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AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

COUNTY FARMERS AND BUSINESSES SUFFER FROM METAL THEFTS

By now I'm sure most of you have read newspaper articles about the dramatic increase in metal thefts not only in Riverside County but also throughout the state. These metals include aluminum, brass, and copper wire.

Many businesses, including agriculture, have been the victims of metal thefts. The Corona-Norco Unified School District, for instance, approved \$64,000 in repair work because thieves stole several coils of copper wire from heating and air conditioning units at Buena Vista High School. Several other schools in Riverside and Alvord School Districts have also suffered thefts of copper wire last month.

Farmers and ranchers in Riverside County have also been the victims of several metal thefts totaling thousands of dollars. These thefts include aluminum irrigation pipes, brass from back-flow devices, and copper wire from irrigation pumps.

Riverside County Supervisor, Bob Buster, has led the charge to help stop the increase of metal thefts in the county. With the help from the other supervisors, the county has formed the Committee to Deter the Thefts of Aluminum, Brass, and Copper. The supervisors have directed the committee to come up with solutions to help stop the escalating metal thefts.

The committee is composed of representatives from the district attorneys office, county counsel, the Riverside County Sheriff Department, metal recyclers, private business owners, Riverside County Code Enforcement, and the Riverside County Farm Bureau to name a few.

At our first meeting on April 4th, the committee discussed the problem and possible solutions to the metal thefts. Recyclers, as an industry, are the key to the problem and solution. They must become more self-regulating and communicate better with the sheriff and city police departments. A "We-Tip" program is a possible solution and must be established where if recyclers suspect materials are stolen, they immediately call the police and communicate the information to other recyclers.

Any solution to the problem must include state legislation, better communication between the county and cities, and harsher penalties for those caught stealing metals. For example, legislators in Sacramento have drafted two bills that would put "more bite" into existing recycling laws. Senate Bill 447 (Maldonado) would require a recycler to take the thumb-print of anyone selling metals and other products for recycling. The bill would also require a recycler to report specified information, using forms approved or provided at actual cost by the Department of Justice, to the sheriff of the county in which the recycler dealer received or purchased the material. The bill would also make a violation of these requirements a crime, and thereby would impose a state-mandated local program.

The second bill, Assembly Bill 844 (Barryhill) would require recyclers to pay by check with payment being held for ten days from the date of purchase. It would also require recyclers to either take a photo or video of the seller and the metal they've brought in for sale. Furthermore, the bill would require the recycler to hold and tag the metal for fifteen-days from the date of purchase. The California Farm Bureau Federation has worked closely with Assemblyman Barryhill to draft this pending legislation.

In short, there is no simple solution to the problem of metal thefts. Riverside County and the state are moving in the right direction to help stop metal thefts, however, it will also require businesses to tighten-up security in and around their place of operation. It will also require recyclers to become more self-regulating and improve communications with law enforcement agencies.

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2006 FAMILY FARM SCORECARD

At the end of each year, the California Farm Bureau Federation examines the voting records of our elected officials in Sacramento to determine if our elected officials support California agriculture.

Doug Mosebar, president of the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) has submitted a report on CFBF's findings on how our legislators voted in support of agriculture. The full report on each legislator's voting record can be found by going to www.cfbf.com. In order to preserve agriculture not only in Riverside County but also in the entire state, we need to elect those officials who support farming and ranching.

Below is President Mosebar's written report on how our legislators voted in 2006.

"We as family farmers and ranchers want to continue providing a safe and abundant food supply, but we are worried about the future of California agriculture.

A recent membership survey showed that half of those Farm Bureau members interviewed felt their elected officials are not concerned about the future of farming and ranching. The state Legislature received particular criticism, with more than half of the respondents disapproving of its performance on agricultural issues and more than one-third expressing strong disapproval.

Their concerns were reaffirmed in the recently released 2006 Family Farms Scorecard. The 2006 Legislature holds an average score supporting family farms just 53 percent of the time, which is up slightly from last year's score of 52 percent.

The scorecard is provided as a tool to measure an individual's voting record in the state Legislature on legislation impacting family farms and ranches. The Protecting Family Farms program is based on 10 broad policy objectives that uphold California's agricultural heritage. As the two-year legislative cycle progressed, these policy objectives were connected to specific legislation and Farm Bureau's position was conveyed to legislators and the governor. The 2006 scorecard shows floor votes by members of the California Legislature and action taken by the governor. A few key measures did not make it out of committee or to

the governor's desk, as noted on the scorecard. Legislators representing rural areas and Republicans across the state were generally more supportive of key legislation. In both Assembly and the Senate, there were a fair number of moderate Democrats also voting to protect family farms.

A highlight of this year's legislative session was the passage of SB 775 (Cox, R-Fair Oaks). This was a Farm Bureau sponsored measure that will provide needed procedures for water right holders in Northern California to replace the Department of Water Resources as their water-master with a more cost-effective local agency. With help from CFBF, legislative staff, and hundreds of letters from Farm Team members, this bill passed unanimously out of the Legislature and was signed by the governor.

Although a number of bills that would have been harmful to the agricultural business climate did not make it to the governor's desk, there are still challenges to overcome. Farmers and ranchers are facing an increase in minimum wage and the unknown effects of climate change regulations.

The farming community across California is urging voters to support candidates that will protect family farmers' ability to feed Californians today and in the future.

Farm Bureau members gave Governor Schwarzenegger a 75-percent favorability rating in the membership survey. Supporting these findings, the governor agreed with the Farm Bureau's position on two-thirds of the key bills on the Family Farms Scorecard.

As you view this scorecard, it is important to remember no voting record alone can tell the entire story of a legislator's views on issues of importance to farmers and ranchers. The scorecard does not take into account the cooperation we received from key legislators on important committee votes or behind-the-scenes support provided in caucus or on the floor. The hard work by CFBF and Farm Team members allowed us to work with supportive legislators to either defeat or modify proposed legislation that would have been harmful to family farms and ranches

Throughout this legislative session, Farm Team participants worked hard to tell their personal stories by making phone calls, writing letters and making personal visits to their legislators. Thank you for taking action to protect family farms and ranches. This scorecard shows that active involvement in the political process at a grassroots level really can make a difference."

FARM PAC & FARM TEAM - Working to Protect Your Bottom Line

The biggest threat to farming is not an act of nature. The cumulative burden of increased taxes and regulations has a direct affect on your profitability.

No one person can face such obstacles alone. However, with Farm Bureau you have the tools to weather the storm.

Farm Bureau has two programs that directly impact your bottom line - the California Farm Bureau Fund to Protect the Family Farm (**FARM PAC**) and the **FARM TEAM**.

These programs compliment each other and work to achieve one common goal - to protect people like you - California's family farmers and ranchers.

FARM PAC is Farm Bureau's political action committee, the muscle and voice representing farming interests in the political arena.

Farm Bureau does not utilize membership dues for making political contributions. This is why Farm Bureau created **FARM PAC** more than thirty years ago.

The voluntary contributions of members like you, allows Farm Bureau to make political contributions to candidates who are committed to working in the best interests of the state's farmers and ranchers, regardless of their party affiliation.

When deciding whether or not to support a candidate's re-election campaign, **FARM PAC** allows Farm Bureau to hold those lawmakers accountable for their actions while in office.

In addition to being able to make political contributions, Farm Bureau also saw the need for California's family farmers and ranchers to tell their story, while weighing in on legislation and regulations.

FARM TEAM allows you to contact the lawmakers who make the decisions

CONT. ON PAGE 4.....

Richard "Dick" Kelley



Each month, the Riverside County Farm Bureau's (RCFB) newsletter introduces 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 Dick Kelley. Dick has been a director of the RCFB since 1979 and has held several positions within the RCFB since that time. He was re-elected to the board last November.

Dick grew-up in Corona and Hemet on his grandfather and father's citrus ranches. His father raised nursery stock for white grapefruit in Hemet and planted the first fifteen acres there in 1936.

Dick attended San Bernardino Valley College for two semesters and transferred to Cal Poly Pomona to study citrus. In 1950, he joined the U.S. Air Force and served four years. After returning from the military, he attended U.C. Davis and returned to work on his father's citrus ranch in 1955. In 1957, Dick and his brother, Dave, began their first orchard in Hemet.

Dick and his wife, Jeanne, have three children and four grandchildren.

.....CONT. FROM PAGE 3. FARM PAC & FARM TEAM

that impact your farming and ranching operations.

As a web-based program, you will receive email Action Alerts from **FARM TEAM** that enable you to send letters and participate in activities that influence public policy and the outcome of elections.

In a matter of minutes, from the comfort of your own home and at your own convenience – you can take part in the political process and ultimately work to protect California's rich agricultural heritage.

There are many issues before lawmakers this year that will impact how you do business. A water bond intended to provide additional water storage and conveyance, eminent domain fixes, food safety regulations and legislation to reduce metal theft are all on the table.

Remember, Farm Bureau's strength is in its numbers and you have the tools to contribute to that strength. Regardless of how you participate, it benefits agriculture, and ultimately, it benefits you.

Visit www.cfbf.com to learn more about **FARM PAC** and **FARM TEAM**. Or simply call the Riverside County Farm Bureau office at 951.684.6732 for more information.



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RCFB ENDORSES THE SALTON SEA AUTHORITY RESTORATION PLAN

The Riverside County Farm Bureau (RCFB) has endorsed the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) Restoration Plan to revitalize the Salton Sea (Sea).

In a March 20, 2007 resolution sent to the Salton Sea Authority's Executive Director, Rick Daniels, the RCFB outlined its reasons for endorsing the Salton Sea Authority Plan.

A special committee of RCFB board members appointed by RCFB president, Grant Chaffin, studied the numerous alternative measures to restore and revitalize the Sea, spoke with officials from several groups interested in the restoration of the Sea, as well as state, county, and local elected officials. The committee's recommendation was unanimous; support the Salton Sea Authority Plan to restore the Sea.

The committee stated that the SSA plan best meets the needs to provide wildlife habitats, improve water quality, and protect air quality in the region. The SSA plan also creates major recreational and economic development opportunities in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys.

In addition, the committee said that the SSA plan retains the Sea as an agricultural sump, utilizes existing water supplies, stabilizes the shoreline, reduces the Sea's salinity, enhances recreational and economic development opportunities, improves the livability of neighboring areas, is cost effective when the \$1-5 billion of restoration are considered, and funds the project from state, federal, and local non-farm sources.

Furthermore, the committee believes overall that the SSA plan best meets the needs of the RCFB's members and those living and working in the Coachella and Imperial Valleys.

According to the chairman of the SSA, Gary Wyatt, "Our plan is the true hybrid, incorporating the best aspects of other proposals while addressing the needs of the majority of all the stakeholders to create a comprehensive solution. This has been recognized by more than 50 agencies and organizations in Imperial and Riverside Counties that have endorsed the Authority's plan, as well as more than 5,000 individuals who have signed support cards."



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2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ☼ April 21st - 10 am - 5 pm UC Riverside Citrus Open House at Lot #4.
- ☼ May 1st - 2:30 pm at the CAC - Metal Task Force meeting.
- ☼ May 9th - 6 pm - RCFB Board of Directors meeting at the Sizzler Restaurant, Indio.
- ☼ May 16th - 9 am at the Nuevo Water District office - WRCAC meeting.

VOTING MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

If you are past due or close to your renewal date, please renew your membership by April 25, 2007

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