

# The Sacramento Region Embraces Production Agriculture



Panelists included, from left, grower Fritz Durst, Northern California Water Association President David Guy and rice grower Nicole Van Vleck.

Often times when we see agriculture in an urban setting it is in the form of a farmers' market or a farm-to-fork event trumpeting the virtues of local agriculture. Once in a while agriculture will be mentioned as being great for exports but that is about it. Production Ag is seen as something that occurs out in the countryside and beyond the general interest of the urban populace. Due to the leadership of Valley Vision, The Sacramento Area Council of Governments and the Sacramento Metro Chamber – all that has changed in our region.

A recent example of the region grabbing the hand of agriculture came at the Metro Chamber's annual Cap-to-Cap event that brought 300 business leaders and local elected officials to Washington, D.C.

Of the 17 issue papers presented at the over 200 meetings on Capitol Hill and with the Administration, four were

the primary focus – water resources, the Trans Pacific Partnership, higher education and innovation. Agriculture and specifically the CRC was asked to author the papers on water resources and the TPP.

If this was not enough, the guest speaker at the delegation lunch was none other than Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Imagine 300 urban leaders from Sacramento listening to a great address of the vital nature of agriculture in the U.S. and in California. Add some wonderful comments by Representative Doris Matsui on the great environmental stewardship of the California rice industry and it is clear that the region's view of ag is far bigger than farmers' markets.

The second example occurred in May again under the leadership of the Metro Chamber. Perspectives on Agriculture was the second annual event designed to connect urban and rural communities on issues that impact the region.

## Changes forthcoming to Industry Publications

In our continuing effort to provide timely news in a method desired by our industry, we are in process to shifting publications to a more electronic form.

A survey of industry members provided valuable information that will help guide our efforts.

Timing and the exact form of future publications are in process. In the meantime, we will continue to deliver at least one publication a month to growers and handlers.

This year's topic – water.

Again, the CRC was instrumental in developing the program, recruiting speakers and providing visual content for the event. The result was 600 community leaders hearing how important agriculture is to the environment, how well we use water and how important we are to the region's economy.

The groundwork for this embrace of farmers, equipment dealers and food processors can be traced back to the early leadership of two groups. First was the Sacramento Area Council of Governments whose groundbreaking Rural Urban Connection Strategy mapped the rural portion of the region and identified what drove the economy. The answer surprised them – farms! Valley Vision then took this work and folded it into its Next Economy initiative highlighting agriculture as one of the key economic clusters in the region.