



Fresno County Farm Bureau

1274 W. Hedges Ave.

Fresno, CA 93728

(559) 237-0263

Fax: (559) 237-3396

www.fcfb.org

info@fcfb.org

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State Board of Food and Agriculture Water Subcommittee meets at FCFB

The State Board of Food and Agriculture was in Fresno on Wednesday to discuss the current and long-term impacts of water shortages. About 60 people attended the meeting at Fresno County Farm Bureau.

The subcommittee heard from speakers from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and conducted a panel discussion on actionable solutions with agricultural farm organizations, water districts and state officials. FCFB President Dan Errotabere provided a local perspective. Secretary A.G. Kawamura, CA Department of Food and Agriculture; Alfred G. Montna, President, CA State Board of Food and Agriculture; and Robert Gore, Senior Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Governor's Office, were also among those who participated.

"As the 2009 harvest winds down, California's farmers and consumers must prudently plan for a fourth year of drought in 2010," said Food and Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura. "The Central Valley is one of the world's leading market baskets for a wide variety of food that is cheap and safe – if we are to protect our resource, we must assess the drought's impact and act to ensure continued progress of water management."

Board President Montna said, "The board returned to Fresno to hear first-hand about California drought impacts on 2009 and 2010. We will use this valuable testimony to reinforce our push for expedited improvements to water transfers and to infrastructure."

Governor signs/vetoes ag-related legislation

By Teresa Plascencia

FCFB Governmental Affairs Coordinator

Sunday, Oct. 11 ended the legislative year, with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger reviewing more than 600 bills. Here are a few of the agricultural-related bills that FCFB and CA Farm Bureau were watching:

AB 281 (Kevin de Leon, D-Los Angeles) Citrus Fruit: Farm Bureau neutral. SIGNED

AB 854 (Arambula, D-Fresno) Farm Labor Contractors: CFBF Supported. Farm Bureau supported. SIGNED

SB 2 (Patricia Wiggins, D-Santa Rosa) Combating Pierce's disease: Farm Bureau supported. SIGNED

SB 135 (Dean Florez, D-Shafter) Tail Docking: Farm Bureau Supported. SIGNED

Governor calls special session on water

As promised, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has called a special legislative session to address the State's chronic water situation. In his proclamation calling for the special session, Gov. Schwarzenegger specifically called for the session to consider and act upon legislation to protect and restore the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta while also improving the reliability and quality of water supplies from that estuary.

His proclamation also called for the State Legislature to consider and act upon legislation to address the short-term and long-term improvement of California's water management system including development of new surface and groundwater storage and improved conveyance facilities, ecosystem health and conservation strategies. In addition, lawmakers will be asked to consider and act to appropriate funds, including appropriations for general obligation and lease revenue bonds, to improve water resource management, build additional water storage facilities, develop groundwater aquifers, improve groundwater quality and flood protection, and restore the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and other important ecosystem restoration projects.

Junior Livestock Auction is Saturday

On Saturday, Oct. 17, 4-H and Future Farmers of America students will aim to take home the top prize and price for their animals at auctions. FCFB will be there to help support its members with "top-off" bids.

Last Saturday's auction for 4-H and FFA students selling meat goats, dairy cows, heifers, chickens, turkeys and rabbits was very successful, and this Saturday, 4-H and FFA students with beef, sheep and swine projects will take center stage. Animal purchases and top-off bids are encouraged to help support our agricultural youth. For details, contact the fair at: (559) 650-3247.

Kerman Ag Expo set for Oct. 21

The 11th Annual Kerman Ag Expo will be held next Wednesday, Oct. 21 from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Kerckhoff Park and Kerman Community Center, 15100 W. Kearney Plaza in Kerman.

Several updates will be provided by agricultural chemical industry representatives, focusing on pest management and new produce information. In addition, Sarah Woolf, of Westlands Water District, will provide an update on the west side water crisis.

Five hours of continuing education hours will be offered, including one hour of laws and regulations. The Expo is free. For details, contact Gary Douglas at (559) 842-4601.

Valley federal representatives introduce water transfer legislation

Representatives Jim Costa and Dennis Cardoza introduced a bill last week to help ease the effects of the Valley's drought by facilitating the transfers of up to 300,000 acre-feet of irrigation water.

The Water Transfer Facilitation Act of 2009 eases restrictions on the Bureau of Reclamation and would streamline environmental reviews for the giant garter snake. The bill would reduce unnecessary delays in water transfers at a time when Valley farmers have been hard hit by a three-year drought. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer were expected to introduce similar legislation in the U.S. Senate.

A similar provision to temporarily authorize water transfers was included in the conference report for the Fiscal Year 2010 Energy & Water appropriations bill. The conference report was adopted by the House last week and will likely be adopted by the Senate this week. This legislation would make the transfer facilitation permanent.

Specifically, the measure would: establish new parameters for San Joaquin Valley water transfers that can be authorized by the federal Bureau of Reclamation, generating up to 100,000 acre-feet of water transfers per year; direct the Interior Department to streamline the giant garter snake environmental review for water transfers from the Sacramento Valley to the San Joaquin Valley by ensuring that they occur on a programmatic basis rather than on a project-by-project basis; and direct the Bureau to analyze existing transfers and prepare recommendations on whether there are other ways to facilitate future Central Valley transfers more efficiently.

The legislation is supported by many Valley water agencies, including Friant Water Users Authority, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Authority, Westlands Water District and others.

Post-harvest irrigations are critical for grapevines

Of all the irrigations grape growers make during the season, fall irrigations have the greatest impact on long term vine health, reports a leading agronomist.

Ron Braze, of AgQuest Consulting, reports the higher temperatures this summer and fall resulted in grapevines using a little more water than in a normal season. During the months of September and October, vines can need 3-4 inches of irrigation to meet evapotranspiration ET, resulting in a post-harvest need for up to 6 inches of water depending on irrigation cutoff for harvest and weather conditions.

Braze said fall moisture helps position the vines for next year's crop. Fall is the time of the season when vines accumulate and store carbohydrates for growth next spring; poor accumulation of carbohydrates in the fall can result in reduced spring vigor, he said. Also, the vines have their biggest root flush in the fall and new root growth is at its maximum for the season. Without sufficient soil moisture, this new root growth is reduced, which in turn can lessen the vine's ability to acquire nutrients and store carbohydrates. Likewise, significant acquisition of nitrogen and potassium occur in the fall; this is the nitrogen and potassium that the vine will use for growth next spring.

For additional details, contact Braze at (559) 275-8095.

Fundraiser to benefit Caruthers Fair and Lions Club to be held Oct. 24

A Harvest Social event to benefit the Caruthers Lions Club and the Caruthers District Fair will be held on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 2-6 p.m. at the Caruthers Fairgrounds. The beer and wine tasting event will feature hors d'oeuvres and live entertainment.

Tickets cost \$30 per person, and sponsorships are available. Proceeds will be used to support the Lions Club eyeglasses, scholarships and community service projects, and the fair board to help fund the new livestock building. For details, contact Herluf Hansen at (559) 647-4529 or Thaden Vick at (559) 977-8807.

Calendar of Upcoming Events & Meetings

- Oct. 16** Fair Ed presentations, 8:30 a.m. to noon, fairgrounds
- Oct. 21** Kerman Ag Expo, 7:30 a.m., Kerman Community Center, 15100 W. Kearney Plaza, Kerman;
Fabulous Food Machine presentation at Centerville School (Sanger Unified), 8 a.m.;
Fresno Chamber Board of Directors meeting, 3:30 p.m., Chamber office
- Oct. 24** California Young Cattlemen's Committee Barbecue, 6 p.m., Fresno State Agriculture Pavilion,
2708 E. Barstow Ave. Details: (209) 327-7546, email: briennewitt@comcast.net.
- Oct. 28** State of the County luncheon, noon, Fresno Fairgrounds;
Gar Tootelian Inc. Continuing Education Classes, 7:30 a.m., Kerman Community Teen Center,
15101 W Kearney Ave., Kerman; details: (800) 696-6108 or (559) 638-6311
- Oct. 29** Gar Tootelian Inc. Continuing Education Classes, 7:30 a.m., Reedley Community Center,
100 N East Ave., Reedley; details: (800) 696-6108 or (559) 638-6311

Editor: Liz Hudson, APR • Public Relations Coordinator • cell: (559) 779-1569 • email: lizh@fcfb.org