

# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Media Advisory -- News Conference

**Agricultural Water Coalitions to discuss and demonstrate water quality efforts at news conference**

**Thursday, Sept. 13, 2007**

**11 a.m.**

**Water & Energy Technology Incubator**

**Center for Irrigation Technology**

**California State University, Fresno campus**

**Southwest corner of Chestnut and Barstow avenues**

**(At the equipment yard behind the building)**

Representatives from the agricultural and water communities will discuss water quality efforts and demonstrate water quality technology at a news conference held prior to a joint workshop of the State Water Resources Control Board and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board on the four-year old Irrigated Lands Program (ILP) in Clovis.

Scheduled to speak at the news conference are:

- **Parry Klassen**, board chairman of the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, and Selma-area farmer
- **Mark McKean**, president of the board of directors of the Kings River Conservation District, a Fresno County Farm Bureau director, and a Riverdale area diversified farmer
- **Chris Kapheim**, general manager of Alta Irrigation District, Dinuba (invited)
- **David F. Zoldoske**, Ph.D, director, Center for Irrigation Technology, Fresno State
- **Jerry Prieto, Jr.**, Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner (invited)

Also available for interviews will be Mike Wackman and John Meek, of the San Joaquin County and Delta Coalition, and Wayne Zipser, of Stanislaus County Farm Bureau.

## **Background**

The Sept. 13 joint workshop of the water quality boards will include a presentation by Regional Water Board staff responding to questions submitted by the Executive Officer of the State Water Resources Control Board. Watershed Coalitions will provide the Water Boards with updates on their individual activities.

Since 2003, nine agricultural-based water quality coalitions have spent more than \$9.5 million to sample and analyze water quality of rivers, streams, creeks and sloughs in the Sacramento/San Joaquin Valleys and Delta. The nine coalitions, roughly encompassing the Sacramento Valley, Delta, northern San Joaquin Valley and southern San Joaquin Valley, used the funds to analyze the impact of farm drainage on local waterways.

Coalition groups representing 21,000 Central Valley farmers will deliver a unified message to the joint workshop: “Keep the momentum of the Irrigated Lands Program moving forward.”

The water quality monitoring mandated by the Water Board through the Irrigated Lands Program has proven to be an effective tool to evaluate water quality, and agriculture is actively participating with the Regional Water Board in development and implementation of the program. Water monitoring data collected from the first three years of the program (2003-2007) was presented to the Regional Water Board on Aug. 2. This data serves as baseline information that is already helping agriculture focus on the locations and farm inputs impacting water quality.

When elevated levels of farm inputs are identified, the coalitions immediately take steps to remedy any problems. Measures are coordinated by the individual coalition to focus on specific waterways and the surrounding farm properties, and may include:

- \* Holding local farmer workshops;
- \* Sending mailings and/or making direct contact with farmers to provide information on practices to prevent farm inputs from moving into water; or,
- \* Tracking adoption of farming practices to address specific problems.

“Maintaining a consistent ILP in coming years will ensure that agriculture continues to address the water monitoring results using a science-based approach. Coalitions and our farmer members recognize that water monitoring has identified watersheds where work is needed,” said Parry Klassen, of the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition.

“Already, the coalitions in these areas are focusing outreach and education efforts on farm practices to protect and improve water quality and we are beginning to see results,” Klassen added.

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## **Irrigated Lands Program by the Numbers**

### **NUMBER OF TESTING SITES**

Water and sediment sampling data has been collected and analyzed from 313 sites in the Central Valley.

### **AMOUNT OF DATA COLLECTED**

Over 10,000 tests have been completed and thousands more measurements collected. The results are directing coalition's efforts to reduce impacts of farm impacts and identify future monitoring needs.

### **DOLLARS SPENT BY COALITIONS**

To date, the state's farmers have spent \$9.5 million to make this program work. The nine coalitions, staff and technical experts are solely focused on managing water quality.

### **NUMBER OF FARMERS ENROLLED**

The Irrigated Lands Program is the single largest water quality program undertaken by the Central Valley Water Quality Control Board. Over 7 million acres and 21,000 farmers are involved. The next largest program, at a tenth of the size, is the urban Storm Water Program.

### **PROGRAM SUCCESS**

In comparison to other regulatory programs, the Irrigated Lands Program has moved at lightening speed. Between 10 and 15 years of research and monitoring have gone into establishing other regulatory programs. Hard work by agriculture and the Regional Board has made it possible to implement a comprehensive regulatory program to evaluate and address water quality in less than five years.

### **COALITION STRUCTURE**

The water quality coalitions have evolved into regional, autonomous but cooperating groups that draw management and expertise from commodity organizations, irrigation districts, Resource Conservation Districts, Farm Bureau, University of California, County Agricultural Commissioners, and other state and local agencies.

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