



October 26, 2007

Fresno County Supervisors approve dairy/feedlot ordinance

By a vote of 3-to-2, Fresno County Supervisors approved a land use ordinance that regulates expansion of current dairies and feedlots and the placement of new larger dairies and feedlots in Fresno County.

Fresno County Farm Bureau directors and dairy producers Steve Nash, Donny Rollin, Kathi Woodward, Brian Pacheco and FCFB Executive Director Ryan Jacobsen worked extensively with County of Fresno staff to help craft an ordinance that would address the County's environmental concerns, while at the same time provide for the growth that dairy producers need to stay competitive.

The new ordinance changes Fresno County from a "by-right" county to a discretionary use status, increasing the regulations for dairies located within the County. The new ordinance creates buffers from residential zones, spheres of influence, public drinking water sources and resource conservation zoned property for new dairies of any size.

The ordinance also addresses operational, nutrient and vector control management plans and soil and groundwater monitoring programs for both new and existing dairies (if permitted after the adoption of the ordinance). In addition, applicable air district and water board requirements and permits are required under the ordinance, as well as CEQA compliance.

The new ordinance is the result of more than 16 months of discussions and drafts. Extensive public involvement was included in the process, with much of the opposition coming from the Fresno Healthy Dairy Commission, a union-backed local group with strong environmental ties. The commission paid for television and radio advertisements to make their case, often using mis-information and emotional rhetoric to influence policy to include unscientifically proven regulations on so-called "mega" dairy producers.

At a packed Hall of Records on Tuesday, both sides made their cases with the county leaders Phil Larson, Judy Case and Bob Waterston voting to support the ordinance, and Henry Perea and Susan Anderson opposing it.

"This ordinance protects and balances the planning for dairies for today," said Bernard Jimenez,

of the County of Fresno Development Services Division.

"We want to do the right thing, but we want to make it possible for the smaller 500-cow dairy to survive, too," said Supervisor Phil Larson, who supported the ordinance.

"This will not be easy for us. The regulations are already tough, and this ordinance will make it tougher. But we are willing to work with you because we recognize that all businesses must achieve better environmental performance," FCFB Dairy Commodity Chair Donny Rollin testified.

"We must make sure that all dairies meet appropriate environmental standards. We also must make sure that we have balanced regulations that allow for growth. Today's 'existing' dairies would not be here today if yesterday's county officials had set up an unworkable process," said the Riverdale dairy producer.

Southland fires impact crops

The fires that hit Southern California destroying homes and businesses also have affected farms, ranches and nurseries.

This week, the California Farm Bureau Federation surveyed its members and agricultural officials to assess impacts, reporting that the winds and wildfires have damaged or threatened avocado and citrus groves, nurseries, vineyards, rangeland and other farm and ranch operations. CFBF's Communication staff is providing updates of the impacts. Here's a brief recap:

Emergency officials estimate as much as one-third of the state's avocado acreage stood in the path of wildfires. The CA Avocado Commission will survey farmers to gather updated information about losses, but the combination of wind and fire causes serious concerns.

The most extensive farm-related damage may have occurred in San Diego County, a key agricultural region that leads California production of avocados, flowers and nursery products. The county agricultural commissioner's office says egg ranches, turf farms, pumpkin farms, greenhouses and dairy farms may also be threatened. More than 2,000 horses have been evacuated to the Del Mar fairgrounds.

In Orange County, minor fire damage has occurred to avocados and to nursery crops and buildings. In Riverside County, strong winds appear to have caused the worst trouble. The county Farm Bureau says power outages caused by the wind disrupted milking at dairy farms. It says some pumpkins and winter vegetables were "sandblasted" by blowing dust carried on the strong wind.

In Ventura County, high winds have wreaked havoc with avocados. One avocado farmer says up to one-third of the fruit has been blown off his trees. Lemons may also have been damaged by high wind.

Fire killed 52 goats that gathered in a shelter near Malibu, according to the Los Angeles County agricultural commissioner's office. In a sad irony, the owner kept the goats to lease to landowners for brush clearing, in order to reduce fire danger.

Overall losses remain impossible to quantify at this time. Farmers and county agricultural officials will need several days to assess the losses, once they're allowed to return to fire-damaged areas.

CFBF has a very informative update of the fire-related impacts by commodity and location. Check it out at: www.cfbf.com/fire.

Chamber issues breakfast is Oct. 30

Assemblyman Juan Arambula is the featured speaker at the Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce's Eggs and Issues Breakfast on Tuesday, Oct. 30. The breakfast will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the Piccadilly Inn, 2305 W. Shaw Ave. Seating is limited. For details, contact the Chamber's Amy Huerta at (559) 495-4818.

Reminder: USDA EQIP Program deadline is Nov. 2

Next Friday is the deadline to apply for cost-share funds under the USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The program provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who want to make voluntary improvements to natural resources on land they own or manage.

EQIP can help in implementing water conservation, integrated pest management, nutrient management, air quality improvements, rangeland management, manure management programs and more. Assistance can be in the form of structures and conservation equipment as well as incentives payments for proper management to achieve

environmental benefits. Details can be found at: www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/. Growers interested in applying should contact the USDA Fresno County Farm Service Center at (559) 276-7494.

U.S. cows contribute less to greenhouse gases

With so much focus on cow-generated methane gases, it's interesting to note that a report released last April by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency does not even list livestock production emissions as a concern.

The EPA says that livestock contribute less than 2.4 percent of total U.S. greenhouse emissions, while fossil fuel combustion contributes 80 percent. The Natural Resources Defense Council reiterates that burning fossil fuels for electric power is the No. 1 cause of global warming.

Interestingly, livestock production practices in the U. S. produce fewer greenhouse gases, such as methane, than cattle raised in other parts of the world, as reported in *Drovers*. According to the EPA, from 1990 to 2005 methane emissions from beef cattle operations declined by three percent, due mainly to decreasing cattle populations and improvements in feed quality. To read more about cattle's environmental footprint, go to www.drovers.com.

Corn and wheat yields are up

The USDA reports that California's 2007 corn for grain production is expected to total 931,000 tons, 83 percent above last year. The forecast yield, at 4.90 tons per acre, is six percent above last year.

Likewise, California's final 2007 winter wheat production is estimated at 576,000 tons. Average yields came in at 2.40 tons per acre, 38 percent above the previous year. However, harvested acreage was estimated at 240,000 acres, about four percent below last year.

Nationwide, U.S. corn for grain production is forecast at 373 million tons, 26 percent above 2006. The area harvested and to be harvested for grain is forecast at 86.1 million acres, 22 percent higher than last year. If realized, this would be the most corn acres harvested for grain nationwide since 1933.

Beef prices look strong

Strong prices for cattle are expected to continue through the first quarter of 2008. That, in turn, could affect consumer beef prices.

American Farm Bureau analysts note that cattle feedlots in most states hold fewer animals than they did a year ago. California is an exception.

The Farm Bureau report says the lower supplies of cattle in feedlots nationally indicate that supplies of feeder cattle will stay tight ... and prices will stay firm.

Drink your milk!

Low dairy intake, too much weight and too little activity make today's children more likely to break a bone than the children of 40 years ago.

The Dairy Council of California says research has shown steady growth in the number of fractures among children. It says the increase correlates with a reduction in dairy consumption by kids. A professor of pediatrics says children who avoid dairy products have lower bone mass, and more risk of a fracture.

Did you know?

Here's some fun trivia about Halloween, which will occur next Wednesday, Oct. 31:

- Candy Corn is the most popular Halloween candy.
- According to superstition, if you stare into a mirror at midnight on Halloween, you will see your future spouse.
- The world's biggest pumpkin weighs 1,385 pounds.
- The carved jack-o'-lantern dates back to medieval Ireland. Its legend involves an Irishman named Jack who had to wander the Earth until Judgment Day with a lantern made from a hollowed-out turnip with a live coal inside. Children started making these lanterns on Halloween, and in the New World they switched from turnips to pumpkins.

Here are last week's World Series Trivia

Answers:

1—B; 1903; Although there were other post-season championships that took place as early as 1884, the World Series was not established until 1903--the year that the feuding National League and American League, who had been battling each other for several years over players, decided to come to some sort of peace agreement.

2—A; Sandy Koufax; After losing in game 2 of the 1965 World Series, Sandy Koufax came back with a 4-hitter in game 5 and a 3-hitter in game 7. He finished with a 0.38 ERA, a record 29 strikeouts, and World Series MVP honors.

3—C; 1989; Just minutes before game three of the 1989 World Series between Oakland and San Francisco, an earthquake hit the Bay Area. The game was postponed and the series was resumed 11 days later.

4—C; Mickey Mantle; He played in 12 Fall Classics, and holds the record for most World Series home runs with 18. He also holds World Series records for most runs (42), runs batted in (40), and total bases (123).

Source: www.usefultrivia.com

Congratulations to Mike Henry, of the CA Farm Water Coalition, who won the raffle for the bottle of wine by providing the correct answers. Interestingly, Mike was at Candlestick Park for the 1989 Series Game when things started to rock-and-roll from the earthquake! Thanks for playing!!!!

Next Week's Calendar

- Oct. 30 Chamber's Eggs & Issues Breakfast, 7:30 a.m., Piccadilly Inn; San Joaquin Valley Political Academy, 11 a.m., Board of Realtors
- Oct. 31 **Trick-or-Treat! Happy Halloween!**
- Nov. 1 FCFB Board of Directors meeting, 6 p.m., FCFB office, 1274 W. Hedges Ave.
- Nov. 2 Farmland Conservation Meeting, 9 a.m.; Chamber's Valley Legislative Delegation, noon, Chamber office

This Week's Calendar

- Oct. 22 CA Farm Water Coalition Board of Directors meeting
- Oct. 23 Fresno County Board of Supervisors hearing on dairy/feedlot ordinance; Fresno Fair Board of Directors
- Oct. 24 CFBF Board of Directors meeting
- Oct. 25 One Voice meeting
- Oct. 26 Fresno Ag Roundtable

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

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Farm Bureau

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