REPORT CALLS FOR INVESTMENT IN 'AG OF THE MIDDLE' Page 5

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"There's no way to win.

The West's

It's happening all around us, and it's a losing battle."

- California farmer Gary Beene

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

By TIM HEARDEN Capital Press

RESNO, Calif. — Roger Isom was shocked by what he saw as he drove along Highway 33 through the west side of the San Joaquin Valley: Thousands of acres of rich farmland were fallowed because of a lack of water.

"It's fast becoming more and more like Nevada," said Isom, who runs three organizations that help cotton and nut farmers and processors. "There's nothing here anymore."

In nearby Helm, Calif., almond, cotton and tomato grower Gary Beene discussed whether his grandchildren should follow his

two sons into the family business. There's no way to win," the 68-year-old Beene said of the water shortages that have put some of his neighbors out of business. "It's happening all around us, and it's a losing battle.' About 40 miles away in Dinuba, Calif., grower and packer Jay Gillette watched a bulldozer rip out about one-third of his navel orange grove. "I don't know anybody near here that isn't affected" by water shortages, Gillette said. "I think it's going to take some years off people's lives. The stress is just incredible."

MORE ON PAGE 4	Calif conc					4	12	2	
 Rain eases drought, but not much 	Legend D0-At D1-Dr D2-Dr	D3-Drought (extreme) D4-Drought (exceptional)			in the second se		Source: National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Capital Press graphic		
Roza District	Intensity of drought by percent area affected								
looking	Date	None	D0-4	D1-4	D2-4	D3-4	D4	2 12	
for water;	Current	0.1%	99.9	98.3	93.9	66.6	46.8	2 - f-	
forecast	3 mo. ago	0.2	99.8	98.1	93.4	67.5	40	-00-	2-1
drops	1 yr. ago	0	100	100	100	76.7	24.8	• •	Y
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Judge: Does **'right** to farm' cover **GMOs**?

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Weekly

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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.

A pall hovers over the San Joaquin Valley these days. Water shutoffs and shrinking aquifers threaten to turn what has long been the nation's most productive agricultural region — producing slightly more than \$22

Turn to WATER, Page 12

estimates statewide drought to cost farmers \$1.2 billion

 Western landowners can apply for drought mitigation funding



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

Tim Hearden Capital Press

Turn to GMO, Page 12

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 50,000acre 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



John O'Connell/Capital Press

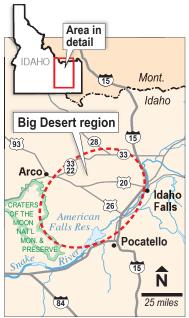
Brian Lebrecht herds his cattle from his Bureau of Land Management grazing allotment in the Arco Desert near Aberdeen, Idaho, back to private ground on May 11. He moved them to irrigated pasture a month early due to the extremely dry range conditions.

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, executive director of the Idaho Wool Growers Association. "Everybody expects an early fire season."

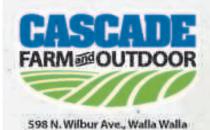
The Lebrechts moved their cattle

Turn to DRY, Page 12



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press





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