



CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

FRIDAY REVIEW

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL UPDATE

February 24, 2012

Farm Bureau continues to participate on CDFA's Direct Marketing Ad Hoc Committee to provide advice on how to improve food access and promote farm direct sales. This committee was formed last fall to review and provide recommendation on the existing direct marketing programs, such as certified farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, and farm stands. The committee is tasked with making recommendations on potential statutory and regulatory improvements to California direct marketing programs. The committee is beginning to discuss specific proposals for certified farmers' markets and farm stands. Additionally, there is currently no definition or program overseeing community supported agriculture sales and specific proposals of how to regulate these sales are being developed. The committee hopes to have its work complete by this July. More information about the specific proposals will be provided at Farm Bureau's upcoming Leader's Conference scheduled for March 13th in Sacramento.

Legislation was introduced that would allow a combination of coupled vehicles to operate only on certain sections of highway in San Benito County if they do not exceed 75 feet in total length. SB 1155 (Anthony Cannella R-Ceres) would allow vehicle combinations consisting of a motor truck and two trailers, with the trailers not exceeding 28 feet 6 inches in length, that are used exclusively to transport agricultural products from the field to either the first point of handling and return or to a designated truck route and return. This allowance would be granted with certain restrictions: the vehicles cannot be driven on an interstate highway, the vehicles cannot be driven at a speed higher than 50 miles per hour, they would have to submit to inspection by the CHP and the County of San Benito would be required to adopt an ordinance authorizing the exemption before it could be in force. Farm Bureau is in support.

The Senate Agriculture Committee held a hearing in Salinas on February 24th focused on regulatory impacts, including the Irrigated Lands Conditional Waiver in the Central Coast. The hearing was organized with three panels, one focused on the regulatory impacts on agriculture with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, California Farm Bureau and Western Growers on the panel; another addressing the impacts on food processors with the California Air Resources Board, Del Mar Food Products Corp., Ingomar Packing Company and Pacific Coast Producers on the panel; and a third panel addressing the Draft Agriculture Order from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for irrigated agriculture with the regional board, Monterey County Farm Bureau and the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California as panelists. Farm Bureau has been actively engaged in these issues in recent years. Rich Matteis, CFBF Administrator, provided testimony on a range of regulatory issues that face the agricultural community and proposed mechanisms for providing regulatory relief to farmers and ranchers.

Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, will hold a Water Forum February 29th to educate students and the public about the Draft Agriculture Order that is currently before the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Forum will have a panel discussion with presentations from a farmer, California Farm Bureau and the Central Coast Regional Board. The audience will be allowed to ask questions.

A study conducted by UC Davis on nitrates in groundwater that has been in the making for several years is anticipated to be publicly released March 13th after a legislative briefing earlier in the day. [SBx2 1](#) (Don Perata, D-Oakland) added Water Code Section 83002.5 requiring the State Water Board, in consultation with other agencies, to develop pilot projects in the Tulare Lake Basin and the Salinas Valley. The bill directed the State Water Resources Control Board to create an interagency task force as needed, to oversee the pilot projects to study nitrate contamination, and identify remedial solutions and funding options to recover costs associated with cleanup or treatment of groundwater and to report to the Legislature within two years. Farm Bureau will continue to monitor this effort closely. For more information go to the State Water Board website at:
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nitrate_project/index.shtml