

# FARM BUREAU

## O F V E N T U R A C O U N T Y

### THE INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR AGRICULTURE

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MAY 2015

## Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

About 100 Farm Bureau members and guests gathered May 21 at the Museum of Ventura County for the organization's annual business meeting and election of direc-

tors. Incumbents David Borchard, Katie Brokaw, Ted Grether and Chris Sayer were re-elected to three-year terms.

In addition to a report on the activities and finances of Farm Bureau of Ventura County, those in attendance heard a presentation by guest speaker Danny Merkley, director of water resources for the California Farm Bureau Federation. Danny has played a key

behind-the-scenes role in negotiations over the Proposition 1 water bond approved last year by voters, and in the legislative process that resulted in passage last year of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. He's also been part of the CFBF legal and legislative team that's been working on key follow-up bills currently making their way through the Legislature. His insights into the evolving world of water-supply funding and groundwater management were informative and stimulated a lengthy discussion session with the audience.

water user who wants to learn more about this issue, which is of critical importance to agriculture.

The workshop will be from 2 to 4 p.m. on Friday, June 19, at the Courtyard by Marriott, 600 Esplanade Drive, Oxnard. Attendance is free, but RSVPs are requested via email ([admin@farmbureauvc.com](mailto:admin@farmbureauvc.com)) or phone (805-289-0155.)

The new law, which took effect Jan. 1, requires that Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) be established to develop Groundwater sustainability Plans (GSPs) for most high- and medium priority basins in the state. In Ventura County, these include a dozen of the basins most important for agricultural irrigation.

Although SGMA explicitly requires broad public participation in the GSP development process, it empowers only public agencies – not private well owners or mutual water companies that typically serve agriculture – to participate directly in basin management.

Agricultural groundwater users, for example, are merely one of numerous “interested parties” whose input must be considered as the GSAs develop their GSPs, but to whom no explicit role in governance is granted. The degree to which their input will be allowed to shape the resulting management plans – and thus determine the amount of water they can pump from their own wells – is unknown.

Numerous public agencies already have begun stepping forward to assume the role SGMA describes for them. The Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA) will be the GSA for most of the county's groundwater basins. United Water Conservation District most likely will elect to become the GSA for the Fillmore and Piru basins, probably joined by the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, and for the Mound Basin, joined by the city of Ventura.

In the Upper Ventura River Basin, the institutional landscape is even more complicated: The GSA will be a partnership among the city of Ventura, the Watershed Protection District, Casitas Municipal Water District, the Ventura River Water Agency and the Meiners Oaks Water Agency. In the nearby Ojai Basin, the law designates the Ojai Groundwater Management Agency (continued on page 2)

**Groundwater Management Workshop**  
**Friday, June 19, 2-4 pm**  
**Courtyard by Marriott**  
**600 Esplanade Drive, Oxnard**  
**Program: Background information**  
**and discussion, plus examples**  
**of how growers might organize**  
**themselves to participate effectively.**

### Agricultural groups to host groundwater workshop

Farm Bureau of Ventura County, the Ventura County Agricultural Association (VCAA) and the Ventura County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (VC CoLAB) invite agricultural groundwater users and well owners to a workshop to learn about the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and its implications for Ventura County growers. The session is primarily intended for those with operations on the Oxnard Plain and adjacent valleys, but it is open to any ground-

### What's Inside?

- Drought may bring new safety challenges to farms
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- Member Benefits

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# Drought may bring new safety challenges to farms

By Mike Burns

California farmers produce half of the fruits, vegetables and nuts consumed in the United States, but as drought conditions continue, these same growers have to make some tough cropping decisions based on the depleted water supply.

As drought conditions intensify, many farmers are changing their crops to less water-intensive plants, drought-resistant crops, or leaving their lands fallow. This shift to different crops causes changes in cultivation and harvesting, and requires farmers to conduct hazard analysis to update safety procedures for equipment,

tools and chemicals related to new crops and processes.

Because of these changes, growers should set aside some time for advance planning as to what it may mean as they and their employees may find themselves in unfamiliar territory.

For example, new crops may require changing implements on your farming equipment. Make sure to:

- Be trained on the operation of any new blades, discs, or other implements.
- Keep blades sharpened.
- Inspect equipment before each use for correct operation.

Changing water conditions can also require changes to irrigation systems. Follow safety guidelines such as:

- Use good trenching techniques when you dig to add or remove equipment.
- Formulate and apply lockout/tagout procedures when you work on power sources and automatic equipment.
- Watch for and avoid power lines when you add or remove lengths of piping.
- Look for changing movement and activation patterns of automatic equipment.

Consider any other field safety issues that might change with your crop and also be up-to-date on heat illness prevention procedures, lighting needs for safe movements and activities, changes in field vehicle needs and safety procedures, and terrain changes and uneven or unstable walking surfaces.

Analyze and plan for any drought-related changes to your farming procedures and equipment so you can prepare workers and keep them safe on the job.

— Mike Burns is Farm Bureau Group manager for State Compensation Insurance Fund. Contact him at [mjburns@scif.com](mailto:mjburns@scif.com). Since 1943, the California Farm Bureau-State Fund partnership has provided affordable worker compensation insurance coverage and accident prevention training for agricultural employers and their employees.

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## Salt management is critical during drought

By Ben Faber

One, hundred, thousand.

This little mnemonic, or memory aid, is helpful in remembering the critical levels of toxic constituents in irrigation water. The “one” stands for 1 part per million (ppm) of boron (B), the “hundred” flags 100 ppm of sodium (Na) and chloride (Cl), and the “thousand” represents the level of total dissolved solids (TDS or salts) in water.

Levels exceeding the critical values for any of these constituents can present problems for tree growers. The problems typically show themselves as tip-burn and defoliation. The B, Na and Cl are toxic elements at relatively low concentrations, but symptoms appear similar to the damage caused by high salinity.

Water that exceeds the critical levels mentioned in the mnemonic has a greater tendency to cause damage if sufficient leaching is not applied. It doesn't mean the water is impossible to use, only that greater attention needs to be made to ensure that these salts are adequately leached. High levels of these salts accumulate in the soil with each irrigation, and the salts are absorbed by the tree and end up in the leaves where they do their damage.

This promises to be another low rainfall year and the leaching we rely upon in winter rainfall is not going to be as ef-

fective as in customary years. Irrigation is a necessary evil. Every time we apply irrigation water we apply salts, and unless some technique is used to minimize salt accumulation, damage will result. This damage can be more than just leaf drop, but also the stress that induces conditions for avocado root rot.

Irrigation water has been applied the last four years and many trees look stressed. Even well-irrigated orchards have leaf burn due to the gradual accumulation of salts from irrigation. With the current drought-induced buildup of salts, it may be necessary to irrigate even if there is rain.

The wetted pattern that is created by a drip or microsprinkler emitter also creates a ring of salt in the outer band of the wetted pattern. If there is less than an inch of rainfall to push this salt down, this salt tends to diffuse towards the tree where it can accumulate back in the root system. Orchards with even good water quality would find it advisable to run the irrigation system with the first rains, to ensure that sufficient water is present to flush salts away from the roots. Growers with water quality exceeding one, hundred, or thousand should be especially alert to the need to manage water in low rainfall years.

— Ben Faber is a farm adviser in the University of California Cooperative Extension Office in Ventura, specializing in soils, water, avocados and minor subtropicals. Contact him at [bafaber@ucanr.edu](mailto:bafaber@ucanr.edu).

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## Notes from the CEO

(cont'd from front page)

as the GSA. (The Santa Paula Basin, managed under a court-approved adjudication settlement agreement, is exempt from SGMA).

Over the past several months, representatives of FBVC, CoLAB, VCAA and a number of major growers, commodity groups and packer/shippers, have discussed the need to organize agricultural groundwater users and well owners and provide them the technical and institutional support they need to participate effectively in a process that so clearly tips the scale in favor of municipal and industrial users. Farm Bureau has been acting as a convener of these meetings, and FBVC's Board of Directors has pledged the organization's financial, institutional and (continued on page 3)



## Notes from the CEO

(cont'd from page 2)

staff support in helping facilitate the process.

Growers in the Fillmore and Piru basins have already begun to organize themselves into a groundwater users association. Likewise, individual growers and mutual water companies in the East, West and South Las Posas Basins have a long record of successful collaboration as the Las Posas Users Group, which has been developing a management plan for those basins in cooperation with the Fox Canyon GMA.

But there remain hundreds of well owners, operators and farm tenants who have no organized way to engage in the process, potentially putting them at a disadvantage in relation to urban residents and environmental groups. These include those groundwater users dependent on the Mound, Pleasant Valley, Arroyo Santa Rosa Valley, Oxnard Plain and Oxnard Forebay basins.

The purpose of the June 19 workshop is to provide background information on SGMA, discuss its implications for Ventura County agriculture, and provide examples of how growers might organize themselves to participate effectively. Those who attend will have an opportunity to become part of an information-sharing network, join a strategy-setting committee, or help establish basin-specific working groups.

### "From Field to Fork" tickets on sale now

Tickets are now on sale for the fifth Annual "From Field to Fork" fundraiser, which will be on Thursday, July 23, from 4:30 to 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$95 until July 1, when the price increases to \$125. Purchase them online at [bit.ly/FieldToFork2015](http://bit.ly/FieldToFork2015).

"From Field to Fork" is a fundraiser for *House Farm Workers!* The event brings together farmers who produce Ventura County's agricultural

bounty, chefs who celebrate that bounty on their menus, and the farm workers whose labor makes it all possible. Guests will enjoy a delicious meal at one of the most beautiful locations in Ventura County, The Walnut Grove at Tierra Rejada Ranch, 3370 Sunset Valley Road, Moorpark.

Funds raised by the dinner support the *HFW!* City Committee Program. These volunteer-driven committees are the heart of the organization and have played a critical role in advocating on behalf of the farm worker community for the past 10 years. The city groups mobilize public support, engage public officials, and collaborate with other grassroots organizations to ensure affordable housing for farm workers.

For more information, or to become an event sponsor, contact *House Farm Workers!* Program Coordinator Alondra Serna at (805) 921-0430 or [housefarmworkers@verizon.net](mailto:housefarmworkers@verizon.net). To learn more, go to the *HFW!* website: [www.housefarmworkers.org](http://www.housefarmworkers.org).

— John Krist is chief executive officer of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Contact him at [john@farmbureauvc.com](mailto: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 (12+ yrs): \$19.95 (save \$9); Child (3-11 yrs): \$11.95 (save \$3). Valid thru 12/31/15.

#### California Adventure and Disneyland 1-Day

**Park Hopper** — Adult (10+ yrs): \$144 (save \$6); Child (3-9 yrs): \$139 (save \$5). Valid thru 12/31/15.

**Cinemark & Century Theatres** — Platinum ticket, valid all show times at all Cinemark & Century locations: \$8.75 (savings \$2.75). Additional premiums may be applied for specially priced films and/or events priced higher than normal box office. No expiration.

**Knott's Berry Farm** — Buena Park/Palm Springs. Adult (12+ yrs) \$36.95 (save \$28.05); Junior (3-11 yrs) Senior (62+ yrs) \$32.95 (save \$2.05). Valid thru 12/31/2015.

**Legoland** — "E" tickets only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$74.95 (save \$10.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$69.96 (save \$9.05). Includes 2nd day free ticket within 90 days of 1st visit.

**Resort Hopper Ticket** — "E" Ticket only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$79.95 (save \$29.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$74.95 (save \$28.05). Includes 2 visits to Legoland, including new Waterpark (seasonal) and 2 visits to Sea Life Aquarium. Valid thru 12/31/2015.

**Magic Mountain** — \$43.50 (savings \$26.49) General use ticket (3 yrs. +). Valid thru 9/27/15.

**Regal Cinemas** — Unrestricted tickets \$8.75 (regularly \$9.50 Sun.-Thurs, \$10 Fri.-Sat). Good at Edwards, Regal, Signature and United Artists Theaters. No expiration.

**San Diego Safari Park** — (Formerly Wild Animal Park) Adult-African Tram Safari: \$40.75 (save \$7.25) (12+ yrs); Child-African Tram Safari: \$33 (save \$5) (3-11 yrs). Africa Tram Safari includes admission, unlimited use of the Journey into Africa Tour, Conservation Carousel and other shows/exhibits. Valid through 12/31/15.

**San Diego Sea World - 2nd Day Free Ticket.** First Visit must occur on or before 9/30/15. 2nd Visit valid thru 12/25/2015. Adult (10 yrs. +) \$57 (save \$32); Child (3-9 yrs.) \$57 (save \$26).

**San Diego Zoo** — Adult (12+ yrs): \$40.75 (save \$7.25). Child (3-11 yrs): \$33 (save \$5). Includes admission, unlimited use of Guided Bus Tour, Express Bus, Skyfari Aerial Tram and all shows & exhibits. Valid through 12/31/15.

**See's Candy** gift certificate — One-pound box \$15.45 (Save \$2.05). No expiration.

**"E Tickets"** — Disneyland: 1 day/1 park, 2 day/1 park, 2 Day Park Hopper. Universal Studios, buy 1 day, get "2015" FREE (3+ yrs). Valid thru 12/31/15. Blackout dates apply after first visit.

# FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

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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.

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