

# California Food and Farming Policy Update

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## **California tackles Global Warming**

*AB 32 (Nunez and Pavley) To Governor:* 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 he 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.

## **Rights of Citizens to Restrict GMOs Upheld**

*SB 1056 (Florez) Held in Senate Rules:* 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.

## **Industrial Hemp Anyone?**

*AB 1147 (Leno) To Governor:* AB 1147 paves the way for California farmers, after a 69-year federal ban, to once again grow industrial hemp as a commercial crop. The bill cites a recent federal court ruling that drew a bright-line distinction between marijuana and non-psychoactive hemp. The Drug Enforcement Agency has chosen not to appeal the ruling, thus opening the door for California farmers to operate under the rules established by AB 1147 to cultivate, harvest and sell hemp. Farmers in 30 other countries currently grow industrial hemp legally. Despite the bill being authored by liberal San Francisco

Assemblyman Mark Leno and co-authored by libertarian Republican Chuck DeVore, the California Farm Bureau and other large agricultural organizations avoided AB 1147.

**CAFF was the first and one of the few farm groups to support the market-building bill.**

### **Organic Apple Growers Resist New Pest Regs**

*AB 2425 (Matthews) Held in Senate Agriculture:* For several frenzied weeks in the early summer, CAFF was pulled into a contentious and confusing debate spawned by AB 2425, which proposed to allow CDFA to appoint a committee of the California Apple Commission to identify apple pests and impose fees on apple growers in areas with pests.

**A number of North Coast organic apple growers sought CAFF's help in understanding the legislation and their options.**

The bill eventually drew a wide range of opposition from many apple growers and the Farm Bureau. North Coast growers were especially worried about repeating the apple maggot quarantine on the late 1980s, which they felt unfairly imposed costs to fight a pest that was not a problem to their own apple crops. After much discussion and explanation, the Apple Commission agreed to hold the bill. The commission is expected to pursue the idea again in 2007, but only after better outreach among apple growers statewide.

### **Farmers Market Fees Continued**

*AB 2676 (Assembly Agriculture Committee) To Governor:* AB 2676 extends until 2012 the ability of CDFA to collect fees from farmers who sell at Certified Farmers Market. The fee, equal to \$0.60 per stall per market, is used to enforce CFM rules. AB 2676 was a stop-gap measure to ensure that the current CFM system continues past the 2007 sunset date. But CAFF and other participants in CFMs have been engaged in discussions to identify broader reforms and expansions of the state's direct marketing program. Those discussions may result in 2007 legislation.