

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2008

Media Advisory -- News Conference

Statewide “Heat Stress Prevention in Agriculture” Seminars

Wednesday, July 9, 2008

1:30 p.m.

Nisei Farmers League

1775 N. Fine Ave., Fresno

With temperatures rising around the state this week, heat-related injuries have moved to the forefront of the public awareness. To reduce the problems of heat stress injuries in California, the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal OSHA), the California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), and several California agricultural organizations are sponsoring a program called “Heat Stress Prevention in Agriculture.” While many efforts have been focusing on growers as well as contractors, this program will be a joint effort specifically to train Farm Labor Contractors (FLCs) about the dangers of heat-related injuries and how heat injuries can be prevented.

A news conference outlining the program will be held on Wednesday, July 9 at 1:30 p.m. at the Nisei Farmers League office, 1775 N. Fine Ave., Fresno.

Scheduled to speak at the news conference are:

- **Len Welsh**, Cal OSHA Chief;
- **Manuel Cunha**, Nisei Farmers League President;
- **Barry Bedwell**, California Grape and Tree Fruit President;
- **Russel Efird**, Farmer and Fresno County Farm Bureau President;
- **Bryan Little**, California Farm Bureau Director of Labor Affairs;
- **George Rodriguez**, G. Rodriguez Farm Labor; and
- **Augustine Cardenas**, C&M Farm Labor Service.

The goal is to ensure that all FLCs understand the regulations and the urgency of training their crew bosses about heat stress prevention and its dangers. Crew bosses will be instructed to pass the information to the employees they oversee and make sure they are fully protected as required by law. The program will encompass the four elements of heat stress programs: providing and encouraging the drinking of plenty of cool water, ready access to shade, full and complete training, and written procedures spelling out the essentials. The program will teach FLCs the importance of heat stress prevention and the risks to employees and the consequences of not following the law.

At the completion of the program, FLCs will receive proof of completion. Ag groups encourage anyone using the services of FLCs to ask for this proof of completion of the heat stress program. This program is not a substitute for any of the State training required to obtain or maintain an FLC license under the law, and cannot be used to meet any of those training requirements.

The first seminar is scheduled for Thursday, July 10 at the Fresno County Farm Bureau office, 1274 W Hedges Ave, Fresno. The Spanish session will be held from 1-2:30 p.m. and the English session will be from 3-4:30 p.m. RSVP's can be made to Nisei Farmers League office at (559) 251-8468 or Fresno County Farm Bureau office at (559) 237-0263.

Participating agricultural organizations include: California Citrus Mutual, California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association, California Dairy Campaign, California Farm Bureau Federation, California Farm Labor Contractor Alliance, California Grape and Tree Fruit League, Fresno County Farm Bureau, Kern County Farm Bureau, Merced County Farm Bureau, Nisei Farmers League, Raisin Bargaining Association, Tulare County Farm Bureau, Ventura County Agricultural Association, and Western Pistachio Association.

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