

Fresno County  
**Farm Bureau**  
**News Advisory**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement by Fresno County Farm Bureau about the release of the Fresno County 2007 County Crop Report:**

Once again, Fresno County's farmers and ranchers, farm workers, and agribusiness support has helped make Fresno County the number one food and fiber producing county in the state and nation. It is truly a testament to the resourcefulness and stewardship talents of our farmers and ranchers.

The report illustrates what we have been seeing in the fields and markets, cropping changes that reflect the risks and difficulties that our farmers must overcome to stay in business. The \$5-billion plus generated by the crops and products produced by Fresno County farmers and ranchers does not equate to the producers' bottom line. With increasing production costs, growers are challenged each year to make changes needed to stay competitive and in business. For example, cotton, once heralded as king in the Valley and a rival for the number one and two spots, is number 7, with production expected to be much lower in 2008. The shift into more permanent crops, such as almonds that tend to bring higher prices, and uncertain water supplies are primary reasons for the reduced cotton acreage.

The many changes we see in agriculture, including new marketing opportunities for what we grow, are made possible as long as we have the resources needed to produce this bounty. Water is the key to keeping our county in production. Because of reduced water supplies and subsequent reductions in acreage this year, 2007 may be the last year we retain the number one status. Already this year, we have seen \$88 million in losses from an inadequate water supply in the county. The litigated/regulated drought that currently is affecting the west side is creating hardships that will be felt throughout the county for some time to come.

While we relish in last year's successes, let's not forget that we have farmers and ranchers facing financial hardships today because of a lack of water, and our farm workers and our rural communities are suffering undue adversity. We need our Board of Supervisors to continue to push for a reliable, affordable water supply for agriculture to help ensure our food and fiber industry has a viable future in Fresno County.

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Statement was presented by Liz Hudson, FCFB public relations coordinator.