

California

FARMER

Apple moth foray spreading see Page 13

Tejon helps save state condor see Page 24

Group aims to kill co-ops see Page 28

Water watch

By **LEN RICHARDSON**

If you have irrigated cropland, chances are you have heard about CURES — the Coalition for Urban and Rural Environmental Stewardship. And you may have heard about the water coalitions formed by CURES so growers can be in compliance with Regional Water Quality Board's Irrigated Lands Program.

In practice, CURES forms partnerships with water-quality coalitions and other specialists to work on solutions to problems impacting agriculture and urban areas. Most recently, CURES efforts have focused on water-quality problems originating from irrigated agriculture and urban areas.

CURES is funded from two sources: 1) grants from state agencies, and 2) private funding from commodity groups, ag organizations or pesticide registrants. This funding is used to develop outreach programs and to perform studies assessing the effectiveness of Best Management Practices with potential for protecting surface water.

Outreach programs include presentations to growers and pest-control advisers, and production and distribution of BMP publications for specific crops or pesticides.

Recent BMP efficiency studies have focused on

Key Points:

- CURES partners to solve water and environmental problems.
- Coalitions formed to comply with Irrigated Lands Program.
- Member acreage jumped to meet board deadline.

technologies such as Smart Sprayers, vegetative ditches, use of PAM in irrigation water and others. CURES also uses technology such as an orchard sprayer calibration instrument to assist in educational efforts for fruit growers.

An idea is born

The original idea for CURES was gelled over lunch between two experts in water and pesticide regulations, explains Parry Klassen, executive director.

"They envisioned forming a group that would pursue public and private support to promote stewardship of farm and home pest-control products and nutrients.

"After drafting Len Richardson, editor of *California Farmer*, to be board chairman, a board of trustees was selected that represented a cross section of agricultural and urban interests."

Ten years later, CURES is on its way to fulfilling the goals set by its first board and chairman, says Klassen.

"With more than \$2 million



CURES TEAM: (From left) Parry Klassen, executive director, Coalition for Urban and Rural Environmental Stewardship; Jim Markle, projects manager; Robert McMurry, calibration technician; and Tamara Taliaferro, projects coordinator, in front of the Austrian-built Pessl Instruments.

in State Water Board grants and another \$250,000 in privately funded projects, CURES is in the midst of a 'project boom' that has prompted the nonprofit to hire two full-time employees along with several specialized consultants to conduct various programs."

Since 2003, CURES staff has worked closely with the Central Valley watershed coalitions formed to comply with the Irrigated Lands Program implemented by the Central Valley Water Quality Control Board. A responsibility of watershed coalitions is to provide growers with information on BMPs should farm inputs cause problems in surface waters.

CURES staff assists coalitions in organizing outreach events, developing response plans should pesticide exceed waterway standards under Water Board orders, and providing BMP publications on specific constituents or issues relevant to growers and PCAs.

CURES actively participates with:

- ✓ Sacramento River Water Quality Coalition, led by the Northern California Water Association
- ✓ West San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, led by the San Joaquin River Drainage Authority
- ✓ East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, which

covers the region bordered by the Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced rivers

For several Central Valley Regional coalitions, the deadline for sign-up with a coalition ahead of a Dec. 31 deadline seems to have worked. Based on preliminary reports, these coalitions increased membership acreage by approximately 680,000 acres.

Individuals who have not signed up with a coalition face an increased permit scrutiny. Application forms are available by calling the Irrigated Lands Program at 916-464-4611.

■ **More about CURES on Page 4.**

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