

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

Please join me in welcoming the newest member of the Farm Bureau Board of Directors. At last month's meeting, the board chose Scott Klittich to fill out the remainder of David Murray's term, which expires in 2011. David regretfully

resigned from the board in September, citing lack of time due to professional and personal obligations.

Scott and his wife, Cindy, are the owners of Otto & Sons Nursery in Fillmore, and specialize in growing container roses and fruit trees for retail garden centers throughout Southern California. Scott received his bachelor's degree in ornamental horticulture from California Poly-

technic State University, San Luis Obispo. He has worked at Otto & Sons for more than 25 years and is currently general manager.

Scott serves on the State Board of Directors for the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers, and has been on the local board for many years. Scott is the Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 406 in Fillmore. He is active in Bardsdale 4-H as a project leader for farm machinery and beef, and he led the swine project for eight years. Scott has been on the Ag Advisory Committee for the Fillmore High School farm for 20 years.

Scott and Cindy have three children: Danny, a senior

at UC Davis studying entomology; Andy, a sophomore at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, studying environmental horticulture; and Timmy, a 7th grader at Fillmore Middle School. Cindy also works part time at Associates Insec-tary.

Materials for sale

One of our members is currently enduring a personal hardship and is looking for help getting rid of a rather large stockpile of unused agricultural materials. Please take a look at the following list to see if there's anything you could use. The materials were originally purchased by ABC Organics, and the owner is willing to sell them for a fraction of the list price.

Methyl sulfate methane: 500 pounds.

Ferrous sulfate: 14 tons

High calcium hydrated lime: 5,000 pounds.

Vicron 15-15 calcium carbonate: 18 tons.

Malic acid: 2,000 pounds.

Citric acid: 7,000 pounds.

Lignite (humic acid): 7,000 pounds.

Planters 2 mix: 5 tons.

A variety of equipment is also on the block, including pumps, motors, large storage tanks and mixers. If you're interested, contact Joseph Johnson, operations officer, at (707) 498-9642, or Lisa Agulia, owner, at (805) 410-2032 or ABCOrganics@gmail.com.

Williamson Act overcomes another hurdle

On Jan. 26, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors voted to continue accepting and processing new Land Conservation Act contracts during the 2010 calendar year. This was the fourth time the board had taken up some element of the LCA program since Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger last July eliminated state funding for the subvention program, which reimburses counties for a portion of the costs associated with their participation.

The board publicly affirmed its support for the LCA program during a budget discussion following the governor's action, and on Oct. 20 it formally amended county policy to allow it to continue the existing LCA program and contracts in the absence of state funding. On Nov. 10, the board approved the 2009 contract proposals. But in both October and November, the board also asked for a staff analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of accepting and processing new contracts in 2010.

The Resource Management Agency reported back to the board last month, recommending that the board continue to accept new contracts this year. The RMA report included an analysis of the cost to the county in tax revenue it gives up by agreeing to assess enrolled property at a reduced value based on agricultural production. According to that report, the county forgoes about \$1.5 million a year in property tax revenues by participating in the LCA program.

Farm Bureau submitted comments in support of the staff recommendation, and the board unanimously approved. The issue may well come up again next year – and every year, as long as state funding remains suspended – but the program appears safe for now. It also was encouraging to see the supervisors do more than just talk about how much they support Ventura County agriculture. Talk is cheap. The

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Citrus pest is focus of grower-PCA workshop

The newly formed Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force will host a workshop on Feb. 25 to educate growers and pest-control advisors about a significant threat to the continued survival of the local citrus industry.

Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is an invasive insect pest that can transmit a bacterial disease to citrus trees. Known as greening disease or Huanglongbing (HLB), the disease renders citrus fruit unmarketable and eventually kills infected trees. There is no treatment, and all commercially valuable varieties of citrus are vulnerable. If ACP and HLB reach Ventura County, and cannot be contained or eradicated, it is likely that the county will cease to be a significant producer of citrus crops within a decade.

Arrival of this pest is imminent.

ACP has already been found in Van Nuys, only 7 miles from Ventura County, as well as at numerous other sites in Los Angeles, San Diego, Imperial and Orange counties. And HLB-infected trees have been found in the western Mexico coastal states of Nayarit and Jalisco, only 750 miles from the California border. Experts anticipate the psyllid's arrival in Ventura County in 2010.

The Feb. 25 workshop will be from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Santa Paula Community Center, 530 West Main Street, Santa Paula. It will feature presentations from the following experts, who will be able to answer questions about how the pest affects citrus, how to detect it, and what is being done to combat it:

- Hilda Gomez, plant pathologist,

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Florida. Focus: ACP and HLB detection.

- John Hooper, program supervisor, California Department of Food and Agriculture – Pest Detection Emergency Projects. Focus: ACP program status updates.
- Janet Taylor, CDEFA associate agricultural biologist, ACP Project. Focus: ACP regulatory update.
- Brian Taylor, Citrus Research Board. Focus: Research and outreach update.

The workshop is free, and is being sponsored by the Farm Bureau of Ventura County in cooperation with the Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

Play it safe when operating a tractor

By Mike Klimenko

In an annual agricultural ritual, farmers up and down the state are firing up their tractors and preparing their fields for spring planting. While most everyone is in agreement that a

tractor is the most important tool on the farm, it also is one of the most dangerous.

Did you know that nearly half of farm fatalities in the United States each year involve tractors? Rollovers and run-overs are most often cited as the cause of these deaths. The most frequent victim is the farm's operator,

but other family members and farm employees are also frequent victims.

Men over age 60 are in the highest-risk category. But another grim statistic is that 20 percent of these farm fatalities involve children under the age of 16, with most being victims of run-overs.

As with most accidents, the likelihood of a tractor mishap can be decreased substantially with some basic preventative measures and proper training.

First off, it is important that anyone who operates a tractor should first become familiar with the tractor's operating manual, paying particularly close attention to the safety information.

Most tractor operators know the necessity of making sure the tractor has sufficient fuel and oil, but they should also perform a safety inspection before using the vehicle. Here's a quick checklist of some of the most important safety elements:

- Brake pedal: Is the locking device functioning and are the brakes properly adjusted?
- PTO shields and safety guards: Are they in place and in good condition?
- Hitch: Are pins and bolts in place?
- Attached or mounted equipment: Is it securely fastened? Are hitch pins the correct size? Are sway blocks properly adjusted?
- Handrails, steps, platform: Are they clean and in good condition?
- Tires: Are they in good condition? Is air pressure correct?
- Wheel bolts: Are they tight and not

broken?

- Steering: Are connections tight?
- Exhaust system: Is it sound and leak-free?
- Fire extinguisher: Is it charged and easily accessible?
- First aid kit: Is it fully stocked and accessible?

When operating a tractor, remember that farm fields are loaded with booby traps that can cause a tractor to flip and roll over. Require everyone to drive at a safe speed because excessive speed causes many accidents. Avoid ditches, embankments and holes, and take extra care when working on steep slopes. If you must travel on steep slopes, go in reverse up the slope and forward down the slope. Do not travel across a steep slope.

As farm and ranch operators, it is important to lead by example when it comes to tractor safety. Take the time to be safe and insist that others do the same.

— Mike Klimenko is Farm Bureau Group Manager for State Compensation Insurance Fund. He may be contacted at mnklimenko@scif.com.

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Agriculture secretary to address Spray Safe meeting

A.G. Kawamura, secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, will deliver the keynote address March 3 at the second annual Spray Safe event in Ventura.

Spray Safe is intended to prevent pesticide-exposure incidents and improve communication among growers, chemical applicators and farm employees.

The event, which will be at the Ventura County Fairgrounds from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., is free and open to the public, but advance registration is required. To reserve a spot, visit www.farmbureauvc.com and download the registration form. The deadline is Feb. 26.

Spray Safe is intended to prevent pesticide-exposure incidents and improve communication among growers, chemical applicators and farm employees. Originally developed by a coalition of farmers, pest control advisers, applicators and labor contractors concerned about drift incidents in Kern County, the program is being embraced by growers throughout California as a way of better protecting the health and safety of farmers, field crews and neighboring residents.

The Ventura County program has been developed by a coalition of local farmers,

pesticide applicators, labor contractors and other members of the agricultural community. Last year's inaugural Spray Safe event in Ventura drew more than 400 people.

The March 3 program will feature educational presentations, equipment displays, exhibits and a barbecue lunch. In addition to Kawamura, featured speakers will include Ventura Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzales; Rob Roy, president of the Ventura County Agricultural Association; and Scott Deardorff, immediate past president of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Spanish translation will be provided.

Mr. Kawamura has been secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture since November 2003. He chairs the Specialty Crop Task Force of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, and he is a member of the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee. He is the immediate past president of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Prior to his appointment, he was active as a produce grower and shipper from Orange County, where his third-generation farming family still grows strawberries, green beans and other specialty crops. Secretary Kawamura has a bachelor's degree in comparative literature from UC Berkeley.

Notes from the CEO *(cont'd from p. 1)*

continued county commitment to the LCA program, however, is a tangible expression of that support.

I encourage you to write to your supervisor to thank him or her for that continued support. Names and addresses are on the Farm Bureau website at www.farmbureauvc.com/ventura.html.

Foundation receives another donation

The Ventura County Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture has finally received all its approvals for tax-exempt status, and not a moment too soon. Just before the end of the year, it received another generous donation from Gimlin & Udy Insurance. At the November Farm Bureau board meeting, John Udy presented a check for \$28,179.41 to the

board on behalf of the foundation.

We thank John and his firm for their generosity and continued support of the agricultural community. The money will help finance the foundation's scholarship and education program.

Raffle winner announced

Robert Procter of HH Procter Ranch in Santa Paula is the winner of our 2009 membership raffle. Throughout the year, all members who renewed on or before their membership renewal date were automatically entered into a drawing for a Sony portable DVD player and a \$100 Blockbuster gift card. We ended up with 1,048 entries, and Robert's name was drawn from them at random during our Jan. 30 directors dinner.

Congratulations, Robert! *(cont'd on back page)*

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 \$5); Child (age 3-11): \$10.95 (save \$1). *Valid through 12/31/10.*

California Adventure and Disneyland 2Fer Ticket — Adult (age 10+): \$72; Child (age 3-9): \$62. *Valid through 4/24/10. First visit may be to either park; second visit must be to other park within 30 days of first visit. One person per party must show proof of California residency.*

California Adventure and Disneyland one-day Park Hopper — Adult (age 10+): \$76 (save \$21); Child (age 3-9): \$68 (save \$9). *Valid through 4/24/10*

Knott's Berry Farm — Adult (48" tall): \$29.95 (save \$22.04); Junior (age 3+, under 48" tall): \$22.99 (save \$2.04). *Valid through 3/31/10.*

Legoland — General use ticket: \$51.95 (save \$15 adult, \$5 child). Triple Park General: \$62.95 (save \$24 adult, \$14 child) *Valid through 12/31/10. Includes two visits to Legoland, including new Water Park opening Memorial Day weekend, and two visits to Sea Life Aquarium.*

Magic Mountain — General use ticket: Adult (48" tall): \$25.95, (save \$29.04); Child (under 48" tall): \$16 (save \$11.50). *Valid through 12/31/10.*

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 : "Two Days of Fun" — Adult (age 10+): \$57.95 (save \$11.05); Child (age 3-9): \$52 (save \$7). *Valid through 12/31/10.*

San Diego Wild Animal Park — Adult (age 12+): \$31.95 (save \$5.05). Child (age 3-11): \$23.95 (save \$3.05). *Valid through 12/15/10.*

San Diego Zoo — Adult (age 12+): \$31.95 (save \$5.05). Child (age 3-11): \$23.95 (save \$3.05). *Valid through 12/15/10.*

See's Candy gift certificate — One-pound box \$12.95 (save \$2.65). No expiration

Universal Studios — Two-day ticket (age 3+): \$59 (save \$10). *Valid 1/1/10 through 12/31/10. First use must occur by 5/31/10. Buy a Day, Get 2010 Free: \$69. Valid through 6/30/10. Includes 15 blackout dates.*

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MISSION STATEMENT

We represent the collective interests of the agricultural industry, for the benefit of our members, in political and policy interactions with our urban and rural neighbors. We seek to be aggressive in promoting the interests of our members and are committed to the long-term success of agriculture in Ventura County.

FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

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 www.farmbureauvc.com

Notes from the CEO *(continued from page 3)*

This year, as a continued inducement to members to renew early – which saves us time and expense by eliminating the need for multiple reminders to pay your dues – we’re giving away a copy of our beautiful coffee-table book, *Living Legacy: The Story of Ventura County Agriculture*, to any member who renews on time. That’s a \$40 value, and we’ll throw in shipping.

If you already have a copy of your own, I encourage you to give the duplicate away to someone in the community who needs to know more about local farming and ranching. Give it to your doctor or dentist to place in his or her waiting room. Donate it to your child’s school or the local library. Give it to an acquaintance in your Rotary Club, church or other community group. Present it as a housewarming gift to your new neighbor. The book is a potentially powerful educational tool. Put it to use, and let it help tell our story!

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

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