

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

Ventura County agriculture faces one of the greatest threats in its history.

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 would cease to be a significant producer of citrus crops within a decade.

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Arrival of this pest is imminent. ACP has already been found in Echo Park, less than 40 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. Based on experience in other regions, HLB invariably shows up in areas infested by ACP, two to three years after the pest is initially detected.

In an effort to prepare Ventura County to respond effectively when ACP arrives – an event that will trigger a quarantine and eradication effort – the Farm Bureau recently convened a task force modeled after that established in the mid-1990s to combat the Mediterranean fruit fly. The mis-

sion of the Ventura County ACP Task Force is to coordinate an education and outreach program intended to alert Ventura County residents to the threat posed by the Asian citrus psyllid, and to mobilize broad public support for efforts to exclude, detect and eradicate the pest.

These activities will be coordinated with statewide efforts including those directed by the Citrus Research Board, Invasive Species Council and California ACP-HLB Task Force. Local activities will include presentations by trained speakers to elected officials

and civic groups; distribution of educational materials to the general public; operation of a hotline; hosting of educational workshops for growers, shippers, pest control advisors and homeowners; and preparation of materials for print, radio and online distribution.

The economic stakes are high for everyone in Ventura County. Lemons, tangerines, oranges and grapefruit currently account for more than 24,000 acres (a quarter of the total irrigated agricultural land in the county) and generate at least \$510 million a year in economic activity. Citrus also supports more than 7,000 local jobs, including on-farm employment, jobs in packinghouses and related businesses, and jobs in other sectors supported indirectly by agricultural activity. The county's citrus industry also generates \$19 million annually in indirect business tax revenue.

Additional dollars and jobs are supported by that portion of the local nursery industry devoted to producing young citrus trees, which also would suffer severe impacts in the event that HLB and the vector are detected in Ventura County. Even those nurseries that specialize in other plants would face increased costs for inspection and certification required to ship products out of infected zones.

But the potential threat posed by ACP and the disease it transmits goes well beyond commercial citrus production and the jobs, income and tax dollars it generates. Tens of thousands of trees in residential yards also are at risk. They, too, will die if infected, meaning that iconic element of the suburban Southern California landscape – the backyard orange, lemon, lime or mandarin tree, fruit hanging ripe and ready for plucking just a few steps from the door – will also disappear from Ventura County.

In recognition of the broad implications for the county should the citrus industry collapse, the task force encompasses a wide range of perspectives and expertise: citrus and nursery growers, pest-control specialists, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, University of California Cooperative Extension, labor and social-justice advocates, environmentalists, Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources, business groups and others.

You will be hearing more about ACP and the task force as it ramps up its work. And we will be counting on many of you to help support it and to spread the message.

Diesel deadline approaching

The deadline is fast approaching for agricultural operators
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Political action will be key in 2010

By Casey Gudel

Every bit of strength Farm Bureau's political program possesses will be needed as we face 2010.

In the year ahead, farmers and ranchers will see game-changing elections that will determine whether California faces a continual decline or can recover to be the Golden State it once was.

Statewide, more than 40 seats in the Assembly and Senate are open – either as a result of term limits, members retiring or moving on to pursue other opportunities. Additionally, the eight statewide constitutional offices, including governor, are up for grabs.

Each and every position will be important to ensuring the future viability of California's farms and ranches.

At stake in both houses of the state government is protecting the 2/3 vote margin needed to pass the budget or increase

taxes, as we see the number of safe Republican seats continue to decline.

Farmer and ranchers cannot afford to have a single party hold all the power in state government.

In addition to electing candidates, voters will also see a large number of initiatives on their ballot. To date, more than 90 proposed measures are making their way through the initiative process.

While many will fail, there are two measures of interest that have already qualified. The first will appear on the June ballot and enacts an "Open Primary" where the top two vote getters will face each other in the general election, regardless of party affiliation.

The second measure of interest will appear on the November ballot and will provide \$11.4 billion in funding for water supply and water quality improvement projects.

However, elections won't be the only task for farmers and ranchers as we enter 2010 and the second of a two-year legislative cycle. Agriculture faces numerous challenges in both Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

In addition to normal legislative issues, the budget in Sacramento contin-

ues to provide challenges as California has racked up a \$21 billion shortfall entering 2010. For agriculture, funding for the Williamson Act continues to be at risk. All the while, new and continued efforts to increase fees and taxes loom.

Back in Washington, D.C. a number of top priority issues for the Obama Administration have been pushed back a year, including estate tax reform, food safety regulations, climate change legislation, immigration reform and the H-2A program. Additionally, changes to the Clean Water Act will likely surface again.

The strength of Farm Bureau's political program and our ability to meet the challenges of 2010 are completely dependent on the activity of our members. Now, more than ever, is the time to be involved and help get California back on track.

There is no doubt that participating in the political process can be intimidating. However, Farm Bureau makes it easy with our two political action programs: FARM TEAM and FARM PAC.

By signing up for FARM TEAM, you receive email action alerts to notify you of important issues facing the agriculture community or ways to support candidates who are committed to protect-

ing the farming and ranching way of life. It only takes a click of a button to weigh in on important issues impacting your operation.

With regard to the election process, FARM PAC, the California Farm Bureau Federation Fund to Protect the Family Farm, has been the voice for agriculture in the political arena for more than 30 years.

Voluntary contributions, separate from your membership dues, are raised specifically for supporting farm and business friendly candidates. This helps candidates get their message out, giving them a better chance of getting elected.

Regardless of how you participate – whether it is writing letters to your elected officials, taking part in a press conference, checking the box on your membership renewal, responding to a fundraising letter or participating in a County fundraising event – you are helping to protect California's family farms and ranches.

— Casey Gudel is manager of political affairs for California Farm Bureau Federation. Contact her at cgudel@cfbf.com. For more information about FARM TEAM and FARM PAC, visit the CFBF website, www.cfbf.com.

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to take advantage of a special provision granting them additional time to comply with tough new air-quality regulations for diesel trucks.

The regulation, intended to significantly reduce emissions from existing on-road diesel vehicles, was adopted Dec. 12, 2008, by the California Air Resources Board (ARB). It requires owners of most heavy-duty diesel trucks to install soot traps on exhaust pipes of their vehicles or take them off the road starting in 2011.

As we reported in this newsletter a year ago, agricultural vehicles have longer to comply. Most farm trucks have until Jan. 1, 2017, to meet the standard. Trucks used less frequently – under 10,000 miles annually – have until Jan. 1, 2023.

Vehicles that qualify for the special agricultural provision are defined by the ARB as "those vehicles that are used exclusively in agricultural and forest

operations, those used exclusively to transport agricultural products to the first point of processing after harvest, and certain heavy-duty vehicles that exclusively deliver fertilizer or crop protection products from a distribution center to farms."

To qualify for the special compliance timetable, however, farmers and ranchers must report to ARB by March 31, 2010, which of their vehicles will be designated as agricultural vehicles.

Reporting forms and more information about the program are available at www.arb.ca.gov/msprog/onrdiesel/onrdiesel.htm.

Another equipment survey

California Farm Bureau Federation is asking members to take 15-20 minutes to fill out a survey about their off-road equipment. This information will help set the stage for discussions with the ARB as it begins work on a new rule

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Use care when working with electricity

By Mike Klimenko

As farmers and ranchers take their work indoors during these chilly winter months, they frequently find themselves working more with electricity as they maintain and repair their equipment for another growing season.

Electricity is the most widely utilized form of energy on the farm, providing a steady and reliable power source to assist us in our tasks. But along with this use comes some potential dangers. Electrocutation is the greatest hazard associated with electricity. A person's inability to let go and detach oneself from the source of electricity may result in receiving a near-fatal or even fatal shock if the source of electricity is not shut down or removed.

Burns are the most common injuries associated with electricity. They are particularly bad because they often extend quite deep into the tissues of the body. Frequently these accidents occur in situation where equipment is allowed to deteriorate, resulting in broken outlets, cracked cables, improperly

grounded tools and other such preventable situations. Careful inspections of equipment and wiring are wise preventative practices.

Water and electricity can be a fatal combination. Damp areas and metal objects can offer good shortcuts for electricity to reach the ground. In wet winter months, extra caution should be observed when working with electrical equipment or when working near grounded objects.

Here are some other important tips for working with and around electricity.

- Treat every electric wire as if it were a live one.
- Inspect equipment and extension cords before each use.
- Take faulty equipment or plugs with bent or missing prongs out of service for repair.
- Only qualified electricians should repair electrical equipment or work on energized lines.
- If a plug doesn't have three prongs or if the receptacle doesn't have three

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Notes from the CEO *(cont'd from p. 2)*

that eventually will require gradually upgrading self-propelled agricultural field equipment of 25 horsepower or larger.

Many Farm Bureau members filled out on-road truck surveys in 2008 and those responses were crucial in helping create flexible regulations for the agricultural community in the impending on-road diesel truck rule.

This new survey is completely separate and for a different purpose than the one used to develop the on-road diesel truck rule. The deadline for submitting completed surveys is Feb. 15. Since other agricultural organizations are also conducting this survey, it's important for those who belong to more than one association to fill out the survey only once.

There are three surveys: one for growers, one for 100 percent custom operators and one for first point processors. Agricultural producers who also operate custom business should only complete the agricultural producer survey. First point of processing facilities include packinghouses, cotton gins, nut hullers and processors, as well as dehydrators and feed and grain mills. The processor survey form includes a more detailed definition.

The survey may be completed online at www.cfbf.com/offroadsurvey.

Funding applications being accepted

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

Through the EQIP program, cost sharing and technical assistance are available for developing and implementing conservation plans addressing soil erosion, water quality, runoff management, rangeland improvement, wildlife habitat and implementation of pest, nutrient and water management.

Through the AWEP program, funding is available for irrigation evaluations, irrigation management, and installation of some structural practices to address water conservation.

The WHIP program offers funding to create, enhance or restore wildlife habitat.

Applications are accepted on a year-round basis. For more information, contact the NRCS service center at 3380 Somis Road, Somis, (805) 386-4489.

— 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 (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.

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Use care when working with electricity *(continued from page 3)*

- openings, make sure the tool is grounded in some other way before use.
- Never try to bypass an electrical system by cutting off the third prong of a plug.
 - Turn off the power and report the smell of hot or burning plastic, smoke, sparks or flickering lights.
 - Stop using a tool or appliance if a slight shock or tingling is felt.
 - Never disconnect an electrical plug by pulling on the cord.

Whenever working on an electric circuit, the circuit should be turned off and locked out at the circuit breaker or fuse box to ensure that the circuit cannot be accidentally turned on.

Those who regularly work on or around energized electrical equipment should be trained in emergency response and CPR.

Training can instill in everyone the importance of using common sense and an understanding of safe practices. Take the time to determine what needs to be done to ensure that everyone is safe from electrical hazards. And then follow through.

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

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