

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

Following May board elections, Farm Bureau of Ventura County is getting ready to welcome new directors to its leadership team.

George Boskovich III will be joining the board for the first time. Jason Cole, who served on the board in an advisory capacity from 2012 to 2014 as chairman of

End of an era: Terry [Schaeffer]'s voice provided the frost-season soundtrack for generations of local farmers and their families, as he ran down the temperature and air movement probabilities for the county's many microclimates in calm, measured tones.

Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers committee, will be returning, this time as a voting director. Also returning to the board is Will Pidduck, who was a director from 2003 to 2009. Incumbents Ed McFadden and Danny Pereira also will be back, having won re-election in last month's balloting.

George is the first of the fourth generation to join Boskovich Farms, Inc. a local grower, packer, processor, shipper

and marketer of fresh produce. George graduated from California State University at Channel Islands with a bachelor of science degree in business. While attending college he worked part time for the family business and began working full time in June 2006. In May 2012 George became the chief technology officer of Boskovich Farms and in 2015 became vice president, responsible for production scheduling and managing all contract growing. He serves on the Board of Directors for Western Growers Association and on the Board of Directors for the Ventura County Agricultural Association.

Jason is a third-generation avocado, citrus and cattle rancher from Santa Paula. He is a 2009 graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a bachelor's degree in agricultural sciences. Jason is a member of Class 42 of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation program, and is active in the Region 9 CALF alumni group. He is an alternate member of the California Avocado Commission board, and serves on the CAC governance committee.

Will was raised on his family's ranch outside Santa Paula. He graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and began working as an agronomist for Fruit Growers Laboratory. Ten years ago Will began farming for Finch Farms LLC, which grows citrus and avocados in Ojai, Ventura and the Santa

Clara River valley. He served as Farm Bureau's treasurer from 2005 to 2007 and its secretary from 2007 to 2009.

The three newly elected directors will replace board members Fred Van Wingerden and Chris Garmon, both of whom resigned, and Phil McGrath, who chose not to run for re-election.

The other relatively new face on the FBVC board is Brian Benchwick, who was appointed in March to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Jan Berk. Brian is manager of Tri-Tech Ag Products, Inc., a pesticide application company serving Ventura County vegetable and strawberry growers. He grew up in Camarillo, and attended Moorpark College before earning a bachelor's degree in agronomy at Cal Poly Pomona. After graduation he went to work as a licensed pest control advisor for Carr Fertilizer, and later worked for Hiji Brothers, where he advised on a variety of vegetable crops and also worked as human resources manager.

We welcome the new and returning directors, and thank those who have moved on after serving our organization so well. Farm Bureau's board members are a diverse lot, reflecting the diversity of Ventura County agriculture, and they have a distinguished track record of industry leadership. With their guidance, Farm Bureau will continue fulfilling its century-old commitment to providing a strong and effective voice for the local farming and ranching community.

In memoriam

I'm sad to report that Terry Schaeffer, who for nearly three decades provided critical weather forecasting services to the Ventura County agricultural community, died June 3. His passing means the end of an era.

Terry's voice provided the frost-season soundtrack for generations of local farmers and their families, as he ran down the temperature and air movement probabilities for the county's many microclimates in calm, measured tones. No matter how dire the prognostication – warnings about the kind of cold nights that keep growers from their beds and damage crops despite every protective effort – his soothing tones, delivered originally by radio and later via telephonic recordings, somehow made even a looming crisis seem manageable.

Terry's career as a meteorologist began with the National Weather Service, which for decades offered its agricultural Fruit Frost Forecast program in areas throughout the United States at particular risk of crop damage from cold weather.

(continued on page 2)

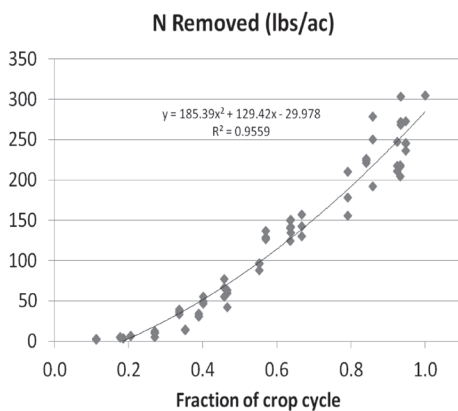
What's Inside?

- CropManage: Online tool to manage water, fertilizer
- Member Benefits

CropManage: Online tool to manage water, nitrogen fertilizer

By Andre Biscaro

Successful berry and vegetable production cannot be achieved without proper irrigation and nitrogen (N) management. Applying the right amount of water and N fertilizers is only part of an effective irrigation and fertility program. The timing of their applications is equally important. The figure below illustrates celery N uptake pattern recently measured in multiple fields in Ventura and Salinas. Minimum N uptake observed until about 1/3 of the crop cycle suggests that N fertilizer rates can be devised accordingly.



By matching water and N fertilizer applications to the specific needs of the crop, growers can optimize yields and inputs and address environmental concerns related to water conservation and off-site movement of nitrate.

In order to help berry and vegetable growers with customizing irrigation and N management to the specific growth stage of their crops, the University of California Cooperative Extension created an online tool that makes water and N fertilizer recommendations on a field-by-field basis. CropManage (cropmanage.ucanr.edu) is a free web-based app that uses data from multiple sources to customize recommendations of water and N fertilizer for commercial fields. Data sources that drive CropManage include: plant developmental models from UC research (N uptake, canopy cover and root depth), soil nitrate samples, expected yield, evapotranspiration data from the California Irrigation Management and Information System (CIMIS), irriga-

tion system characteristics and soil properties data from the NRCS national database.

The software creates water recommendations based on crop evapotranspiration (ETc) estimated since the last irrigation, which is calculated from CIMIS daily reference evapotranspiration (ETo) and crop coefficient (Kc) values for the specific stage of the crop at the time the recommendation is created. Irrigation design, irrigation efficiency and leaching fraction (based on soil and water salinity) are also taken in consideration for the irrigation recommendation for providing the number of hours and amount to irrigate.

Fertilizer recommendations are based on the N uptake rate of the crop at various stages of development, and soil nitrate levels estimated with the quick nitrate test or laboratory analyses. Nitrogen mineralization from previous crops' residues and nitrate concentration in groundwater are also factored into the recommendation. Recommended fertilizer rates are provided in pounds of N/A and also in total amounts of fertilizer.

CropManage was initially developed for lettuce grown in Salinas Valley and it has been recently extended to multiple crops including strawberries, celery, iceberg and romaine lettuce, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage. The development of CropManage for a specific crop and region requires intensive data collection from multiple fields for at least one year in order to create reliable plant growth models. The collaboration between UC and local growers and companies has enabled the development of CropManage for strawberries and celery production in Ventura County.

Three validation studies were performed in Ventura County in the last year in order to assess the effectiveness of CropManage's water and N fertilizer recommendations for strawberries and celery production. The table below summarizes the results of these trials. Studies 1 and 3 were conducted in randomized complete block design with four replications within a commercial field, while study 2 was a comparison between two 15-acre blocks. Yield, water and fertilizer use were compared to the grower standard practice of the commercial field where each

study took place. The use of significantly more water and N fertilizer in study 1 is most likely related to under-fertilization of the grower standard treatment. Whether CropManage's recommendations result in greater or lower use of water and fertilizer use depends on how different the comparison management is. The fact that yields were the same or greater is encouraging.

More details about these and other research findings from various researchers will be available at the Irrigation and Nutrient Management Meeting for Berry and Vegetable Crops on July 28 (Location: Orvene S. Carpenter Community Center, 550 Park Ave., Port Hueneme.) More information is to come.

— Andre Biscaro is irrigation and water resources advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in Ventura. Contact him at (805) 645-1465 or asbiscaro@ucdavis.edu.

Notes from the CEO

Continued from front page

For years, Terry worked out of a small space above the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office in Santa Paula.

In 1995, however, the NWS announced it would be discontinuing its customized agricultural weather forecasting services in the face of federal budget cuts and a strong political push to privatize government services. It extended the program through mid-1996 in order to minimize disruption, while growers and agricultural organizations across the country scrambled to find replacements.

Farm Bureau of Ventura County was among them. With the elimination of the Fruit Frost Forecast program, Terry left NWS and launched his own consulting firm, Weather by Schaeffer. In 1997, FBVC signed him to a consulting contract, invested in a custom computerized telephony system and software, and set up a subscription program whereby packinghouses and individual growers could obtain code numbers that allowed them to phone FBVC's office and listen to Terry's recorded forecasts.

In 2009, we updated the system, jettisoning the old computer and its bundle of telephone lines. We contracted with a remote hosting service, which provided far more reliable and secure technology, and added web and email options to the standard telephone-accessed voice recordings for Terry's forecasts.

Despite the superior speed and simplicity of the email delivery option, (continued on page 3)

Study #	Crop	Yield relative to grower standard	Water use relative to grower standard	Fertilizer (lbs N/A) use relative to grower standard
1	Strawberry	30% higher	14% higher	132% higher
2*	Strawberry	Same	10% lower	5% lower
3	Celery	5% higher**	6% higher	24% lower

*on-going study (results are not final)

**not statistically significant

commercial field where each study took place.

CropManage's recommendations resulted in similar or greater yields com-

Notes from the CEO

Continued from page 2

an overwhelming majority of the system's users continued using the telephone to listen to Terry's daily frost-season recordings. I'm convinced they just wanted to be reassured by the sound of his familiar voice.

Although Terry and I worked for several years to develop a retirement succession plan and recruit a replacement, we never found one. Terry was quite simply irreplaceable — no meteorologist will ever know as much as he did about the behavior of cold air amid Ventura County's complex and varied topography — and no one expressed interest in taking on the burden of providing daily or twice-daily forecasts from November through March.

As a result, the FBVC Board of Directors reluctantly voted June 16 to discontinue the Agricultural Weather Forecasting Service. Instead of sending our subscribers a new invoice this month for the 2016-2017 forecasting season, we'll be sending them notification of the service's elimination and information about alternative agricultural forecasting options.

Terry cared deeply about Ventura County's agricultural community — the people he always referred to as "my growers" — and he was a regular visitor at our monthly board meetings. He'd do his best to provide a long-range forecast for coming weeks, and cheerfully accept gentle ribbing about his inability to make it rain or his gloomy predictions about an upcoming meteorological calamity of one sort or another — too much rain, too little rain, dangerous heat, ruinous cold, gale-force Santa Ana winds.

Like so many of you, we enjoyed hearing his voice, regardless of whether it was delivering good news or bad, and we regret that we never got the chance to throw him the huge retirement party he deserved. We already miss him.

Irrigation grant project moving forward

In recent months, FBVC has taken on a role that is new to us, and likely unprecedented among Farm Bureaus statewide: We have entered into a contract with the Ventura County Watershed Protection District to administer a state grant intended to help growers improve the efficiency of their crop irrigation systems.

The Agricultural Water Use Efficiency Program is being funded with \$1.7 million from the Department of Water Resources using Proposition 84 bond funds. We worked with

the county to develop the grant application through the competitive Integrated Regional Water Management Grant program, and it was one of several projects in the application package submitted by the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County that was selected for funding.

For the past two months, we have been developing the internal tracking systems and procedures. Our next step will be to establish an application process and eligibility criteria. Farm Bureau will then distribute notice of the program through mailings and workshops. Selected applicants will receive a free evaluation of their irrigation system by a technical team — likely Ventura County Resource Conservation District staff working under a subcontract with Farm Bureau — which will develop recommendations for improvement.

For those who agree to move forward with the recommendations, the grant provides about \$1.2 million in matching funds to help growers purchase and install such things as irrigation timers, meters, sprinklers, soil-moisture sensors, drip tape and emitters, irrigation-management software and high-efficiency pumps. Growers who apply and are selected for eligibility will be reimbursed for 60 percent of the cost. A post-installation evaluation will also be conducted, to ensure the equipment was installed correctly and to quantify the water and energy savings.

We are also planning to subcontract with the University of California Cooperative Extension to provide additional technical assistance, and are coordinating with the local Natural Resources Conservation Service in the hope that federal funds might provide some of the match required by the grant program.

Although it will increase our workload, the program will be in the able hands of Nancy Broschart, our water policy specialist, and the grant includes funds to compensate us for staff time. It also pays for the pre- and post-installation analyses.

We look forward to launching this program within the next few months, because it will help growers adapt not only to the new groundwater rules being developed under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, but to meet the tough water-quality standards in the updated irrigated lands regulatory program approved two months ago by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

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

Member Benefits

TICKETS & DISCOUNTS

Farm Bureau members qualify for discounts on admission to many of Southern California's most popular theme parks and other attractions. To take advantage of any of these special offers, drop by the Farm Bureau office at 5156 McGrath St. in Ventura. You can also place an order and pay by phone, and have the tickets mailed to you. For more information, contact Cissy Perez-Haas at (805) 289-0155. Have your membership number handy. We accept Visa and MasterCard.

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

California Adventure and Disneyland "1-Day Park Hopper" — Adult (10+ yrs): \$165 (save \$6); Child (3-9 yrs): \$144 (save \$5). 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.

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

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.

"E Tickets" — Disneyland: 1 Day 1 Park, 2 Day 1 Park, 2 Day Park Hopper, 3 Day 1 Park, & 3 Day Park Hopper. Ask about SoCal Resident specials. **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.universalpassmember.com2016N.

FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

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We represent the broad and dynamic interests of the agricultural industry through our diverse membership. We serve members by delivering services, promoting policies, developing coalitions, and fostering community action that will ensure the long-term success of agriculture in Ventura County.

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