

## Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

Farm Bureau of Ventura County conducted its annual membership meeting on May 19. In addition to hearing reports from President Leslie Leavens-Crowe and me, those in attendance listened to an interesting presentation by Chris Stephens, director of the Ventura County Resource Management Agency. His presentation, titled "Agriculture and the County's Regulatory Process," shed helpful light on the way county policies, ordinances and other regulations affect agricultural activities.

The meeting also concluded the election period for seats on the FBVC Board of Directors. Incumbents Gus Gunderson, Scott Klittich and David Schwabauer were reelected. There was a tie for the fourth available seat. The board of directors broke the tie during a subsequent secret-ballot vote by selecting Jan Berk to fill the seat vacated by the retirement of director Steve Onstot.

Jan Berk is vice president at San Miguel Produce. She joined the company in 2002, and initially focused her efforts on re-branding Cut 'n Clean Greens and directing its sales growth as the No. 1 brand for cooking greens in North America. In 2008, she developed a new product line of Asian value-added greens under the label Jade. Jan continues to develop sales and marketing strategies to increase sales, improve customer loyalty and develop important consumer data.

Jan became a partner at San Miguel with its founder, Roy Nishimori, in 2006. She serves on a number of organization boards, including those of the 31<sup>st</sup> District Agricultural Association/Ventura County Fair, Ventura County Fair Foundation, California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement, and the United Fresh Produce Association.

Jan will be a welcome addition to the board. She will be seated in September.

Farm Bureau thanks Steve Onstot for his 11 years of service to the organization as a director. Steve was appointed last year to the Ventura County Planning Commission and will continue to serve as an important liaison between Farm Bureau and the commission.

### Chefs and farmers team up for "Field to Fork"

The organizers of a unique fundraiser to promote better housing for Ventura County farm workers have

chosen a lineup of chefs and farmers to prepare a gourmet meal and serve it to diners in an iconic agricultural setting.

"From Field to Fork" is a fund-raiser to benefit House Farm Workers! The event will bring together farmers who produce Ventura County's agricultural bounty, local chefs and restaurateurs who celebrate that bounty on their menus, and the farm workers

whose labor makes it all possible. Each of the five courses will be prepared by an outstanding local chef, partnering with a local farmer. The food will be accompanied by featured wines from California wineries.

Local farm workers and their families will be honored guests and participants in the program.

- Featured chefs and restaurants:  
Tim Kilcoyne, The Sidecar Restaurant  
Todd Aarons, Tierra Sur  
Olivia Chase, The Farmer and The Cook  
Kate Dunbar, Petite Reve Cafe
- Featured farmers:  
Steve Sprinkel, The Farmer and the Cook  
Chris Sayer, Petty Ranch  
Jason Tamai, Tamai Farms  
Phil McGrath, McGrath Family Farms  
John Fonteyn, Rio Gozo Farms

Seating is limited, and the deadline to purchase tickets is July 6, so don't delay. Tickets are \$125, and include all food, wine and entertainment. Tickets are available for purchase online with a credit card, or may be reserved by mailing a check to Ag Innovations Network, 101 Morris Street, Suite 212, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

To purchase online, go to the Farm Bureau website and

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## Notes from the CEO *(cont'd from page 1)*

click on the link at [www.farmbureauvc.com/news.html#fork](http://www.farmbureauvc.com/news.html#fork).

Major support for the event is being provided by Limoneira, Reiter Affiliated Companies, Houweling's Hot House and the Ventura County Star.

Since 2004, House Farm Workers! has been promoting construction of decent, safe and affordable housing for farm workers. A project of the Ag Futures Alliance Farm Worker Housing Task Force, House Farm Workers! has played an important role in completion of several such housing developments in Ventura County, giving new opportunities and new hope to hundreds of families. Farm Bureau has long supported the work of the Task Force, and is helping organize the "Field to Fork" event.

### More ACP discoveries

Earlier this month, California Department of Food and Agriculture confirmed that two new specimens of Asian citrus psyllid had been found in traps in Ventura County. One was in a residential yard in Camarillo, and the other was in a commercial grove near Hitch Boulevard and Ventavo Road in Moorpark.

The find sites have been treated, and CDEFA was preparing to conduct a community open house before applying pesticides to host plants within 400 meters of the residential find. There has been some difficulty identifying all the managers of groves within the recommended treatment radius surrounding the commercial discovery, but CDEFA and the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office are continuing to work on it.

Given the proximity of these recent finds to the Highway 118 corridor, we are pleased to announce that our first ACP highway banners finally have a home along a key stretch of that highway.

Thanks to the generosity of John Grether and assistance from David Coert at Saticoy Lemon Association, the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force was able to have a large stack of fruit bins placed in a prominent location on Grether property adjacent to Highway 118 just east of Mesa School. Armed with an electric drill, plastic ties and wire, my son and I affixed a pair of 30-foot banners (supplied to us by the Citrus Research Board and originally intended for placement on cotton trailers) to the bins. The double-sided display is visible to eastbound and westbound traffic.

The Task Force is still looking for a similar location along Highway 126. The stack requires a fair amount of space, so not all properties are suitable. But if you think you might have a location that would work, please let me know. I would not want to let my newfound banner-hanging skills to grow rusty.

### Regional Board moves against Santa Clarita over chlorides

After months of pressure from stakeholders in Ventura County, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) has taken steps to force wastewater dischargers in Los Angeles County to comply with regulations limiting the amount of crop-damaging salt they can dump in the Santa Clara River.

On May 27, Regional Board Executive Officer Sam Unger sent letters to the Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District, say-

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***After years of complaints and fruitless negotiations between interests on both sides of the county line, the downstream irrigators prevailed and won a ruling from state water-quality regulators.***

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ing that the district's failure to complete several tasks specified in its agreement with downstream stakeholders constitutes a violation of the discharge permits for the Saugus and Valencia wastewater treatment plants.

Those violations, according to the LARWQCB, expose the Sanitation District to substantial penalties. The California Water Code specifies fines of up to \$10,000 per day – plus \$10 multiplied by the number of gallons by which the discharge volume exceeds 1,000 gallons – as long as the violation goes uncorrected.

The Saugus plant is permitted to discharge up to 6.5 million gallons per day, and the Valencia plant is permitted to discharge up to 21.6 million gallons per day.

The potential magnitude of the fines should put pressure on the communities of the Santa Clarita Valley and their elected leaders, who have been balking at spending the money necessary to address the problem.

The high chloride level in discharges from urban wastewater treatment plants – the consequence of brine discharges from self-regenerating water softeners, as well as relatively high chloride levels in state water imported from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – degrades groundwater and surface water downstream in Ventura County. It can damage crops irrigated with water diverted from the river or pumped from those compromised aquifers, particularly salt-sensitive crops such as strawberries and avocados.

After years of complaints and fruitless negotiations between interests on both sides of the county line, the downstream irrigators prevailed and won a ruling from state water-quality regulators limiting the allowable chloride level in

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*Ventura County's first roadside ACP alert has been installed along Highway 118 west of Somis.*

# Stay focused on the job when using a ladder

By Mike Klimenko

In agriculture, most people equate ladders with the hand harvesting of fruit. While this is certainly the most predominant use of ladders, they are likely put to use on every farm and ranch in California at one time or another.

Because they are utilized infrequently, there is a certain amount of unfamiliarity surrounding their use — and this could lead to a serious mishap if someone is careless or ignorant of basic ladder safety techniques.

In the United States, falls are the third leading cause of worker deaths, and half of these deaths resulted from falls from ladders.

Before using a ladder, it is important to first check for its structural integrity. This is particularly important if the ladder hasn't been used for awhile. Check first to be sure rails and rungs are strong, properly fastened and undamaged. Be sure to keep ladder rungs free of debris because dirt, mud and oil can easily build up. All surfaces of the ladder should be free of cracks, splits and bent edges, and the braces should be solid. If a ladder fails a visual safety inspection, it should not be used until it is properly repaired.

When it comes time to position a ladder, check first for power lines and other potential overhead hazards. Do not place ladder with its legs sticking out into the road. Then move the ladder vertically to avoid striking others.

Set the ladder on a good base of firm, even ground and keep in mind that wet and grassy areas do not provide good support. Extend the third leg so it's centered on the ground opposite the ladder. The third leg should not be extended too far or too close because the legs can slip or collapse.

When it is time to actually use the ladder, check the bottoms of your shoes for slippery debris. It is very important to not climb too high — never go above the third rung from the top of the ladder. Hold onto the ladder by the rails, not the rungs and always face the rungs of the ladder.

The most common cause of falls from ladders is overreaching. Sometimes when a person is high on a ladder and a needed object is just out of reach, the temptation is almost overwhelming to stretch and reach out as far as possible — it seems so much simpler than climbing back down the ladder and repositioning it. But that is how accidents happen. A good rule of thumb is to keep your belt buckle inside the rails of the ladder to avoid overreaching.

When your task is completed, be sure to store the ladder properly so it will be in good working order the next time you need to use it.

— Mike Klimenko is Farm Bureau Group manager for State Compensation Insurance Fund. He may be contacted at [mnklimenko@scif.com](mailto:mnklimenko@scif.com).

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wastewater discharges in order to protect Ventura County crops.

Los Angeles County interests continued to balk, however, when it became clear that the only way for them to comply was to construct a very large reverse-osmosis (RO) plant to purify the effluent, and a 43-mile brine line to carry the RO byproduct and/or treated effluent along the Santa Clara River through Ventura County to a new ocean outfall off the Ventura coast. This proposal would be hugely expensive, involve a daunting set of political and legal obstacles during permitting and construction, and would result in greatly reduced flows in the Santa Clara River.

More negotiations ensued. Eventually, a compromise was reached. Santa Clarita residents voted to greatly reduce salt loads in their effluent by banning water softeners. The Santa Clarita Sanitation District agreed to build a smaller treatment plant and other facilities in order to deliver water of suitable quality to downstream users. In return, Ventura County users agreed to slightly relaxed chloride standards, and on Dec. 11, 2008, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board approved a series of regulatory changes that cleared the way for the plan to be implemented.

The Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District still has to build a fairly expensive treatment plant, and it needs to raise residential sewer rates to pay for it. The district board has refused to do so, however, citing widespread public opposition. Grandstanding local politicians have been vowing to sue or bring political pressure to bear on the Regional Water Quality Control Board to relax the standards.

Last month, Farm Bureau and its allies in Sacramento fought back one such effort. Assemblyman Cameron Smyth, who represents a portion of Ventura county as well as the Santa Clarita area, introduced a bill that would have taken authority to set chloride

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## 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 3-11yrs.): (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) (12yrs.+); 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.

## Board of Directors

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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 3)*

standards away from regional water boards and handed it over to the State Water Resources Control Board.

Farm Bureau of Ventura County promptly brought this to the attention of out legislative advocates at California Farm Bureau Federation. They and their counterparts at Western Growers Association expressed concern to Smyth and his staff. Rather than pick a fight with statewide agricultural interests, Smyth withdrew the bill just a week before its first committee hearing and agreed to work with CFBF and others to address our concerns.

The LARWQCB gave the Sanitation District until June 27 to confirm that it has corrected the violations or explain how it plans to do so. Given that one of the tasks the district has failed to perform is to complete an environmental impact report for the facilities required to reduce the chloride levels – an EIR the district has not even begun to prepare – it is unlikely the district will be able to avoid penalties.

Farm Bureau will continue to track developments in this ongoing dispute, along with our partners in the coalition that's been fighting for years to get salt out of the river – United Water Conservation District and the Ventura County Agricultural Association being two of the leading members of that coalition.

— 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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## FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

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