



Riverside County

AGRICULTURE

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

RIVERSIDE COUNTY AG DAY

By Ann Hennessey



About 200 fourth-graders from San Jacinto and Hemet Unified School Districts met at the California Citrus State Historic Park in Riverside on Wednesday, May 28th, to celebrate Riverside County's first Ag Day.

The Riverside County Farm Bureau and the Citrus Park hosted the event. The Riverside County Farm Bureau and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom (CAITC) provided funding for the event.

standards for fourth-grade social studies. Fourth graders study California history, including agriculture as an industry and the state's water system.

The event, one of several planned throughout the State of California, was created to align with the California Department of Education's



School buses arrived at the park at 10 am and departed at 12:30 pm. Students attended Hyatt Elementary, San Jacinto Elementary, Idyllwild Elementary, and Cottonwood Elementary (in Aguanga). The San Jacinto High School FFA students, led by teacher, Melanie Stanley, also attended as presenters.



Students toured the citrus museum, hiked through the orchards, sampled citrus donated by Paramount Citrus, learned about water pollution with Eastern Municipal Water District, played 5-a-Day Bingo with San Jacinto school board member Nancy Ayres, played California nutrition games with the Riverside County Department of Public Health, planted seeds with the University of California, Riverside, Cooperative Extension, mapped California produce and created paper chickens with the San Jacinto High School FFA, learned about mission olives with CAITC, and learned about California animals from the state park's docent.

California ranks second in the nation in citrus production, and is the nation's top producer of fresh oranges. The state's citrus industry originated in the Inland Empire.

I want to thank all those individuals who donated their time and energy to make Ag Day a success.



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Printed by Layton Printing, La Verne, California.

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

RIVERSIDE COUNTY AG DAY 2008 Photos



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CVWD responds to Indio's attempt to adjudicate water basin

Water district advocates for equitable participation in groundwater management programs

The Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) took action Tuesday to block the city of Indio's pursuit of an adjudicated groundwater basin, which would have potentially devastating effects to the Coachella Valley's already depressed economy. Indio recently filed a lawsuit against the water district seeking adjudication as the means to avoid paying its fair share of the costs to replenish the groundwater basin.

"As the valley's oldest and most experienced water manager, CVWD has for decades managed a comprehensive groundwater management program that benefits the entire valley. The city of Indio's refusal to participate in and support regional groundwater management programs is putting the long-term viability of the valley's groundwater supply in jeopardy and placing the burden on water users in every other city throughout the valley," said CVWD General Manager-Chief Engineer Steve Robbins.

Under adjudication, a judge would determine how much groundwater individuals can pump from the aquifer with little or no regard to economic viability or public benefit. For example, farmers could face severe reductions in water allocation that would diminish crop production and other water purveyors could be forced to limit the amount of water available for domestic use. The court directed adjudication process is lengthy and costly for all involved parties. It also creates an environment that can inhibit development and investment due to the uncertainty created.

CVWD's legal filing also includes responses in the agency's ongoing effort to make the City contribute equitably to long-standing, valleywide efforts to preserve the groundwater basin and ensure reliable, affordable water for generations to come.

"Adjudication would impact thousands of interests beyond Indio, would not improve the basin, and ultimately would pit regional interests against each other," Robbins said.

The valley's aquifer is in a state of overdraft, requiring careful stewardship of resources and collaboration. CVWD's groundwater management program includes conservation, recycling and contracts for the importation of water from the State Water Project (through a partnership with Desert Water Agency) and the Colorado River. For many years, CVWD and DWA have replaced water pumped from the aquifer with the imported water, recharged into the groundwater basin at four public facilities.

These collaborative efforts are funded through a Replenishment Assessment Charge (RAC), authorized by Water Code and levied upon all large groundwater users in the valley who pump more than 25 acre-feet (8.1 million gallons) annually, including CVWD. Nearly one year ago, Indio started withholding its RAC payments and after repeated attempts by CVWD to get the city to pay its fair share, CVWD was forced to file a lawsuit to recover the debt.

"CVWD is committed to the well-being of the entire Coachella Valley and therefore is simply looking for the City of Indio to participate equitably toward protecting the long-term viability of the Coachella Valley's aquifer," said Board President Peter Nelson. "CVWD would like to avoid taxpayer dollars being wasted on lengthy and costly court battles and is committed to working collaboratively with the city toward finding a resolution."

CVWD is a public agency, governed by a five-member board of directors, that provides domestic and irrigation water, agricultural drainage, wastewater treatment and reclamation services, regional stormwater protection, groundwater management and water conservation across 1,000 square miles, primarily in Riverside County but also in portions of Imperial and San Diego counties.

Watch for early indications of heat stress

By Mike Klimenko, Farm Bureau Group Manager

The nature of farming and ranching is that many activities take place outdoors. Weather conditions play a major role in working conditions, with temperatures ranging from sub-freezing in winter to well over 100 degrees in summer. Without proper acclimation to these changing temperatures, serious consequences may develop.

Working outdoors during the hot summer months puts special demands on the body's cooling system. Under certain conditions, a person's body may have trouble regulating its temperature. The harder a person works, the more heat his or her body needs to lose.

Heat stress occurs when the body builds more heat than it can cope with. In its less severe form, it can lead to cramps, rash and exhaustion. One of the most serious threats to people working in a high-temperature environment is heat stroke. Heat stroke occurs when the body has used up all of its water and salt and stops sweating as a result. This can cause the body temperature to rise. The victim may be weak, confused, upset or acting strangely. In its more advanced stages, heat stroke may cause the victim to pass out or have convulsions.

If you observe a person showing signs of heat stroke, it is imperative to act immediately because this condition can kill a person very quickly. The first thing to do is call 911 to call in professional help. Once you have done that, remove excess clothing from the victim and try to cool his or her body by fanning or spraying with cool water. Offer sips of water if the person is conscious.

Prevention is the best protection from heat stress/heat stroke. Here are some tips to help prepare you and your employees to California's hot summer temperatures.

- Drink small amounts of water frequently. Be sure to avoid alcohol because it increases the loss of body fluids.
- Try to schedule hot jobs for cooler times of day or cooler seasons of the year. This isn't always possible in agricultural operations, but do the best you can.
- Take rest breaks in cool areas and add more workers to reduce the workload or shorten the workday.
- Gradually adapting to heat will reduce the severity of heat stress.
- Mechanize heavy jobs and when possible increase air movement with fans or coolers.
- Clothing can affect heat buildup, so it is recommended that loose, lightweight and light colored clothing be worn.
- Do not use salt tablets. Taking salt tablets can raise blood pressure, cause stomach ulcers and seriously affect workers with heart disease.

Whether mild, moderate or severe, heat stress can come on suddenly and be dangerous to your health. But if you're prepared, you can prevent heat-related problems.

For 65 years Farm Bureau and State Fund have been business partners. When your policy comes up for renewal, if you are not insured with State Fund, please be sure to get a quote in our Farm Bureau Group Program!

Heat Illness Prevention and Resource Materials

Another round of hot temperatures in California is just around the corner, and the recent tragic death of a young farm employee in Lodi has certainly highlighted the need for extra care and attention to the subject of heat illness.

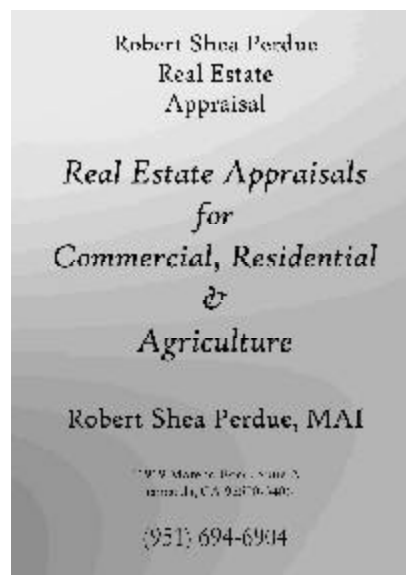
California's heat-illness standard is the first at both the state and federal levels and contains four key employer requirements:

1. An employer must provide access to cooling shade for at least 5 minutes to outdoor employees experiencing heat illness or believing they need time to recover from heat exposure to prevent heat illness.
2. An employer must provide each outdoor employee with at least one quart of cool drinking water per hour and encourage the drinking of small amounts frequently, up to 4 cups per hour. Water must be plumbed or from an otherwise continuously supplied source, replenished as necessary, or supplied in full at the start of a shift.
3. An employer must provide outdoor employees with training in heat-illness recognition, prevention and emergency-response procedures.
4. The employer must have written compliance and emergency procedures and make them available upon request to employees and Cal/OSHA inspectors.

Taking these steps can greatly reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses and goes a long way toward keeping California's farm workers healthy and safe.

For a copy of the complete heat-illness prevention regulations or to order pocket-sized bilingual (English/Spanish) heat-stress education cards, please email heatstress@cfbf.com.

Additional resources and information can be found at <http://www.cfbf.com/programs/rhs/index.cfm>, www.fels.org and <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/heatillnessinfo.html>.



State Fund Files a 3.5 Percent Premium Decrease

Filing marks a 57 percent cumulative rate decrease since 2004

SAN FRANCISCO – State Compensation Insurance Fund today announced it filed a July 1, 2008 revision to its rating plan, which it anticipates will result in a 3.5% reduction in collectible premium. While base rates will remain unchanged, State Fund has expanded its merit rating and claims-free discount plans to lower rates for policies with superior safety records. The new rate filing will affect new and renewal workers' compensation policies with an effective date on or after July 1, 2008.

As State Fund expands its "claims-free" credit, some small employers with superior safety records will see their claims-free discount increase from 10% to 13% or 15%. Additionally, for the first time new business accounts to State Fund may also qualify for a claims-free credit based on experience with their prior carrier. "Promoting safe workplaces is a vital part of State Fund's mission and small business is the backbone of California's economy. We feel it is critical to pass on savings that recognize employers for maintaining safe workplaces," said State Fund President and CEO Janet Frank.

In addition State Fund is enlarging the range of accounts that qualify for its expanded merit rating plan allowing its underwriters greater discretion in pricing accounts generating more than \$100,000 in premium. State Fund's underwriters will be able to base more of the pricing decision on each individual account's experience, providing the opportunity for deeper discounts on accounts with excellent safety records.


"Since 2003 State Fund's rates have fallen steadily and this latest filing brings our cumulative decrease to 57% below pre-2004 reform levels" Frank added. "We have seen significant decreases in cost that are directly attributable to the 2004 passage of SB 899, the Governor's reform legislation, as well as AB 227 and SB 228 in 2003. State Fund has been committed to passing those savings back to employers in the form of lower rates to help California's economy continue to grow," Frank said.

State Fund has approximately 200,000 policyholders ranging from small businesses to large group associations. Created by the California Legislature in 1914, State Fund is a nonprofit, self-supporting, fairly competitive public enterprise that guarantees a permanent workers' compensation insurance marketplace at cost for California employers. State Fund has acted as both a moderating and stabilizing influence on the workers' compensation market.

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WASTING WATER IS NOT IN FARMER'S VOCABULARY

By Mike Wade, Executive Director, California Farm Water Coalition

California farmers all too often find themselves at the center of the bulls-eye because critics claim they use too much water. But, do they really use too much water?

People need to understand that a farmer is a businessman, just like the owner of the downtown hardware store. Both are in business to make money and one of the simplest ways to make money is to manage those expenses to avoid unnecessary costs.

Farmers pay for every gallon of water they use, whether it is delivered from a river or canal to their fields or pumped from the underground. The cost of delivered water varies according to location in our state and the source of water. The cost per acre foot (remember, one acre foot equals 325,000 gallons) to farmers can range from as low as \$6 to a high of more than \$800. If a farmer's water comes from the underground he must pay the energy cost to lift the water and, if you think power is cheap, just check your monthly utility bill for your home.

For the past 50 years farmers have sought ways to increase their efficiency in water applications. Micro irrigation, including drip systems, has become popular in vineyards and orchards, and more recently in row crops thanks to new technology. A grape grower in Napa County uses only a third of one acre foot of water per acre for an entire year to keep his vines alive and producing. In comparison, a grape grower in Santa Clara County uses 1.4 acre-feet. Why the difference between these grape growers? Plants growing in different regions require differing amounts of water to survive because of the temperatures and soils.


These grape growers, along with the rest of our farmers, are growing a crop for market. If there is no market for their crops then the future of growing their respective crops is drawn into question.


Thus, we arrive at the bottom line for the farmer. If he does not have a market for his crop then there is no reason to use the water and grow a crop. Looking even closer, it is the consumer who decides whether there will be a market for the crop...this means you.

Again, consider the hardware store owner...would he add to his expenses unnecessarily by keeping employees working when his store is closed? I think not. The same holds true for the farmer. Would a farmer add to his expenses by wasting water? Again, I think not.

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The official publication of
Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.
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A private, nonprofit organization serving farmers throughout Riverside County since 1917

Our 62nd Year of Publication: Volume LXII, Number 6, June 2008.

(USPS 466-900) Published monthly by Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc., a non-profit organization serving farmers and ranchers at 21160 Box Springs Road, #102, Moreno Valley, California 92557, Telephone 951/684-6732 or Fax 951/782-0621. Subscriptions: \$1 per year of membership dues. Periodicals postage paid at Riverside, California 92507, under act of March 3, 1887. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RIVERSIDE COUNTY FARM BUREAU, 21160 Box Springs Rd., #102, Moreno Valley, CA 92557.



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2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- ☼ June 24th - LE/CL TMDL meeting - 1:30 pm at the EVMWD office.
- ☼ June 26th - WRCAC meeting - 1pm at the Nuevo Water District office.
- ☼ The RCFB office will be closed on Friday, July 4th to observe Independence Day.
- ☼ JULY 9th - RCFB Board meeting at the Farm House Restaurant, Banning. The meeting begins at 5:30 pm.

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