



Capital Press

The West's **Ag** Weekly

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2015

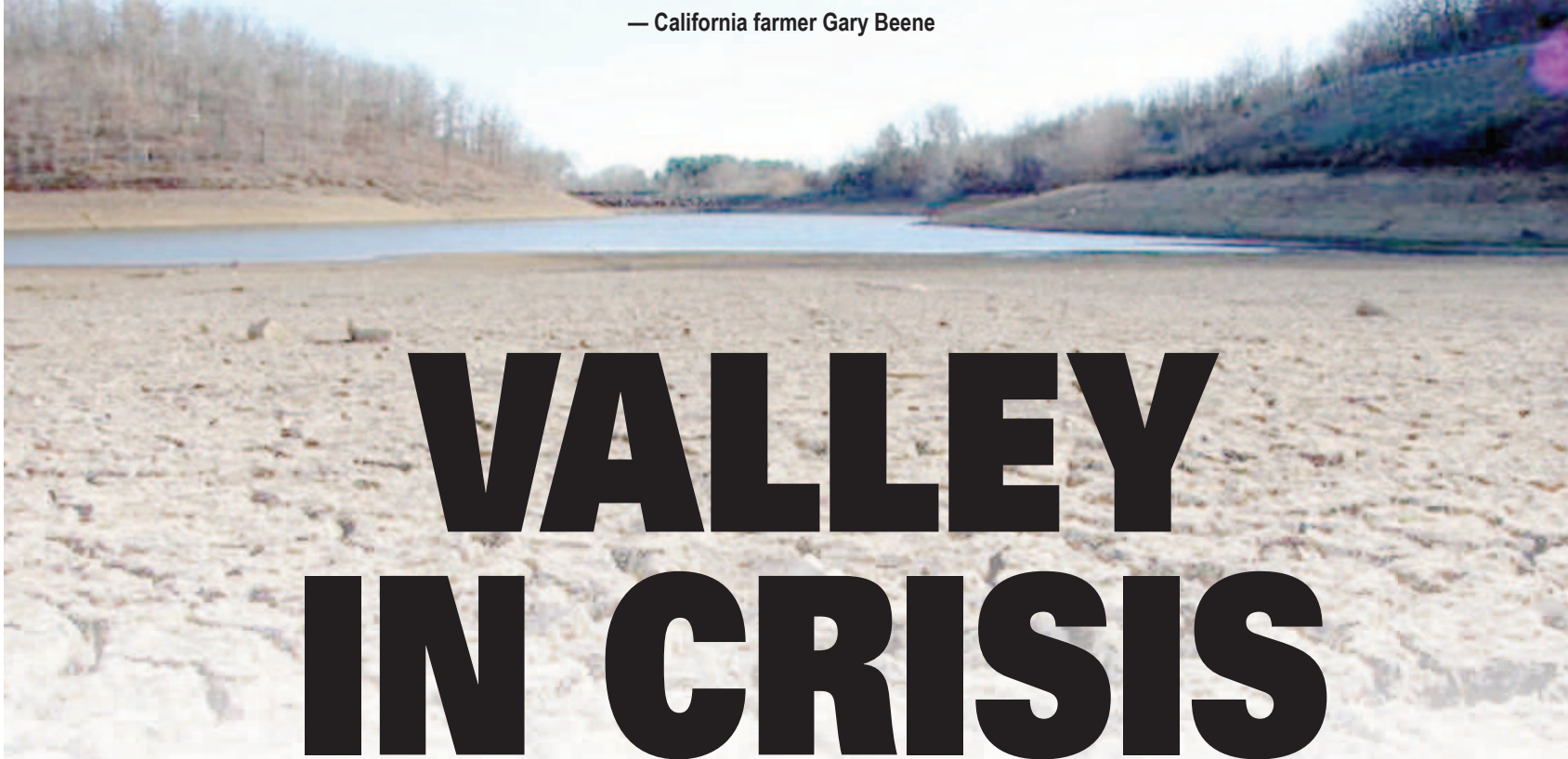
★ VOLUME 88, NUMBER 21

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**“There’s no way to win.
It’s happening all around us, and it’s a losing battle.”**

— California farmer Gary Beene



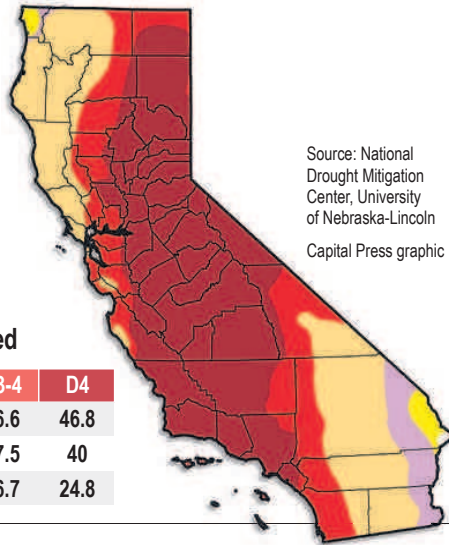
VALLEY IN CRISIS

Water shutoffs, shortages imperil top U.S. agricultural region as drought continues in its fourth year

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press

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California drought conditions (As of May 14)



Intensity of drought by percent area affected

Date	None	D0-4	D1-4	D2-4	D3-4	D4
Current	0.1%	99.9	98.3	93.9	66.6	46.8
3 mo. ago	0.2	99.8	98.1	93.4	67.5	40
1 yr. ago	0	100	100	100	76.7	24.8

• **Rain eases drought, but not much**

• **Roza District looking for water; forecast drops**

• **WSDA estimates statewide drought to cost farmers \$1.2 billion**

• **Western landowners can apply for drought mitigation funding**



From right, Louie Columbini, general manager of Westside Farmers Cooperative Gin Inc. in Tranquility, Calif., talks with grower Gary Beene and his sons, Brent and Brad Beene. Cotton acreage in western Fresno County has been devastated in recent years because of water cutbacks.

Tim Hearden
Capital Press

Judge: Does ‘right to farm’ cover GMOs?

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

Whether Oregon’s “right to farm” law extends to the production of genetically modified crops is a central question in the legal battle over Jackson County’s prohibition against such crops.

During oral arguments on May 20, U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Clarke questioned whether the statute was intended to protect such technology.

The legislative history seems to indicate that lawmakers passed the “right to farm” statute to prevent urban sprawl from undermining agriculture, he said.

“It seems to me this situation doesn’t squarely fit into that now, does it?” Clarke asked.

The ban was approved by Jackson County voters last year, but two farms that produce biotech alfalfa filed a lawsuit challenging the ordinance’s validity.

The growers — Schulz Family Farms and James and Marilyn Frink — claim their ability to grow genetically engineered crops is protected by the “right to farm” statute, under which local governments are barred from restricting a common farming practice as a nuisance or trespass.

An attorney for the farmers said that the impetus of the law may have been urban sprawl, but “right to farm” protections are much broader.

The statute is intended to preserve the entire resource base of Oregon agriculture, which include biotech crops, he said.

Defendants also argue that Oregon lawmakers expressly authorized the GMO ban by excluding Jackson County from 2013 legislation, Senate Bill 863, that pre-empted local governments from regulating biotech seeds.

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Idaho ranchers report dry range

By **JOHN O’CONNELL**
Capital Press

ABERDEEN, Idaho — Wulf Lebrecht and his son Brian couldn’t find enough forage this spring to sustain 53 cow-calf pairs within their 50,000-acre Bureau of Land Management allotment in Eastern Idaho’s Big Desert.

Though recent isolated showers have revived patches of grazing land throughout the state following a dry and warm winter, storms have missed other areas, leaving them bone-dry and devoid of forage.

Southwest Idaho’s Owyhee region and the Big Desert — which offers critical spring grazing terrain spanning roughly 75 miles long and 40 miles wide north of American Falls, south of State Highway 28/22/33 and west of Idaho Falls to Craters of the Moon



Brian Lebrecht herds his cattle from his Bureau of Land Management grazing allotment in the Arco Desert near Aberdeen, Idaho, back to private ground on May 11. He moved them to irrigated pasture a month early due to the extremely dry range conditions.

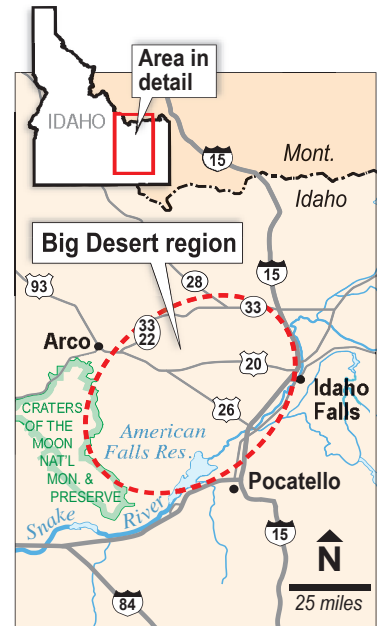
National Monument — are among the state’s most drought-stressed regions, according to BLM.

“There are concerns all over the state because of the conditions of these range lands,” said Stan Boyd, execu-

tive director of the Idaho Wool Growers Association. “Everybody expects an early fire season.”

The Lebrechts moved their cattle

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