



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 Settles Lawsuit with County on Southwest MSHCP

By Cindy Domenigoni, Director

On February 7, 2006, the courts approved the settlement between Riverside County Farm Bureau (RCFB) and The County of Riverside and key participating cities regarding the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservations Plan (MSCHP).

The MSHCP is a massive plan, encompassing 1.26 million acres, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 17, 2003. Its primary goal is to provide "take authorization" for building projects under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts in exchange for establishing an "MSHCP Conservation Area" of approximately 500,000 acres, of which 153,000 acres would be acquired from private owners. In urbanizing Riverside County, this meant accommodating development of land adjoining agricultural areas, with the result of forcing listed species onto operating farms. In order to protect farmers from increased risk of illegal "take" of listed species, it was necessary for agricultural operations to be covered by the MSCHP's "take" authorization.

The RCFB has been involved in the MSHCP since the plan's inception to its present implementation. Over the past several years, RCFB participated in advisory committee meetings and small group meetings with county staff, decision makers, environmental interests and members of the public. The RCFB educated participants about the importance of farming to the local economy and quality of life, and the differences between agricultural operations and building projects. RCFB's goal was to develop a workable process for agricultural landowners and operators to receive incidental take authorization under the MSHCP, instead of having to obtain individual permits under the Endangered Species Acts.

The RCFB was successful in obtaining take authorization for existing agricultural operations and a streamlined process for extending take authorization for new and expanded agricultural operations. Though the county agreed in concept with RCFB's recommendations, the language of the MSHCP did not clearly document those provisions. As a result, RCFB initiated litigation against the county on July 17, 2003. That litigation ended this past February with a settlement agreement.

As a result of the settlement agreement and Riverside County Farm Bureau's participation in the MSHCP process, the MSHCP now:

- ❖ Provides take authorization to protect agricultural landowners and operators against illegal take of listed species under the state and federal Endangered Species Acts;
- ❖ Extends take authorization to existing agricultural activities and CEQA mitigation for Covered Species and habitat under the MSHCP simply by being included on the Agricultural Database and executing a Certificate of Inclusion;
- ❖ Provides a streamlined procedure for new agricultural activities to receive take authorization and CEQA mitigation for Covered Species and habitat under the MSHCP;
- ❖ Clarifies that compliance with the MSHCP mitigation requirements and fees applies only to larger building, structures, and land uses (not

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**MEET YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Each month, the Riverside County Farm Bureau (RCFB) newsletter will introduce a member of the Board of Directors. It is very important that all Farm Bureau members get to know their representatives; including the Board member's farming background, interests, and family.



In this month's issue, we would like to introduce Director Dan Hollingsworth. Dan has been a member and a director of the RCFB since 1961. Dan currently chairs the Farm Bureau's Legislative Committee and Nominating Committee. He is also a past president of the RCFB and a past District Director to the California Farm Bureau Federation.

Dan is a former dairyman and helped design the 1986 dairy buyout. Currently, Dan is a nurseryman and together with his wife, Joan, are owners of JoDan Farms in Murrieta. They grow a variety of trees for landscapers and developers. Dan and his wife have been married for over 50 years and have four children; Tina, Marcy, Lennie, and Dennis. They also have 17 grandchildren.

**RCFB Visits Blythe**



This month, the Farm Bureau held its monthly Board of Directors meeting in Blythe at the Riverside County Administration Center. We would like to thank our Blythe Director, Grant Chaffin, for

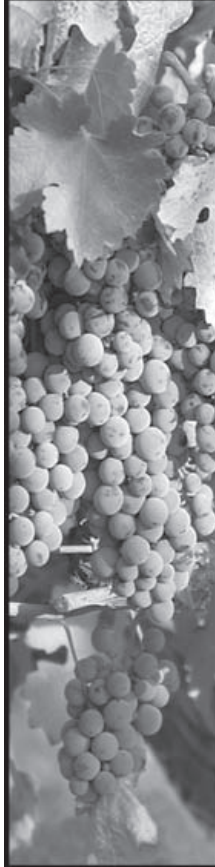
arranging tours to the Blythe Diversion Dam and to Hay Day Farms.

Also, many thanks to the staff at the Riverside County Administration Center for making us feel very welcomed and to the ladies of CWA, who catered a wonderful lunch.



The purpose of the trip was to give directors and members living in the Palo Verde Valley the opportunity to participate in the Board meeting and allow them to express their concerns.

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.....CONT. MSHCP SETTLEMENT.

all land uses) requiring a discretionary permit, and allows for farmers to undertake environmental compliance activities and smaller building expansions and land uses without imposing the individual MSHCP mitigation requirements (for example, an agricultural building that would add less than 50% of the existing square footage occupied by buildings and structures, or permitted agricultural land uses less than two acres in size);

- ❖ Provides for a 15-day process to confirm whether agricultural land is desirable for conservation or could be used for tenant farming or dry land farming;
- ❖ Provides for an outreach program to distribute information on the MSHCP's agricultural provisions;
- ❖ Protects information compiled for the Agricultural Database; and
- ❖ Provides uniformity in implementing the agricultural provision of the MSHCP throughout Western Riverside County and the participating cities.

In future publications we will be supplying information to better understand this plan and how it relates to your operations. If you have questions regarding the MSHCP, please call the Farm Bureau office at (951) 684-6732.

## "Imagine this..." winners promote California agriculture

By Brian Watson  
Farm Bureau Group Manager

The California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom has announced this year's winners in the annual "Imagine this..." story writing competition for students in grades 3-8. Competition was particularly strong this year, with thousands of entries being submitted by students from around the state. The competition is coordinated by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom and funded by a donation from State Compensation Insurance Fund.

This year's winners are:

3rd Grade: Megan Harlander, Valley Oaks Charter School, Kern County, "Perfect Eggs."

4th Grade: Riley Tomczak, Lone Elementary School, Amador County, "The Grape that Couldn't Decide What to Be."

5th Grade: Daniel Kaplan, Fremont Elementary School, Los Angeles County, "The Adventures of Compost Man."

6th Grade: Mackenzie Allen, Grenada Elementary School, Siskiyou County, "Forest Friends."

7th Grade: Kaelin A. Swift, Home Choice/Washington Alternative, San Bernardino County, "Remembering."

8th Grade: Tyler Sweet, Grenada Elementary School, Siskiyou County, "What's the Difference."

The six winning essays were brought to life through a video production created by Sacramento-

CONT. ON NEXT PAGE.....



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## Join us for A Special Dinner & Auction at our “Seeds of Change” Event

Help protect family farms this year at the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual FarmPac® benefit dinner and auction hosted by the San Bernardino and Riverside County Farm Bureaus.

Join us April 28, 2006 for a BBQ Dinner, 6:00 p.m., at Kallisto Greenhouses in Fontana.

Farm Bureau Fundraiser Chair, Jim Rietkerk, welcomes all county residents to join in a fun-filled Friday evening attended by Farm Bureau members and local legislators. CFBF President Doug Moseber, CFBF 2nd Vice President Kenny Watkins, and CFBF Administrator George Gomes will be in attendance. It promises to be a festive event featuring good food, fine wine and an array of special auction items.

FarmPac® was established to strengthen the voice of agriculture by raising funds to support candidates, regardless of political party, who are committed to work in the best interest of agriculture and the residents of California. Funds raised will be used to help elect representatives who share our philosophy from throughout the state. The Political Action Committee allows Farm Bureau to hold lawmakers accountable for their actions. By supporting or not supporting candidates, we send a powerful message about what's important to our membership.

In addition, FarmPac® funds can be used to support or oppose ballot initiatives as well as educate the public about the language in each measure. By contributing to Farm Pac®, our voice will be heard in the halls of the state capitol and in Washington, D.C.

More information about the upcoming event can be obtained by calling the SBCFB office at (909) 875-5945 or RCFB office at (951) 684-6732.

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### ....."IMAGINE THIS" CONT.

area high school students. The video showcased illustrations by Sheldon High School art students in the Elk Grove Unified School District and animation and narration created by Franklin, Inderkum and Center high school dramatic arts students with direction from the Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium. The video made its debut during National Agriculture Week in March at a celebration honoring the student authors, illustrators, narrators and their teachers.

According to Judy Culbertson, director of CFAITC, State Compensation Insurance Fund is setting an example for the rest of the business community by funding a program that supports literacy in California's schools. "It is definitely to our benefit, and to the benefit of the agricultural community, that SCIF chooses to do this by underwriting Imagine this....," Culbertson said. "We hear regularly from teachers of winning students that kids get a kick out of competing. Imagine this... successfully blends the thrill of competition with the educational components of literacy and agricultural awareness. Everyone wins." "For 11 years, SCIF has underwritten this contest for 3rd-8th graders. We truly appreciate their commitment," she said.



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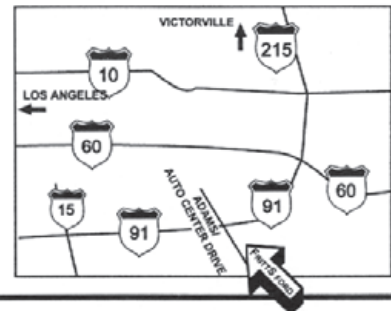
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### APRIL / MAY 2006 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- \* Apr. 20th - 10:00 am, "Understanding the dangers of Agroterrorism" workshop at the Orange County Sheriff Dept/Operation Area Emergency Operation Center.
- \* Apr. 22nd - 10:00 am, "UCR 100th Anniversary" event to celebrate the founding of the Agriculture Experiment Station. RCFB will have a booth present.
- \* Apr. 28th - 6:00 pm, "Seeds of Change" event to raise funds for Farm PAC. See Page 5 for details or call for more information.
- \* May 9th - 1:00 pm, Annual Meeting Committee meeting at RCFB office.
- \* May 10th - 6:30 pm, RCFB Board of Directors meeting at the Sizzler Restaurant in Banning.

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