

From the Ground UP



A quarterly publication of
the Sacramento County
Farm Bureau

Agriculture news from around the County— coming to you from farmers and ranchers...

Sacramento County Farm Bureau looks to the Blue Ribbon Task Force to help create a vision for the Delta

Sacramento County Farm Bureau (SCFB) supports executive order S-17-06, which directs the Blue Ribbon Task Force to develop a vision for sustainable management of a durable Delta by January 2008 and supports that part of Governor Schwarzenegger's water plan which creates new surface water storage.

Sea level rise, climate change, subsidence, and potential seismic activity will negatively impact services

provided by the Delta. SCFB will only support a "Delta Fix" which includes the following elements:

- Adequate levee maintenance and upgrades.
- Water for exports moved through the Delta.
- Exportation of surplus water only.
- Reduced dependency on the Delta for water exports.

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Farm Bureau celebrates the affordability of food in the United States

In just five weeks, the average American earns enough disposable income to pay for his or her food supply for the entire year, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. Farm Bureau is celebrating the continued affordability of food Feb. 4-10, during Food Check-Out Week.

The latest statistics compiled by the Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service indicate American families and individuals currently spend, on average, just 9.9 percent of their disposable

personal income for food.

In comparison to working 36 days to pay for food, Americans worked 77 days to pay their federal taxes, 62 days to pay for housing and household operation, and 52 days for health/medical care, according to The Tax Foundation.

We are thankful for a safe, abundant and affordable domestic food supply here in the United States, thanks to the farmers and ranchers who produce it.



Farm Bureau leaders urge local cities to address the impact urban development has on agriculture

Every minute of every day, we lose two acres of agricultural land to development. Why? Farm and ranch land is desirable for building because it tends to be flat, well drained and affordable. And the rapid rate of agricultural land converted to development is unnecessary—over the past 20 years, the average acreage per person for new housing almost doubled—with our best agricultural soils being developed the fastest. (source: American Farmland Trust)

Sacramento County Farm Bureau believes that if the future trend of converting agricultural land to non-agricultural uses continues, the American economy will suffer greatly. The U.S. food and farming system

contributes nearly \$1 trillion to our national economy—more than 13 percent of the gross domestic product—and employs 17 percent of the labor force. "It takes every county in every state to recognize agricultural production is important and do their part to contribute to the trillion dollar national economy," said executive director of the Sacramento County Farm Bureau, Charlotte Mitchell.

The Land Use Ad-Hoc Committee of the Sacramento County Farm Bureau worked on developing a land use policy that would help protect agricultural land in the County.

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National Ag Week

March 16-22, 2008

National Ag Day is celebrated on March 20, 2008 - the first day of spring. National Ag Day falls during National Ag Week, March 16-22, 2008. It's a week to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless other across America recognize and celebrate the contributions of agriculture. Watch for and participate in Ag Week celebrations in your community

Land Use (continued from page 1)

The Sacramento County Farm Bureau Board of Directors has adopted the following Land Use Policy:

Whereas, the Sacramento County Farm Bureau (Farm Bureau) champions' private property rights, a basic and essential right to personal freedom guaranteed by the Constitution.

Whereas, agriculture's economic impact to Sacramento County is over \$303 million in farm gate sales and over \$1.2 billion in supportive industries, like transportation, processing and sales.

Whereas, Farm Bureau respects the position of the cities and County's need to grow to accommodate future population growth. However, agriculture should be of highest priority and protected against urban sprawl. Farm Bureau supports the Sacramento County General Plan and the County's urban limit lines. Farm Bureau supports infill projects and revitalization of existing developed areas. Farm Bureau opposes "leap frog" centers in the

county's agricultural areas.

Whereas, Farm Bureau works to protect and improve the ability of farmers and ranchers engaged in production agriculture to provide a reliable supply of food and fiber through responsible stewardship of the land's resources.

Whereas, the land is the 'manufacturing floor' of the agricultural industry. Without the land, the factory cannot manufacture food and fiber to feed and cloth the world. Nor, can it provide habitat for wildlife, the oxygen trees and plants produce to clean the air, hydrological benefits in the form of canopy interception and infiltration, to name of few. Once agricultural land is converted to non-agricultural uses it historically has never returned to agriculture.

Therefore, private property must not be damaged or taken for public use without critical and absolute need. In no event should eminent domain be used to take private property for a private business.

Delta Vision (Continued from page 1)

All Delta services, including flood management, transportation, utilities, ecosystem health, water supply, and land use, are dependent on a well-maintained levee system. Because these services are essential to the entire state of California and because any vision for the Delta will take many years for implementation, any plan for the Delta must provide for immediate and adequate levee maintenance and upgrades, especially in the Western Delta, where the greatest risk from seismic activity has been identified.

Water exports (State Water Project and Central Valley Project) must be rerouted in order to minimize negative environmental impacts. Any modified route for export water must pass through the Delta. Through Delta conveyance provides flexible management to protect water quality in the Delta Pool for all Delta water users. Sacramento County Farm Bureau emphatically opposes an isolated facility (peripheral canal). Any conveyance facility which removes fresh water from the Delta will result in degraded water quality for Delta water users and catastrophic and irreversible environmental damage.

When the State Water and the Central Valley Projects were built, Federal and State Governments clearly stated that only surplus water would be exported. Because water storage projects upstream from the pumps were not built as planned, there is insufficient water in the Delta to

support export targets and until significant new surface storage is created any Delta Vision will be severely compromised. Pumping export water from the Delta must be done on an opportunistic basis (only occur when there is a surplus), and cannot negatively impact either the supply or quality of area-of-origin users.

Users of export water should strive for regional self-sufficiency by using tools such as ground water storage, surface storage, conservation, reuse, and desalinization. By reducing dependence on Delta exports, the water supply for millions of Californians will be more secure in the future. Sacramento County Farm Bureau understands that the Delta is a very complex system and that there are major gaps in scientific knowledge to support long-term changes. Therefore, within the framework outlined above, we can only support actions which are adaptive (easily modified to conform to knowledge as it develops) and are reversible in the event they do not work as intended. Actions should be incremental and subject to continuous scientific evaluation.

For more information on the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force, visit <http://deltavision.ca.gov>.