

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

It's been a fairly chaotic month here in the Farm Bureau office, thanks to our opening of the initial re-enrollment window for the Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group.

It's possible to comply with the [Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board's] complex set of regulations and requirements on your own, but we strongly advise against that course – the monitoring and reporting activities would cost even small growers tens of thousands of dollars a year. The far more economical (and sanity-preserving) course is to join VCAILG

Nearly 1,400 agricultural property owners, and hundreds of growers leasing some of that land, have been notified that we need signed participation contracts, updated contact information and accurate parcel and crop data from them. This can be accomplished online, or by submitting paper forms. As you might expect, the phones here have been busy as our staff answers questions, troubleshoots login issues, and guides users through the signup process.

We have to undergo this cumbersome process every five years, when the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality

Control Board (LARWQCB) adopts a new irrigated lands regulatory program for agriculture. It's possible to comply with the complex set of regulations and requirements on your own, but we strongly advise against that course – the monitoring and reporting activities would cost even small growers tens of thousands of dollars a year. The far more economical (and sanity-preserving) course is to join VCAILG, let us and our consultants do all the work, and reduce your costs by sharing them with your fellow growers across an entire watershed.

So, even though enrollment is a hassle – and believe me, we share your pain – it's a walk in the park compared to the red tape required for individual compliance and the pitfalls of dealing directly with state regulatory staff.

If you did not submit your re-enrollment before our initial Sept. 1 cutoff, do not panic. That was the deadline we set for compiling the VCAILG membership list we are required to submit to the LARWQCB with our notice of intent to be recognized as the county's formal discharger group, which is due in October.

Technically, the LARWQCB could regard anyone not on the list as being in violation of the regulations, but the board

realizes that the process takes time and it is unlikely to do anything for many months. In the meantime, we will continue to accept new or renewed enrollments, and we will periodically update the Regional Board on additions to our membership.

One of the questions we have been fielding during the re-enrollment process is what the participation costs are likely to be in the coming year. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to answer that with any precision.

The cost varies by watershed, depending on conditions and the types of monitoring and analysis required for different streams. In 2015-2016, for example, the per-acre assessment ranged from \$5.94 in the coastal watershed to \$22.82 in the subwatershed draining to Revolon Slough.

But the current set of regulations is much more stringent than those in effect from 2010 to 2016, and there is some ambiguity in the language that makes it difficult for us to develop a plan for compliance that's detailed enough to generate cost estimates. We are still working with Regional Board staff to flesh out those details, and until we do, we can't finalize a scope of work for our consultants, prepare budget projections and calculate per-acre assessments.

Right now, we're anticipating being able to do that this fall, probably in October. So, with any luck, we'll be following up with invoices for the 2016-2017 program year in November. And when we do, your response will be somewhat simpler: Just send us a check. We'll do the rest.

ACP research project in development

Under the oversight of the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force, local citrus growers launched a new round of coordinated area-wide management (AWM) pesticide applications in August. Intended to maximize suppression of the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) population and reduce the chance the bugs will find and begin spreading the bacteria that cause Huanglong-bing disease, the AWM strategy requires close cooperation among growers, packinghouses, pest-control advisers and pest control operators, making it a daunting logistical challenge.

Nevertheless, Ventura County has been setting an example for the rest of the state about how to execute a large-scale AWM strategy. During the previous round of AWM between Jan. 31 and May 29 – the first cycle to involve all the county's citrus acreage – participation rates were generally quite high. Countywide, 92 percent of the citrus acreage was treated. Ten of the 49 psyllid management areas (PMAs) had treatment

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UC education programs going strong

By Susana Bruzzone-Miller

The 4-H Youth Development Program (YDP) is alive and thriving in Ventura County. Currently, 14 community clubs boast 691 youth members, 189 adult volunteers and a variety of hands-on projects and leadership opportunities for kindergarten to 12th grade youth. As California 4-H YPD goals move towards tripling enrollment and broadening diversity in the next 10 years, innovative 4-H programming ideas have emerged such as in-school, after-school, and special interest (SPIN) clubs.

The idea of expanding reach through various delivery modes is not new to Ventura County. The 4-H YPD programs at the UC Hansen Agricultural Research and Extension Center

More than 60 Rio School District fifth- and sixth-graders participated in "4-H Sustainable You! Summer Camp," which helps youth understand what it means to be sustainable and features interactive activities ...

(HAREC) have been helping in this endeavor for many years. Youth programs are offered county-wide and serve the community at large through the efforts of vol-

unteers, staff, and community partnerships. Farm field trips, classroom outreach, student farm, summer camp and other community activities reached more than 7,900 youth in program year 2015-2016.

Rio School District, in Oxnard, is a welcomed new partner. Rio added the *4-H Sustainable You! Summer Camp* curriculum to their districtwide Summer Science Camp that serves more than 200 K-6 students. HAREC educators provided curriculum training and support. More than 60 fifth- and sixth-graders participated in this exciting program, which helps youth understand what it means to be sustainable and features interactive activities based around the five major areas of sustainability: land, air, food, energy and water. Rio campers rounded out the experience by visiting HAREC for further study of our local food system. Additionally, the City of Ventura joined forces for a second year collaboration with HAREC. City environmental educators delivered *Sustainable You!* at the Center. Twenty-five youth, ages 9-12, delighted in spending a week of fun and learning on the farm.

The popularity of 4-H Farm Field Trips and Classroom Outreach continues to grow. Educators from 12 Ventura County school districts participate in these programs and often remark on the benefits. Judie Wing, a Conejo Unified teacher commented, "One day on the farm is more educational and complete than a whole semester of second-grade science." Every attempt is made to accommodate as many schools as possible, but programs fill up quickly each fall and spring with long wait lists. When visiting the farm is not an option, classroom outreach bridges the gap. Teacher suggestions often prompt additions to outreach lessons offered. Recent requests have been heard. *Wiggly Worms, Food Friends* rolls out this fall, teaching first graders how to recycle food waste into healthy soil.

The continued success of the on-site 4-H Student Farm, a collaboration with Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) and Food Corps, is set for expansion to a year-round after-school program for middle schoolers. Ashley Parrish Decker, Food Corps member and student farm educator states, "a winter session will be added that incorporates farm to school aspects of growing food and cooking but also includes a community service component."

Two interns joined the education team for

spring and summer 2016. Karina Lopez, Santa Paula High School, and Shanti Sandosham, Ventura College, set the bar high for future interns. The purpose of the new Youth, Families & Community internship opportunity is threefold: give students real-life experience working in a Research and Extension Center or agricultural setting, engage in hands-on research or outreach projects, and ignite a spark leading to future studies or careers in agriculture or natural resources. Shanti hopes to transfer to UC Davis to further her education in sustainable agriculture.

Volunteers and interns play a key role in program delivery and support. Their efforts are greatly appreciated by HAREC staff and the many teachers and youth that participate in these programs. For more information on 4-H Youth Development Programs at HAREC, volunteering or internships visit our website: http://harec.ucanr.edu/Extension_Outreach_-_Education/. For information on the Ventura County 4-H Program: http://ceventura.ucanr.edu/Families_-_Communities/4-H/. To keep abreast of news at Hansen follow our blog: <http://ucanr.edu/blogs/Hansen/>.

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Notes from the CEO

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rates of 100 percent, 13 were between 95 and 99 percent, and seven were between 90 and 94 percent.

Moving forward, however, we need to know more than just the participation rate if we are to ensure an effective strategy. We need information about the relative efficacy of aerial vs. ground applications and conventional vs. organic materials. We need to determine the influence of untreated groves or urban neighborhoods on APC population trends in treated groves, and we need to understand seasonal variations in ACP population size and distribution. Without this information, we are unable to determine how ACP populations are responding to the AWM program or what improvements might achieve better results.

The need for an effective suppression program has never been greater. The state's HLB survey has identified two separate confirmed infection sites in Los Angeles, and the data strongly suggest the bacterial disease has

already spread to more than a dozen areas in multiple Southern California counties.

Unfortunately, the state's existing ACP trapping and sampling program is incapable of generating the data needed to answer the questions we need answered. So, working with University of California researchers Beth Grafton-Cardwell and Neil McRoberts, the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force has developed a data-gathering and analysis project that will enable them to provide those answers. Beth and Neil are developing a federal grant application to support the project over the next two to three years. Approval will take time, however, so we have asked packinghouses that process Ventura County fruit to raise \$25,000 through a voluntary self-assessment based on their proportional share of the total volume. We estimate this will be sufficient to fund the program for the first six months, while we await approval of the federal grant application.

The funding will pay for a full-time scout who will work under a contract with FBVC, which acts as fiscal agent for the Task Force.

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We have designed a network of 50 sampling sites, representing the full range of variables across all citrus varieties and all major geographic production areas. The scout will visit 25 sites each week, and gather ACP population data using a protocol designed by Beth in collaboration with local pest control advisors. The scout also will collect ACP nymphs so they can be submitted for HLB testing.

In response to the apparent spread of HLB throughout Southern California, the state is developing a new set of quarantine regulations. Because ACP is known to hitch rides in loads of bulk fruit moving from orchards to packinghouses – meaning the HLB-causing bacteria infecting trees in Southern California are but a truck trip away from the state's major production areas in Ventura County and the San Joaquin Valley – the regulations aim to reduce or eliminate psyllid transport in this manner.

Under the proposal endorsed by the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee, the state would be divided into five regions. Four of these would be quarantine zones: One would encompass all of Southern California, another the coast (Ventura, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties), one the San Joaquin Valley, and another the Bay area. Most of the state's counties would be in a non-quarantine zone because they lack commercial citrus and ACP has not been detected in them. Under the CPDPC-approved proposal, fruit would have to be washed or commercially processed, and loads fully tarped, before moving from one quarantine zone to another.

Both FBVC and the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force have endorsed this proposal as the best way to ensure that infected ACP are not trucked here from production areas in Imperial, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, where there are several suspected sites of HLB infection. The added expense and hassle associated with the washing step is insignificant compared to the damage that would result if the industry were to inadvertently spread the HLB epidemic to our commercial groves.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture held several meetings around the state to gather feedback on the proposal. And it became unfortunately clear that growers in some regions don't fully understand or appreciate the risk. Some pushed back against the

wet-wash requirement, or argued for different quarantine boundary configurations.

Alarming, CDFA developed a proposed revision to the regulatory plan that would address those concerns, and submitted it to the CPDPC in mid-August for review. It is unclear why the department did so, or what it expects the committee to do in response, but the effect of actually implementing the CDFA proposal is quite clear: It would be a disaster for Ventura County and, eventually, the entire California citrus industry.

If the revision were adopted, fruit could be moved between quarantine zones without processing as long as the orchard had been treated with pesticides just before harvest – a step that reduces the ACP population, but does not eliminate it and therefore cannot prevent psyllids from ending up in bins. And the quarantine boundaries would be amended to create two zones – one for Southern California that would include Ventura and Santa Barbara counties, and one for the northern part of the state that would include the Central Valley as well as Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties.

By eliminating any regulatory barrier to ACP transport between Ventura County, which as yet has no confirmed or even suspected HLB infection sites, and areas to the south that have many such sites, CDFA's proposal would hasten the spread of the disease to our area. And if it were to eliminate washing in favor of the spray-and-move option, which has been condemned by scientists as dangerously ineffective in keeping ACP out of fruit loads, CDFA would similarly hasten movement of the disease into the Central Valley.

These are intolerable outcomes. Farm Bureau and Members of the local Task Force are pushing hard on CDFA to dump this spectacularly bad idea and move ahead with the original quarantine boundaries and requirements.

— John Krist is chief executive officer of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Contact him at john@farmbureauvc.com.

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Aquarium of the Pacific — Adult (12+ yrs): \$19.95 (save \$9); Child (3-11 yrs): \$12.95 (save \$4). *Valid thru 12/31/16.*

Cinemark & Century Theatres — Platinum ticket, valid all show times at all Cinemark & Century locations: \$8.75 (savings \$2.75). *Additional premiums may be applied for specially priced films and/or events priced higher than normal box office. No expiration.*

Hurricane Harbor — General Use Ticket (3yrs+) \$28.95 (Save \$13.04) Valid any 1 day of the 2016 Season.

Knott's Berry Farm — Buena Park. Adult (12+ yrs) \$37.95 (save \$34.05); Junior (3-11 yrs) Senior (62+ yrs) \$34.95 (save \$7.05). *Valid thru 12/31/2016.*

Legoland — "E" tickets only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$78.95 (save \$14.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$72.95 (save \$14.05). *Includes 2nd day free ticket within 90 days of 1st visit.*

Resort Hopper Ticket — "E" Ticket only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$87.95 (save \$29.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$80.95 (save \$30.05). *Includes 2 visits to Legoland, including new Waterpark (seasonal) and 2 visits to Sea Life Aquarium. Valid thru 12/31/2016.*

Raging Waters — General Use Ticket (3+yrs.) \$29.95 (Savings \$13.04). Valid any 1 day of the 2016 Season

Regal Cinemas — Unrestricted tickets \$8.75 (regularly \$12.50 Sun-Thu, \$10 Fri.-Sat). *Good at Edwards, Regal, Signature & United Artists. No expiration.*

San Diego Safari Park — (Formerly Wild Animal Park) Adult-African Tram Safari: \$42.95 (save \$7.05) (12+ yrs); Child-African Tram Safari: \$33.95 (save \$6.05) (3-11 yrs). *Valid thru 12/31/16. Africa Tram Safari includes admission, unlimited use of the Journey into Africa Tour, Conservation Carousel and other shows/exhibits.*

San Diego Sea World – 2nd Day Free Adult (10 yrs+) \$65 (save \$24); Child (3-9 yrs) \$65 (save \$18). *Both visits valid thru 12/31/16.*

San Diego Zoo — Adult (12+ yrs): \$42.95 (save \$7.05). Child (3-11 yrs): \$33.95 (save \$6.05). *Valid thru 12/31/16.*

See's Candy gift certificate — One-pound box \$15.95 (Save \$2.05). *No expiration.*

Six Flags Magic Mountain — \$45.50 (savings \$27.49) General use ticket (3+ yrs). *Valid thru 9/25/16.*

Six Flags Magic Mountain Fright Fest — General Use Ticket (3 yrs+) \$49.95 (savings \$30) *Valid on day/night during Fright Fest Sept. 17, 18, 24, 25, 30; Oct. 1, 2, 7-9, 14-16, 21-23, 28, 30 OR valid any operating day thru 9/30/2017.*

"E Tickets" — **San Diego Sea World:** Unlimited visits: Adult (10+ yrs) 2016 Fun Card \$75 (save \$14) Child (3-9 yrs) \$75 (save \$8). *Valid thru 12/30/16. Blackout dates apply.*
Universal Studios: 12 Month Annual Pass (3+ yrs) \$109 (save \$40) Exp. 12/31/16. *Valid 12 months from first visit. First visit must be by January 31, 2017. Blackout dates apply after 1st visit. To view blackout dates see www.universalspassmember.com2016N.*

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