

# Policy and Politics

## CCA gears up for legislative year

Following a whirlwind 11 months working for CCA, I find myself already ensconced in a new year, and facing new and old legislative and budget challenges. It is the second year of the 2009-2010 California Legislative Session, and February is a critical month, largely due to the deadline for assembly members and senators to introduce legislation in the regular session. Late this month, we will examine the hundreds of new bills and look toward the remaining session with a glimmer of hope that there is an end in sight.

With all of this happening, it is becoming more important than ever for under-represented agricultural and rural communities to dedicate additional time and resources to educate elected officials about the importance of sustaining an economically vibrant agricultural sector in California.

The number of legislators representing rural areas is small compared to the number of legislators from urban areas of the state, which means there are increasingly more members to educate.

This year, redistricting will undoubtedly have a dramatic effect on how future elections will play out in California. California voters changed the way Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization district boundaries are drawn with the passage of Proposition 11 on the November 2008 ballot.

Every 10 years, following the federal census, each state must redraw district boundaries to reflect current population trends. Before Proposition 11, the Legislature drew district boundaries, but now it is the responsibility of a new Citizens Redistricting Commission. If you are interested in applying to serve on this Commission, the application deadline is Friday, Feb. 12, at which point the lengthy selection process will last into November 2010. Applications can be submitted online at [www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov](http://www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov).

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Member advocacy is a critical part of CCA's lobbying efforts, and I encourage you to mark your calendar now for a number of opportunities to remain engaged. The first opportunity for you to participate in the legislative process is at CCA's 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Steak and Eggs Legislative Breakfast, Tues., March 23, at the Sutter Club, Sacramento.

That day, following breakfast, members who notify CCA staff in advance can participate in meetings with legislators. This event is held in conjunction with California Agriculture Day at the State Capitol.

During these tough economic times, when the state is striving to find new revenues and cut beneficial programs, your engagement and support is needed more than ever. If you have not yet joined CCA's political action committee, Cattle-PAC, please consider doing so. Your support helps to educate elected officials on the importance of ranching in California. If you already are a Cattle-PAC member, mark your calendar for the reception and dinner for Mon., March 22, the night before Agriculture Day.

On Friday, May 21, Cattle-PAC will host a golf tournament, reception, awards ceremony, dinner and auction at Roddy Ranch, Antioch. The following day, a team sorting, team roping and a cutting will be held at **Jack Roddy's** residence. Watch for your invitation in the mail for this two-day event, which is the primary fundraiser for 2010 to keep Cattle-PAC well-funded during this critical election year.

The next Cattle-PAC reception will be held in conjunction with the CCA/CCW Midyear Meeting in June at the Folsom Lake Natoma Inn, Folsom.

The last Cattle-PAC reception of the year will be held during the 94<sup>th</sup> Annual CCA/CCW Convention in November in Sparks, Nev.

We have seen a tremendous benefit

with the collaboration between local cattlemen's associations and Cattle-PAC teaming up to coordinate legislator visits and tours throughout California. Assembly members Connie Conway (R-Visalia), Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco) and Jim Nielsen (R-Biggs) all took time out of their busy schedules to visit CCA members at their ranches.

Events outside of Sacramento provide unique opportunities for CCA members to meet their legislator and demonstrate the challenges and opportunities ranchers are facing today. These events are an outstanding way to build relationships and I would be pleased to assist interested members in hosting legislative visits and tours.

As you can see, there are many benefits to becoming a Cattle-PAC member. As our organization grows, these benefits will become more and more apparent to your bottom line. If you have questions about the Cattle-PAC or would like to join, contact the CCA office at (916) 444-0845.



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