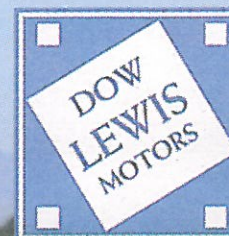


Jon Munger, 37, of Yuba City, vice president of operations for Montna Farms, stands in a rice field being prepared for planting.

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# Yuba-Sutter Ag Life

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## A man of many hats

Story and cover photo by David Bitton  
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### PROFILE

Jon Munger wears a lot of hats in the world of agriculture. Rice farmer, president of the Yuba-Sutter Farm Bureau and vice president of operations at Montna Farms are some of them. At Montna Farms, which grows several varieties of Japanese short grain rice in

south Sutter County, water is on the forefront of Munger's mind. Last year, Montna Farms left about one-third of their roughly 5,000 acres of rice fields unplanted and with the below-average rainfall and snowfall totals again this winter, California is entering a fourth year of drought conditions.

"Water and water security is a big issue for us," Munger said. "We have to work hard at protecting it in Northern California." Munger expects that, since they need water through August for the rice crop, about one-third of their fields will again go unplanted this growing season. Another top priority for Munger is the continued fight against over-regulation.

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## He's dedicated to area agriculture

Jon Munger grew up in Sutter as an active member of 4-H and Future Farmers of America.

His family owned and leased a small rice farm.

He raised game birds before attending Yuba College and moving away to attend California State University-San Luis Obispo.

After graduation, he was hired at Montna Farms and has been there since 2001.

"I thoroughly enjoy coming to work every day," Munger said. "I don't look at it as a job. Every day is a different challenge."

He enjoys working for a company that is conservation-minded.

Munger said Montna Farms has a monthly kids program designed to teach and keep their children involved in all aspects of farming.

"You see too many families get disconnected and they end up selling the farm," Munger said. "We don't want that to happen here."

— David Bitton



In this May 3 photo, agricultural pilot Wes Towel flies over Al Montna's rice farm showing rice fields left idle due to lacking legal rights to water in Yuba City. "In a good year, we wouldn't be able to stand here unless we got wet. This year, it won't produce anything," said the second-generation rice farmer Montna as he knelt in the dust, pulling apart dirt clods on the 1,800 acres he left idle because of scarce water.

Associated Press

## MUNGER, From 1

"Now that there are a lot more regulations, we need to protect our right to farm, Munger said.

"It takes a lot more sophistication to be a farmer today than it used to."

He is also concerned with the state's flood control planning that is going on.

Munger said the state wants to create more habitats.

"From my Farm Bureau standpoint, I want the state to prove what they are planning is really needed," Munger said. "It is an area I am really concerned about."

He said the Sutter Bypass is a flood control system and not a habitat system and that it shouldn't be used for additional habitat.

Using that area to create habitat is a public safety issue, Munger said.

"There is already great habitat there," Munger said. "Let's give credit for what is there, not create more."

"We don't need to lose anymore farmland to habitat," Munger said.