

Nunes keeps spotlight on Valley issues

Agriculture

Dairy

Congressman Nunes asked Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman to adjust the support program purchase price levels for cheese, butter and non-fat dry milk to reflect the significant additional costs manufacturers face when selling products to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). The current CCC purchase price for dairy products does not reflect costs beyond those incurred for commercial sales. As a result, market prices for individual products have fallen below support levels, allowing the price of milk used to produce them to fall below the statutory support level for milk of \$9.90 per hundredweight.

Farm and Conservation Service Offices

Congressman Nunes asked Secretary Veneman to support current staffing levels at Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service offices in California. Statutory reductions in these offices has disproportionately impacted California. The state had 64 offices throughout the state in 1994. Today, 22 offices are required to serve the same area.

USDA Peach Purchases

Congressman Nunes signed a letter to Secretary Veneman in support of the California Canning Peach Association's requests for USDA purchases of



surplus peaches in the amount of 3 million cases.

As imports of peaches continue to grow, no improvement has occurred in export markets. Due to the unique challenges facing the domestic peach industry, it is important to provide market relief to growers by moving surplus supply off farms.

Concurrently with USDA purchases, industry initiatives and trade negotiations seek to address the underlying oversupply of peaches.

Diesel-Fueled Engines

Congressman Nunes, along with a number of his colleagues, sent a letter to Secretary Veneman about the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) issued rule requiring the agriculture industry to comply with Title V under the Clean Air Act. The agricultural operations primarily affected in the first round of the rule involve the use of stationary diesel-powered engines, such as agricultural irrigation pumps. Specifically, he strongly encouraged the Department of Agriculture to allocate \$15 million in FY 2003 funds and \$14 million in FY 2004 funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to provide funding for the replacement of diesel-fueled engines used for agricultural irrigation pumping.

Transportation

Congressman Nunes co-sponsored H.R. 871, which will provide a comprehensive definition of the term "agricultural commodity" in the National Highway Safety Designation Act. Currently, this term is not clearly defined and has been subject

to varying interpretations. This bill will also provide exemptions from the federal hours of service regulations for truck drivers who are engaged in the transportation of agricultural commodities and supplies.

Crime

Congressman Nunes co-sponsored the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. Under current federal law, an individual who commits a federal crime of violence against a pregnant woman receives no additional punishment for killing or injuring the woman's unborn child.

The Unborn Victims of Violence Act narrows this gap in the law by providing that an individual who injures or kills an unborn child during the commission of certain federal crimes of violence will be guilty of a separate offense. The punishment will be the same as the punishment had the same injury or death resulted to the pregnant woman.



Environment

Congressman Nunes wrote a letter expressing his support for a grant request submitted by the Great Valley Center to the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy. The grant seeks \$1.85 million to develop a biomass research and development program in the San Joaquin Valley that will be administered by the Great Valley Center.