

AGRARIAN ADVOCATE



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE WITH FAMILY FARMERS

Apple Growers Wary of Bill, Call on CAFF for Help

BY JOY ROWE & DAWN VAN DYKE

Northern California apple growers were alarmed to discover earlier this year that Assembly Bill 2425 (Matthews), which was being considered by the California Assembly Committee on Appropriations, might slap them with a fee to regulate pests that weren't a problem in their region. Tim Bates, organic apple grower and owner of The Apple Farm in Mendocino County, was the first to find out when his Ag Commissioner faxed him information about the bill. Bates called fellow organic apple grower John Leboyteaux, owner of Eel Canyon Farm in Humboldt, and "from there the whole thing blew up," says Bates.

At issue for these growers at that time was the possibility of being assessed \$0.0125 per pound "to be paid to the California Apple Commission by the first in-state handler of apples originating from designated areas identified by the apple committee as sources of designated pests or diseases." (AB2425 Matthews)

According to Leboyteaux and Bates, the pest of main concern is the apple maggot, which isn't a problem in California, unlike codling moth, which "everyone has." Leboyteaux says growers in the state have been aware of the apple maggot for years and have looked for signs of it in their orchards; it appears to be a pest that is native to the northern parts of the country. "California is too far south," he says.

Occasionally, apple maggot flies have been found, but no maggots. "It's never been a problem," says Leboyteaux.

The bill would not only have assessed a fee on these growers, it could have designated their counties as problem areas for the apple maggot. That didn't sit well with them. After hearing from his Ag Commissioner and talking with Leboyteaux, Bates weighed his options.

"I started thinking, and one week later I called CAFF."

CAFF executive director David Runsten referred him to CAFF legislative representative and policy consultant, Pete Price. Price immediately got on the phone with Bates and Leboyteaux, Farm Bureau staff and neighboring apple growers Cliff Clendon, Don Gowan and John Tennaci, all of whom objected to the way the bill was moving toward a vote with little or no input from affected parties in the north of the state. Following a couple of weeks of intense conference calls, the group was able to convince the bill's author to delay pushing AB2425 forward to a vote.

Apple Growers continued on page 4



CAFF and Slow Food Join Forces to Save the Gravenstein Apple

By Anya Fernald

The Gravenstein apple is considered by many Californians to be one of the best eating apples. Its tart flavor is delicious eaten out of hand, intensifying to a deep sweetness when baked or made into sauce. Sebastopol Gravensteins, grown in the heart of Sonoma County, are picked in August and are especially renowned as an ingredient in the county's famous apple sauces and ciders. Russian colonists brought the Gravenstein to North America in the early 1800s, and by the early 1900s Gravensteins had become a major industry in Sonoma County. In 1919, over 11,000 acres of the county were planted with apple orchards. In the past 40 years, however, cultivation of Gravenstein orchards has dropped off precipitously as vineyards were planted in their stead.

CAFF is working with the international Slow Food organization to develop a promotional project to market the Gravenstein apple's unique heritage and baking attributes. The activities began at the annual Sebastopol Gravenstein Fair, where CAFF sold over \$1,200 of apples from four farmers participating in the project over two days. CAFF and Slow Food have since provided the apples at six events in locations across the United States, including Denver, New Orleans, New York, San Diego, Berkeley, and Madison. Next year, plans include the development of a Gravenstein gift box for commercialization among Slow Food members and the development of a product logo and brochure. For more information, contact Kristen Schroer at Kristen@caff.org.



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food & communities*

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Mission: CAFF is building a movement of rural and urban people to foster family-scale agriculture that cares for the land, sustains local economies and promotes social justice.

The Agrarian Advocate/Farmer to Farmer is the quarterly publication of the Community Alliance with Family Farmers.

Agrarian: 1. Relating to land or to the ownership or division of land. 2. Of agriculture or farmers generally. [From the Latin *ager*: a field or country]

CAFF is a nonprofit membership organization. Members are part of an active, effective voice for CAFF's mission. Benefits of membership: subscription to this newsletter, voting privileges and timely updates on CAFF activities. Membership levels are: \$20 Student, \$50 Basic, \$250 Gardener, \$500 Tiller, \$1,000 Steward.

CAFF encourages contributions of any size to support our work. Contributions to CAFF are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.

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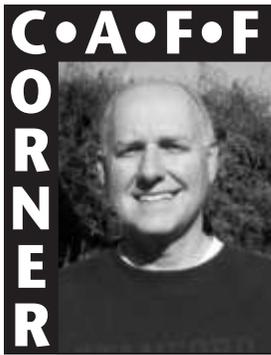
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Our Role in Policy

BY DAVE RUNSTEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Policy is featured in this edition, as the California legislative year has ended. CAFF has a long history of policy work in California, maintaining a continuous presence in Sacramento for 25 years. In fact, CAFF is the only organization that has continuously represented sustainable agriculture in state policy debates.

Some of the issues in which CAFF has played a leading role include: safe use of pesticides, including requiring health and groundwater impact studies, and the passage of the birth defects prevention act; the provision for more in-stream water for fish and wildlife; fair prices for small dairy farmers, and opposition to recombinant bovine growth hormone; the establishment and funding of sustainable agriculture programs at the University of California; farm-stay legislation to facilitate agri-tourism; various direct marketing programs, including the use of WIC coupons at farmers' markets; and on-farm wastewater treatment.

CAFF has been consistently opposed to policies that simply seek to maintain the status quo in the face of overwhelming evidence that the status quo is unsustainable. In fact, sustainability is one of our principal criteria for assessing policy: Does it make California agriculture more viable in the long run? Will it create the kind of society and environment we want our grandchildren to inherit?

In the recent legislative session, we supported bills that few other farming organizations would consider, such as the legalization of industrial hemp production (AB 1147, vetoed by the Governor) and a program to curb greenhouse gases (AB 32, signed by the Governor), and we opposed SB 1056 (died in the Senate), which would have pre-empted counties' rights to control GMOs. We supported the hemp bill because hemp is not marijuana and it is absurd that every other country produces it except the United States. We supported AB 32 because we are convinced that global warming is real and that California agriculture will be devastated by the projected reduction in the Sierra snowpack—people forget that state law puts urban households first in line for water when it becomes scarce. For the same reason we support Proposition 87 on the November ballot, which seeks to provide funding for alternative energy programs by taxing oil extraction in California, as in all other oil-producing states. Finally, we opposed GMO pre-emption because the bill would have pre-empted county regulations without creating any state rules.

We also supported SB 1347 (signed by the Governor) to make it easier and less costly for farmers to implement Integrated On-Farm Drainage Management (IFDM), an innovative program to eliminate off-farm drainage and evaporation ponds, conserve water, and restore salt-degraded lands. CAFF sponsored the initial legislation in 2002 that reduced regulatory barriers to the use of IFDM. It is our alternative to simply retiring farmland.

CAFF's policy approach is pragmatic. When we sponsor legislation, such as IFDM or the Farm-Stay bill, it is in direct response to problems that our members have identified. When we oppose legislation, it is usually also in response to the concerns of our members, as evidenced in this issue's front-page story about opposition to an apple pest bill. One area that we hope to address in the next legislative session is direct marketing. It appears that many of the rules that were written long ago have become outdated. Some common practices are not permitted by existing legislation and certain marketing arrangements that farmers would like to pursue are also prohibited. If you have examples of such rules that need fixing, and that would improve your ability to market your products directly, please let us know (dave@caff.org or 530-756-8518 ext. 25).

FARMER^{TO}FARMER

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

FALL 2006

FARMER PROFILE

Goat Milk?

BY TABER WARD

Sonoma County: The land of Champagne, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Merlot, Zinfandel...and goat milk?

“Goat milk and grapes” may seem like an odd couple, but the centuries-old history of these products as a pair is as logical as the more popular “wine and cheese” platter.

Most people think “Gruyere and Chardonnay” or “garlic-chive chèvre and Sauvignon Blanc,” when they plan a palate-teaser. Sonoma County—self-proclaimed “Premier Wine Destination of California”—has leveraged its grape crops and goat population and is now home to both leading wineries and one of the United States’ most successful goat dairies and creameries: Redwood Hill Farm. Tucked into the hilly pleats of Sebastopol, among vineyards, oak woodlands and Gravenstein apple orchards, Redwood Hill is a vestige of the changing North Bay landscape. The modern winery topography of Sonoma County is a new incarnation of what was once a small dairy-speckled pastureland, but plummeting milk prices forced farmers to cede much of their arable land from livestock farms to the more profitable vineyard mono-crops that now blanket the terrain.

A Different Breed of Dairy

As dairy farming floundered, innovative ideas and flavors emerged from the brainstorms of savvy artisans and entrepreneurs who redefined “dairy.” The 38-year industry veterans at Redwood Hill exemplify the novel niche with award-winning goat milk-based cheeses and yogurts that have become staples for natural-food buyers. According to Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (December 2005), trends in goat milk and cheese sales are up as consumers are drawn to their easy digestibility, high protein, and



low cholesterol and calorie content.

Redwood Hill’s farm manager Scott Bice manages this top producer of yogurt sold at natural-foods markets. He reports that in winter months—when many goats are pregnant and the darker, colder, wetter weather diminishes milk yield—Redwood Hill can’t produce enough goat milk to meet demand and is flooded with calls from customers asking for the yogurt. In response, Redwood Hill has distributed “Goats on Maternity Leave” signs to retailers and a yogurt container lid that explains that goats rest during the winter.

Goats Galore!

Scott’s parents established Redwood Hill in 1968 to sell goat milk. Early on, milk arrived at customers’ doors in glass bottles, a personal if more inefficient distribution mode than today’s trucked products, which sell through retailers. Scott’s sister, Jennifer, assumed the farm’s reins in 1978 and started to show the goats and sell value-added cheese products. Scott explains that the family “got into this business for the goats – then needed to make money!” There are four different breeds of goats at Redwood Hill: Nubians, Sanaans, La Manchas and French Alpines. Each of these has unique qualities that add to the creaminess, flavor and consistency of the award winning

products produced at Redwood Hill.

Jennifer, owner of Redwood Hill, is also head cheesemaker and manages the business along with Scott and Marty, the assistant farm manager. Steve manages the dairy; Jolene manages the herds; Sharon, sister to Jennifer and Scott, heads PR. Students are a great help—current interns have one-year commitments before returning to their native Costa Rica and Ecuador.

Although the humans on the farm manage their business capably and thoughtfully, the goats run the show at Redwood Hill. Sunning, lounging, bleating and skipping, the kids rush the fence to peer at passersby and twist their heads through the boards, eager for attention and even affection from their doting owners and visitors.

Approximately 160 goats are milking now. Scott hopes to build this number slowly



to 800, so the Bices are seeking a farm with more pastureland and larger facilities and natural biodiversity. There they can continue to produce the high-quality milk that is a result of the cleanliness, good diet and lifestyle the goats enjoy.

Farewell to Furry Friends!

As I pull out of the driveway and meander back down the hillside to the valley floor, I happily anticipate my dinner of

Redwood Hill’s Three Peppercorn chèvre, fresh heirloom tomatoes and an avocado-schmeared slab of bread. And, to experience and celebrate the bountiful Sonoma farmland, a glass of wine is most appropriate.

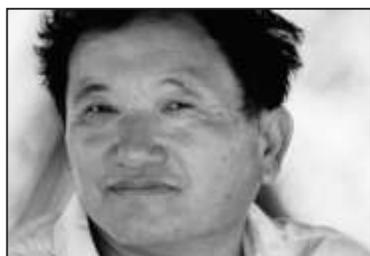
Redwood Hill Products are available Saturdays at The Ferry Plaza and Berkeley Farmers’ Markets; Whole Foods; and most natural and health-food stores. For details visit www.redwoodhill.com. ■

CAFF Helps Bring Family Farms into Kaiser Permanente

BY ANYA FERNALD

CAFF and Kaiser Permanente are working together to source California-grown and sustainably farmed food for the medical group's 19 Northern California hospitals and medical centers. Key partners in the project include Food Service Partners (a commissary food service business that prepares cooked in-patient meals) and Lee Ray Tarantino (a produce wholesaler based in South San Francisco). Within Kaiser, the project has been driven by Dr. Preston Maring, a practicing physician who is a strong advocate for farmers' markets and sustainable food systems development within the Kaiser system. Lynn Garske, director of Environmental Stewardship and Jan Sanders, director of purchasing nationwide, completed the team of Kaiser leaders who worked with Tarantino, FSP, and CAFF to pull together this innovative project.

After a six-month study period—during which CAFF's Community Food Systems team worked to document all current Kaiser produce purchases and to develop a strategy for supplying produce in collaboration with Tarantino—CAFF began a pilot program for sourcing. Now, instead of receiving Costa Rican bananas and Chilean grapes,



Choua Vang provides cherry tomatoes from his Fresno county farm.

Kaiser's patients this fall are being served fresh-picked strawberries and melons from the Central Coast, Central Valley, and Ventura areas. August featured cherry tomatoes from Hmong growers in Fresno and peaches and plums from Paul Buxman in Dinuba. In September, yellow watermelons from Ventura and organic strawberries from Watsonville were added to

the menu along with red and green grapes from a family farm in the Central Valley.

The project has received significant attention, with a front-page story in the San Francisco Chronicle and a feature in the October 16 edition of Newsweek magazine. Other hospitals and large institutions are inspired too by the project, and Kaiser's strong and public endorsement of family-farmed and California-grown food bodes well for the adoption of similar programs by other institutions in the future.

CAFF is eager to involve more growers. Please drop us a note if you would like to participate. All growers in the project must be family-owned-and-operated farms that use sustainable agricultural techniques. Preference is given to limited-resource and minority-owned farms. If you are interested in this or other possible distribution projects through CAFF, please send an email to *Stephanie Johnson* at stephanie@caff.org. ■



Kaiser food service workers help serve fresh local produce in-patient meals.

Apple Growers continued from page 1

As small family farmers, Bates and Leboyteaux say bills like this—imposing additional fees on their crops, could really cause an impact to their business. They are grateful to CAFF for stepping in to help make sure their interests were taken into account. While Price predicts that the bill will eventually be brought back, he believes that the Apple Commission will be forced to include growers from all regions in the debate.

Having seen firsthand that CAFF is available to help farmers, especially those who are underrepresented, Bates is spreading the word. He encouraged members of his local food shed group to find out more about CAFF's programs and activities.

"They didn't know that CAFF existed. People don't want to get involved in another \$50-75 a year membership, but I said 'this is one group you should be involved in. CAFF is a group that's really doing something.'"

Anyone interested in finding out more about how CAFF helps support family farmers can visit the CAFF website www.caff.org to find contacts for their region. 🍏



Tim Bates explains the challenges of organic apple growing to Pete Price.

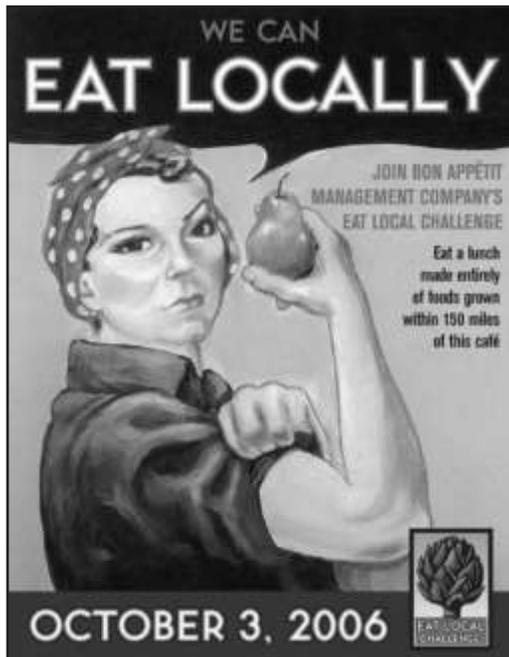
Nominations Open for CAFF Board

CAFF's Board of Directors is seeking nominations for new board members. We are looking for Board members who have a sincere interest in sustainable food and farming and in the mission of CAFF. Members will also need to commit some time to volunteer in pursuit of our goals. Board meetings are held quarterly and special committee meetings are often convened in between the general meetings. People who have experience raising funds from the public are particularly welcome. If you would like to serve on CAFF's Board of Directors, or if you would like to nominate someone, please contact CAFF's Executive Director, Dave Runsten (dave@caff.org), or CAFF's President, Judith Redmond (Judith@fullbellyfarm.com). The election will be held towards the end of the year.

Bon Appetit Buys Fresh, Buys Local

BY ANYA FERNALD

Bon Appetit Management Company has become a key partner of CAFF's Growers' Collaborative (GC), funding the strategic growth of the social-venture produce distribution business in Ventura, Riverside, and Los Angeles counties. Bon Appetit has invested in the Growers' Collaborative to allow the expansion of the business through purchasing a second truck, establishing an office, and moving into a bigger warehouse space. Over the course of the year-long collaboration, the Growers' Collaborative plans on adding a total of 25 new delivery sites. So far, seven sites have been added, with five new sites slated for October. Cary Wheeland, the director of Bon Appetit's Southern California region has become a true advocate of the program, offering guidance and support in the form of planning



for route organization, clarity in invoicing, and produce quality.

Bon Appetit is based in Palo Alto, and operates over 400 cafes in corporations, institutions, and universities around the states. Some of its more high-profile clients include Getty Museum, Intel, Dreamworks, and Cisco. Bon Appetit is a national leader in sustainability—its

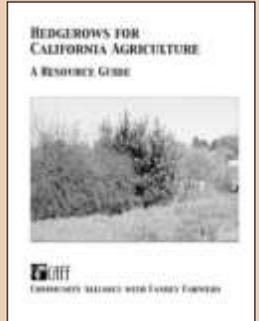
slogan is "Food Service for a Sustainable Future." The company has pioneered local sourcing in other regions, working with America Fresh in Northern California, and challenging all of its cafes nationwide to "Eat Local" on October 3. On that day, all chefs were invited to prepare a meal using ingredients sourced entirely locally—salt was the only ingredient that could be purchased from conventional sources.

The Growers' Collaborative is rising to the challenge of moving beyond its core business of serving public schools to work with the savvy chefs of the Bon Appetit sites. This collaboration allows GC to market many more varieties of specialty produce. Bon Appetit is also eager to develop the educational arm of the collaboration, developing farm tours for chefs and other outreach tools involving GC farmers.

CAFF is eager to involve more growers in the Bon Appetit project. Please drop us a note if you would like to participate. All growers in the project must be family-owned-and-operated farms that use sustainable agricultural techniques. If you are interested in this or other possible distribution projects through CAFF, please send an email to Stephanie Johnson at stephanie@caff.org. ■

CAFF Publications

Hedgerows for California Agriculture. This manual will help you choose and care for regionally appropriate plants that attract beneficial insects and prevent erosion. It lists native plant nurseries and consultants/contractors specializing in hedgerow and other restoration projects. Download it at www.caff.org.



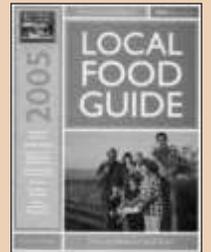
Making the Farm Connection.



This manual is designed to let farmers know what to expect when hosting a farm visit. The booklet is also very useful for teachers and classes so that they may get the most out of their farm visit. Download at www.caff.org.

Central Coast Local Food Guide. A

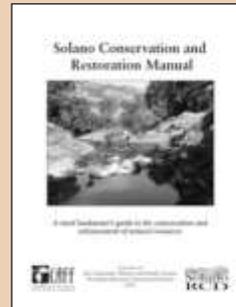
free booklet from the Buy Fresh Buy Local Campaign, this will tell you where to find seasonal, fresh, locally-grown food in the Santa Cruz area, including farmers' markets, CSAs, restaurants, and family farms. Available at various locations. Free.



Call (831) 761-8507 for details.

Also see caff.org/buy local

Solano Conservation & Restoration Manual. Do you



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BASIC Cotton Manual. Practical Lessons Learned from the Sustainable Cotton Project's Biological Agriculture Systems in Cotton (BASIC) Program, San Joaquin Valley, California, 2001 to 2004. This manual describes management and marketing options for cotton production systems that use bio-intensive, integrated pest management to reduce chemical inputs. \$15. To order, e-mail marcia@caff.org.



Yolo Ag Futures Alliance Working to Preserve County Farmland

BY DAWN VAN DYKE

Formed in 2004, Yolo County Ag Futures Alliance (Yolo AFA) continues to use its collaborative approach to achieve its goal of preserving and enhancing agriculture, the environment and the community, indefinitely. Cognizant of the fact that Yolo County currently faces an enormous challenge due to its proximity to both San Francisco and Sacramento—growing pressure to convert land to non-agriculture uses such as housing and commercial development—Yolo County Agriculture Commissioner Rick Landon spearheaded the creation of Yolo AFA. He contacted various stakeholders and encouraged them to create a local chapter of the statewide AFA. In April 2006, the group completed its constitution. In May 2006, Yolo AFA formally introduced itself at the Yolo County Board of Supervisors meeting.

Members of Yolo AFA represent agriculture, environmental and civic organizations, support agencies and others. They believe that by protecting the county's rich agricultural land, they are simultaneously protecting the environment and the nation's food system. As farmland is preserved, the Valley's water supply, habitats, species

diversity and air quality are also preserved.

Realizing that having many interests compete against each other has proven ineffective, Yolo AFA members seek to achieve their goals through a collaborative approach, through shared interests and mutual respect.

Key issues the AFA seeks to address include:

- Increasing the use of sustainable farming practices.
- Preserving viable agriculture, particularly in the urban fringe zones.
- Increasing the awareness of the importance of a healthy agriculture industry to the future of a sustainable society.
- Increasing understanding and collaboration among environmental and farm labor advocates, farmers and ranchers, governments and other civic leaders.



Yolo AFA is working to preserve county farmland and vistas such as this for future generations.

Currently, the group is working on a recommendation regarding development mitigation policy. It is also looking for local markets for locally grown produce.

With the Yolo County General Plan up for review, members of the Yolo County AFA seek to revisit the issue of urban limit lines, keeping development from creeping out into the farmland that stretches throughout the county.

CAFF Biological Agriculture Program Director Marcia Gibbs is one of the Yolo AFA members. Please contact her at Marcia@caff.org or 530-756-8518, ext 34 if you would like more information on the AFA, or how to support the AFA process. ■

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www.californiafarmconference.com



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California Food & Farming Policy Update

BY PETE PRICE

The 2005-06 legislative session adjourned on August 31, and again offered several examples of CAFF's leadership on progressive agricultural policy.

California Tackles Global Warming

Assembly Bill 32 (Nunez and Pavley)—The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 was the most heralded bill of the two-year session. It requires the state, through the Air Resources Board and the Governor's Climate Action Board, to adopt regulations and other programs to reduce California's greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, or about 5%. The bill allows "flexible market mechanisms," including trading, banking, and carbon sequestration.

AB 32 was introduced two years ago, but got added impetus in summer 2005 when the Governor ordered CalEPA to identify actions needed to achieve long-term reductions in global warming gas emissions. Hundreds of hours of intense negotiations among the authors, supporters and the Administration culminated in the last week of session when long-awaited amendments were announced. In a dramatic moment, the Governor initially told Speaker Nunez he would veto the bill because it did not guarantee emission trading, then his chief of staff called back 10 minutes later to announce the Governor would sign.

AB 32 catapults California ahead not only of the Bush Administration but of the Kyoto Accord that most nations have signed. While

most California agricultural organizations opposed AB 32, CAFF is the only statewide farm organization to support the bill, in recognition of the danger global warming poses to agriculture as well as the opportunities agriculture has to reduce its global warming impacts through sustainable farming practices. *Signed into law.*

Rights of Citizens to Restrict GMOs Upheld

Senate Bill 1056 (Florez)—CAFF joined California Certified Organic Farmers, the California Farmers Union, dozens of individual farms, as well as environmentalists and local governments in successfully opposing SB 1056, which would have prohibited local governments and citizens from enacting restrictions on the use of genetically modified organisms in their local jurisdiction. SB 1056 passed the Assembly in August but was held in the Senate without a vote. The failure of the measure highlights the need for reasonable statewide rules governing the use of GMOs in agriculture before the state considers preemption of local rules. Supporters and opponents of the bill held several fruitful discussions in August, which may lead to negotiations in 2007 on legislation to establish statewide rules. *Held in Senate Rules Committee.*

Industrial Hemp Anyone?

AB 1147 (Leno)—AB 1147 paves the way for California farmers, after a 69-year federal ban, to once again grow industrial hemp as

Policy Update continued on page 7