



## Fresno County Farm Bureau

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### Water bond finally makes it; Governor expected to sign it soon

It has been a long time in coming, but the California Legislature finally reached agreement on crafting an expensive, yet necessary measure to help address the state's long-term water needs. Offering money for surface and groundwater storage, drought relief, Delta restoration, conservation and regional water management projects, the comprehensive package is called by some as the most important piece of legislation regarding water passed by the Legislature since 1960.

The \$11.14-billion "Safe, Clean and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010" awaits the Governor's signature, and will then head to State voters on the November 2010 ballot. The legislative package includes Senator Dave Cogdill's general obligation bond measure SBX7 2 and four policy bills, which specifically focus on Delta governance and the Delta Plan, groundwater level monitoring, water conservation, Delta diversions and levees.

The policy measures will become law upon action by the Governor. The bond or funding component must have voter approval. One policy measure calls for groundwater monitoring programs to be conducted by local entities. According to a CA Farm Bureau Federation review, this measure does not specifically impose any new requirements, reporting or restrictions on individual well owners and proposed language to charge some well-owners fees for monitoring functions were deleted from the final version of the bill. In addition, the bill expressly prohibits CA Department of Water Resources from assessing fees to recover the costs of this program. On the water conservation / use efficiency policy, agricultural water districts servicing 25,000 irrigated acres or more will be required to develop and implement water management plans. It does not establish specific conservation targets for agriculture.

Senator Cogdill said the legislation is "the most significant step that the State has taken in decades to invest in its crumbling water infrastructure. With this plan, we can improve the state's water supply and protect the environment, without destroying our economy."

The Senator said the agreement is especially critical for the Valley's agriculture, and can help "reverse the tide that has forced farmers to fallow crops which has caused out-of-work laborers who once fed the world to stand in food lines."

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has been a long-time supporter of a comprehensive water bond package and said this package will mean "a reliable water supply for businesses and local governments. It means jobs for our Central Valley. It means more economic development: more cranes and bulldozers more commerce...more action."

Although the final versions of the bills won't be available until early next week, the inclusion of money for surface and groundwater storage is a critical component that has been absent from previous water bonds put before voters. This bond includes \$3-billion for surface and groundwater storage, allowing the state to capture excess water in wet years to use in dry years.

California Farm Bureau Federation President Doug Mosebar said the bills represent real progress toward meeting long-term water challenges. "There is still much work to do, but the Legislature and the Governor have recognized the key elements needed to achieve long-term solutions to our state's water problems. To fix our broken water system, we must add new water storage both aboveground and underground; we must improve our ability to move water; we must protect the water rights that people depend on and we must enhance the Delta ecosystem," said Mosebar.

The water bond legislation comes as welcomed news for farmers and rural communities on Fresno County's west side. Westlands Water District General Manager Thomas Birmingham said the legislation clearly represents a sensible balance between efforts to restore the Delta and efforts to supply the water necessary to sustain the economy of the State.

"The legislation creates a clear path for the construction of new water supply infrastructure, including conveyance facilities in the Delta, which will benefit both the environment and the people around this State who rely on water imported from the Sacramento River watershed. California has taken an important step toward fixing our broken water system," Birmingham said. "The passage of this legislation will not provide immediate relief from the water shortages we are facing. However, the legislation lays the foundation for restoring reliability to California's water supplies over the long term," he added.

FCCFB President Dan Errotabere also is encouraged by the longer-term benefits, but remains cautious about short-term water supplies for the west side. "We are encouraged by the actions this week, but we must remain diligent in efforts to bring short-term relief for the farmers, farm workers and rural communities on the west side that are living with overwhelming day-to-day water supply uncertainties," said Errotabere. "We must continue to work with the federal and state governments to implement immediate actions to help us move closer to restoring the west side's contract water supply," he added.

Absent final copies of the bill to-date, it remains to be seen what the legislation will mean for the Kings and San Joaquin river service areas. Under the regional water supply component of the bond, \$64-million is listed for the San Joaquin River and \$70-million for the Tulare/Kern integrated regional water management projects. It appears that money remaining unspent from previous water bonds, Propositions 50, 84 and 1E, have been rolled into this bond.

A summary of the final bond is available at the Association of CA Water Agencies Web site at: [http://www.acwa.com/issues/09leg\\_Final\\_BondSummary.pdf](http://www.acwa.com/issues/09leg_Final_BondSummary.pdf).

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### **Ohio and Texas voters send message of support for agriculture**

In Tuesday's election, voters in Ohio and Texas approved two ballot measures that support those states' agriculture.

Ohio voters have passed a constitutional amendment to establish a state livestock care board to handle animal-welfare issues rather than turning animal care issues over to out-of-state animal-rights groups. The vote created a state Livestock Care Standards Board that will include the state veterinarian, two members of the public representing Ohio consumers, one member representing a county humane society, a veterinarian licensed in Ohio, two members representing statewide farmer organizations, three family farm representatives, the dean of an Ohio college or university agriculture department, and two others.

American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman said Ohio voters made a "solid statement that acknowledged the role farmers play in caring for farm animals. Clearly, Ohio has blazed a bold new trail for other states to follow on the issue of livestock care and well-being. It is clear that voters in that state know farmers and ranchers share their values regarding the care of farm animals."

In Texas, voters supported private property rights with passage of Proposition 11. "The ability to productively use and manage private property is vital to all facets of agriculture, and clearly, Proposition 11 is an important citizen endorsement of property rights in that state and sets the stage for additional eminent domain reform in the Lone Star State," said Stallman.

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### **FFA State Finals Cotton Judging Contest will be Saturday at Fresno State**

The 52nd Annual Future Farmers of America (FFA) State Finals Cotton Judging Contest will be held on Saturday, Nov. 7 at the California State University, Fresno campus, beginning at 8:30 a.m. Awards will be presented at 1 p.m.

Fresno State's Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology is hosting the approximately 100 FFA members from across the state who will participate in the career development event, competing for the state champion titles at the individual and team levels. Participants will compete in a written exam, judge several different classes of cotton, and give oral reasons to a judge who will evaluate them on their performance and accuracy.

Fresno State and the FFA Field Day Committee hosts more than 20 state FFA finals contests annually. Approximately 2,500 students attend these events each year. For additional details, contact Deanna Martin at: [deannamj19@csufresno.edu](mailto:deannamj19@csufresno.edu) or visit the Fresno State FFA Field Day Web site: <http://cast.csufresno.edu/ffafieldday>

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### **CDFA to hold hearing on proposal to increase milk prices on Monday in Sacramento**

The CA Department of Food and Agriculture will hold a consolidated public hearing on Monday, Nov. 9 on an emergency basis to consider petitions filed by Western United Dairymen and the Alliance of Western Milk Producers for increases in milk prices. The hearing will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Department Auditorium, 1220 N Street, Sacramento.

Western Dairymen's petition asks for a temporary \$0.50 per hundredweight increase for all classes of milk for a period of six months, from Jan. 1, 2010 through June 30, 2010. The Alliance petition proposes to permanently increase the current Class 1, 2, and 3 prices. The hearing will also consider any other temporary or permanent changes to the Class 1, 2, 3, 4a, and 4b pricing formulas to address emergency conditions that are raised by alternative proposals received.

Although dairy prices are beginning to turn around somewhat, the prices aren't likely to increase fast enough to replace the amount of equity dairy producers have lost during the present downturn. Dairy producers currently are experiencing tough economic times with prices well below the cost of production.

Last Friday, the USDA reported California milk producers produced 3.07 billion pounds of milk in September 2009 -- five percent below the previous month and six percent below September 2008. Monthly milk per cow averaged 1,730 pounds in September 2009, 90 pounds less than in August 2009, and 45 pounds below a year ago.

For details on the hearing and other pricing issues, visit the Western United Dairymen's Web site at: [www.westernuniteddairymen.com](http://www.westernuniteddairymen.com).

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### **Pest management workshop for small farmers set for Nov. 18 in Fresno**

The Fresno County Agriculture Department, Lao-American Foundation, U.C. Small Farm Program and USDA are sponsoring a free pest management workshop for small farmers on Wednesday, Nov. 18 at 8:30 a.m. at the U.C. Cooperative Extension office, 1720 S. Maple Ave., in Fresno.

University and County Agriculture Department experts will discuss mice and rabbit management in organic and conventional crop production, silver leaf whiteflies in Fresno County, root knot nematodes management in vegetables, and weed identification and control. In addition, there will be time to address other pest management grower concerns. Three hours of Continuing Education Credits will be offered.

For additional details, contact U.C. Extension's Richard Molinar at (559) 456-7555.

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### **Dairy Water Quality Workshop set for Nov. 18 in Riverdale**

The California Dairy Quality Assurance Program is sponsoring a series of workshops this fall about dairy water quality compliance, with the Fresno County workshop scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 18, from 1:30-4:30 p.m., at the Riverdale Memorial Hall, 3085 W. Mount Whitney Ave., in Riverdale. Reservations are not required.

The CA Dairy Quality Assurance Program workshops will address the requirements of the new dairy water quality regulations adopted in 2007.

The next stage of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board regulatory requirements will require dairy producers to prepare and submit engineered Waste Management Plans by the July 1, 2010 submittal deadline.

Key topics to be covered during the workshops include deliverables due for the July 1 deadline; important updates on groundwater monitoring requirements, on-farm inspections and implementing/modifying Nutrient Management Plans; information to avoid common Waste Discharge Requirements violations; and the updated information for dairy producers.

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### **Viticulture Tech Group to discuss raisin issues at Nov. 18 meeting at FCFB**

The San Joaquin Valley Viticulture Technical Group will meet to discuss this year's raisin production and harvest issues on Wednesday, Nov. 18 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Fresno County Farm Bureau, 1274 W. Hedges Ave., Fresno.

Specific topics include the 2009 weather and its impact on vine growth stages and vineyard decisions, an overview of the 2009 season, this year's problems with bunch rot, and a perspective from a raisin processor. Speakers include Steve Spate, of the Raisin Bargaining Association; Stephen Vasquez, of U.C. Cooperative Extension Fresno; Ron Brase, of AgQuest Consulting; and Victor Sahatdjian, of Victor Packing.

Registration is \$10, which includes lunch. To make a reservation, call (559) 661-5539.

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### **Did you know?**

One of the more interesting emails to cross the computer recently provided the following self-help home remedies. Why spend money when you already have what you need in your cabinet? (*Editor's note: haven't tried 'em, so can't say they work for sure!*)

Did you know that drinking two glasses of Gatorade can relieve headache pain almost immediately-without the unpleasant side effects caused by traditional pain relievers?

Did you know that Colgate Toothpaste makes an excellent salve for burns?

Before you head to the drugstore for a high-priced inhaler filled with mysterious chemicals, try chewing on a couple of curiously strong Altoids peppermints. They'll clear up your stuffed nose.

Achy muscles from a bout of the flu? Mix 1 tablespoon horseradish in 1 cup of olive oil. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes, then apply it as massage oil for instant relief for aching muscles.

Sore throat? Just mix 1/4 cup of vinegar with 1/4 cup of honey and take 1 tablespoon six times a day. The vinegar kills the bacteria.

Easy eyeglass protection... to prevent the screws in eyeglasses from loosening, apply a small drop of Maybelline Crystal Clear Nail Polish to the threads of the screws before tightening them.

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### **Calendar of Upcoming Events & Meetings**

**Nov. 5** FCFB Board of Directors meeting, 6 p.m., FCFB office, 1274 W. Hedges Ave., Fresno

**Nov. 9** FAACT Class Session on land use planning, 8 a.m., FCFB office

**Nov. 10** Agribusiness Management Conference, 7:30 a.m., Radisson Conference Center, downtown Fresno, Details: <http://cati.csufresno.edu/cab>, or (559) 278-4405;

**Nov. 11—Remember our Veterans!**

Fresno Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee, noon, FCFB office

**Nov. 12** Sheriff's Metal Recyclers Task Force, 9 a.m., Brooks Ranch Restaurant, Chestnut and Highway 99; Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Seminar, 10 a.m., FCFB office

**Nov. 13** Private Applicator Continuing Education Classes, 8 a.m., FCFB office;

Fresno Chamber Agriculture and Land Use Committee, noon, Chamber office, downtown

**Nov. 18** Agriculturist and Ag Business of the Year Awards Luncheon, noon, Holiday Inn Downtown, Tickets: (559) 495-4800

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