



CALIFORNIA GRAPE & TREE FRUIT LEAGUE TOP TEN ISSUES

In January 2010, the CGTFL Board of Directors ranked the top issues in order of priority for the upcoming year.



1

Labor Laws and Regulations/OSHA/ALRA/ Card Check

Year after year, organized labor pushes legislative efforts to sidestep the secret ballot process in unionization attempts. The League continues to lead the fight to defeat card check legislative efforts and protect the workplace and employees against narrow-sighted interest group attempts to strengthen political power. The League is also at the forefront in working with the regulatory community on adapting policies and procedures affecting heat injury and illness prevention.



2

Immigration Reform/AgJOBS

This issue continues to rank at the top for League members who rely on labor intensive practices to be able to bring high quality fruit to market. It is clear that there is concern in the ag industry, with the judicial outcome pending on the Department of Homeland Security's no-match rule as to whether the regulation can be enforced, as well as the need to implement AgJOBS legislation.



3

Water Supply Issues

Media headlines are becoming more widespread about the plight of water availability which is the result of a statewide drought (both natural and regulatory), inadequate aboveground water storage and the state's growing demand for water.



4

Labor Cost/Minimum Wage

Labor continues to rank as the highest variable cost for League members and ranges from 50 to 70 percent of production costs. While increases to the minimum wage were recently implemented, the price paid for fruit has plateaued or declined.



5

Invasive Pest Issues/ Quarantines

The potential impact that a quarantine pest would have on the San Joaquin Valley is unsettling because the ability to ship fruit outside of the region could be severely limited. The League continues to work on the frontlines of current infestations to ensure that state and federal authorities have the tools and resources to combat invasive species.



6

Food Safety Issues/ Audit Harmonization

Despite the "clean" food safety record among fresh grape and tree fruit commodities, League members continue to engage the issue to ensure that their commodities arrive in the hands of the consumer with no food safety concerns. The League remains set that any regulatory requirements should be enacted at the federal level and not the state level, apply to both domestic and imported products and be risk-based as well as commodity specific.



7

Health Care Issues/ Mandates

The rising cost of health care coupled with political pressure for a government managed universal system may potentially become a subsidization burden for California's business community in the already costly state.



8

Produce Traceability Initiative/ Implementation Costs

Retail insistence and the media have elevated the focus on our domestic capability to track incidences of contamination leading to foodborne illness. While consumer and industry expectations for safe food remains paramount, legislative and regulatory bodies combined with retailer requests have spurned the creation of a case level, total supply chain traceability system to address traceback concerns.



9

Air Quality Regulations/Fees/ Costs

Air quality regulations continue to affect all agricultural operations in the state, and particularly in the San Joaquin Valley where federally-mandated requirements place overly burdensome requirements on the region's operators. The League works diligently at the regional, state and federal level to ensure that sound science is used when such regulations are promulgated.



10

Energy Costs

Although energy costs decreased in 2009, there remains concern that another rise in costs compounded with the economic slowdown could have a crippling effect on the movement of agricultural goods.