



# The Cotton Chronicle

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www.ccgga.org



February 2009

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## Industry Calendar

Feb 10-12

World AG Expo —  
Tulare

Feb 13-16

NCC Ann. Mtg —  
Washington, D.C.

Feb 16

President's Day—  
CCGGA Office Closed

Mar 8-11

CA Assoc. of Grower  
Gins Mtg—Pismo  
Beach

Mar 19

CCGGA Grower  
Annual & Board of  
Directors Mtg—  
Harris Ranch

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## Tractor Train the Trainer Workshops



The California Cotton Ginners and Growers Associations along with several other agricultural and safety organizations will be putting on Tractor Safety "Train the Trainer" seminars

up and down California in early 2009. The seminars will be similar to the Forklift "Train the Trainer" seminars that were put on in 2008. Classes will be geared towards training supervisors so that they can then train their workers, but all attendees are welcome. Cost for the class will be \$40/person and the classes will run approximately from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Classes will cover the regulatory requirements, how to conduct effective training, tractor safety aspects, and proper operation and maintenance. Below is the schedule of dates and locations. For a copy of the flyer and to register go to [www.ccgga.org](http://www.ccgga.org) and click on the Latest News section or call (559)252-0684 for more information.

- February 5, 2009 – Oxnard – Cal Coast Machinery
- March 3, 2009 – Bakersfield – So. Kern Machinery
- March 4, 2009 – Hanford – Kings Fairgrounds
- March 17, 2009 – Exeter – Exeter Memorial Building
- March 24, 2009 – Dos Palos – Dos Palos Cooperative Gin
- March 25, 2009 – Modesto – Harvest Hall
- March 31, 2009 – Madera – Kuckenbecker Tractor
- April 7, 2009 – Reedley – Reedley College

- April 9, 2009 – Huron – Huron Ginning Co.

## Time to Post Form 300A!

Beginning on February 1<sup>st</sup>, employers must post their summaries of work-related injuries and illnesses for the previous year. This must be conducted using Cal/OSHA Form 300A. Form 300A information comes from Cal/OSHA Log 300, which details work-related incidents.

## New I-9 Form Effective February 2, 2009

A new I-9 Form is available at <http://www.uscis.gov/i-9> and also available at [www.ccgga.org](http://www.ccgga.org). Employers who hire on February 2nd or thereafter must use the new form or they may be subject to fines. The interim final rule makes the following changes to current I-9 rules:

- Specifies that expired documents are no longer considered acceptable for proof of identification or work authorization;
  - Eliminates three documents from List A: Forms I-688, I-688A, and I-688B (Temporary Resident Card, and older versions of the Employment Authorization Card / Document);
  - Adds foreign passports containing special machine-readable visas for certain citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to List A;
  - Adds the new U.S. Passport Card to List A;
- Revises the employee attestation section of the form.

## Farm Bill Revisions Workshop

Fresno County Farm Bureau, California Cotton Growers and Ginners Associations, Nisei Farmers League, and the law firm of Sawyers & Holland, LLP are hosting an informational meeting on Thursday, Feb. 5 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Harris Ranch Inn near Coalinga to discuss

significant changes in the federal farm programs that go into effect this year. These changes will require some growers to alter their business structures and operations if they want to continue participating in these programs. Among other topics, the meeting will cover new forms and filing deadlines; changes to gross income limits and the introduction of loss limits; changes that affect corporations, LLCs and trusts that reduce overall payments; and the addition of new management requirements. Speaking at the meeting will be agricultural and water law attorneys Gary Sawyers and Dave Holland from the firm of Sawyers & Holland, LLP, and agricultural accountant Toni Porter, CPA, from the firm of Baker, Peterson & Franklin, CPA, LLP.

There is no cost for the meeting, but reservations are requested. For additional details or to make a reservation, call the Farm Bureau's Government Affairs Coordinator Teresa Plascencia at (559) 237-0263 or via email at: [teresap@fcb.org](mailto:teresap@fcb.org)

### **California Receives \$10.9 Million to Improve Air Quality**

California will receive \$10,943,940 or about a third of the money newly made available through the federal 2008 Farm Bill to help farmers and ranchers with conservation practices to improve air quality. The funds will be administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the USDA agency charged with providing technical and financial conservation assistance to private landowners. Funds will be made available through the popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) that has been operating in California since 1996 and last year provided \$54 million in cost share assistance. "California has led the nation in pioneering ways to partner with agricultural organizations and regulatory agencies to identify technical and organizational ways to protect the air," says Ed Burton, State Conservationist of NRCS in California. "I intend to continue the \$5 million in EQIP support of air quality efforts so that the overall funds available for this work should now near \$16 million," he said. Burton noted that since 2004 NRCS in California has spent over \$21 million on conservation practices to improve air quality including treating rural roads, upgrading farm engines to cleaner models, chipping orchard prunings in lieu of burning, and minimizing pesticide sprays. Since farmers match the federal funds, the total dedicated to air quality activities by the farming



community through EQIP is approximately \$42 million. The \$10.9 million will come through a new subpart of the EQIP program and will be expended through contracts with individual producers. "While we don't know all the details on how the program will be administered we do hope to augment our strong history of air quality work with new and innovative methods. We are looking to partner with those who have workable ideas for achieving these goals. We all want the air to be clean enough so everyone can clearly see the full splendor of California's landscapes," said Burton. Thirty-six counties are eligible to use the funds to help them come into compliance with standards for PM 2.5, PM 10 and 8-hour ozone levels. The counties are: Alameda, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Marin, Mariposa, Merced, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tulare, Tuolumne, Ventura, and Yolo.

### **NRCS Announces \$58.4 Million New Water Conservation Program**

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced Wednesday that up to \$58.4 million in financial assistance is available to agricultural producers and entities through the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), established in the new farm bill to promote ground and surface water conservation and water quality improvement. USDA is seeking project proposals from potential partners through this program. "AWEP is designed to address water quality and quantity issues on a regional level," said Ed Burton, State Conservationist for NRCS in California. The AWEP Request for Proposals can be viewed at the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service's (USDA-NRCS) Web site; at the official government regulation Web Site; and at the Federal Register. Potential partners may submit proposals to be considered for a partnership agreement with USDA on the Internet at [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply\\_for\\_grants.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp) using the on-line instructions. Proposals must be submitted by March 2, 2009. Eligible entities include federally recognized Tribes, States, units of local government, agricultural and silvicultural organizations, irrigation associations, ag land trusts and other non-governmental organizations with experience working with agricultural groups. All federal funds go directly to producers and may not be used to cover administrative expenses of partners. The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, or 2008 Farm Bill, established AWEP as a component of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), USDA's largest conservation program on working agricultural lands. All EQIP requirements and policies will

apply to AWEP. The new farm bill expanded EQIP to include AWEP. AWEP offers financial and technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers carry out water enhancement activities that conserve ground and surface water and improve water quality on agricultural lands such as cropland, pasture, grassland and rangeland.

Agricultural water enhancement activities include:

- water quality or water conservation plan development;
- water conservation restoration or enhancement projects, including conversion to the production of less water-intensive agricultural commodities or dry land farming;
- water quality or quantity restoration or enhancement projects;
- irrigation system improvement or irrigation efficiency enhancement;
- activities designed to reduce drought's impacts; and other related activities that will help achieve water quality or water conservation benefits on agricultural land.

Under this new program, USDA-NRCS can contract directly with agricultural producers who are included in approved partner proposals. Producers who apply for AWEP assistance must meet EQIP eligibility requirements. All AWEP funding must go to producers. Like EQIP, contract terms for producers under AWEP run from 1 year to 10 years. Once projects areas are approved, agricultural producers in those selected project areas can apply for available AWEP funds at their local USDA service center. For additional information about the AWEP under EQIP, please visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP> or call Alan Forkey at (530) 792-5653.

**Association Pushes CARE Issue at PUC**

In late January, the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Associations, joined with the California League of Food Processors and the Ag Energy Consumers Association (AECA) to meet with the office of Commissioner John Bohn of the California Public Utilities Commission. At issue, is the allocation procedure for the California Alternative Rates for Energy (CARE) Program, which provides rate discounts for qualifying low income residential customers. Participating customers receive a 20% discount on their utility bills. The problem with the current allocation procedure is the fact that the burden is disproportionately placed on the backs of large natural gas users, including cotton gins. In fact, PG&E reported in 2006 that the ten largest users of natural gas funded 6.5 % of the entire CARE budget, and the top 50 fund over 11% of the

**CLASSING AVERAGES**  
January 23, 2009

CA Bales Classed	2007	2008
Saw Upland	399,218	207,913
Roller Upland	131,287	159,384
Pima	764,653	404,566
Saw Upland	2007	2008
	Saw/Roller Combined	Saw Only
Mike Avg.	4.28	3.99
Color Grade % 21's +	54.2	69.5
Color Grade % 31's	37.5	27.9
Color Grade % 41's	4.5	1.8
Length Avg.	37.35	37.21
Strength Avg.	33.45	32.67
Uniformity Avg.	82.27	81.58
Leaf Distribution 1	9.9	5.3
Leaf Distribution 2	56.5	61.5
Leaf Distribution 3	29.1	29.5
Leaf Distribution 4	3.6	2.9
Extraneous Matter		
Grass	0.3	0.1
Seed	0.1	-
Bark	0.1	0.2
Prep	-	-
Roller Upland Only	2007	2008
Mike Avg.	4.45	4.26
Color Grade		
% 21's +	46.0	36.0
%31's	39.2	60.2
% 41's	8.10	1.09
Length Avg.	39.0	39.45
Strength Avg.	33.48	34.52
Uniformity Avg.	83.6	83.73
Leaf Distribution 1	-	0.7
Leaf Distribution 2	67.9	57.7
Leaf Distribution 3	27.4	39.3
Leaf Distribution 4	3.9	2.1
Pima	2007	2008
Mike Avg.	4.05	3.99
Strength Avg.	40.59	41.64
Color Grade %		
1's	42.8	10.9
2's	52.5	84.1
3's	3.5	4.3
4's	0.9	0.4
Leaf Distribution 1	39.9	25.5
Leaf Distribution 2	52.9	62.9
Leaf Distribution 3	6.5	10.5
Leaf Distribution 4	0.6	1.1
Length Avg.	46.80	47.50
Uniformity Index	84.96	85.58
Extraneous Matter		
Grass	0.2	0.1
Prep	0.2	0.8
Spindle	-	-
Bark	0.1	0.1

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budget. Some individual customers pay in excess of \$1 million per year just in CARE charges! The Association is assisting AECA in helping to lessen this incredible burden. Unfortunately, the Administrative Law Judge presiding over the case has issued a preliminary decision that goes against changing the allocation proposed by AECA, the utilities and other business groups. The meeting was held with Commissioner Bohn's staff in an attempt to convince them that an alternate decision is needed. For cotton gins, savings generated in the original proposal range from \$1,500 to \$18,000 per year depending on the amount of natural gas consumed, generating an estimate total of over \$60,000 per year just for the cotton ginning industry remaining in California. More meetings are underway, as we work to push these changes through.

#### **USDA Approves First Ever Guaranteed Loan for Commercial – Scale Cellulosic Ethanol Plant**

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced that USDA Rural Development has approved the first ever loan guarantee to a commercial-scale cellulosic ethanol plant. The \$80 million loan to Range Fuels Inc., Soperton, Ga., comes from the Section 9003 Biorefinery Assistance Program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill. "The investment in this facility - which will make cellulosic ethanol from wood chips - has the potential to significantly advance the timetable for second generation ethanol production in this

country," Schafer said. "I visited the pilot plant last October and was excited to see how well the technology works." The Biorefinery Assistance Program promotes the development of new and emerging technologies for the production of advanced biofuels - defined as fuels that are not produced from food sources. The program provides loan guarantees to develop, construct and retrofit viable commercial-scale biorefineries producing advanced biofuels. The maximum loan guarantee is \$250 million per project. The project is expected to produce an estimated 63 jobs. When fully operational in 2010, the plant is expected to produce approximately 20 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol per year.

#### **Newsletter Sponsorships**

2009 Sponsorships for the Cotton Chronicles are available to current associate members of either the Ginners or Growers Associations. Sponsorships are on first come first serve basis and months are going fast. We allow one primary sponsor and a secondary sponsor if the primary agrees. Cost to include an insert into the newsletter runs \$2,000 and \$1,500 for a primary who allows a secondary sponsor. The Cotton Chronicles has a distribution of 1,800. If you are interested in sponsoring a month, please contact Casey Creamer at (559) 252-0684.