

The Partnership Newsletter



ALAMEDA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Issue 6 September/October 2008

EQIP Application Deadline is October 31, 2008



Applications for the popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are being accepted for funding in 2009 from now through October 31, 2008, at USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices throughout California, including Livermore.

“This is a very important conservation program with huge potential to help our farming and ranching community in their stewardship of the land,” says NRCS Soil Conservationist Morpheus Anima. “EQIP in Alameda County is an underutilized resource and we hope to reach out to more of our local producers and let them know that this program is available to help meet resource needs on their lands.” Last year, all eligible applications were funded for Alameda County. *Continued page two.*



Alameda County Conservation Partnership 2007-2008 Annual Report

The fiscal year 2007-2008 annual report is out. If you did not receive one with this newsletter it can be viewed at www.acrcd.org. Link to “About Us/Annual Report”. Also, our past newsletters are archived on our website at “News and Events” in printable pdf format.

Watershed Adventures Celebrates 15 Years in Alameda County

By Amy Evans, Resource Conservationist

Watershed Adventures Celebrates its 15th year!

The Watershed Adventures program (WA) will be celebrating its 15th year during the 2008-09 school year- so watch our newsletters and website for updates about special activities and commemorations. WA is a classroom program for 4th grade classes in west Alameda County in which students learn about their school's watershed and how they can take steps to protect it from pollution. The WA program was previously known as San Francisco Bay Savers (1993-2004).

WA will have reached at least **70,000** students and teachers by the end of the current 2008-09 school year. The Partnership appreciates the on-going financial support of the program by Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program. The Partnership also provides support for the program, and in 1999 coordinated the development of a locally-filmed movie

"Adventures in the Watershed Starring Mr. Ball" that can now be viewed on the ACRCDC website. In 2002 the Partnership conducted day-long tours of east bay watersheds for several 4th grade classes as a follow-up to the WA presentations for those classes. In 2004 the Watershed Expressions (art) presentation was added to the program when it became Watershed Adventures. *Continued on page four*





EQIP Deadline, continued



Example of water trough built with matching EQIP funds. Notice the critter ramp.

In fiscal year 2008 California NRCS partnered with farmers and ranchers on nearly \$54 million in conservation cost share contracts, setting a new record for the program in the state. Alameda County was allocated over \$300,000 of that year's funding. This matched the landowner's \$300,000 contribution. The contracts covered a broad spectrum of natural resource

“EQIP in Alameda County is an underutilized resource and we hope to reach out to more of our local producers and let them know that this program is available to help meet resource needs on their lands.”

enhancements including grazing land management, increasing irrigation efficiency, integrated pest management, riparian protection and wildlife habitat, and more. Assistance can be in the form of structures and conservation “hardware” such as irrigation or livestock water developments, as well as incentive payments for proper management to achieve environmental benefits.

“Since the Farm Bill legislation is new, the program rules for this year are still being developed in Washington, but we can accept applications any time and encourage folks to come in and talk with us now so we have time to develop a plan together that will meet their needs,” says Anima.

The 2008 Farm Bill, passed on May 22, 2008, included several conservation programs administered by NRCS and the USDA's Farm Service Agency. Programs active in Alameda County include EQIP, as well as the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP), and others. Many of the program details and procedures for Farm Bill programs will continue to be outlined in coming months as the program rules, written in Washington, D.C., become available for public comment.

Applications for EQIP are accepted year round. The October 31, 2008, date reflects the cut off for contracts to be funded during the 2009 fiscal year.

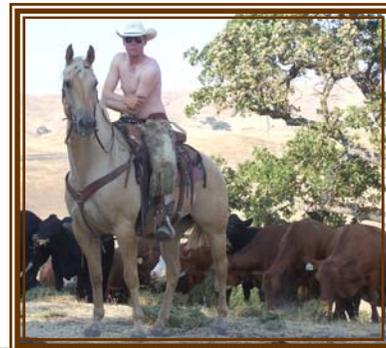
Tri-Valley Men in Agriculture 2009 Calendar pre-sales continue

By Peggy Kiefer

As published in the July/August newsletter, the Conservation Partnership, Alameda County Farm Bureau, Alameda County CattleWomen and Livermore Wine Growers Association are publishing a **2009 Tri-Valley Men in Agriculture** calendar. All proceeds will be donated to various local agricultural related programs including the Livermore High School Ag Department and Farm Bureau scholarships.

Photo shoots continue as the deadline to have the calendar published nears. The calendar committee hopes to have the calendar printed by Halloween. The calendar will be available for purchase at most wineries, at the Martenelli Center, 3585 Greenville Road, Livermore, both at the Partnership office (Suite 2) and the Livermore Wine Growers office (Suite 4) and many locations downtown. You can order yours now at the Partnership website www.acrcd.org under “News and Events”. The calendar features photographs taken by professional photographer Kathleen Ahern. The men featured have made and continue to make contributions to agriculture in Alameda County. They include Clayton Koopmann of Koopmann Ranch, Michael Wood of Wood Family Vineyards, Charles and Charles T. Crohare of Olivina, Brandon and Abbie Batteate of Batteate Transportation, John and John Evan Marion of Big White House Winery, Jim and James Goff of Goff Ranch and Jim's restaurant in Pleasanton and many others. All these gentlemen touch agriculture in one way or another and cover multiple generations.

Contact Peggy Kiefer if you have any questions at peggy.kiefer@acrcd.org, 925-371-0154, ext. 122.



Clayton Koopmann poses for the calendar

It's Harvest Time!

by Peggy Kiefer, Outreach Coordinator

It's that time of year again. School is back in session. Football games are being played at the high schools. Sunday afternoons are spent with friends watching the NFL and taking naps until someone tries to change the channel on the television. Big monster night harvesters causing traffic when they travel down Tesla; cannons shooting like we are at war; predatory birds chirping in distress and bright lights on all night long!

Unless of course you grow grapes, in which case it's harvest time and you are hard at work!



The harvesting of wine grapes is one of the most crucial steps in the process of winemaking. The time of harvest is determined primarily by the ripeness of the grape as measured by sugar, acid and tannin levels with winemakers basing their decision to pick based on the style of wine they wish to produce. The weather can also shape the timetable of harvesting with the threat of heat, rain, hail, and frost which can damage the grapes and bring

about various vine diseases. In addition to determining the time of the harvest, winemakers and vineyard owners must also determine whether to utilize hand pickers or mechanical harvesters. The harvest season typically falls between August & October in the Northern Hemisphere.

Our local wine growers and vintners are working feverishly to harvest their grapes right now and it's time for us to be good neighbors and lend

a hand. Some have already helped by celebrating with the wine growers at the Harvest Festival. Others can help out by just being patient and letting them work. Their success or failure depends on this six to eight week period.

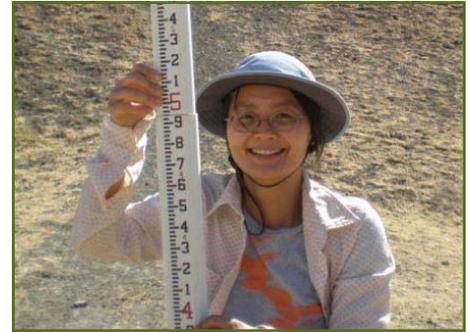


According to the Alameda County Right to Farm Ordinance, ***“Alameda County supports, encourages, and protects agricultural operations and agricultural processing within the county and gives recognition to those operation’s right to farm.”***

Farming is a part of living in wine country. Let's do what we can and enjoy the season while it is here.

For more information on the Alameda County Right to Farm Ordinance please see http://www.acgov.org/cda/right_to_farm.pdf

NRCS hires new Range Conservationist



Ling He, Range Conservationist

Ling He is the new range conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). She graduated from UC Berkeley with a M.S in Range Management in 2007 and worked as a biologist in the private sector for a year. Prior to her graduate study, Ling worked as a biological science technician at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. If you would like to contact Ling she can be reached at ling.he@ca.usda.gov or 925-371-0154, ext. 130.

FUN AG FACT

GRAPES ARE ONE OF THE OLDEST CULTIVATED FRUITS. THEY HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR MORE THEN 8,000 YEARS!



Watershed Adventures Program *continued*

Continued from page one.

Amy Evans, ACRCO Resource Conservationist, who was one of the originators of the program in 1993, continues as the WA program coordinator.

Each school year, WA visits approximately 170 4th grade classes in west Alameda County. Each class receives two classroom presentations: the first is the Watershed Explorers presentation in which students learn about their local creek and watershed, sources of water pollution and how they can participate in watershed protection. A week later the class receives a follow-up art lesson in which they create an oil-resist painting of a fish in an aquatic habitat and take a pledge to protect their fish by helping to maintain a healthy watershed. Students also enter the T-Shirt Art contest; One of the winning entries is shown here.

For more information on the Watershed Adventures program, please go to our website at www.acrcd.org.



T-shirt Art by contest winner Evin Yang from Castro Valley

Landowners and Agencies Attend Local Workgroup Meeting

by Jackie Charbonneau, Ecologist



The Alameda County Conservation Partnership conducted Local Work Group meetings on August 20, 2008 for the fiscal year 2009 NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Two meetings were held - one for local agency representatives, and another for local farmers and ranchers. A joint BBQ, hosted by the RCD and prepared by local ranchers, was provided between the meetings. This year's meeting was well attended by both agency representatives and the agricultural community. NRCS local advisory groups were established to make recommendations on local natural resource priorities and guidelines for NRCS conservation programs. The Local Work Group meetings provide a forum for local farmers and ranchers, public agency representatives and other partners to communicate their views on the most critical natural resource issues and priorities for the county. Local NRCS staff will be able to use the input provided

to help prioritize EQIP funding allocations to meet local natural resource needs. If you have any questions or suggestions please contact Morpheus Anima at 925-371-0154, ext 125 or email her at morpheus.anima@ca.usda.gov.

**The Conservation Partnership
Invites You to Browse Our
Website at www.acrcd.org
for Continuous Updates.**

**Please note...
The Alameda County Resource
Conservation District Board meetings
have changed to the third Monday evening
of the month. See website for agenda.**