

The official publication of Riverside County Farm Bureau, Inc.

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

Powerful Message Sent by Farm Bureau

After 3 ½ years of General Plan Advisory Committee meetings, the complex and technical countywide General Plan came to public hearings last week. Farm Bureau President, Cindy Domenigoni, made a compelling and factual presentation to the full Board of Supervisors on Thursday, March 13th. In her talk, she echoed the words of the county in recognizing agriculture as the county's number one industry, with gross revenue totaling more than \$1.2 Billion in the last published agricultural report. Mrs. Domenigoni then outlined the

proposed plans and the catastrophic negative impacts if the plans are implemented without change and consideration for agriculture.

In her comments, Mrs. Domenigoni noted several positive recommendations presented on the General Plan by senior county staff. However, she noted the industry's greatest concerns still lie in two topics: One is the euphemistically entitled "Certainty" system which is a concept that guarantees new land use restrictions that will control a farmers ability to sell their land or borrow against their land

value in order to plant crops or cover operating costs in down trend years.

The second concept threatens the worst impacts of all to farmers...the Agriculture Mitigation Bank. This surprise recommendation by General Plan EIR consultants, LSA Company, was never discussed in the entire 3½ year process. The proposed concept would require any farmer to contribute into a land bank if they find themselves forced to sell their land for any unforeseen reason. The mitigation would require a farmer selling his land to contribute into a land bank 1 acre for every acre sold. In some cases the mitigation would be 1 acre for every 4 acres sold.

Any Agriculture Mitigation Bank theory or practice spells the doom and eventual extinction of agriculture in Riverside County if the concept is approved. Voting Farm Bureau members are invited to call Sharon Bolton, Executive Director of the Riverside Farm Bureau, for further details.



Cindy Domenigoni, Riverside Farm Bureau President, makes a detailed presentation to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.

Riverside Farm Bureau heads to Washington DC!

Attorney Michele Staples, Executive Director Sharon Bolton, and President Cindy Domenigoni traveled to Washington DC to meet with key legislators (pictured: Congressman Jerry Lewis), to explain the devastating impacts that the Riverside County MSHCP could have on agriculture if passed unchanged. **See page 2 for more information.**



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Farm Bureau goes to Washington DC

The Washington DC meetings were an opportunity to present legislators with detailed MSHCP information of the possible impacts to agriculture if passed as written.

Farmers, ranchers and growers continued to make their case to adhere to the original Planning Agreement of 1998 which called for a voluntary, incentive based plan based on sound science. The Western Riverside County MSHCP, if adopted, must ensure compensation to private property owners and protect agriculture while continuing to allow greatest flexibility for this important industry. Directors believe there could be positive resolution to issues presented in the current program.

Voting members of Farm Bureau are invited to call Sharon Bolton, Executive Director of the Riverside Farm Bureau, for further details.

Riverside President Cindy Domenigoni and Michele Staples of law firm Jackson, DeMarco and Peckenpaugh, and Sharon Bolton, Executive Director (not shown), met with Julie MacDonald, Assistant Secretary to Judge Craig Manson of the Department of the Interior, and Randall Bowman.



Discussions regarding Riverside County's flawed Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan were held with numerous members of Congress. Pictured with President Domenigoni is Congressman Ken Calvert.



Cindy Domenigoni and Michele Staples discuss the MSHCP with Congressman Richard Pombo's, Chairman of the Resources Committee, legislative assistant, Matt Miller. (Sharon Bolton not pictured.)

News in Brief...

Farm aid provided in spending bill

Farmers who suffered disastrous losses as a result of drought, freeze and other weather problems may qualify for federal aid. The final spending bill passed by Congress last week includes \$3.1 billion dollars in farm disaster relief. California fruit and nut growers who lost more than 35 percent of their crop may be eligible for up to \$80,000 dollars in aid apiece.

Con artists exploiting disease concerns

Scam artists are operating in the Southern California exotic Newcastle disease quarantine zone. The task force fighting the poultry disease says these con artists offer to disinfect premises for a fee, which is both deceptive and illegal. If a property is contaminated with exotic Newcastle disease, the government cleans and disinfects at no charge. The task force says all its personnel carry photo identification.

High gas prices pinch greenhouse industry

Rising natural gas prices are causing concerns for California greenhouse operators. Prices have reached their highest level in two years and colder temperatures will mean much higher energy costs for greenhouse flower and vegetable growers. California natural gas prices aren't as high as they are in the Eastern states where extreme cold helped trigger the price hikes. A San Diego County grower cooperative has started operations to moderate member natural gas costs.

Watch out, Wisconsin!

California has moved another step closer to becoming the nation's "Big Cheese." Preliminary estimates show California set another cheese production record last year. The state

Department of Food and Agriculture reports that more than 1.7 billion pounds of cheese was produced in the state. That's up 5 percent from the previous year. Industry experts predict California will overtake cheese-production leader Wisconsin about the middle of this decade.

ALRB approves mediation regulations

The state Agricultural Labor Relations Board has approved most of the regulations needed to enforce a controversial new labor law. Meeting in Sacramento yesterday, the board adopted regulations for a law that would impose binding mediation in farm-labor contracts. The board also delayed action on regulations dealing with subpoena powers under the new law. Farm groups have challenged the law in court as unconstitutional.

Sharpshooter battle gets boost

With the state facing a budget crisis, pest fighters welcome an infusion of federal money to fight the glassy-winged sharpshooter. The federal government will provide \$26 million dollars to battle the insect. The sharpshooter infests parts of 14 California counties. The money will pay for efforts to halt the pest's movement and to seek a cure for the

plant disease it carries. Pierce's disease kills grapevines and other plants.

Budget woes will cost farmers

Farmers and ranchers should brace for higher costs, a budget analyst says, because of California's state budget crisis. Speaking to a California Farm Bureau conference in Sacramento yesterday (February 27th), budget consultant Carolyn Jensen said state legislators and agencies have proposed a wide variety of new fees on businesses and farms. Not all of the proposals will pass, she said, but those that do could become permanent new fees.

Officials praise Williamson Act

Pressure is building to restore money to a key state farmland-preservation program. For a second straight year, Governor Davis has proposed cutting money for the Williamson Act program. It lowers property-tax bills for farmers who agree to maintain their land in agricultural use. At least 18 county boards of supervisors have adopted resolutions seeking to save the program, and 30 Assembly members signed a letter urging continued state funding.

-- News items credited to California Farm Bureau Federation.

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You Must Be a Farm Bureau Member for at Least 30 Days To Be Eligible for Cash Back Offer

Farm Bureau Leadership Conference discusses insurance rates

During the California Farm Bureau Leadership Conference (February), Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi spoke on the rising costs of workers compensation insurance.

Don Bean, member of the Riverside Farm Bureau Board of Directors, questioned Garamendi on what was driving the insurance rates up. Garamendi attributed the continuing

increases to the rising costs of health care and the cost of claims won by trial lawyers. Having worked to control insurance rate increases in the past, Don Bean continues to be active in this important issue.



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Serious Poultry Disease Warning

Exotic Newcastle Disease in Poultry/Birds

Exotic Newcastle disease is a serious poultry disease that primarily affects chickens. The disease has been found in Southern California. However, if you have birds, you should be alert to this disease. If your birds become ill or die or if you are aware of any neighbor's birds that may be affected, please call us immediately at 1-800-491-1899. We will arrange for a free veterinary evaluation of your bird.

To help protect your birds from this serious threat, please follow these precautions:

- Check your birds daily for signs of illness and call us immediately if they become ill
- Keep your birds at home; do not move them to any other location
- Don't visit live bird markets as the disease may be present at these locations and it can be transported back to your birds
- Funds are available to purchase flocks diagnosed with this disease, so it is critical to have the free laboratory tests if this illness is suspected
- This disease does not pose a threat to human health and does not affect the safety of poultry and egg products

Signs of the Disease

- Sneezing, coughing and gasping for air
- Nasal discharge
- Greenish, watery diarrhea
- Depression, muscular tremors, drooping wings, twisting of the head and neck, complete paralysis
- Drop in egg production and thin-shelled eggs
- Swelling around the eyes and in the neck
- Sudden death

If you have questions or require assistance please call us at

1-800-491-1899

Farm Leader: "Time To Implement Country-of-Origin Labeling"

Backed by consumer surveys showing strong support for country-of-origin labeling, the California Farm Bureau Federation urges the U.S. Department of Agriculture to responsibly implement labeling provisions that were approved in the 2002 Farm Bill. Federation President Bill Pauli, in comments to USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said "it's past the time for studying; now is the time to implement the program." Legislation for the implementation of country-of-origin labeling was introduced as an amendment to the Farm Bill by Congresswoman Mary Bono, 45th district.

"We believe USDA has the opportunity to develop a fair and equitable process to implement the new law. We strongly support country-of-origin labeling provisions passed by the 2002 Farm Bill because it will provide farmers the opportunity to identify their products and consumers the ability to make informed shopping decisions," said Pauli.

Pauli noted that various consumer surveys show upwards of 70 percent of produce shoppers support country-of-origin labeling. A March 1999 survey by Wirthlin Worldwide revealed that 86 percent of consumers support country-of-origin labeling of meat products.

"Clearly consumers have spoken on what they want. Our farmers, who operate in a very competitive global marketplace, would be better able to compete if they could tout their products as home-grown," said Pauli.

Farm Bureau expressed concern that the USDA's initial meat labeling requirement goes too far to require the ability to trace back the source of meat to individual U.S. ranches. Pauli said the regulations should instead focus on animals and meat entering the United States for identification.

"USDA has proposed regulations that will make this process far more costly and time-consuming to implement than necessary. Live cattle entering the U.S. for feeding and processing are said to account for only 5 percent of the total beef processed," Pauli said. "If correct, the identification of these live animals in conjunction with health inspections already required, would be the logical place to start implementing country-of-origin labeling. We believe additional requirements to trace-back the source of the other 95 percent of the beef in this country is unnecessary."

Pauli acknowledged that considerable pressure is being applied to USDA to further study the labeling requirement.

"It is past the time for studying; it is time to implement the program," Pauli said. "Nearly all of our major trading partners now label our meat exports as U.S. origin."

Pauli, responding to arguments that the labeling provisions will lead to a loss of exports or higher costs, said such predictions are "largely conjecture."

"It is the responsibility of USDA to carry out this program in a cost-effective, efficient and accurate manner," said Pauli. "It's time to look for workable solutions. The concept of country-of-origin labeling carries a strong meaning for our members. It's important to them that this matter be given careful consideration."

10 Minutes That Could Save Your Life

On **Wednesday, May 14th**, **St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church** will offer Riverside County Farm Bureau members the opportunity to spend a few minutes doing something that could quite possibly save their lives.

Life Line Screening will offer three primary health screenings to detect the risk of stroke and vascular disease. These tests include a Carotid Artery Screening Test, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) test, and an Ankle Brachial Index (ABI).

On that day, Life Line Screening will also offer a bone density screening which tests for the early detection of osteoporosis.

These fast, painless, and low cost tests use ultrasound technology and are conducted by a registered or registered eligible Ultrasound Technologist. A board

certified physician reviews the results of each test to ensure accuracy of the results before the findings are mailed to each individual. Individuals whose screening suggest further evaluation are encouraged to seek appropriate follow-up care with their own physician.

Anyone interested in either the vascular or osteoporosis screenings must register at least 24 hours in advance. Please call 1-800-643-6075 to schedule an appointment for the tests. The vascular tests are offered for \$45 dollars each, which compare to between \$300 and \$500 for similar diagnostic tests offered by hospitals and imaging centers.

Life Line Screening is the nation's leading provider of health screenings. By offering the public non-invasive, painless, ultrasound

screenings, Life Line helps patients identify their risk for stroke and the presence of vascular disease or osteoporosis early enough for their physician to begin preventative methods.

St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church is located at 10915 Pigeon Pass Road in Moreno Valley.

Also available at the screening site will be free information on the identification and control of risk factors, how to recognize the warning signs and symptoms of stroke and other vascular diseases as well as helpful information regarding osteoporosis.

For additional information on Life Line Screening or any one of their stroke and osteoporosis detection tests, please contact Life Line Screening at (800) 643-6075.



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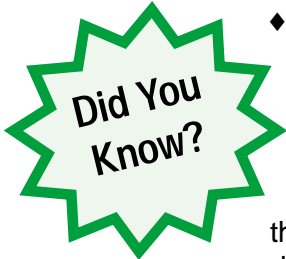
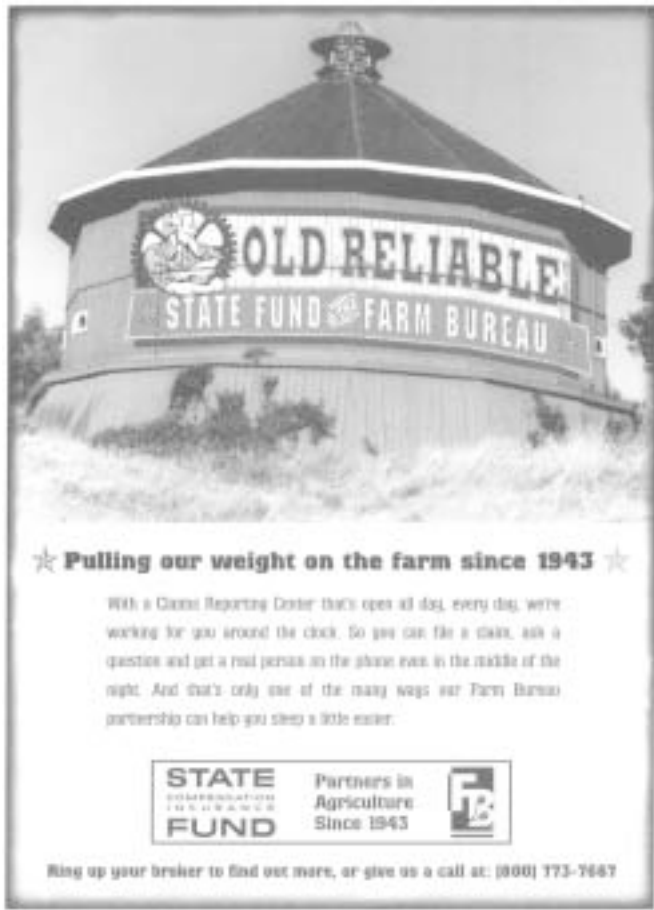
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◆ The Golden State produces 72 percent of the nation's vegetables and melons valued at \$6.15 billion. From the traditional Mardi Gras rice and seafood dishes to the vegetarian dishes served during Purim and Lent, Spring's many holidays provide abundant opportunities for California agriculture to shine.

- ◆ Farm Bureau sources report that California contributes two of its top five agricultural commodities to the production of chocolate. Chocolate manufacturers use about 40 percent of the world's almonds in candy and 3.5 million pounds of whole milk every day.
- ◆ California leads the nation in production of alfalfa hay for the growing dairy industry. The value of all hay increased 33 percent and was California's highest-valued field crop at \$1.02 billion. Hay is Riverside County's 6th highest valued crop at \$53.5 million.

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