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**Statement by Dan Errotabere
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The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is broken. There are many, many reasons contributing to the problems in the Delta, but you wouldn't know it. The easy answer is to blame all of the Delta's ills on the large export pumps that provide water to the cities, towns and farms that have a contractual right to that water. As a result, we are faced with disproportionate social and economic impacts to parts of the state that can least afford them. Moreover, there's a total void of attention to the environmental problems in our area caused by these decisions that continue to take water away from agriculture.

When you take water away from agriculture, you are taking away the ability to feed ourselves. Farmers are not the end user of this water. The water we use on our farms produces food and fiber products for consumers. Along the way, this water generates jobs, regional economic activity and value-added products for consumers here and abroad. The simple fact is it takes water to grow our food – upwards of 900 gallons to produce an average breakfast, lunch and dinner for each person each day. *

As farmers, we have a responsibility to use your "food water" as efficiently as possible. Water is too limited, too precious and too critical of a resource not to make the needed investments to preserve every drop. Statewide, we use only 41 percent of the state's developed water supply to produce food -- and of that, the consumer is the ultimate beneficiary of this water. On Fresno County's west side, our 20-year average irrigation efficiency is 85-90 percent—one of the highest in the nation.

The problem is we don't place a high enough value on the ability to feed ourselves. In 2007, the U.S. became a net importer of food. That same year, a *USA Today* article reported the average American eats about 260 pounds of imported foods

annually, with imported food accounting for about 13 percent of the annual diet. Only one percent of imported fish, vegetables, fruit and other foods are inspected, leaving us extremely vulnerable.

We are blessed with this fertile Valley—one of only five Mediterranean growing regions in the world. Without providing the tools we need, like water, we stand to lose this valuable region and the ability to feed ourselves. We then will have to look elsewhere for food. And, we will have to compete with the rest of the world. A United Nation report estimates there will be a 25 percent shortage of food worldwide by 2050 due to climate change, land degradation and loss, water scarcity and species infestations and an estimated two billion additional people. If we lose the chance to feed ourselves, we will become just as vulnerable as the rest of the world and we don't know what the human and environmental consequences of that might be – both here and abroad. Moreover, the cost of food could rise even higher.

Americans currently pay only 9.6 percent of their disposable personal income for food, compared to China with 35 percent, Israel at 20 percent, Japan at 15 percent, France at 14 percent, Philippines at 37 percent and Indonesia 46 percent. Clearly, our ability to feed ourselves provides an affordable, dependable and wholesome food supply.

The basic reality is if you want safe food, give us the tools we need to grow it for you—and that means an adequate and affordable water supply. Let us continue to feed you, especially those of us in the San Joaquin Valley who work hard to do it right environmentally, safely and affordably.

** Source: California Farm Water Coalition "The Water Fact Book":*

www.farmwater.org.

Dan Errotabere is a third-generation family farmer from the Riverdale area. He and his family produce diversified fruit, nut and vegetable crops in the Riverdale area and in Westlands Water District in western Fresno County. He is the president of the Fresno County Farm Bureau and serves in many leadership roles in agricultural and water organizations.