

Today is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_. This is Ken Morgan's Northcoast Ag Report, our lead story is about \_\_\_\_\_ when we return

## **CALIFORNIA ASSESSING WILDFIRE DAMAGE**

### **Audio with California Farm Bureau spokesperson Dave Kranz**

Farmers and ranchers in the wildfire-stricken part of California are just beginning to assess damages. California Farm Bureau spokesperson Dave Kranz says the state is learning more about the damage as those who were evacuated are returning to the area...tape

Cut #1 :17 OC:... "has happened."

He says many of the grapes in the area were harvested before the fires. While wine and grapes are the dominant commodities, other types of agriculture operations were impacted as well...tape

Cut #2 :19 OC:... "impact is."

Kranz says community needs will take top priority, finding housing for displaced residents, which includes farm workers...tape

Cut #3 :25 OC:... "high priority."

## **California Labor Shortages Detailed in Survey**

OCTOBER 18, 2017

There were a total of 762 farmers and ranchers who submitted information as part of the survey, with 55 percent reporting employee shortages during the past year. Of that number, the incidence of labor shortages was even more apparent for employers who rely on seasonal workers, with 69 percent reporting problems with acquiring sufficient labor. The shortages were seen predominately in crops that require a significant amount of hand labor.

The survey participants were comprised of a diverse group of farmers growing a wide range of commodities including tree fruit, grapes, nuts, rice, and wheat. Employers have been increasing recruiting efforts, as well as offering higher wages and other incentives in hopes of attracting more labor. However, reports indicate that fewer individuals are applying for seasonal harvest jobs.

Many farmers indicated their operations are moving more towards mechanization in response to the labor constraints. Farmers also reported planting fewer acres, or simply leaving some crops unharvested. Other respondents noted changing crops or reducing cultivations activities like pruning trees and vines.

Respondents to the survey also addressed the future of labor requirements in farming operations and the need for improvements to immigration policies. Only three percent of those who participated in the survey noted using the existing H-2A agricultural immigration program. Many farmers cited the cost and overall burden inherent with the program as reasons they did not use the H-2A program.

The impact of age was also highlighted as an important factor for labor supplies over the next 10 to 15 years. Close to 34 percent of respondents are seeing employees retiring or having hours reduced because of their age, further complicating existing labor shortages.

## **Call to Action at CAPCA Conference**

OCTOBER 18, 2017

The 43rd Annual California Association of Pest Control Advisers (CAPCA) Conference and Agri-Expo took place at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, Nevada. The theme for this year's meeting was *Guardians of the Green*, highlighting the role of licensed pest control advisers in continuing the success of California agriculture.

California Farm Bureau Federation President Paul Wenger spoke on the challenges of adapting to changing regulations in California and encouraged cooperation within the agriculture industry. "We see each other as competition, but we've got to get past that and we've got to work together. We're such a minority in the world today and the world is so dependent upon us, we need to work together," Wenger told AgNet West.

A wide variety of industry experts are covering a multitude of topics centered around the different elements of pest control. Some speakers at the conference are also addressing cannabis cultivation, along with bee health and weed control. Water is another significant issue being discussed at this year's meeting.

Wenger commented on how beneficial the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act has been for agricultural water supplies, by changing the biological opinions on the Delta smelt. "[It] made it to where you actually have to use science to see if the smelt are being harmed. If they're not, we're pumping the water; and that's what happened and we have San Luis Reservoir that is full today because of it," Wenger stated.

Events like the CAPCA conference are integral to keeping the agricultural community engaged and informed on the most pressing issues in the industry. Wenger emphasized the need to participate in industry meetings, understanding the commitment that it can require. "We know you've got to go away from your farm, your ranch, or your business to show up to these meetings, but believe me, it will pay dividends down the road," said Wenger.