Water Supply for Agricultural Resources

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Presentation

- San Diego County farm profile
- Water use reduction
- Runoff monitoring and pollutant reduction
- Projects in need of consideration

San Diego County Farming

- 12th ranked farm economy in U.S.
- $5.1 billion local economic impact
- #1 in the nation
  - Nursery crops
  - Avocados
- Small farms
  - Farmers with off-farm income
The Crop Profile - Sales

- Fruit: 21%
- Vegetables: 9%
- Livestock & Poultry: 4%
- Nursery & Floral: 65%
- Other: <1%

Annual Farmgate Value
in millions

Access to Imported Water

- Interim Agricultural Water Program (IAWP)
  - Growers receive discount in exchange for agreeing to interruptible service
  - Historically (since 1994) the majority of ag water use
- Full rate - full service
  - Less price sensitive crops
  - Considered an M&I use
Current State of Water

- 30% IAWP reduction entering 2nd year
- Reductions will go deeper with M&I cuts
  - 15% M&I = 40% IAWP
  - 25% M&I = 75% IAWP
- IAWP program ramps out over 4 years
- Many growers have exited IAWP early
- M&I growers preparing for July cut

Water Supply Impacts

- Smaller farms hardest hit
- No new investment or new entries
- Production shrinkage
- Heavier use of groundwater
- Extent and length of water cuts unknown
- Risk of employing wrong strategies
- Downsizing and exit strategies under consideration

Water Price Impacts

- Some crops can't be sustained at predicted prices
- Crop conversion a limited choice
- Downsizing and exit strategies under consideration
Citrus Tree Removal

Avocado Tree Stumping

Water Use Reduction
- Pressure-compensating systems
- Runoff capture and reuse
- Groundwater filtration and brine disposal
- Smart controllers
- Hillside pressure valves
- Field research on irrigation strategies
- Research on alternate crops
Farm Runoff Monitoring

- Regional Board Conditional Waiver #4
- Agricultural and nursery operators must join a monitoring group or act alone to sample, test, and report on runoff
- San Diego County’s 5000 farms dispersed throughout 8 of 11 watersheds
- Scale of project is very large

San Diego Region Irrigated Lands Group

- 1100 farms enrolled to date
- Represent 35,000 of 63,000 irrigated acres
- Organizational expense estimated at $300,000
- Annual monitoring budget estimated at $600,000+
- Ongoing educational expenses unknown

Projects in Need of Consideration

- Water use reduction
  - On-farm technical water audits
  - Purchase of water efficiency devices
  - Research
- Runoff
  - Monitoring
  - Best Management Practices
  - Education
Why Should San Diego Public Care?

- Economic contribution
- Local products – 33 farmers’ markets
- One avocado tree will sequester 2600 pounds of CO₂
- Farmers maintain open spaces
- Hedge against urban expansion
- Part of San Diego's heritage and ambiance