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California

Farmers propose voluntary water cuts

By SCOTT SMITH
Associated Press



Rich Pedroncelli/Associated Press

Irrigation pipes sit May 18 along a dried irrigation canal on a field farmed by Gino Celli near Stockton, Calif. Farmers in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta who have California's oldest water rights are proposing to voluntarily cut their use by 25 percent to avoid the possibility of even harsher restrictions by the state later this summer as the record drought continues.

how many farmers will participate, said attorney Jennifer Spaletta, who represents

several Delta growers, but those who do would be able to plan their crops earlier in

the season with more certainty.

"From a business standpoint, it makes a lot of sense to do our part and to help in the emergency," Spaletta said. "At this point, obviously we're in an absolute drought emergency."

Gov. Jerry Brown has ordered communities throughout the state to reduce water use by 25 percent. State water officials have encouraged water users to propose conservation measures, drawing the proposal from farmers.

Brown has been criticized for leaving farmers out of tightening regulations that force communities throughout the state to cut back on their water use. But this is the second consecutive year that junior water-rights holders have received orders to stop

pumping river water to irrigate their crops.

Those making the proposal are so-called riparian water rights holders, who have the oldest and most secure access to California rivers. The harsh drought has caused state officials to say they may start ordering even these rights holders to stop taking water.

A coalition of Delta farmers and officials for the State Water Resources Control Board continue to work out the details and Spelatta said officials have responded positively to the proposal.

Delta farmers with the most senior water rights dispute the state can force them to stop irrigating their crops from California rivers, said John Herrick, manager of the South Delta Water Agency,

who called this proposal a "safe harbor." He said that it would likely be adopted beyond the Delta by water users in the San Joaquin and Sacramento River watersheds.

Thomas Howard, executive director of the state water board, would ultimately rule on whether to approve the deal.

Michael George, who works for the state water board as the Delta Water Master, said that the proposal is a classic example of risk assessment by the farmers proposing the voluntary cut-backs.

"It is my personal opinion that a certain 25 percent reduction is a reasonable trade-off for regulatory uncertainty," George said. "Nobody benefits if uncertainty persists."

Researchers mark center's 50th anniversary with time capsule

By TIM HEARDEN
Capital Press

PARLIER, Calif. — Scientists are celebrating a key University of California agricultural research center's 50th anniversary by imagining how studies will be done a half-century from now.

Six academics at the UC's 600-acre Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension center in Parlier, near Fresno, are writing

"letters to the future" to tell their successors what they predict in terms of technology and advances over the next 50 years.

Center director Jeff Dahlberg wrote in his letter that he expects scientists in 2065 to be using holographic demonstrations in their educational programs and technology that will allow 3-D imagery showing how plant systems function and how genes work,

according to a news release.

The letters will be part of a time capsule that will be buried on the grounds until Kearney conducts its centennial anniversary.

"I'm pretty excited that I'm here for the 50th anniversary," Dahlberg told the Capital Press. "Over the years the center has had a tremendous influence on some of the agricultural success here in the valley. That's just

built on 50 years of continuing research and being able to provide solutions to issues (growers have) faced over the years."

UC dignitaries and agricultural leaders will gather with researchers and other employees for an invitation-only celebration on May 26, then the center will be open for students, teachers and the public for tours on May 27.

Opened in 1965, the center

includes a state-of-the-art greenhouse, a postharvest laboratory, a mosquito control laboratory, several insectaries and offices as well as 260 acres of orchards, vineyards and fields, according to its website.

Over the years, the center has gained international acclaim for developing new fruit, nut and grape varieties, innovative cultural and irrigation practices, pest and disease management

techniques and postharvest biology, the website explains.

For instance, Kearney researchers have been using a four-acre plot to test whether shorter peach and nectarine trees can reduce labor and insurance costs without sacrificing fruit quality and yield. Having laborers pick from the ground would save the considerable time it takes to move and position ladders during harvest.

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SCORING SUCCESS FOR YOUTH

Through an innovative soccer club model, youth in the mid-Willamette Valley are staying fit and learning leadership skills.

1971: Juan Vargas, Salem, leads his team out for pre-game warm-ups at the Mt Hood Challenge Soccer for underserved or Latinos.

1980: Nestor Himenez, of the 4-H Liverpool U-13 club team in Salem, gets ready to play in the Mt Hood Challenge Soccer Tournament. The 4-H soccer club contains 90 teams and gained an OYSA affiliation this year.

1991: (L) Francisco Uribe and (R) Kevin Garcia stretch out before playing in a U-13 match at the Mt. Hood Challenge Soccer Tournament. The boys belong to the 4-H Liverpool U-13 Club and live in Salem.

2000: (L) Edgar Jesus de la Rosa Romero, and (R) Nestor Himenez, 4-H Liverpool U-13 club team, Salem, scrimmage as they warm up to play in the prestigious Mt Hood Challenge Soccer Tournament. The team advanced to the semifinals and finished second in Bracket A.

By Mary Stewart, OSU Extension Service

During the 2014 summer soccer season, more than 1000 youth benefitted by playing on soccer teams that are a little out of the ordinary. In 2015, that number will grow to 1500 youth according to Cristian Curiel, Oregon State University Extension 4-H youth development faculty.

The 4-H Soccer Club gained its Oregon Youth Soccer Association (OYSA) affiliation in 2014 after proving the 4-H program could meet OYSA's strict standards for structure and organization. "OYSA recognizes that the 4-H soccer program is of adequate quality coaching and playing to be competitive," says Curiel.

More than 50 OYSA teams of boys and girls ages eight through 16, and 34 high school teams participate in the mid-Willamette Valley.

The program grew out of OSU Extension's 4-H Latino outreach program. Now it's open to all kids and communities. "Without the opportunity that 4-H provides, many youth can't afford to play soccer," Curiel points out. "Soccer is supposed to be an affordable sport, but when youth join club soccer, it gets expensive."

The 4-H Soccer Club provides OYSA player's cards to pre-high school teams, and bright orange and black soccer uniforms that sport the familiar 4-H clover emblem at actual cost. The 180 volunteer coaches and managers are supported by Curiel, who is former semi-pro soccer player and USSF B license coach, as well as a youth development expert.

"This youth development expertise sets 4-H soccer teams apart as the developmental needs and skills of youth are integral to how the teams operate," says Pamela Rose, Oregon 4-H Program leader.

In addition to funding for coach training and soccer balls, Curiel is looking for a donation of land for a soccer field. "If someone has the land, we may be able to come up with the resources to make it an official soccer field," he says.

To make a donation to the 4-H soccer program, and for more information, contact Cristian Curiel at the OSU Extension office in Marion County, 503-588-5301 or cristian.curriel@oregonstate.edu.

As youth train and compete in the 4-H Soccer Club, they grow in self-confidence and have fun, while building their skills. Some players even develop into attractive recruits for other soccer clubs and high school teams. When it comes to opportunities for youth, the 4-H soccer program has clearly scored a winning goal.

"The 4-H soccer club is open to any youth who wants to play soccer."

Cristian Curiel, OSU Extension 4-H faculty.

4-H is the youth education arm of the OSU Extension Service. Through 4-H, young people learn and grow in partnership with caring adults to develop the skills and confidence needed to become contributing, productive, self-directed members of society. Because 4-H uses an active, learn-by-doing approach, young people see how their actions make a difference in the lives of others and the world around them.

At the local level, OSU faculty members who live or work in the community they serve provide leadership and oversight of 4-H. These faculty members have extensive training in youth development principles and also are in touch with the needs of the community's young people. Volunteers who work with 4-H are invited to do so only after they undergo extensive background checks. They must also participate in training that includes topics such as club organization, risk management, and working with youth.

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