The Importance of Agriculture in Our Economy©

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- Stanislaus County - A major Agricultural Producer
- County area: 1,000,000 acres
- Population: 433,000 (1/99)
- Ethnicity: White, 70.8%; Hispanic, 21.8%; African-American, 1.6%; Pacific Islander/Asian, 5.8%

Stanislaus County is centrally located within the state of California. It occupies a portion of the Northern San Joaquin Valley, extending across it from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada to the principal east to west drainage of the Diablo Range. One of the fastest growing areas of California, the county has increased its population over ten-fold in the last 45 years. The cities of Modesto and Ceres account for half the population of the county. The remainder of the population resides in the other seven cities and the unincorporated areas of the county. The first two irrigation districts formed in California under the Wright Act of 1887, the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts, share Tuolumne River water and power with the City of San Francisco.

Agriculture is the economic base of Stanislaus County. Stanislaus County ranks seventh among California counties in the value of agricultural crops sold and is a leading producer of almonds, apricots, baby dry lima beans, blackeyes, broiler chickens, cherries, chicks, cling peaches, corn silage, dairy, dry beans, eggs, grain for hay, green lima beans, irrigated pasture, large dry lima beans, manufacturing milk, mixed melons, squab, sweet potatoes, turkeys, walnuts, and commercial nursery stock. The prime agricultural land of this county is a unique natural resource. The combination of soil characteristics, Mediterranean climate, and the availability of quality irrigation water results in an agricultural production area that is not readily found elsewhere in the United States. The unique nature of these lands is further expressed by the vast array of specialty crops that are grown in this area, with over 200 commercial commodities produced.

Stanislaus County is consistently ranked in the top ten agricultural counties in the United States with an annual gross on-farm value exceeding $1 billion. The 1999 major crop categories andvalues are listed below:

- Fruit and nut crops: $306,276,000
- Field crops: $102,065,000
- Vegetable crops: $84,533,000
- Seed crops: $867,000
- Nursery products: $64,111,000
- Apiary products: $6,514,000
- Livestock and poultry: $207,922,000
- Livestock and poultry products: $437,923,000

Due to relatively inexpensive water and power, and its unique central location relative to the major population centers in the state, Stanislaus County is a center for food processing and distribution. This industry is the major contributor to the county's economy and includes canneries, freezers and dehydrators; chicken, turkey, squab, and egg processors; milk and cheese processors; seed warehouses;

nut processors; produce sheds; and wineries. Agriculture-related industries, wholesale trade, and transportation also play a major role. This food processing, marketing, and related service industry provides an economic multiplier effect estimated to be four to eleven times the raw product value, depending on the commodity. This results in an economic activity that is estimated at over $4 billion annually. Almost one-third of the jobs in Stanislaus County are generated by the agriculture and food processing sector.

There are approximately 4500 farms in the county, the 5th largest number in the nation. This is not an area where large corporate farming is the norm. In fact, only about 100 are larger than 500 acres in size and over 2300 are smaller than 50 acres. Small local family farms are still a viable practice throughout the county, due to the high value crops grown on these farms.

Questions/Answers: General Session I

Robert Driver: What effect, if any, does juvenility have on the expression of noninfectious bud failure?

Dale Kester: Noninfectious bud failure is something that gradually develops in almond. The symptoms suggest that juvenility is involved, but it is not. In fact it may be the opposite since it results in the deterioration of the clone over time and it happens in relation to propagation. We have a report that will be coming out that will be more detailed.

Comments from Don Hartman (Western I.P.P.S. Charter Member and its first President): I am particularly pleased to see all the people here from different countries. I've already met one person here from England and I understand there are more here from around the world. This, of course, was the purpose of trying to develop an international plant propagators society. Thank you very much!