldn't have accomplished what I did without their help."

Beyer is retiring this month after working for USDA-NRCS since 1971.

## Memorial service scheduled for Roy Gabriel

The California Farm Bureau Federation will be hosting a "Celebration of Life" memorial service for Roy Gabriel at the California State Railroad Museum in Old Town Sacramento on Thursday, Nov. 15 at 5:30 pm.

Mr. Gabriel died unexpectedly on Oct. 1, while on business in Washington, D. C. He was the director of labor affairs for California Farm Bureau Federation for nearly 35 years. The Gabriel Family will be holding private services in Fullerton at the end of this month.

For details, contact CFBF at (916) 561-5520.

## Did you know???

*With the World Series just around the corner, here are some trivia questions to see just how much you know about America's favorite past-time. Those persons replying to [lizh@cfb.org](mailto:lizh@cfb.org) with the correct answers by 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 19 will be entered in a drawing to receive a bottle of California wine! To get the correct answers (after Friday!), email: [lizh@cfb.org](mailto:lizh@cfb.org).*

- 1) What year was the first World Series played?  
A: 1884, B: 1903, C: 1910, D: 1921
- 2) What Dodger pitcher broke a 62-year-old record when he struck out 29 batters in the 1965 World Series?  
A: Sandy Koufax, B: Mudcat Grant, C: Don Drysdale, D: Wally Bunker
- 3) In what year was game 3 of the World Series postponed due to an earthquake?  
A: 1908, B: 1920, C: 1989, D: 2001
- 4) What player holds the record for most World Series home runs?  
A: Lou Gehrig, B: Hank Aaron, C: Mickey Mantle, D: Babe Ruth

## Next Week's Calendar

- Oct. 22 CA Farm Water Coalition Board of Directors meeting, Sacramento;
- Oct. 23 Fresno County Board of Supervisors hearing on dairy/feedlot ordinance, 2 p.m., Hall of Records; Fresno Fair Board of Directors, 4 p.m., Fairgrounds
- Oct. 24 CFBF Board of Directors meeting, Sacramento
- Oct. 25 One Voice meeting, 10:30 a.m., COG office
- Oct. 26 Fresno Ag Roundtable, 7 a.m., Marie Calendars Restaurant, Cedar & Shaw avenues

## This Week's Calendar

- Oct. 16 FCFB Executive Meeting
- Oct. 19 One Voice meeting

**Have you visited Fresno Farm Bureau's web site lately? Check it out at: [www.fcfb.org](http://www.fcfb.org). If you have trouble getting on the site, call us at (559) 237-0263.**



Fresno County  
**Farm Bureau**

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