

## Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

On Aug. 5, the city of Ventura sued the United Water Conservation District, challenging a 46 percent increase in the extraction charge UWCD levies on groundwater pumpers.

**The financial stakes for Ventura County growers are substantial. But because agricultural groundwater users throughout California benefit from the rate differential ... Ventura's legal challenge has serious industry-wide implications.**

The city is not alone in being unhappy about the increase, which took effect July 1. Agricultural users also got socked with the rate hike, the latest of several that have boosted groundwater charges for irrigators within the UWCD boundaries 145 percent in just over three years.

Growers complained, but for the most part appear to have accepted the necessity for the increase, which United's management and directors argue is required to ensure that critical water facilities remain in compliance with stringent environmental regulations. Given the chance to weigh in

on the proposed rate increase via a Proposition 218 protest, parcel owners submitted fewer than one-third of the opposition votes necessary to block it.

But Ventura is not challenging the size of the increase, per se. The city is taking direct aim at the longstanding differential between the extraction charge paid by agricultural users and the rate paid by urban pumpers. The California Water Code mandates that a district such as United charge urban pumpers at least three times as much as agricultural pumpers for each unit of water.

By law, the ratio could be as much as 5 to 1. United's board voted June 8 to maintain it at 3 to 1, the ratio that has been in place for decades.

In its lawsuit, the city claims this rate differential amounts to a prohibited subsidy of agriculture by urban water customers. The California Constitution requires that such fees be proportional to the benefit received by those who pay them, and the city argues that it is not getting its money's worth while farmers are getting more than they deserve.

United's board disagrees with the city, and so does Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Our board has formally requested that California Farm

Bureau Federation's Legal Services Division file a motion to intervene in the case, which would ensure that agricultural interests are adequately represented as the litigation moves forward.

The financial stakes for Ventura County growers are substantial. But because agricultural groundwater users throughout California benefit from the rate differential mandated by state law, Ventura's legal challenge has serious industry-wide implications. We believe this makes a strong argument for CFBF involvement.

At the time of this writing, CFBF's Executive Committee had not yet met to consider the request, but CFBF attorneys are recommending approval. I will keep you apprised as developments unfold.

### Save the date

To show appreciation for the extraordinary level of support provided to this organization by our Platinum, Diamond and Gold Seal members, the FBVC board will host a Premium Member Recognition Reception on Friday, Oct. 14, at the Museum of Ventura County's new Agriculture Museum in Santa Paula. The event will be from 5 to 7 p.m., and will include wine, hors d'oeuvres and a special presentation on agricultural trends and issues.

If you are one of our Premium members, we thank you. If you are not but would like to be, this is a perfect time to take your membership to the next level. Formal invitations to the event will go out in coming weeks, so there is still time to join the roster of respected individuals, businesses and organizations listed on the back page of this newsletter. Contact Cissy Perez-Haas, our membership manager, for more information about joining this select group and scoring a ticket to the Oct. 14 reception.

### ACP found again

Following closely on the heels of two Asian citrus psyllid discoveries in June, the California Department of Food and Agriculture confirmed last month that two new ACP specimens had been found, not far from the earlier detections. One was in a citrus orchard near Moorpark, close to the location of a detection in June. The other was in a residential planting in Camarillo.

Because of continued confusion and difficulty in contacting the owners and/or managers responsible for the affected groves within the recommended treatment area – orchard blocks located within 400 meters of a find site – the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force was asked to *(continued on back page)*

### What's Inside?

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# Agriculture Museum to open September 25

Bees, bugs and tractors will be the stars when the Museum of Ventura County's long-awaited Agriculture Museum opens in Santa Paula on Sunday, Sept. 25. The grand opening will feature

“Ugly” will feature the museum's own beehive and magnified images of bees taken with a scanning electron microscope by artist and photographer Rose-Lynn Fisher. The exhibit also will focus

on the threat posed to farmers by the tiny but frightening Asian citrus psyllid.



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Eight vintage tractors, dating from 1914 to 1955, will be found throughout the building, including one upon which children can sit. The machines are part of a rotating display of the museum's nationally recognized collection of farm implements.

Permanent exhibits, using rare historical photographs and interactive elements,

will tell the story of Ventura County's farming and ranching tradition. Starting with Mission times, visitors can trace the county's evolution into one of the

nation's most productive growing regions, and learn what innovations are in store for an industry that employs more than 30,000 county residents. The realization of more than 40 years of effort and dedication by supporters, the Agriculture Museum is appropriately housed in the restored 1888 Mill building, at 926 Railroad Ave., beside the railroad tracks and across from the depot in Santa Paula's historic downtown. The museum will be open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, with admission \$4 for adults, \$3 for seniors, \$1 for children 6-17, and free for children under 6. Membership in the Museum of Ventura County includes free admission to both the Agriculture Museum and the Museum of Ventura County's primary location at 100 East Main St. in Ventura. More information is available online at the museum's website: <http://www.venturamuseum.org>.

To receive information about the Sept. 25 Grand Opening Celebration Fundraiser for the Agriculture Museum, please contact the museum by email: [development@venturamuseum.org](mailto:development@venturamuseum.org).

free admission for the day, docent-led tours, and live music by the Lynn Mullins Pickup Band, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. “Insects: The Good, The Bad and The

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## Turkish sabbatical provides citrus lessons

By Ben Faber

Sometimes you have to leave home to learn new things, or that is what we hope when we take a sabbatical. One

of the last great perks of being with the University of California is being able to take a year off every eight years to learn something new. I went to Turkey from August 2010 to August 2011 to get away from telephones and do some work ... and also to play and meet interesting people.

I went to see how they grow low-water-using tree crops like pomegranate, fig and mulberry, to see what varieties worked, what the growing systems were and how they were marketed. I saw some of that, but what really impressed me was the citrus.

Citrus was introduced into Turkey

way back in Alexander the Great's time, when he brought citron from India. It wasn't a big industry, though. In fact, most fruit tree culture there has been more backyard production. A 10-acre fig orchard is huge. A 50-acre mixed citrus orchard is massive, according to old landownership patterns.

The town I was in, Adana (along the coast, near the Syrian border), was famous for its Adana kebab. This was a mix of ground mutton with garlic, onion, spices, chile pepper and sour orange juice. It was barbecued on a skewer then served on flat bread. It is really delicious, but a little goes a long way.

This dish had been served for hundreds of years, but there had never been a major commercial acreage of sour orange in the area. In 1970, the total citrus acreage in the country was a bit under 100,000 acres; most plantings were less than 5 acres. The last acreage

count (2008) put the acreage at 300,000 acres with much larger plantings going in. During the time I was there, if you blinked there were suddenly more plantings going in and there was more land being cleared for citrus. Why? Cotton prices had tanked, they have lots of Euphrates River water (toilets run continuously and water runs down streets), and the Russian market is growing and paying well for citrus.

A lot of the citrus varieties and rootstocks are from California and Florida, but many are coming from Israel, Italy, France and Australia. Some orchards will have 12 or 15 varieties of mixed lemon, mandarin and orange. The growers are trying to figure out what does best in their growing/marketing environment. Meyer lemon does really well for them because the Russians like the thin-skinned, big fruit and it is a tremendous producer in this environment. W. Murcott mandarin is (continued on next page)

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***We are testing a lot of these [citrus] varieties in California, too, but they are doing some really interesting things with these trees in Turkey that are different from here.***

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## Turkish sabbatical provides citrus lessons *(continued from page 2)*

a big producer, as well, but surrounded by all the other varieties, the fruit is seedy. The Russians don't care about seeds at this point. Early varieties of navel are big there, such as Navellina and Powell.

We are testing a lot of these varieties in California, too, but they are doing some really interesting things with these trees in Turkey that are different from here. They girdle branches to increase fruit size, but they claim it also reduces seed number in normally seedy mandarins. They plant on large berms to improve drainage on their heavy clay soils, but it also improves air drainage and reduces frost damage. They also plant on sour orange rootstocks. This rootstock is known for the high quality of fruit that is produced and for high productivity. It is also extremely resistant to iron chlorosis and Phytophthora root rot. We have avoided this rootstock, because in orange, tristeza quick decline is more pronounced. This is a really devastating disease that has concerned orange growers around the world.

Now, this is why travel is good. What I learned during my stay is that this rootstock combination with lemon is not prone to quick decline. It's relatively immune to the disease. So maybe we have a new rootstock for lemon in the Ventura area that would out-perform the rootstocks we currently use. We'll see.

By the way, I never got away from phones. Most Turks have at least one cell phone and most have two, because it is cheaper to call Verizon to Verizon than it is Verizon to T-Cell, so they have one phone to call their Verizon friends and another to call to T-Cells and they talk all the time. Right in the middle of a conversation they excuse themselves to talk to the phone, and in meetings, usually a third of the people are on their cell phones. This is progress of another sort.

— Ben Faber is a farm advisor with the UC Cooperative Extension Office in Ventura, specializing in soils and water, avocados and minor subtropicals. Contact him at [bafaber@ucdavis.edu](mailto:bafaber@ucdavis.edu).

## Strawberry production meeting planned

The University of California Cooperative Extension office in Ventura will conduct its 10th annual strawberry production meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 7, from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Freedom Center, 516 Eubanks St., Camarillo. The meeting will be presented in English with simultaneous translation into Spanish.

### AGENDA

7:30 a.m.	Registration
8 a.m.	Southern California strawberry research update: varieties and production (Kirk Larson, UC Davis).
8:30 a.m.	Investigation of macrophomina and fusarium: research update on biology and management (Tom Gordon, UC Davis, Steve Koike, UCCE-Monterey); results from 2010-2011 non-fumigated field trials (Oleg Daugovish, UCCE-Ventura County).
9:30 a.m.	Break
9:45 a.m.	Fungicide evaluations in strawberry (Steve Koike).
10 a.m.	Lewis mite, thrips and Lygus research update (Frank Zalom, UC Davis, and Anna Howell, UCCE-Ventura).
10:45 a.m.	Herbicide efficacy and safety for nutsedge control in strawberry (Oleg Daugovish).
11 a.m.	California Strawberry Commission update on regulatory and research issues in strawberry production (Dan Legard, CSC).
11:30 a.m.	Lunch (provided)

Continuing education credits have been requested from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. To register, for special arrangements, or for more information, contact Oleg Daugovish at UCCE-Ventura before Aug. 31: (805) 645-1454, [odaugovish@ucdavis.edu](mailto:odaugovish@ucdavis.edu).

## 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 (Age 12+): \$18.95 (save \$6); Child (age 3-11): \$10.95 (save \$2). Valid through 12/31/11.

**California Adventure and Disneyland one-day Park Hopper** — Adult (age 10+): \$96 (save \$5); Child (age 3-9): \$88 (save \$3). Valid through 12/31/11.

**Cinemark Theatres** — Platinum ticket, valid any show time at all Cinemark & Century locations: \$8 (savings \$3.50). 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 (48"+) \$21.95 (savings \$11.04). Valid through Sept. 25, 2011. Child ticket (under 48") \$15.95 (savings \$9.04). Valid through Sept. 25, 2011

**Knott's Berry Farm** — Adult (12 yrs.+ ) \$31.95 (save \$25.04), Junior/Senior (age 3-11 yrs.) (62 yrs.+ ) \$22.95 (save \$2.04). Valid through 12/31/11.

**Legoland** — General use ticket: \$55.95 (save \$13 adult, \$3 child) + 2nd day FREE. Resort Hopper General: \$65.95 (save \$23 adult, \$13 child). Valid through 12/31/11. Includes two visits to Legoland, including new Water Park when open, and two visits to Sea Life Aquarium.

**Magic Mountain** — General use ticket: Adult (48" tall): \$27.95, (save \$32.04); Child (under 48" tall): \$18.95 (save \$16.04). Valid through 12/31/11.

**Raging Waters** — General use ticket (3+ yrs.) \$23 (savings \$13.99). Valid through Sept. 11, 2011

**Regal Cinemas** — Unrestricted tickets \$8.25 (regularly \$9.50 Sun.-Thurs, \$10 Fri.-Sat). Good at Edwards, Regal, Signature and United Artists Theaters. No expiration.

**San Diego Sea World** — \$49.95 (Save \$20 per adult; Save \$10 per child) Adult /Child Ticket (3 yrs.+). Valid through 12/31/11.

**San Diego Safari Park** — (Formerly Wild Animal Park) Adult-African Tram Safari: \$33.95 (save \$6.05) (12 yrs.+); Child-African Tram Safari: \$26.95 (save \$3.05) (3-11 yrs.). Africa Tram Safari includes admission, unlimited use of the Journey into Africa Tour, Conservation Carousel and all shows/exhibits. Valid through 01/31/12.

**San Diego Zoo** — Adult (age 12+): \$33.95 (save \$6.05). Child (age 3-11): \$26.95 (save \$3.05). Valid through 01/31/12.

**See's Candy** gift certificate — One-pound box \$13.45 (Save \$2.65). No expiration.

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### MISSION STATEMENT

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.

## FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

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## Notes from the CEO *(continued from page 1)*

help develop a communication protocol. Task Force Chair Leslie Leavens-Crowe, working with me and key figures in the local citrus industry, spent many hours establishing a set of procedures for ensuring that timely notification of a confirmed ACP detection is communicated to affected parties. The protocol also provides a means of following up to ensure that affected groves are promptly treated to kill ACP, and to communicate treatment plans to packinghouses and relevant agencies.

Task Force member Dave Machlitt has agreed to serve as the communication and treatment coordinator. The procedure is still receiving some final tweaks, but we intend to use it the next time ACP is trapped in the county. Grower communication of this type lies outside the responsibilities of CDFA and the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. If the local agricultural industry wants to ensure an effective response to ACP detections involving commercial citrus, it will have to assume that responsibility itself. And so we are.

— John Krist is chief executive officer of Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Contact him at [john@farmbureauvc.com](mailto:john@farmbureauvc.com).

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