

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

Farm Bureau of Ventura County is seeking candidates willing to represent District 4 (Ventura-Santa Barbara) on the California Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors.

[C]andidates for district director must be either (1) a State Delegate or past State Delegate; (2) a county Farm Bureau president or past president; or (3) a member or former member of the Board of Directors.

The District 4 seat is currently held by David Schwabauer, a former president of this organization and a member of its board since 1987. His third term as district director ends in December.

The District 4 director seat is informally rotated between Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, although the rotation is not consistent. The Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau does not currently have any willing candidates, and our board voted June 17 to nominate a candidate from Ventura County. According to FBVC policy, the availability of the position and the ability to make qualified nominations must be announced to the general

membership via the Farm Bureau newsletter. The Board of Directors will review potential candidates and select the district director nominee at its September meeting.

CFBF by-laws stipulate that candidates for district director must be either (1) a State Delegate or past State Delegate; (2) a county Farm Bureau president or past president; or (3) a member or former member of the Board of Direc-

tors. The by-laws further stipulate that district directors must derive a majority of their gross income from farming operations in California when elected, or within five years prior to election.

The actual election of the District 4 director will take place at the annual CFBF meeting in December, during a caucus of delegates from Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The election is subject to confirmation by the House of Delegates.

If you or anyone you know is qualified and interested in serving, please contact me by email (john@farmbureauvc.com) or by phone (805-289-0155).

VCAILG invoices coming soon

Members of the Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group can expect to see invoices for their 2010-2011 program assessments arriving in the mail beginning July 1. Those invoices will be accompanied by a cover letter and the annual VCAILG newsletter, explaining in more detail the status of the program and the assumptions used to calculate this year's per-acre fees.

A number of important changes take effect with this year's assessment. For one thing, the invoices are arriving later than they have in previous years. With approval of the Farm Bureau board and the VCAILG Steering Committee, the VCAILG fiscal year has been shifted to align with the July 1-June 30 fiscal year utilized by state and local governments in California.

The main reason for doing this is to make VCAILG's budget and billing cycle match the cycle used by the agencies with which it has signed legal agreements to share monitoring and other compliance costs for several water-quality regulations. These agreements have resulted in lower costs for growers, but they require continuing collaboration with such agencies as the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, various cities and several utility districts. From a budgeting and bookkeeping standpoint, it's easier and more efficient if we all operate on the same deadlines and schedule.

In previous years, Farm Bureau— which manages the VCAILG program — issued VCAILG invoices in January or February. In order to delay the billing this year until July, we squeezed nearly six more months of program expenditures out of last year's payments. As a result, there won't be much cash left in the VCAILG account as we start the new fiscal year. This means we won't be applying any carryover credit against the assessment for fiscal year 2010-2011.

The other important thing VCAILG members will notice is that their bills will now itemize charges for Total Maximum Daily Load compliance as well as charges specific to the ag waiver program.

A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet standards established by states and tribes to protect the beneficial uses of that water, such as municipal supply, body-contact recreation, agricultural irrigation and sup-

What's Inside?

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Organic amendments and sulfur can lower soil pH levels

By Jim Downer

Plants have a pH of about 6.8 in their sap. Coincidentally most plants like to grow in soil at about that same level. In Ventura County, our soils are neutral in pH (7) to slightly alkaline (7.5-8). While many ornamental and

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crop plants will grow well in our soils, there are many plants in the Ericaceae, protea and myrtaceae families that prefer lower soil reactions. Some crops, such as blueberries, require very low soil reaction in the 4-5 range for optimum growth and fruit production. Liquidambar, maple, hydrangea, gardenia and azalea all suffer from alkaline soils and the consequent deficiency of iron, which is poorly available to some plants when soil pH approaches 8.

Soils become alkaline in climates where evaporation exceeds precipitation. In our soils, bicarbonate minerals tend to maintain a high soil reaction. This can be offset by applying sulfur, which slowly oxidizes to form sulfuric acid in soils, thus lowering the pH. Over the years many gardeners and horticulturists have asserted that certain organic amendments such as coffee grounds, oak leaves or pine needles will acidify soils. While it is accepted that organic matter will moderate soil reaction (make acid soils more alkaline and alkaline soils more acid), there has been little study of the capability of these amendments to acidify southern California soils.

Farm Advisor Ben Faber and I started a study at the Hansen Agricultural Center a few years back with a grant from the Hansen Trust. The goal of our study was to compare organic amendments and sulfur in combinations to see if the presence or quality of organic matter would speed the oxidation of soil sulfur, giving a faster pH reduction.

One of the real drawbacks of using soil sulfur is the slow reaction time because it is heat-dependent. The idea is that organic matter, which increases

soil microbial activity, may help to speed the mineralization of sulfur, thus giving a faster pH reduction.

It has been over two years since we started our study. The organic amendments we used were lemon fruit, oak leaves, pine needles, yard waste, peat moss, and coffee grounds. These were tilled into 4-by-6-foot plots 6 inches deep, with an incorporation rate of 25 percent by volume. Amendments were applied with or without soil sulfur, so we could see the effect of sulfur alone or with each amendment.

As it turned out, lemons gave the fastest response, quickly reducing soil reaction to about 3. This lasted for a few weeks and then increased gradually over time to the mid-6 range. Coffee grounds gave the longest-lasting soil pH reductions, to the low 6 range after two years. The others were not

much different from each other and did not significantly reduce soil reaction over time.

None of the organics seemed to speed the mineralization of the sulfur. In general though, organic amendments applied with soil sulfur maintained lower soil reactions than sulfur applied without organic matter.

The take-home message of our research is to use a high-quality organic amendment with soil sulfur to get the most out of the pH-lowering capabilities of the sulfur. These results will be presented this summer at the American Society of Horticultural Science meetings in Palm Desert California. We are thankful to the Hansen Trust for supporting this research.

— Jim Downer is landscape horticulture and plant pathology advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension office in Ventura.

ACP eradication strategy to be discussed

Newly developed strategies to detect and eradicate Asian citrus psyllid will be among the presentation topics at a grower seminar on Friday, July 9, in Santa Paula.

Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is an invasive insect pest that can transmit a bacterial disease to citrus trees. Known as 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.

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.

Hosted by the Citrus Research Board and University of California Cooperative Extension, the seminar will be at the Santa Paula Community Center, 530 W. Main Street. Registration begins at 8:15 a.m.. Sessions will begin at 9 a.m. and wrap up at 2 p.m. Lunch will be included.

Topics and presenters include:

- ACP/HLB Panel Introduction – Ted Batkin, president, Citrus Research Board.
- South of the Border: What's happening in Mexico? – Jim Cranney, president, California Citrus Quality Council.
- Biocontrol of ACP – Kris Godfrey, agricultural biologist, California Department of Food and Agriculture.
- ACP Treatment Strategies – Joe Morse, professor of entomology, UC Riverside.
- ACP Detection Strategies – Brian Taylor, field program director, CRB; and Henry Gonzalez, Ventura County agricultural commissioner.
- Citrus Pest and Disease Management Program – Nick Hill, program chairman.

(cont'd on back page)

Summer brings risk of heat stress

By Mike Klimenko

California's scorching summer temperatures are approaching. In many areas of the state, temperatures approaching and surpassing the century mark are not uncommon. With the heat comes the potential danger of heat stress when a person's body may have trouble regulating its temperature.

When a person's body heats up faster than it can cool itself, heat stress may occur. If the situation isn't too severe, the person suffering from heat stress may experience a rash, cramps and a feeling of exhaustion. If these warning signs aren't heeded, the result may be heat stroke, a serious condition that may lead to brain damage and death.

Heat stroke occurs when the body has used up all of its water and salt and stops sweating as a result. As the body temperature rises, the person feels weaker and weaker, and may start acting confused or upset. As the situation becomes more dire, the victim may pass out or have convulsions. If heat stroke is suspected, it is imperative to call 911 immediately because this condition can kill a person quickly.

While waiting for the EMTs to arrive, there are things that can be done to aid the victim. Remove excess clothing from the victim, and fan and spray him or her with cool water. Offer sips of cool water if the person is conscious.

Prevention is the best course of action. Here are some tips to help prepare you and your employees for summer temperatures:

- Drink small amounts of water frequently. Be sure to avoid alcohol because it increases the loss of body fluids.
- Whenever possible, schedule hot jobs for cooler times of day or cooler seasons of the year.
- Take rest breaks in cool areas and add more workers to reduce the workload or shorten the workday.
- Gradually adapting to heat will reduce the severity of heat stress.
- Mechanize heavy jobs and when possible increase air movement with fans or coolers.
- Clothing can affect heat buildup, so it is recommended that loose, lightweight and light colored clothing be worn.
- Do not use salt tablets. Taking salt tablets can raise blood pressure, cause

stomach ulcers and seriously affect workers with heart disease.

Awareness, which comes from proper training, is an essential feature of heat stress management. It should be conducted for both employees working on heat-related jobs and for their supervisors. The information gained from the training enables them to recognize heat stress and to control the risks associated with it.

Due to the severity of heat illness in the past, State Fund provides information on heat illness prevention on its website at www.statefundca.com/news/FeatureArticles2009/050609-EmployerResponsibilities.asp?WT.svl=7. In addition, Cal/OSHA has taken steps to clarify some of the issues concerning the Heat Illness Prevention Standard. Please check www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/HeatIllnessInfo.html.

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

Notes from the CEO *(from front page)*

port of aquatic life. A TMDL sets the total amount of a single pollutant that can enter the water body, divides the total load among all of the sources of that pollutant in the watershed, and tells each discharger how much it can contribute.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board is making the waiver the legal compliance mechanism for all TMDLs adopted in Ventura County. This means additional monitoring and reporting costs for TMDLs that are distinct from those required under the waiver. It also means compliance with the TMDLs by paying for those activities becomes a condition of continued VCAILG membership.

As a result, the overall program budget will be about 9 percent higher for 2010-2011 than it was for 2009-2010. The per-acre fee will increase most dramatically in those watersheds where multiple TMDLs have been adopted, such as the Ventura River.

For more information about VCAILG, the ag waiver and TMDLs, visit the Farm Bureau's water issues page at www.farmbureauvc.com/water_quality.html.

— 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 one-day Park Hopper — Adult (age 10+): \$86 (save \$11); Child (age 3-9): \$78 (save \$9). Valid 4/25/10 thru 1/3/11.

Knott's Berry Farm — Adult (48" tall): \$29.95 (save \$22.04); Junior (age 3+, under 48" tall): \$21.95 (save \$2.04). Valid through 12/31/10.

Knott's Soak City (Buena Vista, Chula Vista, & Palm Springs) — Regular Ticket (age 12+ yrs): \$21.95 (Save \$9.05). Junior Ticket (age 3-11) or Senior Ticket (62+) - \$19.95 (Save \$.04). Valid any 1 day of the 2010 season.

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.

Raging Waters — General Use Ticket: \$23 (Save \$13.99) (For all persons greater than 48" tall). Valid any 1 day of the 2010 season.

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 \$13.45 (Save \$2.65)

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor — General Use Ticket: (48" tall +) — \$19.95 (Save \$5.04). Child (under 48" tall) — \$14 (Save \$5.99). Valid any 1 day of the 2010 season.

Universal Studios: 3 Days are Less than 1 — General Ticket (Age 3 +) - \$59. Must process at the Annual Pass Center prior to entry. No blackout dates on first visit. Blackout dates subject to change. ID & finger scan required for park entry. Valid thru 12/31/2010.

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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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ACP eradication strategy to be discussed

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- Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force – Leslie Leavens-Crowe, Task Force chair and president of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County.

- What's new in citrus? – Tracy Kahn, Botany and Plant Sciences, UC Riverside.

The seminar will also include a California citrus industry update, and a question-and-answer session.

The seminar has been approved for 3 hours of continuing education credit. The cost is \$20 per person, which includes lunch and course materials.

Reservations are required. To reserve a spot, call (559) 738-0246 by noon on July 7, or send an e-mail to info@citrusresearch.org. (The fee may be paid at the door.)



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