



March symposium targets agricultural leaders

The California Agriculture Symposium slated for March 23-24 at the Hilton Sacramento Arden West will feature an in-depth look at challenges and opportunities facing California agriculture.

Topics will cover economic forces, public policy, international trade, marketing, technology, and a host of other issues ranging from water, land and farm labor to biotechnology and its potential consequences. Economic Forces for the Next Decade, Policy Overview for California Agriculture: Challenges and Opportunities, The Changing Marketplace for California Crops, Biotechnology for California, Meeting the Challenges of Food Safety on Fresh Produce, and Maximizing Opportunities for California Agriculture are just a few of the provocative issues that will be presented during the two-day event.

Featured speakers include California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura, California Farm Bureau president Bill Pauli, farmer Stuart Woolf, president of Woolf Enterprises, a family-owned farming business in Fresno County, and former USDA Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. Other speakers represent agribusiness, banking, government, and universities. Research and industry displays and an evening of tasting California Food and Wine will complement the formal presentations.

The symposium is designed to update a broad section of California's agricultural leadership on key issues facing the industry and to provide a forum for discussion of the challenges and opportunities these issues present.

Principal sponsors include the AIC, UC Specialty Crops Research Program, Center for Agricultural Business at CSU Fresno, and the California Institute for the Study of Specialty Crops at California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo.

Registration information and a detailed agenda are available at calagsymposium.org, or from the AIC at (530) 752-2320.

Risk management project concludes

The AIC and its two contract partners—the Center for Agricultural Business at CSU Fresno and Farm & Agriculture Collaborative Training Services—has completed a one-year program to increase producer understanding and use of financial management, crop insurance and other emerging risk management tools.

Target audiences included cow-calf and hay producers in the Tahoe Basin, Susanville and Alturas; small and beginning farmers and ranchers; and fruit and nut producers.

Accomplishments included:

- Eleven regional half-day workshops on tailoring risk management to fit farm needs, with topics covering family and personal risk, financial risk, production risk, market risk and legal and regulatory risk

Continued →

- A 10-week course offered at three locations for cow-calf and hay producers, two conferences (Kelseyville and Yuba City), and conference educational materials
- A new paradigm for analysis of risk cycles to help farmers and ranchers use risk analysis on long-run time scales
- Statistical analysis of specialty crop growers' decisions to use risk management tools and the relationships to farm and farmer characteristics
- A website <<http://www.calriskmgmt.org>> and an online seminar for fruit and nut growers

In addition to direct participation in some of the programs, the AIC provided administration, planning, reporting, program logistics, publicity and support for the conferences and workshops.

The risk management project was supported by a grant to the AIC from the USDA Risk Management Agency.

Farm worker protection rule prohibits hand weeding

An AIC-sponsored seminar in January drew a standing room-only crowd to hear Leonard Gianessi, director of the Crop Protection Research Institute for CropLife Foundation, discuss banning of hand weeding and why California's organic growers want an exemption from the rule. Although the rule, seen as a way to reduce worker back injuries, was adopted in 2004 after two years of hearings, it still is still being reviewed and has not been implemented.

Gianessi's research which draws on work done by UC weed scientists and costs studies and data on organic agriculture by AIC Associate Director Karen Klonsky, attempts to quantify the amount of hand weeding done in California and the economic consequences if it is banned. His numbers show that hand weeding in just three crops—lettuce, carrots and celery—total approximately 775,000 hours annually. Projecting a tripling of organic production over the next 10 years, the hours spent on hand weeding those three crops could expand to 2.3 million hours—or an equivalent of 50,000 pounds of herbicides per year.

The use of herbicides, however, is not an alternative for organic producers, and Gianessi noted that such other alternatives as greater plant spacing and use of long-handled hoes (short-handled hoes were banned in 1975) lower yield and crop value.

Ag outlook and land values highlight April conference

The Spring Ag Outlook Forum, "Managing Our Resources for Profit," is scheduled for April 22 at the Sacramento DoubleTree Hotel. This event will focus on key issues facing California agriculture and furnish vital information for farm and agricultural business managers and professionals, government and organization representatives, and others with an interest in California agriculture.

The conference will provide an environment to discuss challenges and opportunities facing California agriculture—from input suppliers through farm producers and on to marketers. It will begin with an overview on the outlook for agriculture in California and then turn to panel sessions on:

- Water resource and allocation issues facing today's producers
- Evaluating decisions about long-term investments in permanent crops
- Profitability of developing product attributes and traceability

Drafts of presentations and other background material will be provided to all participants.

The final session will feature results of the land value survey. The popular publication *2005 Trends in Agricultural Land & Lease Values* will be presented and distributed.

As in the past, everyone is invited to the annual California Classic Barbecue at the Heidrick Ag History Center in Woodland on the evening preceding the seminar to renew acquaintances and enjoy the history that has put California at the forefront of American agriculture.

The AIC and the California Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA) are cosponsoring the program. A registration form is available online at aic.ucdavis.edu or contact: American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers, CA Chapter Office, P. O. Box 838,

Woodbridge, CA 95258. Tel: 209-368-3672, fax: 209-368-3602, or e-mail: secretary@calasfmra.com

AIC publishes guide for conserving agricultural land

Landowners who want to keep their farms and ranches in production while participating in compensatory land conservation will find a wealth of information in *Conserving Agricultural Land Through Compensation: A Guide for California Landowners* written by Alvin Sokolow and Mica Bennett in the UC Department of Human and Community Development and published by the AIC.

The guide examines the public rationale for compensatory programs and the history of such programs, explains how the programs work, and discusses landowner concerns and issues related to specific programs.

Various chapters also deal with levels of landowner payment and other fiscal features of individual programs in California; and eligibility, application, landowner requirements and other operational features. Individual chapters deal with such approaches as preferential taxation, USDA conservation payments, and development rights. A final chapter speculates about the future of compensatory programs.

Focus of the guide is on programs that keep farms and ranches in production, thus retaining working landscapes.

The guide is available through the AIC by phone 530-752-2320, email agissues@ucdavis.edu, or online at <http://aic.ucdavis.edu/research1/land.html>.

Conference explores commodity promotion programs

California, home to the nation's the largest number of commodity promotion programs, is hosting a national conference to discuss the economics and consequences of such programs.

The conference, set for March 17-18 at the Sheraton Hotel in Mission Valley, San Diego, is designed to update individuals who are involved in commodity

promotion programs in California and other regions on legal issues and to provide them an opportunity to participate in a dialog with industry and academic experts.

Commodity promotion programs spend approximately \$1 billion annually in the United States and have been the subject of many legal actions, including several cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

AIC Associate Director Julian Alston is one of the conference organizers and coeditor of a new book, *The Economics of Commodity Promotion Programs: Lessons from California*, that will be launched at the conference and used for some of the conference discussions (see next article).

The conference will also address ongoing legal issues, alternatives to mandated programs, and other issues in the economics of mandated commodity programs. Program for the conference and registration information is available at <http://www.nec63.org/> or by contacting Anita Vogel at av69@cornell.edu or (607) 255-1620.

The conference is sponsored by NEC-63, a national research committee consisting of individuals from academia, government, and industry who are interested in, or doing research on, the economics of commodity advertising and promotion programs.

New book on commodity promotion programs features case studies

A new book, *The Economics of Commodity Promotion Programs: Lessons from California*, describes commodity promotion programs in California and presents detailed case studies and a benefit-cost analysis of several programs.

The 425-page volume discusses the general economics and history of mandated commodity programs and includes case studies for California table grapes, eggs, avocados, almonds, walnuts, raisins, and strawberries and includes national benefit-cost estimates for dairy, beef, pork and cotton promotion programs. The book also has chapters dealing with nutrition education by the Dairy Council of California, the economic value of spin

control regarding food safety and strawberries, returns on dairy check-off investment in research for new uses for whey, and demand enhancement through food safety regulation with respect to California pistachios.

AIC Associate Director for Science and Technology Julian Alston was a coeditor of the book and also contributed to several chapters. Other AIC-affiliated authors include Henrich Brunke, assistant specialist; Colin Carter, associate director for international trade; Daniel Sumner, director; and Joseph Balagtas (formerly AIC), assistant professor at Purdue University.

The publisher is Peter Lang Publishers, an international publishing group for academic publications.

AIC projects contribute to value-added agriculture

The AIC is entering its fourth year as a founding partner in the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC), a national information resource for value-added agriculture <www.agmrc.org> .

AIC projects have included:

- Developing national profiles—covering commodity demand, production, price, exports and imports and for selected commodities, organic acreage, sales and producer numbers—for nearly three dozen commodities for posting on the AgMRC website.
- Labeling and consumer acceptance studies of bioengineered food
- Economic analysis of the benefit to growers if consumer demand for fruits and vegetables met USDA recommendations for 5-A-Day and 7-A-Day cancer prevention diets
- Cost comparisons of the USDA standard Thrifty Food Plan with healthier and less healthy alternatives
- Assessing the impact of taxes on wine quantity and quality
- Studying the impacts of federal pistachio marketing regulations, especially on producer revenues from food safety information and certification
- Analyzing value-added marketing strategies
- Determining export, import and world-market shares for selected commodities
- Analyzing national and Northwest (Washington and Oregon) raspberry, blueberry, strawberry, sweet corn, and snap bean production, yield, trade and price trends
- Evaluating commodity check-off programs
- Studying the impacts on consumer demand of the single U.S. case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)
- Marketing research on California specialty crops
- Identifying changes in the corn and sorghum basis in recent years and the impact on placement of ethanol plants
- Estimating producer costs of implementing USDA's Process Verified Program for beef and evaluating its use in Uruguay and the implications for producer initiatives in the U.S.
- Examining the effect of retailer promotions on demand for fresh California strawberries and precommitment agreements between retailers and strawberry shippers
- Studying retail milk pricing by supermarkets and marketing margin behavior for fluid milk products in nine large western metropolitan markets
- Evaluating antibiotic resistance in livestock production systems and its marketing implications
- Maintaining a historical and current database on 50 important commodities.

The AgMRC partnership also includes Iowa State University and Kansas State University.

AIC Quarterly going electronic

Future issues of the *AIC Quarterly* and *AIC Issues Brief* will be distributed electronically as well as placed on our website at aic.ucdavis.edu. We plan to phase out mailing of paper copies. Please email agissues@ucdavis.edu with the word "subscribe" in the subject line to join the electronic mailing list. Please include all the email addresses in your organization to which you would like a copy sent. **We will continue to print a limited number of hard copies, but we must receive a postcard or letter with your name, affiliation and address if you want to continue receiving a paper copy.**



California Agriculture Symposium

March 23-24, 2005
Hilton Sacramento Arden West

CalAgSymposium.org

\$125 Advance registration (before February 24, 2005)

\$200 Late registration (after February 24, 2005 or walk-up)

Includes admission both days, one copy of proceedings, two banquet lunches, continental breakfast, refreshments and California Tasting Reception March 23.

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Note: Registrations will not be considered final until check is cleared or credit card number is approved. Advance registration closes February 24, 2005.

For further information: contact Laurie Treacher at 530-752-2320; <latreacher@ucdavis.edu> or Kitty Schlosser at 530-752-1748; <meschlosser@ucdavis.edu>

Hilton Hotel: Room reservations should be made by contacting the Hilton Sacramento Arden West Hotel directly at 916-922-4700 or online at www.hilton.com. Mention the "California Agriculture Symposium" to obtain the group rate of \$95 for Single/Double occupancy.

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