



Riverside County

AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

LEGISLATION PENDING ON A STATE METAL THEFT ORDINANCE

By Steven A. Pastor, Executive Director

As metal thefts continue to rise throughout the county and state, I have received many calls and letters from members wondering what the county and state are doing to stop the never ending increase in metal thefts.

In our April 2007 edition of "Riverside County Agriculture," I wrote about the metal theft problem and the possible solutions to the problem. Since that time, legislatures in Sacramento have debated the problem without resolve. The best opportunity at that time was AB 844 (Barryhill). Nevertheless, this bill never went anyplace. AB 844 was "watered down" by legislatures, hence, Assemblyman Barryhill withdrew his bill after it was a shell of his original intent to curb metal thefts. Recently, however, there may be some "light at the end of the tunnel." SB 447 (Maldonado) has shown signs of life and was endorsed by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. In mid-February, Senator Calderon sponsored SB 691 that may be the best hope for a statewide Metal Theft Ordinance

However, SB 691 is not a perfect bill. The final language has not been finalized but the current language is very similar to SB 447 (Maldonado) except that the new bill has the pre-emption language added. Pre-emption language would not allow local governments to write stricter ordinances. Many counties and cities in California prefer not to have the pre-emption language in the bill because the counties and cities need the flexibility to design their local ordinance to fit their needs. In order to appease the recycling industry and to pass a statewide bill, legislators are recommending to the California State Sheriffs' Association and others to support SB 691.

According to Mike Shetler, Senior Management Analyst for Riverside County, "...Riverside County's position is that we acknowledge that the problem is global with local consequences and any solution has to be at the state level, but must have the key elements such as expanded record keeping, fingerprinting and delayed payments to be effective."

The California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) is urging the legislature to adopt legislation aimed at reducing the market for stolen metal. Legislation to address metal theft must not pre-empt county ordinances unless it includes fingerprint provisions, strict penalties against recyclers, and holds payments for metals received by the recyclers.

Riverside County farmers and ranchers will continue to see a never ending increase in metal thefts unless some type of legislation is passed and enforced at the state and local levels. Cities must also support the legislation and begin enforcing the rules.

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Welcome New Members

We would like to "Thank You" for becoming part of the Farm Bureau Family.

Grants Available to Replace Irrigation Pump Engines with Electric Pumps.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District is encouraging farmers within their 4-county jurisdiction (including Riverside County) to apply for grant funding to replace their agricultural engines with electric powered pumps or natural gas engines that meet new emission standards. The funding can cover up to 85% of the equipment costs, including installation, but not power line extension costs. The application deadline is May 2, 2008 at 1 p.m.

Many of the stationary engines used for agriculture are under a deadline for replacement. AQMD's Rule 1110.2 has deadlines of July 1, 2008 for large facilities (those having Title V permits), and July 1, 2010 for smaller operations.

For information on how to apply, contact Al Baez, (909) 396-2516.

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Assemblyman John Benoit

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2008 Junior. Livestock Auction

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The Farm Bureau would like to give many thanks to the members who have contributed to the Auction Support Fund.

With your contributions you have helped these young people continue in learning important life skills, including time management and financial responsibility. We hope that you will continue to support these great organizations with the choices that children have today. FFA, 4-H, and Grange are worth supporting.

These photos are of young people that the Farm Bureau and members like you helped support this year.

Please know your dollars are working to teach a young person the skills necessary to become a responsible adult.

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Permanent Estate Tax Repeal: Best Option for Farmers

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 12, 2008 – Permanent repeal of estate taxes is the best option for farmers and ranchers among reform alternatives being considered, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. In written testimony sent to the Senate Finance Committee, AFBF explained why federal estate taxes have long been a concern to America’s farmers and ranchers.

According to AFBF, farmers and ranchers are particularly sensitive to the estate tax for several reasons. “First and foremost, farm operations typically require substantially more in capital assets to generate \$1 in income than other sectors of the economy,” said the group. “A more modest-sized farm operation can pay higher estate tax rates compared to a non-farm business, even if the non-farm estate generated comparable income while the owners were alive.”

In addition, said AFBF, the typical farm estate has more capital tied up in fixed assets that are difficult to liquidate. As a result, farm estates often face greater difficulty in making death tax payments compared to other types of estates.

“Replacing the estate tax with an inheritance tax or other tax due when a business owner dies will do little to resolve the issues that plague farmers and ranchers under the current death tax regime,” said AFBF. “Taxes still will be owed by surviving sons and daughters who want to continue to farm and many will be forced to sell off parts of their business to settle the debt.”

AFBF reiterated its commitment to permanent repeal of estate taxes, but urged Congress to make several immediate changes. Among them: the estate exemption should be increased to \$10 million per person and indexed for inflation; there should be full stepped-up basis for inherited assets, the gift tax exemption should be increased to \$20,000 and indexed for inflation; and special use valuation adjustments for property should be unlimited.

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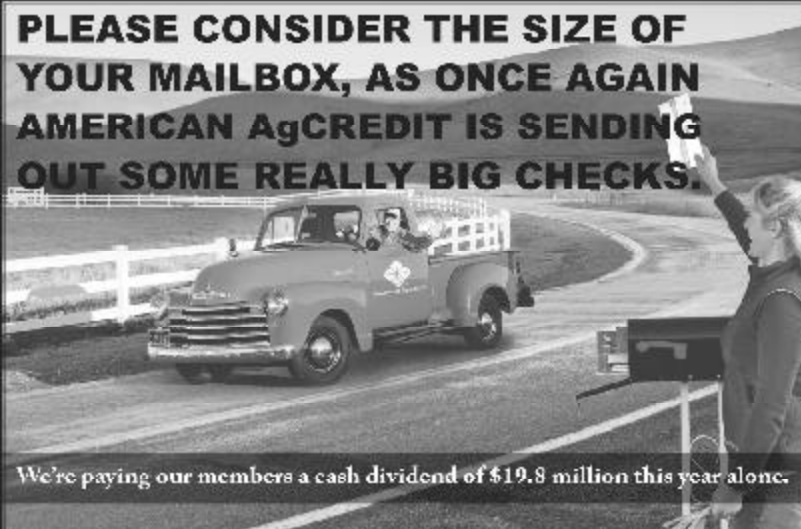
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INDEX FRESH APPOINTS JOHN DIMYTRIW AS COMPANY'S NEW SALES DIRECTOR



BLOOMINGTON, CA—Dana Thomas, president of Index Fresh, announced today the appointment of John Dmytriw to the position of Sales Director at the company's corporate offices, based in Bloomington. "We welcome John to the team at Index Fresh. I am excited about the enthusiasm he brings to his role in our Sales Department," Thomas said. Dmytriw has previously worked for BuyProduce.com in Irvine, and he has spent the last 7½ years at West Pak Avocado in Temecula.


Born on the Island of Oahu to a Marine Corp. family, John and his family came to Southern California as a child, where he has spent the majority of his life. "My job is very rewarding, because I supply people with something that they want or need—customers are not all the same, and their businesses should not be treated as such," John commented.

"In some industries, there is only one platform, or way, to sell products. I am energized by the flexibility that is offered by the Produce Industry. The Index Sales Team is a great group of high-energy and positive people—we all are passionate about providing the highest quality of service. The most rewarding part of my job is when a customer tells me that I added value to his or her business – that is a day well-done!"

John is very concerned about connecting with the people who are not getting the focus they deserve, and welcomes dialogue with anyone who is interested in learning more about Index Fresh. "I invite anyone to call and to introduce themselves," he emphasized. John can be contacted at 909-877-1577.

Index Fresh, Inc. is a grower-owned packing, marketing and shipping company located in Bloomington, CA. Index Fresh remains strongly committed to keeping Index growers, customers and trading partners on the cutting edge of the produce industry. The company distributes premium avocados and Asian pears from California to New York, and supplies large retailers, small specialty retailers, and food service.

Index Fresh has been in business since 1914, and became a cooperative in 1929. In 1991 Index Fresh entered the import avocado business to supplement the high demand and to broaden the California base, offering year-round avocados to its customers. Imports are from Chile and Mexico. The firm incorporated in 1999.











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Make sure everyone on the farm protects his or her eyes

By Mike Klimenko
Farm Bureau Group Manager

Take good care of your eyes. They are irreplaceable.

According to research done by the University of Tennessee, an estimated 7,500 eye injuries occur on American farms annually—that's nearly one every hour. These injuries are painful, expensive and can result in partial or total blindness.

Eye injuries occur much too frequently on the farm or ranch, and in too many instances, the injuries were much more severe because the victim failed to wear proper eye protection. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that three out of five workers who suffer eye injuries wore no eye protection at the time of the injury. And of those who did wear protection, two of every five wore the wrong kind.

It makes good sense to wear safety eyewear whenever there is a chance that machines or operations present the hazard of flying objects, chemicals, harmful radiation or other hazards. Most eye injuries result from small particles or objects striking or abrading the eye. Examples include metal slivers, wood chips, dust and cement chips that are ejected by tools, wind blown, or fall from above a worker. Some of these objects, such as nails, staples, or slivers of wood or metal penetrate the eyeball and result in a permanent loss of vision. Large objects may also strike the eye/face, or a worker may run into an object causing blunt force trauma to the eyeball or eye socket. Chemical burns to one or both eyes from splashes of agricultural chemicals or cleaning products are common.

There are certain preventative measures that can help reduce the chance of eye injuries. These include:

- Conduct a thorough analysis of the work to be done and the equipment that will be used. Inspect work areas and equipment and identify operations and areas that present eye hazards.
- Select protective eyewear designed for a specific operation or hazard. Protective eyewear must meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

- For best protection against eye injury, wear eye protection whenever it is warranted and require workers to do the same. Allow no exceptions.
- Protective eyewear that doesn't fit properly and comfortably is not likely to be used. To ensure the eyewear is satisfactory, have it fitted by an eye-care professional.
- Plan for an emergency. Establish first-aid procedures for eye injuries. Make eyewash stations accessible, particularly where chemicals are used. Train employees in basic first aid and identify those with more advanced first-aid training.
- Educate and review. Conduct ongoing educational programs to establish, maintain and reinforce the need for protective eyewear. Continuously review and when necessary revise your accident prevention strategies.

One more thing, don't rely on ordinary prescription glasses for eye safety. Although they may be impact-resistant, they are not safety eyewear. In addition, chemical or spray dust can get around the sides easily and into the eyes. Contact lenses are made for seeing not protection, so wear safety glasses over them.

Personal protection should never be overlooked

By Mike Klimenko
Farm Bureau Group Manager

On the farm and ranch, everyone pretty much knows that to do a job right, it is important to have the right tool at hand. In the same way, to have proper protection from injury, it is important to have the right personal protective equipment (PPE).

A farmer knows better than to cut corners on tools, so why would he think it is OK to cut corners when it comes to protecting himself and/or his workers. It's a four-step process:

- Providing workers with PPE.
- Teach them how to use this equipment.
- Make it a rule that the equipment be used, and enforce the rule.
- And finally, as an employer, be sure to follow your own rule. Don't make the "Do as I say, not as I do" mistake.

It isn't possible to provide detailed descriptions of personal protective equipment in this brief column, but here are some of the main ones:

Hand protection: Properly fitted gloves—cotton, canvas, leather, rubber or plastic coated—protect hands when handling tools, rough objects, or when exposed to weather, chemicals, solvents, branches and so on.

- **Eye protection:** Eyes are vulnerable to injury when a person is performing a number of different tasks on the farm or ranch, such as pruning, harvesting, haying or handling agricultural chemicals. Protective eyewear is a must.
- **Head protection:** Hard hats protect the head from impact and flying or falling objects. Some of the tasks that necessitate the wearing of a hard hat include trimming trees, operating or repairing machinery, and working under low ceilings.
- **Foot protection:** Safety shoes with metal toes and puncture resistant soles should be standard issue of agricultural workers. They protect feet around livestock, power mowers and other equipment and when handling heavy or sharp objects.
- **Ear protection:** Ear plugs and external ear coverings protect the ears from noise-generating tractors, harvesters, chain saws and other loud equipment.
- **Skin protection:** Protect the skin from chemical burns, sunburn and scrapes by covering with clothing, as well as proper skin washing and garment laundering.
- **Breathing protection:** Various types of respirators—disposable dust masks, filter respirators, chemical cartridge, gas mask or self-contained breathing apparatus—protect workers from breathing hazardous substances. Be sure to match the proper respirator to each specific task.

Remember strong and healthy employees are your greatest assets. Taking care of their safety is a "win-win" proposition.

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- ☼ March 19th - WRCAC meeting, Nuevo Water District, 9:00 am.
- ☼ March 20th - Dairy Outreach meeting, EMWD, 10 am.
- ☼ March 29th - FarmPac Fundraiser. Call the RCFB
- ☼ April 5th - AITC Fundraiser at the Ronald Reagan Library. Call for details.
- ☼ April 9th - RCFB Board meeting at the Sizzler Restaurant in Indio. 6 pm.
- ☼ April 23rd - Coachella Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Workshop at CVWD - 2:30 pm.
- ☼ April 29th - LE/CL TMDL Task Force - EVMWD, 1:30 pm.

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