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California

New CCA president preps for fight over grazing rights

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press

RED BLUFF, Calif. — Billy Floumoy, a fourth-generation rancher in the high plains of Northeastern California, is well suited to meet the challenges facing the California Cattlemen's Association as its new president.

Floumoy, 73, who operates Likely Land and Livestock Co., with his wife, Athena, in Likely, Calif., relies on federal grazing allotments to run his cattle and has been a staunch advocate for ranchers on such grazing-related issues as a state wildlife management plan.

He says grazing rights will be a key issue for cattlemen in 2015, as the State Water Resources Control Board is putting together a plan to minimize grazing's impact on water quality.

"We don't need the water board regulating our grazing," Floumoy said in an interview at the annual Tehama County Cattlemen's Winter Dinner and auction Jan. 10 at the fairgrounds.

The water board is in the midst of community meetings on its Grazing Regulatory Action Project, including one held in San Luis Obispo on Jan. 9 and another set for Redding on Jan. 15. The water board plans to develop an initial proposal this year and begin environmental reviews and a broader public comment period before adopting the plan in 2016, according to its website.

The state wants to develop strategies to enhance the environmental benefits from grazing while protecting surface water and groundwater, the website explains. State officials have said grazing can be compatible with various environmental needs, such as preserving habitat for wildlife.

For Floumoy, the coming fight over GRAP won't be the first time he's sought to defend grazing rights in the face of looming state regulation. Attending a Redding meeting on a state wildlife management plan in 2013, Floumoy said then that the land was healthier 50 years ago when more cattle were grazing away the non-native grasses.

A former CCA first and second vice president, Floumoy was elected to a two-year term as president in December. He re-

Calif. dairy groups file lawsuit against water board

By **CAROL RYAN DUMAS**
Capital Press

Three California dairymen organizations filed suit against the California State Water Resources Control Board last week challenging its increases in annual water quality permit fees in 2013 and 2014.

Fee increases have been ongoing for a number of years but have increased dramatically over the last couple of years, said Tess Dunham of Somach Simmons & Dunn of Sacramento, the groups' attorney.

California Dairy Campaign, Western United Dairymen and Milk Producers Council filed the lawsuit Jan. 8.

Fees increased 27 percent in 2013 and 33 percent in 2014, which the lawsuit alleges is illegal, Dunham said Monday.

The 2013 increases are being challenged on two fronts, she said.

First, the fees were adopted in violation of water code, failing to consider the pricing mechanism for milk. Second, the 2013 increase failed to comply with the requirement under Proposition 26 that prohibits state agencies from collecting any fee or charge in an amount that exceeds the reasonable cost of providing the service, Dunham said.

The plaintiffs allege the 2014 increase violates the state constitution which requires any tax increase be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature, she said.



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Rancher Billy Floumoy, right, of Likely, Calif., talks with Ellington Peek, owner of the Shasta Livestock Auction Yard in Cottonwood, Calif., during the annual cattlemen's dinner Jan. 10 in Red Bluff, Calif. Floumoy is the California Cattlemen's Association's new president.

Online

California Cattlemen's Association: <http://www.calcattlemen.org/>

places Tim Koopmann, a Sunol, Calif., rancher who manages a 40,000-acre watershed adjacent to his ranch for the city and county of San Francisco.

Among other issues that will confront the CCA in 2015 are a federal effort to congregate wild horses in the Modoc National Forest, which could complicate

grazing, and attempts by state lawmakers to regulate antibiotic use in livestock, Floumoy said.

"We're trying to get it to where ... it's all right to doctor a sick animal" with antibiotics, he said. "We don't want to feed it for growth ... but we like feeding it when it holds the illness down."

Citrus disease in China could prompt more imports from Calif.

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — The onset of citrus greening in China's domestic orange crop could force that nation to import more fruit from California, a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture report suggests.

Orange production in China could drop by 10 percent to 6.9 million metric tons as a result of the disease, which has caused the removal of about 15 percent of the trees in the Guangzhou region on the nation's southern shore, the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service notes.

Continuing strong demand for citrus fruit could entice China to turn to suppliers such as the United States, which is already the third largest supplier of citrus to that nation behind South Africa and Australia, according to the report.

"Fruit outlets that are dedicated to fresh fruit sales continue to expand in urban areas, resulting in the increased consumption of fresh fruit," authors Chris Frederick, Wang Tong and Wu Bugang observe. "As the prices of locally produced fruit keep rising, import-



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Navel oranges are displayed at a farmers' market in Davis, Calif. The USDA expects China to import more citrus fruit because citrus greening disease diminished the nation's domestic crop.

ed fruit has gradually gained market acceptance."

Citrus greening is caused by the plant disease huanglongbing, which eventually kills the trees. It's been a problem in the United States. The University of Florida estimates the disease has caused more than 6,500 lost jobs, \$1.3 billion in lost revenue to growers and \$3.6 billion in lost economic activity in Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas, where the disease is present.

A 100-square-mile portion of Madera County in California was put under quarantine this week for the Asian citrus psyllid, which can carry huanglongbing. Psyllid quarantines are now in place in 15 counties in central and southern California.

China's outbreak of citrus greening comes as the nation just lifted restrictions on California citrus after inspectors there detected a strain of Phytophthora, which causes brown rot, in some imported fruit last season. Restrictions were lifted for this season after California growers agreed to take certain measures, including applying fungicides, said Bob Blakely, vice president of California Citrus Mutual.



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