



Fresno County Farm Bureau

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In This Issue:

- FCFB to host "Water 101" seminar on Dec. 18
- CA Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting gets underway next week
- State Water Project preliminary allocation is at five percent – a record low
- Final environmental review of Delta-Mendota Canal/California Aqueduct Intertie Project is now available
- Gopher management workshop set for Dec. 10 at U.C. Kearney Research Center
- Irrigation monitoring technology workshop to be held Dec. 15 at Fresno State
- Workshop on labor rules/regulations will be held Jan. 7
- California's 2009 cotton crop is down due to acreage declines
- Milk price adjusted on Dec. 1
- Support your local Christmas tree farmers

FCFB to host "Water 101" seminar on Dec. 18

An overview of Fresno County's water issues, as well as the 2010 Water Bond, will be the focus of an educational seminar on Friday, Dec. 18 from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Fresno County Farm Bureau, 1274 W. Hedges Ave., Fresno.

The seminar, "Water 101—The Basics of Fresno County Water," will focus on the sources of water for Fresno County; water terminology; federal, state and local water systems; basic water law; and current issues, such as the San Joaquin River restoration settlement, the Upper Kings Basin Regional Water Management Plan, and west side water supply uncertainty. Speakers include local experts in hydrology, water management and water policy. In addition, Sen. Dave Cogdill will provide an overview of "The Safe, Clean and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010," the November 2010 water bond.

The seminar is open to elected officials and their representatives; reporters, editors and news directors; farmers, livestock producers and agribusiness representatives; and community and business leaders. Members of the Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce's Water and Environment Committee are invited to attend as well.

"Fresno County's water sources cover a wide range, and the issues are just as diverse -- whether it's balancing demands for a limited supply, Endangered Species Act impacts on supply, groundwater recharge or river restoration," said FCFB Executive Director Ryan Jacobsen.

There is no cost and lunch will be served. Seating is limited, and reservations are requested by Dec. 14. For more information or to RSVP, contact FCFB at (559) 237-0263 or info@fcfb.org.

CA Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting gets underway next week

Solutions to the challenges facing California family farmers and ranchers will be discussed at the California Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting next week in Anaheim. FCFB delegates will join farmers and

ranchers from throughout the state beginning Monday for three days of meetings, including policy and organizational leadership discussions under the theme of "Our Future, Our Farmers."

CA Farm Bureau President Doug Mosebar will outline the organization's action plan for the coming year, and CA Food and Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura, an Orange County farmer, will welcome Farm Bureau delegates. American Farm Bureau Federation President Bob Stallman also will offer his insights on the first year of the Obama Administration on issues affecting agriculture including developments in trade, the estate tax, farm policy and other topics.

Issues-oriented seminars include the outlook for the world agricultural economy; groundwater supply and management; effects of invasive pests; online outreach through social media; the impact of the federal deficit; and regulations on diesel engines. An awards ceremony on Monday night will include presentation of the Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award and recognition of outstanding work by county Farm Bureaus, including Fresno County Farm Bureau. The meeting will conclude after the election of officers on Wednesday.

State Water Project preliminary allocation is at five percent – a record low

The CA Department of Water Resources (DWR) on Tuesday announced an initial allocation of five percent from the State Water Project, the lowest initial allocation in the state's history. Fresno County water users do not have contracts for State Project water, but in some years, State Project water can be made available through transfers and exchanges. Farmers in the Tulare Lake Basin and in Kern County have contracts for State Project water.

The other large water provider in the State, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, will issue its preliminary allocation estimate in January, 2010. In a statement released on the DWR announcement, Westlands Water District officials projected that the 2010 supply announcement will be another zero percent allocation, just like last year. The Bureau's Central Valley Project begins the current water year, which started Oct. 1, with about 4.4 million acre-feet of water (39 percent of capacity) in five key CVP reservoirs. The 15-year average carry-over for these reservoirs is 6.7 million acre-feet of storage, or 59 percent of capacity.

The initial supply announcement by the State is further reflection of the impacts to water availability for farms and cities by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and environmental restrictions on pumping water through the Delta. Last year at this time, for example, DWR's initial allocation was 15 percent, according to Westlands statement. This year, the state and federal reservoirs are higher than they were last year and Northern California has received 90 percent of its normal precipitation. "The reason for this reduction has a lot to do with the limitations on moving water and the fact that the additional restrictions that were imposed on behalf of the salmon are taking full effect for the first time this year," reports the Westlands statement.

Because of the environmental regulations, water shortages for much of California will continue despite the amount of precipitation the State will hopefully receive this winter. If 2010 has normal precipitation, for example, DWR projects that, at best, it could only deliver 20-to-40 percent of the State Water Project total allocated supplies, depending on how federal authorities exercise their discretion in how tightly they will be restricting water deliveries.

Final environmental review of Delta-Mendota Canal/California Aqueduct Intertie Project is now available

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has released the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Delta-Mendota Canal /California Aqueduct Intertie (Intertie) Project.

The Intertie is a pipeline to connect the federal Delta Mendota Canal with the state California Aqueduct to help improve existing conveyance limitations, allow for maintenance and repair activities, and provide the flexibility to respond to Central Valley Project and State Water Project emergency water operations. After a 30-day waiting period following release of the EIS, the Bureau will complete a Record of Decision, stating the action that will be implemented and discussing all factors leading to that decision.

The Final EIS is available on-line at http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=1014. If you encounter problems accessing the document on-line, please contact Public Affairs at mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov or call (916) 978-5100.

Gopher management workshop set for Dec. 10 at U.C. Kearney Research Center

A workshop looking at gopher management will be held on Thursday, Dec. 10, from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the U.C. Kearney Research and Extension Center in Parlier.

The workshop includes both discussions about the biology of pocket gophers and a trapping demonstration. Subjects will include gopher control techniques, such as fumigants, burrow builders, and trapping, as well as how to identify gopher mounds and locate gopher tunnels, how to set Gophinator and Macabee traps, and setting and checking traps.

Two hours of continuing education units have been requested. For additional information, contact Stephen Vasquez, U.C. Cooperative Extension-Fresno County, at (559) 456-7567.

Irrigation monitoring technology workshop to be held Dec. 15 at Fresno State

The Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT) at California State University, Fresno is holding a free workshop about soil and plant moisture monitoring techniques and equipment to improve irrigation efficiency on Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 8:30 a.m. at the Water & Energy Technology Lab on campus.

The workshop, "Irrigation Water: Monitoring Tools to Make the Most Out of Every Drop," will show several soil and plant moisture monitoring systems that can be used to maximize water supplies. Speakers from equipment companies will discuss their products and how they are used along with table displays of different equipment currently available to growers.

Registration can be done on-line by visiting: www.californiawater.org/IrrigationTech or by calling (800) 845-6038. Seating is limited. The next seminar will be held Jan. 14, 2010 on WATERIGHT a free web-based water management tool. Additional Irrigation Tech Seminars have been scheduled for 2010. Visit www.californiawater.org/IrrigationTech for information about upcoming event dates.

Workshop on labor rules/regulations will be held Jan. 7

An educational and training workshop to help agricultural employers avoid labor violations will be held in Fresno on Thursday, Jan. 7 from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. at the Fresno County Farm Bureau, 1274 W. Hedges Ave., Fresno.

The workshop is sponsored by the Economic and Employment Enforcement Coalition, which includes Cal/OSHA, CA Employment Development Department, CA Division of Labor Standards Enforcement and U.S. Department of Labor agencies that carry out targeted enforcement sweeps. The Employment Coalition

is partnering with local agricultural organizations to conduct the workshops to help farm employers understand the regulations and to avoid penalties for not knowing the myriad rules and regulations.

To RSVP for the workshop, call the FCFB office at (559) 237-0263.

California's 2009 cotton crop is down due to acreage declines

California's 2009 Upland cotton production is forecast at 218,000 bales, down 41 percent from last year, reports the USDA. The harvested acreage came in at 70,000 acres, and the average yield is 1,495 pounds per acre.

California's Pima cotton crop is forecasted to be 330,000 bales, down 18 percent from 2008. Harvested acreage is estimated at 127,000 acres, resulting in a yield of 1,247 pounds per acre, reports the USDA.

Milk price adjusted on Dec. 1

There finally may be a slight break for the State's dairy producers as the price for milk was adjusted on Dec. 1.

The CA Department of Food and Agriculture says some farmers may start at least to break-even when the average on-farm milk price rose to the equivalent of \$1.39 a gallon. Farmers have been selling milk at a loss all year.

CDFA says the cost to produce milk has also gone down due to lower feed and energy prices. While retail prices for dairy foods have come down, dairy farmers have struggled.

Support your local Christmas tree farmers

Local Christmas tree farmers are in the middle of their "harvest," as homes across the Valley are being decorated for the Christmas season.

Local Christmas tree grower and FCFB member Melissa Bautista, of Hillcrest Christmas Tree Farm in Reedley, is looking forward to a big weekend. Her farm on Reed and Adams avenues near Reedley offers locally grown cut-your-own trees, as well as other varieties of trees grown elsewhere. Special attractions also are planned for weekends during December.

The Auberry-based Red Hawk Ranch Christmas Tree Farm will have a visit from Santa on Sunday, Dec. 6. Red Hawk owner Rodney Blalock is a FCFB member. The farm is located at 33477 Cottontail Lane in Auberry.

Christmas tree farmers say consumers will find tree prices about the same as a year ago, reports the CA Farm Bureau Federation. The California Christmas Tree Association says all its member-farmers had adequate water and good weather, which has produced high-quality trees.

This year, many farmers will invite consumers to participate in the Trees for Troops program. Donations pay for Christmas trees to be provided to military service families. For details, visit <http://www.treesfortroops.org/>. For information and locations of local Christmas tree farms, visit the Association's Web site at: <http://www.cachristmas.com/>.

Calendar of Upcoming Events & Meetings

- Dec. 4** Fresno Ag Roundtable, 7 a.m., Fresno State VERC Department;
Private Applicator Pesticide Education Class, 8 a.m., FCFB office.
- Dec. 9** Fresno Chamber Governmental Affairs Committee meeting, noon, Chamber office downtown
- Dec. 10** Sheriff's Metal Recyclers Task Force, 9 a.m., Brooks' Ranch Restaurant, Chestnut and Highway 99; Food Processing/Ag Industry Cluster meeting, 3 p.m., Wawona Frozen Foods, Clovis
- Dec. 11** Fresno Chamber Agriculture and Land Use Committee, noon, Fresno Chamber office downtown

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