

Agrarian *advocate*

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CSA Conference Huge Success

by Jered Lawson

"To create community we need to love each other, trust each other, and help each other; that is hard."

— Wendell Berry,

In Defense of the Family Farm

Referring to the quote above in her presentation about developing community supported farms, Gloria Decater, co-farmer of the Live Power Community Farm in Covelo, Ca., said, "It is hard. It's a lot of work, but it's worth it... I feel (the rewards) from our community. I feel trusted, I feel loved, and as a farmer, which doesn't always happen, I feel respected."

Gloria was among the 375 attendees of the first Western Region CSA Conference held in San Francisco, California, where the philosophical underpinnings and practical experiences of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) were shared. CSA farms sell shares in the production of the farm to consumers, and each share holder receives a weekly box of mixed produce directly from the farmer delivered to the share-



Farmers from across the country shared information and answered questions about how to run a successful CSA from the field to the dinner table.

holder's neighborhood.

The highlight of the conference for many was the sold-out evening event open to the public. Helena Norberg-Hodge from the International Society for Ecology and Culture, Alice Waters from

Chez Panisse restaurant, and Cathrine Sneed from the Garden Project in San Francisco, discussed the topic of "strengthening our communities through farming and gardening." From the

See CSA, page 7

Developers Forced to Reckon with Water Limits

by Adrienne Alvord

As statewide water demands outstrip supply, a new law takes a first step toward sensible water use planning. A diverse coalition of organizations, including CAFF, helped pass California Senate Bill 901, which for the first time requires local governments to check with local utilities to make sure water supplies are available before approving large new developments.

The bill's sponsor, State Senator Jim Costa (D-Fresno), thanked CAFF by saying, "I greatly appreciate your strong support for SB 901, my water supply planning bill. Without the efforts of the Community Alliance with Family

Farmers and others, our success would not have been possible." CAFF's Rural Water Impact Network, which leads the organization's effort to keep members and farm communities informed on water and land use issues, provided information and contacts to support SB 901. CAFF provided community-based support for the bill through letter-writing campaigns to legislators, committees, and Governor Wilson.

While CAFF and others concerned about over-allocation of state water believe that the bill does not go far enough in protecting water supplies of existing users, it is an important first step. Linking water supply availability to land use planning and development would

seem to be common sense—it's recommended by the California Department of Water Resources in its most recent five-year statewide water supply plan. However, developers often overlook potential water supply problems.

Of particular concern is the 110 new housing developments that are currently approved or pending approval across California (see map, page 7). Almost half of these projects identify the State Water Project as the primary or alternative source for water, yet the SWP, a major agricultural water supplier, is currently 100% over-allocated. Other identified sources include the Central Valley Project, also currently over-allocated, and

See Water, page 7

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Agrarian Advocate, a bimonthly publication of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), is a voice for the growing movement of farmers, consumers, and environmentalists to foster alternative, community and family centered agriculture.

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Kai Siedenber, and Tom Haller
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CAFF is a non-profit membership organization. Become a member of CAFF today and join our growing community dedicated to changing California agriculture from the ground up. Benefits of membership include a free subscription to the *Agrarian Advocate*, invitations to CAFF activities in your area, and discounts on other CAFF publications. Additionally, you will become part of an active, effective voice to foster family-based agriculture that builds healthy communities, cares for the land, and sustains local economies.

Membership levels are \$75 business \$35 family \$25 individual/non-profit, and \$15 low income. CAFF also encourages contributions of any size to support our work.

Because we work to change public policies, contributions to CAFF are not tax-deductible.

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CAFF CORNER

Changing Agriculture from the Ground Up

by Thomas Nelson

CAFF member Mark Van Horn recently remarked that when an organization has been moving at 150 miles per hour for more than two years, it's a good idea to slow down and figure out where you've ended up. He was referring to CAFF's tremendous growth in staff, resources, and recognition, since the California Action Network and California Association of Family Farmers partnered in 1993. In keeping with Mark's advice, we recently held an organizational retreat, and a strategic planning initiative is ongoing.

Just before the holidays, CAFF staff and board gathered for a two-day vision and planning retreat at R.H. White Center in Northern California. We reviewed our accomplishments, honed our vision, created action plans — not to mention playing exciting matches of ping-pong and walking in the Redwoods.

Through strategic planning, we'll continue to work on many themes discussed at the retreat. We're looking outward for new organizing opportunities and better ways to communicate with the public. We're also looking inward to clarify our mission and weigh organizational restructuring options. Star-gazing aside, one retreat outcome I'm happy to report is CAFF's renewed commitment to working with members to make change from the ground up. Below are four areas of work that reflect this commitment.

Welcome!

CAFF made a strong commitment to better serve members and broaden our base of support by hiring Adair Schwarz to become Membership Coordinator last November.

Adair brings a solid background in membership development and community organizing from her many years working with a variety of non-profits, including Citizen Action and the Sacramento Valley Toxics Campaign. She has organized around a broad range of issues from



PHOTO: NANCY GALLERY

- CAFF is organizing a series of strategic planning sessions to gather input from members and allies. These focus groups will help us to clarify CAFF's mission and assess our mix of program activities. The sessions are scheduled for late

January through early February in Pacific Grove, Sanger, and Woodland. We

welcome your participation. If you want more information please feel free to give me a call at the CAFF office.

- Staff are working closely with chapter leaders throughout the state to invigorate local chapter organizing. The current push has revolved around assisting with election of local and state board representatives (see below). If you couldn't make the meeting, contact your chapter contact (see back page) for a meeting recap. We're also planning a Chapter Development Retreat for early spring to improve collaboration between the state organization and chapters. Look for an update in the next issue of the Advocate.
- CAFF is developing a policy program

health-care reform to water policy to pesticide reduction.

In fact, Adair has experience working directly on our issues. In 1994, she directed a Central Valley-wide canvass to generate support for our BIOS bill, which led to the creation of the Biologically Integrated Farming Systems program at the University of California. When asked about the potential for building membership at CAFF, Adair says, "When I consider the groundbreaking achievements of CAFF and the many challenges still to come, I feel that the time is especially ripe to build our membership."

Those who have met Adair know that she brings a great deal of enthusiasm and confidence to her work. Welcome Adair — we look forward to a growing and thriving membership! ★



PHOTO: MARTIN BARNES

Undaunted by the darkness and chill and plagued by three days of storms and power outages, board and staff came out smiling at the annual CAFF retreat. Despite challenging conditions, the retreat produced a renewed vision and an exciting plan of action for 1996.

that will be driven by CAFF members and activists. The Rural Policy Council, introduced in the last issue, is now recruiting members who want to actively serve on the Council. The Policy Council has also been busy bringing together farmers to formulate recommendations for reforms of the Department of Pesticide Regulation now underway (see center spread on page 4).

- Finally, we want to facilitate greater communication with and between members. Enclosed is a survey of local and state issues. We want to hear what the most important issues are for you. This issue of the Advocate also contains a calendar of CAFF-related activities. If there are any future events you want listed, call Adair at the office. ★

Board Nominations

Nominations for At-Large State Board members are open for the 1996 year. This year five such positions will be filled. These positions are for a one year term beginning with the first State Board meeting on February 28.

According to CAFF by-laws, nominations are to come from any chapter, committee, or individual member of the organization. This includes any member who wishes to nominate himself or herself. Nominations should be in writing and include a brief biographical sketch and reasons why this nominee would make a good CAFF Board member. This information should be sent to the CAFF office by February 12. ★

Member Profile

Twentysomething Sows Seeds for the Future

by Pam Kasey

Jana Barstow is a new CAFF member and a force to be reckoned with in the future of California agriculture. She is the enthusiastic founding president of Ag Link, an innovative California organization that is working to preserve agricultural land and rural communities (see sidebar).

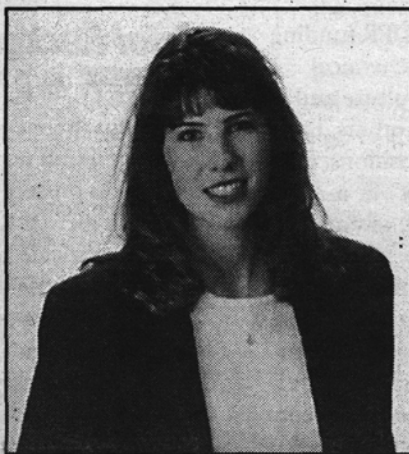
Jana's enthusiasm drives her to work hard. She founded Ag Link during her second year at California Polytechnic State University, where she graduated in 1995 and became the full-time marketing director for California Independent Almond Growers. While at Cal Poly, her curiosity about a magazine article describing Nebraska's Land Link Realty led Jana to a 1993 Minnesota conference of the six existing farm linking programs. Inspired by the concept of helping beginning farmers acquire land by linking them up with retiring farmers, she incorporated Ag Link that same summer. Jana began to promote the idea to county Farm Bureaus, Cooperative Extension offices, and university agriculture departments. She also met with Henry Voss when he was Director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture to win his department's endorsement. While completing her last two years of college, she worked to create relationships with lawyers, accountants, and others who have since become important resources for Ag Link.

If one asks why she's so motivated to help farmers sell and buy land, Jana has

plenty to say. Her own family got into almond farming when her father, an agricultural equipment salesman, was approached by a retiring farm couple in the 1960s. They felt he would be perfect to farm their land. Knowing he did not have the resources to buy it outright, the couple offered Jana's father a crop-share arrangement that allowed him to pay off the property using a yearly percentage of the farm's profits. "My dad was just trying to get his feet on the ground. This was an opportunity for him to develop a lifestyle that his family could be proud of." Today, the Barstow family's 250-acre almond farm is an inspiring example of a creative and successful farm transfer.

That's family history. In the present, Jana sees her neighbors' children go off

PHOTO JOHN MICHAEL TERRY



New members like Jana Barstow are bringing enthusiasm and inspirational ideas to CAFF chapters across the state.

one by one to make their fortunes, leaving the future of their family farms uncertain. "That's a small example of what you see happening in the whole state," she notes. Yet, while her neighbors' children headed for the cities, Jana's classmates at Cal Poly were "a lot of ambitious and excited ag students who don't come from ag backgrounds and don't have land coming to them." Jana, who envisions her grandchildren growing up in an environment

similar to her own childhood home, sees Ag Link as an important step toward preventing the loss of agricultural land and preserving the rural way of life for future generations.

Building a new organization while holding down a full-time job is hard work, but Jana is energized when her interest is shared by others. A 1993 Ag Link survey showed that when the time comes to retire, most of the 200 farmers surveyed strongly support finding young farmers to keep the land in production. The establishment of ten additional linking programs across the country since the 1993 conference also affirms that this is an idea whose time has come.

Most important among Jana's influences have been her parents. She describes them as "self-employed and very equal partners in business" and energetic like herself. "Growing up, I was involved in millions of things — clubs and organizations — my parents were the boy scout and girl scout leaders." She also credits the girl scouts and Future Farmers of America in shaping her career.

Jana speaks intelligently about the future of agriculture. She points out the need to make information about family

farming available to people in cities, who have the political capital to sway decisions affecting rural communities. Regarding her own future, not surprisingly, Jana sees herself and her brother one day taking on her parents' farm, "but they're not going to give it to us." Jana says the family will agree on an arrangement similar to those Ag Link is working to arrange for other farmers. ★

Pam Casey interned with the CAFF Rural Policy Council and lives in the Bay Area.

Ag Link: Continuing the Tradition of Family Farming

California's Ag Link program, established in 1993, is patterned after the Center for Rural Affairs' Land Link program in Nebraska which matches retiring farmers with beginning farmers. The "land link model" is an effort to counter the nationwide trend of more farmers retiring than beginning.

Dozens of states have since adopted this proactive approach toward increasing the pool of young farmers and preserving agricultural land. Most land link programs are either privately run or affiliated with a state program such as cooperative extension and strive to not only match farmers but also to educate the public about farming and related policies.

What Ag Link Does

Ag Link's mission is to provide today's farmers the opportunity to buy, lease, or sell land by connecting beginning and existing farmers with retiring farmers in order to insure the continuance of the long-time tradition of family farming.

Ag Link serves this mission by:

- maintaining a statewide database networking system
- analyzing the status and needs of current farmers
- publishing a regular newsletter providing information to registered participants
- matching retiring farmers and ranchers with appropriate beginning or existing farmers and ranchers
- providing consultation services and guidance to all participants in the areas of real estate, financing, and sustainable farming practices

There is a \$15 fee to fill out a complete profile and be placed in the Ag Link computer network. This includes a subscription to the newsletter.

For more information, contact Jana Barstow at:
Ag Link, P.O. Box 1, Ballico, CA 95303
(209) 634-8849 or (800) 588-LINK



Ag Link addresses the problem of an aging farmer population by matching young farmers with those who are retiring.

Volunteer Opportunity

NEEDED: three enthusiastic members/ friends to volunteer with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), March 15-17 at the 1996 Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim, CA. Join us for a day-long shift (includes time to see the show) to promote CAFF and sell our brand new edition of the 1996 National Organic Directory to industry folks from around the globe. See what's happening on the cutting edge of the natural and organic products industry! Interested volunteers may call Carol Klesow at the CAFF office: (916) 756-8518.

Crisis and Opportunity

Funding For Pesticide Regulation Sunsets

by Steve Schwartz

Few issues debated in Sacramento in 1996 will have as broad an impact on the long-term future of California agriculture than the mill tax debate. This coming legislative battle will determine the future of the Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR), the government agency charged with protecting people and the environment through the regulation of pesticide sales and use. The mill tax, an assessment on every pound of active ingredient of pesticide sold in California, accounts for more than sixty percent of the DPR's current budget.

If no new legislation passes this year, the mill tax will "sunset" or revert back to less than half its current level. This could result in more than a 35% cut in the department's budget which would severely impact its programs to protect public health as well as its programs designed to help farmers reduce their use of agri-chemicals.

As the debate over the DPR funding and mission heats up, the chemical industry, production agriculture and environmentalists, among others, have begun to stake out their positions. CAFF is representing the views of our members, including farmers, who want increased support for reducing reliance on chemicals.

CAFF's unique contribution to this debate will be to focus everyone's attention on the need to adequately fund alternative crop management systems. Executive Director Tom Haller commented, "We want to see a DPR with adequate funding to ensure protection of consumers, farmers, and the environment. A crucial component of this will be support of increased funding for crop management systems that significantly reduce the need to use chemicals."

Brief Background on DPR & Mill Tax

The Department of Pesticide Regulation is charged with regulating pesticide sales and use to protect public health and the environment. DPR's budget is used to enforce pesticide regulations, study new pesticides for risk to human health and efficacy, maintain data on pesticide usage, certify Pest Control Advisors and "maintain the safety of the pesticide workplace". Another crucial, but sometimes overlooked part of the DPR mission statement is to "encourage the development and use of reduced-risk pest control practices." It is under this mandate that DPR has been active with the Biologically Integrated Farming Systems (BIFS), IPM Innovators, and the Pest Management Advisory Committee programs.

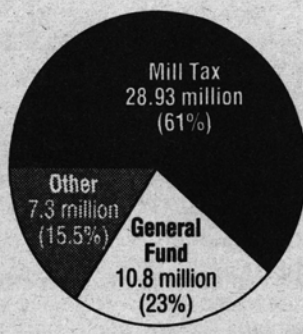
The current mill tax assessment is 2.2 cents on the dollar, which brings in approximately \$29 million every year to DPR. Without passage of a new bill, the level of the mill tax will revert back to the 1989 level of .09 cents on the dollar of active ingredient pesticide sold. The Directors of DPR are working on the assumption that the amount of money going to County Agricultural Commissioners would remain constant. The result would be an approximately fifty percent cut in the budget for state operations.

Some in the chemical industry consider that just fine. One key lobbyist for production agriculture in Sacramento described the chemical industry's goal in the mill tax debate as "downsizing the DPR to an organization that churns out new registrations on new products and does little else."

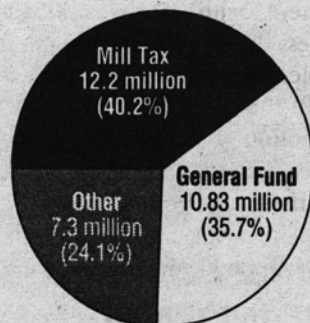
Proponents of renewing current mill tax funding levels charge that DPR needs the funding to do its work. They worry that allowing the mill tax to sunset would cause DPR's budget to dwindle substantially and ultimately eliminate hard

Sources of DPR Funding

Proposed For 1996-1997^A



Projected For 1997-1998 If Current Mill Tax Not Reauthorized This Year^B

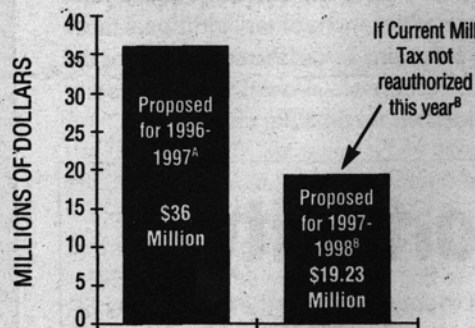


DPR's revenues from the mill tax would drop from a maximum of 28.927 million dollars to 12.2 million dollars if no new reauthorization bill passes this year.

A) Proposed by Governor. B) Assuming no other changes in budget.

DPR Expenditures For State Operations

(Currently accounts for about 3/4 of total DPR spending)



DPR funding for state operations could be cut in half if the mill tax is allowed to sunset. This cut would cripple DPR's capacity to regulate and enforce pesticide laws. CAFF is concerned that DPR's already small biological farming programs would also be severely impacted.

fought protections created by the Birth Defects Prevention Act and other California laws. In fact some environmental and university sources have called to increase the tax to 2.5 cents or higher. Production agriculture, meanwhile, will likely support a level somewhere between .9 cents and 2.2 cents.

Though the chemical industry pays the tax, the costs are passed on to the farmer, and, as a result, CAFF believes agriculture should have the lead in this debate. DPR has a primary responsibility to help maintain a long-term positive reputation for agriculture by enforcing regulations that protect people and the environment from dangerous chemicals.

If DPR lives up to this responsibility then farmers will not have to worry that they will use a chemical this year and find out next year that they are being attacked in the press, or that their children or grandchildren are at risk because of its use. CAFF also believes that if DPR does not meet its responsibilities, state laws that have made California a national leader in farmer and farm worker safety could become meaningless pieces of paper.

Whose Interests Are at Stake?

While production agriculture and the chemical industry will be very active in this debate, it is not yet clear to what degree the environmental community will invest resources. Production agriculture is active in fighting to keep DPR from over-regulating — making sure DPR does not unreasonably tie the hands of farmers. The Farm Bureau, Agricultural Council and other groups will have a strong voice on every proposed reform. Environmentalists want to ensure DPR is vigilant in enforcing regulations. Their focus will be on maintaining tough standards created by the Birth Defects Prevention Act (which CAFF helped pass) and other legislation guiding DPR enforcement.

Formulating CAFF's Position

Beginning last fall, CAFF began organizing to ensure that our members' views are central to the debate over the future of DPR. Formation of a CAFF Working Group on DPR reform (see above article, "Public Speaks Up") led to a dominating CAFF presence at public hearing last fall, formal written comments, and a meeting between CAFF and DPR directors. By the end of January, DPR Director Jim Wells and Cal-EPA Under Secretary Jack Pandol will have met with CAFF members and farmers in six counties.

CAFF's ongoing input into the mill tax debate will be based on comments from the our DPR Reform Working Group as well as from farmers and other members

Public Speaks Up on DPR Reforms

Beginning in Mid-September the Department of Pesticide Regulation began a review of itself asking for public input on the question "What should this department look like if it were built from the ground up?" Answers drawn from various perspectives at focus group meetings were compiled without editing into what is called the "Strawman" document. This summary of varied and often conflicting proposals will inform DPR's future planning and may lead to several new bills and administrative orders.

Should DPR be reshaped and, if so, how? The answer, not surprisingly depends on who is answering the question. Those who have chosen to answer this question so far have included chemical companies, representatives of production agriculture and environmental groups, and, of course, CAFF.

Based on discussions with CAFF's DPR Reform Working Group and comments from Lighthouse Farm Participants, CAFF made comments on the reforms proposed in the Strawman Document. (See "CAFF's Position, at right). CAFF's Richard Reed says "CAFF has both criticized and cooperated with the Department. We need to work together to defend the essential functions the Department performs while at the same time demanding more efficiency and a deeper commitment of resources to programs such as BIFS."

The Department finds itself in a predicament where, as part of a rhetorically anti-tax, anti-regulation campaign by the Wilson Administration, they need to justify an extension of a tax used to regulate chemical companies and farmers. To accomplish this they'll

need the backing of consumer and environmental groups which in the past have often criticized DPR for not being vigilant enough with enforcement of pesticide regulations. They will also need support from rural Republican legislators likely to be anti-EPA, anti-tax, and shall we say "open-minded" to the value that chemical companies provided our economy.

CAFF too is in a predicament. While CAFF recognizes the value of the Department's work to promote alternative pest management systems, and maintain accurate and accessible records of pesticide usage, we also recognize how DPR has in some cases gone too far in its efforts to approve conditions under which certain chemicals can be used.

The CAFF Position

Following is a partial list of CAFF recommendations for reform of DPR:

- DPR should continue work which supports whole systems approaches such as the BIOS/BIFS programs. DPR's work through the IPM Innovator Award and the Pest Management Advisory Committee grant programs are steps in the right direction. A significantly higher proportion of the Department's funds should go to these types of programs.
- DPR needs to focus on moving agriculture in the direction of less reliance on the harsher (most toxic, broad spectrum) chemicals.
- DPR should require that all Pest

Control Advisors (PCA's) demonstrate proficiency in non-chemical pest management. This would include increasing the required number of hours for PCA's continuing education credits focused in the area of non-chemical pest management.

- DPR should add a category to the Pesticide Use Report form to list the specific pests the grower is attempting to control. This simple addition will help us to target research and extension efforts for alternative management systems.
- DPR needs adequate funding and enforcement capacity to better protect public health and the environment. This is particularly important for residents in rural areas close to sites of frequent pesticide applications.

If you would like to be involved, we welcome your input. Please contact Steve Schwartz at the CAFF office, (916) 756-8518, for more information.

over the next few months.

So far, CAFF's written response has noted that most CAFF farmers are against a broad mandatory reduction program. Every farmer needs the availability of a range of tools and flexibility is necessary to respond to differences between locations and to avoid pesticide resistance.

With these concerns in mind, CAFF proposed that the DPR should focus on the most toxic chemicals, and should be expected to establish specific reduction goals for these targeted chemicals. This would be acceptable under the conditions that 1) a range of alternative man-

agement techniques are available to address the same pest management problem (chemical or non-chemical); and 2) the department will assist in the promotion of these alternative techniques. (See attached box for a summary of the key points).

Mill Tax Debate is Just Heating Up

Most likely, a number of competing bills that include varying levels of funding for DPR will be introduced in the Legislature during January and February. The debate

Write a Letter

Write a short letter or postcard to your state senator and/or assembly person. The following are some suggestions:

- Keep it short, simple, and to the point.
- Identify yourself as a voter in their district.
- Identify yourself as a member of CAFF.
- Urge them to support legislative language that earmarks a percentage of mill tax revenues for programs that develop and extend alternative farm management techniques, including the Biologically Integrated Farming Systems (BIFS) program.
- Please send CAFF a copy of your letter for our records so we can follow up in holding our elected officials accountable.

Send letters to: The Honorable (name of your state senator and/or state assembly person), State Capitol, Sacramento, CA 95814.

will heat up by late spring as the battles move into the fiscal committees of the Legislature. CAFF will need to be active throughout in trying to influence the legislators who will have the power to decide the level of support for the entire Department, as well funding for alternative agriculture programs. ★

Steve Schwartz coordinates the CAFF Rural Policy Council.



POLICY UPDATES

National Family Farm Conference Report

The National Family Farm Coalition Annual Meeting last month led to a newly focused campaign to empower family farmers in relation to corporate agribusiness. The NFFC will continue working on federal issues that affect family farmers as well as facilitating a greater degree of cooperation among member groups which battle on state and regional levels to protect family farms. The Coalition added four new task forces which will spearhead efforts on:

Commodities and Produce, Credit and Rural Development, Dairy and Bio-Tech, and Livestock.

CAFF has been a member of the coalition since its founding in the mid-1980's. NFFC staff in Washington, D.C. serve to keep its members informed on issues affecting family farmers at the federal level. Representing CAFF, Gail Lennon, CAFF Board member and long time NFFC member, and Steve Schwartz, Coordinator for CAFF's Rural Policy Council, attended the meeting.

"By working more closely with the NFFC in 1996 we can increase the impact California family farmers have on the Farm Bill and other national issues," stated Schwartz. Lennon added, "NFFC-led victories on farm credit are now under attack in D.C. Our efforts are needed now more than ever before."

If you are interested in helping to represent CAFF on these national issues please call Gail Lennon (916) 294-5506 or Steve Schwartz (916) 756-8518. ★



National Family Farm Coalition Executive Director, Kathy Ozer, travelled to California in January and spoke at the monthly meeting of the CAFF Yolo/Solano chapter.

What Ever Happened To The 1995 Farm Bill?

While no Farm Bill was passed in 1995, drastic changes in national food and farm policy are underway, with profound implications for family farmers, consumers, and the environment.

The U.S. Congress normally re-writes federal farm policy every five years. There was supposed to be a 1995 Farm Bill, but political upheaval and other priorities stalled action on most components. Congressional agricultural committees did draft a series of proposals for the portions of the Farm Bill dealing with farm credit, rural development, and trade, but none of these proposals could muster enough votes needed to get them out of committee. The farm commodity and nutrition programs that are normally part of the Farm Bill package were incorporated into the Budget Reconciliation Bill because these program mandate federal spending. This bill was passed by Congress, but then was vetoed by the President. As of this writing, the budget process is at an impasse.

This failure to pass farm bill legislation is actually good news for family farmers and the environment. Most of the draft bills written in this Congress have been worse than current law, especially in the House. For example, "The Agriculture Regulatory Relief and Trade Act," introduced in the House by Wayne Allard (R-CO) would have completely gutted many conservation programs that help farmers protect the environment. Fortunately, strong grassroots pressure built up opposition and helped prevent its passage.

Through the Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, hundreds of organizations are working to defend sustainable and family farming from Congressional attacks. California SAWG coordinates California's participation in the Campaign, and many CAFF members have been active.

Had it passed into law, much of the Budget Reconciliation Bill would have had disastrous consequences. The commodity title deeply cuts benefits to family farmers while the largest farms take little or no cuts, and reduces program flexibility for farmers who plant resource-conserving crops. The nutrition title makes cuts in food assistance and other "safety net" programs, eliminates the guarantee of assistance to qualified applicants, and turns many programs over to the states without assuring adequate funding. Much of these cuts could remain on the chopping block for 1996.

As was widely expected, President Clinton vetoed the Budget Reconciliation bill on December 6. Thanks to a flood of letters from farmers and activists, the Campaign succeeded in convincing Clinton to include language about protecting small and moderate sized farmers in his veto message.

Congress will almost certainly attempt to pass a Farm Bill this year, but it is unclear whether they will succeed, especially as election year politics heat up. The Campaign's grassroots activists are primed to spring into action to prevent rollbacks of programs that support family and sustainable farmers, the environment, and common people. Contact California SAWG to find out how you can help.

On a related front, the agriculture appropriations process (which sets actual funding levels for programs) was a rare bright spot in national agriculture policy last year. Due to effective organizing by Campaign participants (including California SAWG and many CAFF members), most sustainable agriculture-related programs were cut only slightly or not at all, a remarkable victory given deep overall spending cuts. ★

California Coalition Launches New Initiatives

by Kai Seidenburg

The California Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SAWG) held its second annual meeting on December 2-3 in Menlo Park. Titled "Rural-Urban Partnerships for a Sustainable Food System," the meeting tackled themes ranging from how to be more effective in the fight for sustainable food policies to how to promote food security for communities of all income levels.

Among the many established and

emerging leaders who participated were farmers, environmentalists, consumer and anti-hunger activists, agency personnel, and university researchers.

One of the keynote speakers, Jose Montenegro, who works with farm workers as the director of the Rural Development Center in Salinas, pointed out the need for unity and coalition building amongst different groups interested in sustainable agriculture issues. He described the meeting as a chance to "work on our common vision and action plans...and to build our community."

After two days of workshops, panels and speakers, the participants agreed on major actions and strategies for 1996.

These included: advocacy work to protect state funding for pesticide reduction programs; actions to increase the percentage of California farmers' markets accepting food stamps; developing a SAWG platform of top priority policy changes to promote a sustainable food system; collecting and distributing resources to promote food purchases from local farmers by school districts; and developing a task force linking farm-

land preservation efforts with water availability issues.

Participants elected a slate of SAWG Steering Committee members including CAFF board president and almond farmer Glenn Anderson, who represent a broad spectrum of issues, constituencies and regions. ★

Kai Seidenburg coordinates the California SAWG, an umbrella group of 24 diverse organizations including CAFF. CAFF Foundation is the SAWG's organizational sponsor.

ground water, which is increasingly subject to overdraft.

In a letter supporting SB 901, Rande Kanouse of East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) pointedly asked, "If we fail to plan new water supplies in tandem with approving new development, which existing water users are going to find their water is being mortgaged for these new towns without their knowledge or consent?"

If planners don't take these essential water supply questions into consideration, the results could be disastrous for many current water users including agriculture and the environment.

Last year, EBMUD sponsored Assembly Bill 2673, by Assembly member Dominic Cortese, which would have made servicing

existing customers a top priority for county planning. The bill also gave local water agencies veto power over new developments proposed for areas not currently receiving water service. AB 2673 was supported by an unusual coalition of agricultural and environmental groups, including CAFF, the Farm Bureau, and the Sierra

Club, but even so, it was defeated. Developers and a number of local government entities opposed the measure as a no-growth provision, and particularly opposed granting veto power to local utilities in the planning process.

SB 901 differs from the failed AB 2673 in that it simply requires that local water agencies provide assessments to deter-

mine whether they can provide reliable water service during both normal and drought conditions for both existing and new customers. However, SB 901 allows cities or counties to allow the approval of developments, even when adequate water supplies are not assured if it determines there are "overriding economic, social or other conditions" which mitigate the impact of the project.

Previous attempts to legislate a water supply/land use link have foundered, primarily because of opposition on the part of developer interests and some local governments who fear that such linkage would discourage project approvals. SB 901 initially faced strong opposition and a threatened veto by Governor Wilson, until a last-minute compromise limiting water assessments to developments of 500 units or more caused the developer community to drop its opposition.

Clearly more work needs to be done to protect agricultural water supplies as California's population grows, environmental needs increase, and periodic droughts strain the existing patterns of use. As Tom Haller said in a letter to Governor Wilson, urging him to sign SB 901, "The Community Alliance with Family Farmers places high priority on policies that promote sensible development that protects both

"Without the efforts of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers and others, our success would not have been possible."

—State Senator Jim Costa (D-Fresno)



highly productive agricultural land and preserves community integrity...we would have preferred that this legislation be tougher in requiring evidence of water availability before any development is approved, but we support SB 901 as a good first step." ★

Adrienne Alvord coordinates CAFF Foundation's Rural Water Impact Network program.

macro-level of global economic changes impacting traditional agrarian cultures to the inner-city renewal efforts of gardening vacant lots and school grounds, each speaker brought a clarity of purpose to the work of Community Supported Agriculture. Of particular interest was Alice Waters' letter to vice-president Gore urging him to prioritize food and sustainable agricultural efforts, such as CSAs, in the national agenda.

Conference participants at the two-day event ranged from seasoned CSA organizers to enthusiastic newcomers, looking to learn how to start a CSA on their farm or in their community for the first time. Workshops and panel presentations were comprised of farmers, consumers, other community members, and non-profit

organization representatives, all seeking to share knowledge about the growing movement of CSAs.

In addition to the mechanics of a CSA, such as budgets, labor, distribution and bartering, theoretical and innovative ideas were discussed. Chuck Matthei from Equity Trust Inc., in Voluntown, CT., spoke about the need for a "new voluntary land reform effort." The Equity Trust is launching a National CSA Land Tenure program and CSA Fund that will serve the many CSAs that have extenuating land-tenure issues. Most farmers don't own the land they're farming, and some are looking for new models of ownership, such as cost and stewardship responsibility sharing between the farmer and the community

that eats from the land.

The two-day event was coordinated by one of CAFF's newest program, CSA-WEST, which serves as a West Coast clearinghouse for the CSA movement. CAFF strongly supports development of direct marketing and other links that strengthen ties between farmers and consumers.

Overall, the conference was a reflection of the growing movement of community supported agriculture, predicated on the notion that we all have something to gain if we put our attention not just on the health of our own lives, but also on the health of our neighbors—especially our local farmers. As principle stewards of the land, local farmers (and the food they grow) are often our closest connec-

tion to the land and help to nourish all of us and our children into the future.

One attendee, Annie Main of Good Humus CSA in Capay, Ca., said it best, "This conference has been more than how to start a CSA or the nuts and bolts of CSA. It has been the realization and articulation that it is time to revitalize and start to live the definition of the word community: to listen from our hearts, to speak from our hearts, and to love and care for each others needs—to start living together." ★

Jered Lawson coordinates CAFF Foundation's CSA West program.

Upcoming Events...

Unless otherwise specified, all events are open to CAFF members.



Program Abbreviations



BIOS Biologically Integrated Orchard Systems
contact: Liza Lewis 916/756-8518



GEN General CAFF Events
contact: CAFF office 916/756-8518



LFN Lighthouse Farm Network
contact: Jill Klein 916/756-8518



NOD National Organic Directory
contact: Carol Klesow 1-800-852-3832



OIR Organic Industry Reception
contact: Nancy Aebersold-Reed 707/257-6613



R-WIN Rural Water Impact Network
contact: Adrienne Alvord 510/204-9240



RPC Rural Policy Council
contact: Steve Schwartz 916/756-8518



SAWG Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
contact: Kai Seidenburg 408/458-5304



MEM CAFF Membership
contact: Adair Schwarz 916/756-8518

Central Coast CAFF Chapter
Reggie Knox 408/425-8145

Northern San Joaquin Chapter
Glenn Anderson 209/667-7494

North Coast Chapter
Malcolm Yuill-Thornton 707/433-3739

Yolo-Solano CAFF Chapter
Tom Haller 916/756-8518

January

- 24-28 ★ **GEN/ECO-FARM CONFERENCE**/Pacific Grove
- 25 ☂ **SAWG/Community Food Security**/10:30am/Eco-Farm Conference
- 25 ☂ **SAWG/California SAWG Info**/5:15pm/Eco-Farm Conference
- 24 ~ **R-WIN/Cal-Fed Workshop on Bay-Delta Restoration**/7pm/Fresno
- 25 🏠 **LFN/Lunch**/12 noon/Woodland
- 26 ☑ **RPC/Input on Dept. of Pesticide Regulations Reforms**/7am/Atwater-Livingston
- 30 🌐 **BIOS/Tri-County Almond Day**/9am/Merced
- 31 🏠 **LFN /Breakfast/Biointensive Pest Management**/7:30am/Hollister
- 31 ~ **R-WIN/Central Valley Project Improvement Act**/1pm/Willows

February

- 1 🏠 **LFN/Breakfast/Microorganisms**/8am/Santa Cruz
- 7 🌐 **BIOS/Almond Grower Meeting**/9am/Modesto
- 8 🏠 **LFN/CCGA Meeting**/7am/Kingsburg
- 8 🌐 **MEM/Modesto Chapter Meeting**/2pm/Modesto
- 9-10 🏠 **LFN/Statewide Meeting**/Sanger

- 13 🏠 **LFN/ Lunch**/12noon/Woodland
- 13 🏠 **LFN/Lunch/Agric. Use of Yard Trimmings**/12noon/Watsonville
- 15 🏠 **LFN/Breakfast**/7:30am/Madera
- 15 🏠 **LFN/Lunch**/12noon/Winters
- 15 ~ **R-WIN/Bay Delta Advisory Council**/10am-4pm/Los Angeles
- 17-19 ★ **GEN/CAFF Sponsored Workshops/FARM CONFERENCE**/Visalia
- 17 ★ **GEN/Short Course: Marketing/TBA/Farm Conference**
- 17 ★ **GEN/CAFF Reception & Raffle**/6:30pm/Farm Conference
- 18 ☂ **SAWG/Community Food Security**/3:30pm/Farm Conference
- 18 ☑ **RPC/How To Become An Effective Political Advocate**/3:30pm/Farm Conference
- TBA ~ **R-WIN/Water Transfers/TBA/Farm Conference**
- 18 ★ **GEN/Ag-Land Preservation**/1:30pm/Farm Conference
- 18 🌐 **MEM/CAFF Membership Meeting**/7:30am/Farm Conference
- 18 ☂ **SAWG/Steering Committee Meeting**/1:30pm/Farm Conference
- 20 🏠 **LFN/Breakfast**/7am/Modesto
- 21 🌐 **BIOS/Citrus Field Day**/Lindsay
- 21 🏠 **LFN/Breakfast/Soil & Plant Health**/7:30am/Hollister
- 21 🏠 **LFN/Lunch**/12noon/Ventura
- 22 🌐 **MEM/North Coast Chapter Meeting**/6pm/Sonoma
- 22 ☂ **SAWG/Community Food Security**/1:30/Pleasant Hill
- 22 🏠 **LFN/Breakfast**/7am/Atwater
- 26 ~ **R-WIN/Cal-Fed Public Workshop/BayDelta Restoration**/9am-5pm/Sacramento
- 26 🌐 **MEM/Modesto Chapter Meeting/TBA/Modesto**
- 28 ★ **GEN/State Board Meeting/TBA/Davis**
- 29 🌐 **BIOS/Walnut Grower Meeting**/3pm/Woodland
- 29 🌐 **MEM/N.San Joaquin Chapter Meeting**/4pm/Stockton

March

- NOTE: Lighthouse Farm Network Meetings are monthly, call for March dates
- TBA 🌐 **NOD/13th annual National Organic Directory (1996)** released/Davis
- 14 🏠 **OIR/Organic Industry Reception**/7-9pm/Anaheim (open to all in organic industry)
- 20 🏠 **LFN/Breakfast**/7am/Lindsay
- 22 ~ **R-WIN/Bay Delta Advisory Council/TBA**
- 27 🌐 **MEM/Central Coast Chapter Meeting/TBA/Santa Cruz/Watsonville-TBA**
- 30 ★ **GEN/Alternative Ag and Pesticides**/9:30am/Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo
- TBA ☑ **RPC/Sonoma County Land Preservation/TBA/TBA**
- TBA ☂ **SAWG/SecurityCommittee Meeting/TBA/San Francisco**