

## Water Quality Workshop for Farmers

After a successful pilot program last year to help participating farmers manage irrigation water more efficiently using drip irrigation systems, the CCRCD partnered with the San Joaquin and Delta Water Quality Coalition to spread the news of good results to other farmers. We coordinated a workshop last fall to provide farmers with the latest information on state and federal water quality requirements they must meet, and also new research and recommendations on ways to minimize the amount of chemicals and wastewater that can be discharged as farm runoff. Many producers attended, including those who participated in the original grant project. The meeting began with an overview of the San Joaquin & Delta Water Quality Coalition by John Meek. Gene Mangini from the Contra Costa Agricultural Commissioners Office gave an update on the current issues that relate to the farming communities. Water quality monitoring and the levels of site exceedances were covered by Dr. Michael Johnson, Project Coordinator for the Water Coalition. Parry Klassen, CURES Executive Director, discussed the use of Pyrethroid and Chlorpyrifos. The management of irrigation runoff was covered by Dr. Terry Prichard, Irrigation Specialist with UC Extension. The results from the grant project were then presented and followed up with options for future funding for Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The information not only helps farmers comply with regulations, but it also helps them save soil, save money and reduce or eliminate pollutants that could flow to the Delta.

Allison Irish



Luscious Blenheim apricots can be picked fresh at several farms or purchased at fruit stands in Brentwood.

Allison Irish



A girl scout picks apricots during the RCD-sponsored Farm Tour.

## Farm Tour for Families and Scouts

Another way the CCRCD provides support for farmers, and land stewards is by helping our suburban and urban communities learn more about local agriculture and by organizing opportunities to meet the farming families that are caring for our land. The RCD took a group of approximately fifty Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, their leaders, as well as home schooled families to see two different family farming operations in East Contra Costa County — a row-crop farm and a stone-fruit orchard with a farm-stand business. We met with the farmers who explained their operations and their philosophy of caring for the land. We got up-close-and-personal with tractors, diskers, cornstalks, apricot trees and a corn-packing operation. With the addition of some educational games to reinforce what they learned, the group left with a new appreciation for their local farmer, the fresh food they provide for us, and also with a sense of pride that Contra Costa's fertile soil still supports family farms.

## Watershed Symposium

The CCRCD also lends its support to educational efforts organized by other groups. The Contra Costa Watershed Forum holds bi-monthly meetings and organizes a quadrennial watershed symposium (held last fall) to educate county residents on a variety of current watershed issues and projects. The CCRCD plays an active role in the Watershed Forum organization, and assisted with production of their extremely informative symposium. To order a DVD of the Symposium go to [www.cocowaterweb.org](http://www.cocowaterweb.org).