



Fresno County Farm Bureau

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Reminder: Easton Coffee Talk is next Wednesday

FCFB is hosting an Easton Coffee Talk meeting with Supervisor Phil Larson on Wednesday, July 29. Also in attendance will be a representative from the Fresno County Assessor's office to discuss property values and the assessment process. The meeting will begin at 7:30 a.m. at the Easton C.P.D.E.S. Hall, 172 W Jefferson Ave, Fresno.

The informal Coffee Talk meetings provide Farm Bureau members and others a chance to get up-to-speed on current local issues and ask questions of the morning's speakers. There is no cost to attend for FCFB members or potential members. Breakfast burritos, coffee and other refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to FCFB at (559) 237-0263 or via email: info@fcfb.org.

News resources and interviews to be available at FCFB Media Event

It's not too late to plan on attending the Fresno County Farm Bureau's Media and Partners Appreciation Night, which is scheduled for Thursday, July 30, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at P-R Farms, 2917 E. Shepherd Ave., Clovis.

This year, the event will feature not only the much-anticipated annual traditions, but will offer several industry experts and interview opportunities on a variety of subjects, including water, drought and groundwater conditions; the transitions in the fresh fruit industry; rural crime prevention; dairy industry challenges; food distribution and community need; and agricultural safety / heat illness prevention programs. The industry experts will be available for interviews and background information from 5:30 to 6:45 p.m.

This year, FCFB is partnering with the Community Food Bank, which will have representatives and board members available to discuss the current need in Fresno County and programs available to help prevent hunger. In particular, the Food Bank will have on display the new Nutrition on Wheels program, equipped with a specially designed mobile van that offers on-site cooking and nutrition information for Food Bank recipients, providing information about how to prepare donated produce and other nutritious foods. Participants are asked to bring a food or monetary donation to the event.

Also, FCFB will announce the recipients of the 2009 Journalism Awards at about 6:45 p.m. One of the attractions of Media Night is the trailer full of fresh produce donated by Farm Bureau members for the media guests to take home. This year, additional farm donations have been collected to provide to the Food Bank.

The event is free to members of the media and FCFB Business Support Members, and non-media/BSM guests cost \$10 per person. To register, visit www.fcfb.org, call the Farm Bureau office at (559) 237-0263 or email Liz Hudson at lizh@fcfb.org.

Legislative Update

By Teresa Plascencia

FCFB Governmental Affairs Coordinator

State legislators have continued their legislative bill work through the budget process; committee work must be completed by Aug. 28. Here is an update on a few of the bills:

AB 1437 (Jared Huffman, D-San Rafael) would have prohibited the selling of eggs that are not in compliance with the California animal care standards (Prop 2). Since Prop 2 only applies to in-state producers, the bill sought to level the playing field so that in-state producers are not disadvantaged. The author held it, and it could be reintroduced next year.

SB 677(Leland Yee, D-San Mateo), which would have provided Workers' Compensation coverage insurance exclusions for small family farmers' (under \$10,000 gross receipts) immediate family members, has been removed by the author, and it may be reintroduced next year. Discussions will continue.

SB 789 (Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento) Commonly called the "card check" bill, SB 789 seeks to amend the Agricultural Labor Relations Act by allowing a "majority sign-up election" process, in place of a secret ballot process. The bill is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly on July 23.

AB 854 (Juan Arambula, D-Fresno) would require a Farm Labor Contractor (FLC) to certify there are no court judgments or Labor Commissioner orders related to unpaid wages against the FLC when seeking renewal of their FLC license. The bill now awaits action by the full Senate.

Pacific Institute's report criticized for unrealistic claims

An Oakland-based environmental organization's report on agricultural water conservation released on Wednesday has been met with criticism for making unrealistic water-saving claims. The report by the Pacific Institute claims that California farmers can conserve more than 4-million acre-feet of water through cropping changes and on-farm water conservation technology.

"The assertion that California farmers can conserve 4-million acre-feet of water is absurd and borders on pie-in-the-sky reasoning," said Mike Wade, executive director of the California Farm Water Coalition. Among other things, the report calls for a shift from field crops to vegetable crops, ignoring market demands that dictate what crops a farmer grows. "If our farmers follow the institute's suggestion then grocery stores would be glutted with more vegetables than anyone wants to buy. Prices would collapse and the crops would be wasted," Wade explained. "This new report bears no resemblance to reality."

This report is similar to one last year that was heavily criticized by representatives from the University of California and California State University systems. "The Pacific Institute dusted off its earlier report, added a few words and is offering the same conclusions that drew a sharp rebuke from members of the academic world who are experts on real-world irrigation research," Wade added.

Previous studies conducted by expert economists and resource specialists as part of the CALFED process indicated that on-farm changes by California farmers could result in a savings of 240,000 to 600,000 acre-feet of water.

Fig Fest 2009 is set for Aug. 8 at Fresno State

From the Garden of Eden to the San Joaquin Valley, figs have played an important role throughout generations by providing good nutrition as well as serving as an important cultural food. The celebration of this versatile, yet ancient fruit will be held on Saturday, Aug. 8, from 9 a.m. to noon on California State University, Fresno Ag East Lawn between the Ag Science Building and Satellite Student Union, near the corner of Barstow and Maple Avenues.

The 6th Annual Fig Fest features fig-inspired dishes created by some of the area's premier chefs and artisan food companies, live music, kid's-oriented educational activities and more. Attendees can sample baked, roasted, marinated, stuffed, dipped, and wrapped figs.

Tickets are available by contacting the California Fig Advisory Board office at (559) 243-8600. They are \$10 per person in advance or \$12 at the gate. Children under 12 years are free. Parking is also free. Event proceeds will benefit Fresno State Ag One Foundation, Slow Food Madera, and the Bulldog Pantry, a non-profit food bank serving the community since 2007.

Figs, one of the area's finest delicacies, are in peak season in early-August. All dried figs harvested in the U.S. are grown in the Central Valley. For more fig facts, visit www.californiafigs.com.

U.C. Grape Day set for Aug. 11

The U.C. Kearney Agricultural Center Grape Day 2009 will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 11 from 7 a.m. to noon at the Ag Center, 9240 S. Riverbend Ave., near Parlier.

Several UC Extension Specialists will discuss a variety of projects, including vineyard soil fumigants, heat pulse sensor monitors for water use, new wine grape varieties, post-emergent herbicide management, powdery mildew management, pocket gopher management and grape maturity in DOV raisin production. CCA and PCA continuing education units have been requested.

The cost is \$10 per person, which includes the meeting, proceedings and refreshments. For information, contact (559) 456-7285.

Fresno Fair seeks nominations for awards programs

The Big Fresno Fair is seeking nominations for its Community Champions and Hall of Fame awards programs. The deadline to submit nominations for both awards is Aug. 15.

The Community Champions Awards, which recognize individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary passion for the betterment of Fresno County, are selected in four categories: Youth, Volunteer, Humanitarian and Educator. All Community Champions Award-winners will receive prominent visual recognition at the Fairgrounds, as well as receive a special Community Champions Award plaque at Opening Ceremonies.

Nominations also are being accepted for the Fresno Fair Hall of Fame, which honors five individuals who have demonstrated long-time continued support and extraordinary passion for the betterment of the Fair. Individuals inducted into the Hall of Fame must be nominated by a community individual, Fair staff or past Fair Board of Directors.

Nominations for both awards programs will be reviewed by the Fair Board of Directors and final selections made at the Board's September meeting. Nomination forms are available at the Administration Office located at 1121 S. Chance Ave., Fresno, or online at: www.FresnoFair.com.

Leadership Farm Bureau applications are available

Applications for the CA Farm Bureau Federation's Leadership Farm Bureau Class of 2010 are now being accepted. The deadline to apply is Oct. 15.

Participants in LFB receive over 250 hours of training in seven sessions on a variety of topics including personal development, governmental affairs and California agriculture. A lobbying trip to Washington D.C. and an opportunity to tour agriculture operations in another region of the U.S. also are planned.

The program is open to Farm Bureau members who are interested in learning more about the organization and developing the skills and expertise needed to lead Farm Bureau and the agriculture industry into the future. Detailed information about the program, a tentative 2010 calendar and a complete application package is available online at: <http://www.cfbf.com/programs/lfb/apply.cfm>.

Smile for the Week

Some people just don't know when to stay quiet...

A Policeman pulled a car over and told the man driving that he was going 50 mph in a 40 mph zone.

"I was only going 40!" the driver protested.

"Not according to my radar," the officer replied.

"Yes, I was!" the man shouted back.

"No you weren't!" the policeman said, starting to get annoyed. With that, the man's wife leaned toward the window and said, "Officer, I should warn you not to argue with my husband when he's been drinking."

Source: Jokes Galore.com

Next Week's Calendar

July 28 San Joaquin Political Academy Board of Directors; 11 a.m., Fresno Association of Realtors; Fresno Fair Board of Directors, 4 p.m., Fairgrounds

July 29 FCFB Coffee Talk, 7:30 a.m., CPDES Hall, Easton; Fresno County Ag Lands Conservation Committee, 8 a.m., FCFB office; Fresno Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee, noon, Fresno Chamber office

July 30 FCFB Media and Partners Appreciation night, 5:30 p.m., P-R Farms, Clovis

July 31 Fresno Ag Roundtable, 7 a.m., Marie Calendar's Shaw and Cedar avenues, Fresno

This Week's Calendar

July 23 Dairy seminar
