



Riverside County

AGRICULTURE



The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

A private, nonprofit organization serving farmers throughout Riverside County since 1917

Farm Bureau Spearheads MSHCP Reform

The Riverside County Farm Bureau continues to press for reforms to the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) in Western Riverside County. On July 17, 2003 Riverside County Farm Bureau along with other property owners filed a lawsuit against the County challenging the MSHCP based on the California Environmental Quality Act. The Farm Bureau will continue to work diligently to correct the deficiencies on the plan and work to clarify the terms of the plan so that it fulfills its intent to streamline and simplify the permit approval process and provide authorization to “take” endangered species while engaging in agricultural activities.

The boundaries of the MSHCP encompass approximately 1,966 square miles consisting of the unincorporated Riverside County land west of the San Jacinto Mountains to the Orange County line, and approximately 372,700 acres within the jurisdictional boundaries of fourteen cities: Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Canyon Lake, Corona, Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Norco, Perris, Riverside, San Jacinto and Temecula.

The MSHCP intends to conserve and manage 500,000 acres of habitat for 146 species (75 of which have no federal or state designation) pursuant to state and federal laws over the next 75 years. Instead of fulfilling the original promises of creating an incentive based voluntary plan that would avoid the mistakes of the Stephens’ Kangaroo Rat program, the MSCHP is a regulatory program that puts a cloud over thousands of acres of private property. It does so without a dedicated source of future federal or state funding to pay for these properties. Other key concerns and reasons why we have challenged this plan are:

- Imposes onerous burdens and hurdles for farmers to obtain incidental take authorization for routine farming activities that require a permit, including: biological survey requirements, permanent set-asides of private property, fees, and lengthy permit procedures.
- It sets a 10,000 acre cap and 5 year development prohibition on new land converted to crops within the 310,000 acre Criteria Area whether or not they are part of an existing farming operation. These restrictions will have devastating impacts to agriculture, and particularly on agricultural leases. Landlords would more than likely cancel existing leases and withhold additional land from new farming and landowning farmers would likely convert their land to other uses.
- Farmers and ranchers need to make public their business records that may include tax records in order to obtain a “Certificate of Inclusion” necessary for them to receive incidental take authorization under the plan.

Happy New Year

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News in Brief...

AUCTION YARDS TAKE 'WAIT AND SEE' APPROACH

A number of California cattle auction yards have decided to close for a few weeks, in the hope that the beef market will stabilize. The beef market has been volatile since a single cow from Washington was diagnosed with the cattle disease BSE. As a result, ranchers have been holding their animals off the market. One California auction yard earlier this week handled only about 10 percent of the usual number of cattle.

GOVERNMENT WORKS TO RESTORE BEEF EXPORTS

Quick response by the federal government has helped maintain consumer confidence in American beef, according to US Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. She told the American Farm Bureau's annual meeting that the Bush administration is working to restore foreign markets. More than 40 nations stopped buying US beef, after discovery of a single case of the cattle disease BSE. Inspection teams from Japan and Mexico are visiting the US this week.

RANCHERS SEEK QUICK END TO EXPORT BANS

Cattle ranchers hope foreign nations will soon agree to resume their shipments of American beef. A Japanese delegation is visiting this week, to learn more about how the US has responded to the discovery of BSE. Some beef destined for Japan and other nations is being shipped back to the US, for sale in domestic markets. At the Port of Oakland, a spokeswoman says the export bans have created only minor logistical problems.

PREDATORY WASP PRODUCTIONS TO TRIPLE

A new greenhouse - research laboratory opens in Arvin later this month to produce parasitoid wasps, which control the glassy winged sharpshooter. The California Department of Food and Agriculture says the four-acre site will produce three times more wasps than the old facility. The wasps devour the eggs of the glassy-winged sharpshooter, providing an effective control of the pesky insect.

FARMERS PLANT MORE WINTER VEGETABLES

More winter-season vegetables have been planted in California this year. The US Agriculture Department reported yesterday (Thursday) that the state's farmers planted 9 percent more broccoli for harvest during the first quarter of the year. Acreage also increased for cauliflower and celery, while carrot plantings declined a bit and lettuce acreage stayed unchanged. California leads the nation in vegetable production.

On the calendar: Crop diversification, agri-tourism and other potential cures for a slumping agricultural economy will be discussed at a two-day University of California conference opening tomorrow (Saturday) in Kelseyville.

NORTON PROMOTES FARMER-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

The federal government will work with farmers and ranchers as partners ... rather than adversaries ... on species conservation, according to Interior Secretary Gale Norton. During a speech to the American Farm Bureau annual meeting, Norton outlined a "subtle but major shift in environmental policy." She said the Bush administration would continue to promote voluntary, incentive-based programs to protect endangered species.

-- News items credited to California Farm Bureau Federation.

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Roadside safety tips: Don't let one accident become two

We all lead busy lives. We're always on the go. And for most of us, that means spending a lot of time in our vehicles.

Unfortunately, all that time behind the wheel also means that whether it be a flat tire, a breakdown or even an accident, there's a good chance we'll experience some sort of roadside emergency in our lifetimes. And if it happens on a busy street or highway, a bad situation can quickly become worse when contending with the dangers of heavy traffic flow around the scene of the emergency.

If you should experience a roadside emergency while driving, make personal safety your first priority.

Follow these safety recommendations from the Insurance Information Institute, and help ensure that one accident doesn't become two:

1. Never get out of the vehicle to make a repair or examine damage on a busy highway. Get the vehicle to a safe, out-of-the-way spot, and then get out of the car. If you've been in an accident, motion for the other driver to do the same.
2. If your car won't run or if it is so badly damaged that it can't be driven, stay in the vehicle and use a cell phone to call for help. Whatever you do, remember that it's a bad idea

to stand outside the vehicle in the flow of traffic.

3. Carry flags or reflective triangles in your vehicle so you can mark your location in the event of an emergency. And remember to turn on your hazard lights. These steps are critical in giving other drivers advanced warning of a problem ahead.
4. If you have a tire blowout or a flat, move your vehicle to a safer place out of harm's way before attempting a repair, even if it means destroying the wheel. The cost of a new tire, rim or wheel is well worth it when it means ensuring your safety.



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Attention all Farm Bureau Members - We need your Help!

Over the past nine years, the Farm Bureau has funneled well over \$37,000 into the Junior Livestock Auction and a large portion of that comes from members like you.

Your money that is donated to the Auction Support Fund will go toward the purchasing of animals at the Riverside County Fair, National Date Festival and Colorado River Country Fair. The animals are entered into the festival and fair by the members of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H students.

With all of the choices children have today, FFA and 4-H are two activities worth supporting. Both organizations teach young people important life skills, including time management, financial responsibility, and the importance of caring for others.

FFA and 4-H students that profit from these auction sales use the funds to start their next animal project and to start saving for college.

Payable to: Farm Bureau, Auction Support Fund, Riverside County Farm Bureau, 21160 Box Springs Rd, #102, Moreno Valley, CA 92557

*Donations are not tax deductible as charitable contributions but may be deductible as ordinary business expenses.
Consult your tax preparer for information.

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FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Feb. 1st - Last day to apply for Leadership Farm Bureau.
- Feb. 11th - 6:30pm, RCFB Board of Directors Meeting in Banning.
- Feb. 12th - 10:00am - 2:00pm, NRCS, Conservation Security Program Listening Session, USDA Service Center, 82-901 Bliss St., Indio
- Feb. 13- 22nd - Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival.
- Feb. 21st - Jr. Livestock Auction, Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival.
- Feb. 25 - 27th - CFBF Leadership Conference and CAC Meeting in Sacramento.



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....CONT. FROM FRONT COVER

- Increases farmer’s exposure to illegal “take” of listed species by setting conservation areas next to farming operations.
- Leaves farmers with a no-win choice of either risking unlawful take of listed species or accepting heavy land use restrictions and mitigation costs in exchange for incidental take authorization.
- The land use restrictions and mitigation costs deplete property values impairing the ability for agricultural landowners to access capital needed to invest in their agricultural operations.
- The MSHCP is a 7,000 page document that will cost tax payers throughout Riverside County more than \$1 billion over 25 years – a cost estimate contained in the MSHCP and related Nexus study.


If these items are not changed in the MSHCP this plan will have devastating consequences to the farmers and ranchers in this County. Other organizations opposed to the MSHCP are the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, the Save Proposition 13 Committee and the Riverside County Property Owners Association.

For further information or if you are experiencing problems due to MSHCP implementation, please contact our Farm Bureau office at (909) 684-6732.


If you wish to contribute to the MSHCP lawsuit fund, please remit checks to Riverside County Farm Bureau with special memo: MSHCP.


---Article written by Cindy Domenigoni

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