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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 16 - 18, 2007  
UAL Board & Committee Meeting  
Laguna Beach, CA

June 6 - 8, 2007  
UABT Board of Trustees Retreat  
Coeur d'Alene, ID

Aug. 25 - Sept. 9, 2007  
China Trade Tour

Sept. 19 - 21, 2007  
UAL & UABT Board & Committee Meeting  
Yosemite, CA

Jan. 23 - 25, 2008  
Annual Meeting  
Santa Barbara, CA

## UNITED AGRIBUSINESS LEAGUE ANNOUNCES AGRICULTURAL TRADE TOUR TO CHINA



Photo Courtesy of Mack Ramsay

United Agribusiness League's Board of Directors announced plans for a mid-August agricultural trade tour to China with the mission of promoting US-China agricultural trade relations.

UAL's China trade tour will involve leading agriculturists throughout California. Additionally, California Secretary of Food and Agriculture, A.G. Kawamura, has been invited and has offered to work closely with UAL to set up special events and meetings with California's agricultural contacts in China. UAL has also received interest from former California Senator, Pat Bates and US Ambassador for the United Nations Food & Agricultural Organization, Gaddi Vasquez.

### UAL's China Trade Mission

The primary focus of the visit is to learn about the Chinese market, meet with government officials, growers, processors, importers/exporters and other agriculturists. The trade group will meet with USDA's Agricultural Trade Officers in Shanghai and Guangzhou to discuss marketing and potential for high quality US agricultural products. UAL's group will also visit farming, packing, shipping operations, and visit the largest wholesale produce market in China.

"The benefit of this agricultural trade tour is providing an opportunity to meet companies that can increase trade with California and the United States," said Bill Goodrich, President and CEO of United Agribusiness League.

The China trade tour is being spearheaded by UAL Past Chairman and Pacific Commerce Group President, Mack Ramsay, who frequently travels to China and



provides consulting services to agricultural companies in the United States.

"The huge and rapidly expanding middle and upper class consumers in the Chinese market are providing great opportunities for grower-exporters of high quality fresh agricultural products. There is pent-up consumer demand for premium California products. Additionally, Chinese agriculture offers product sourcing and joint venture opportunities," Ramsay said.

### What impact does China have on the future of U.S. Agriculture?

A report from the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission revealed that after several years of heavy Chinese production and record low prices, the U.S.

*Cont. on pg. 4...*

# Bill Goodrich

## President's Column



**I**t would be easy to make too much or too little out of a recent U.S. Census Bureau report showing a decline in the percentage of the population with employment-based health insurance coverage.

About 59.5% of people in the US last year had employment-based

coverage, down from 59.8% in 2004.

That decline in employment-based coverage almost entirely explains why the percentage of the population without health insurance rose in 2005 to 15.9% from 15.6% in 2004.

Such a one-year decline, in itself, is not disturbing. Indeed, we'd question whether the small size of the decline is significant.

Still, the long-term trend is clear: Employment-based coverage, the way most of the non-elderly population receives health insurance, is on the decline. The proportion of the population with employment-based coverage has declined each year since 2000, when 63.6% had coverage through employers.

Certainly, some of the decline is the result of changes in the economy over which policy-makers have little control. For example, many corporations have downsized in recent years, with employees losing their jobs and, after COBRA coverage runs out, their health insurance.

But by far the biggest reason for the decline in employment-based coverage is the high cost of providing it. In just five years, group health care costs per employee have leaped 60%, rising to an average of \$7,089 per employee in 2005 from \$4,430 per employee in 2000. Few other goods and services have increased by that much in that time.

Indeed, the cost of health insurance, especially for early retirees, certainly was a factor in the demise of such one-time steel industry giants as Bethlehem Steel Corp. and LTV Corp.

But it is wrong to suggest that all is gloom and doom and that the decline in employment-based health insurance is irreversible.

Corporations, for example, are rapidly moving away from overly generous health insurance plans, which, over the long run, are unaffordable. Instead, many companies are offering lower-cost consumer-driven plans in which employees have greater financial incentives to use services more carefully.

Health insurers finally are starting to make provider price and quality information more available, allowing employees to make better purchasing decisions before a service is performed.

And government, in some cases, is doing its part. At the state level, Massachusetts and Vermont, as a result of legislation passed this year, will increase eligibility for state-subsidized health insurance coverage, reducing the number of uninsured. With that increase, presumably there will be a reduction in uncompensated care, a cost that providers try to shift to patients covered under employer plans.

While the decline in employment-based coverage is disturbing, there is no reason to believe the declines will continue indefinitely.

Let us know if you have any questions or concerns on any particular matter.

**You can contact me at [wgoodrich@ual.org](mailto:wgoodrich@ual.org) or fax me at (949) 975-1671.**

### MISSION STATEMENT

*United Agribusiness League's Mission is to unite Agribusiness by providing members with economic solutions, benefits and services both domestically and internationally.*

## UAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VISITS WITH LEGISLATORS IN SACRAMENTO

The UAL Executive Committee made their annual trip to the state capitol in early February to meet with state legislators, members of the Governors staff, senior staff of Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner and Secretary of Agriculture A. G. Kawamura.

Meeting with over 15 influential assembly members and state senators, the executive committee sent a strong message why the Governor's "pay or play" health care plan should be defeated, why association health plans should be promoted at a greater level, why the California Air Resources Board needs to be very careful in implementing the Global Warming legislation and why a continued commitment to improving nutrition in schools should be a top priority for California.

In our meeting with Secretary Kawamura, we had a discussion regarding the need and likelihood of passing a Guest Worker Program at the federal level. Secretary Kawamura also thanked the Executive

Committee for the leadership role UAL has taken over the last 6 years in promoting the school nutrition agenda in Sacramento.

He also commended UAL's President & CEO for arranging the UAL China Trade tour scheduled for this September. (For trip details, call Samantha at UAL at (800) 223-4590.) Secretary Kawamura also promised to work closely with UAL to set up special events and meetings with California's agricultural contacts in China.

Meetings with the senior staff of Superintendent O'Connell were very productive. O'Connell's staff expressed how grateful the Superintendent was for UAL being a leader in pushing the school nutrition agenda and for participating in his School Nutrition Task Force during 2005-2006. (Mike Stoker, on behalf of UAL, served on the task force which issued its report and recommendations last fall.) They also expressed their gratitude that UAL was the first agricultural association in the state to "Adopt a School" as recommended in the task force recommendations for all

agricultural associations to do.

Finally, in a meeting with Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner, a discussion took place regarding the negative impact to California if "pay or play" health care legislation is passed in the state. Commissioner Poizner also laid out his agenda to further reduce fraud in workers compensation. That plan should be announced in the next two months.

We appreciate the working relationship we have with our legislators in Sacramento and will continue to work closely with them on issues that affect our industry.



Photo Courtesy of GreenwichMeantime.com

## IMMIGRATION BILL UPDATE

By Dena Bunis  
The Orange County Register

Reps. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., and Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., have teamed up to see if they can garner enough support for one of the most complicated issues of the day – immigration – to get a comprehensive bill passed that can eventually land on President Bush's desk.

Gutierrez and Flake call it the "Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy Act," or STRIVE. The authors of the bill are working hard to convey that the bill is not an amnesty and that it will help bail out segments of the economy that rely mostly on illegal immigrant workers.

The bill includes features that concern immigration advocates but are designed to elicit skeptical lawmakers' approval.

**"Our bill is about ending illegal immigration"**

-Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill.

While the majority of Democrats are expected to support the kind of measure Gutierrez is proposing, he acknowledged the bill cannot succeed without Republican votes. Some Democrats, particularly some freshmen elected from the nation's heartland, campaigned against illegal immigration.

Flake and Gutierrez hope the president's support for such an approach will help attract GOP votes. Bush has steadfastly supported a major immigration overhaul since his first term.

Flake has six other Republican supporters so far. Gutierrez said he has many supporters, including all the Democratic members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Illinois, head of the Democratic caucus.

"Our bill is about ending illegal immigration," Gutierrez said at a packed news conference.

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in 2000 imposed anti-dumping duties on imported Chinese apple juice concentrate to protect domestic producers and yet currently Washington State apples are being imported into China with a heavy retail demand for their high quality.

During the past 5 years, competitive Chinese frozen strawberries have eroded the Japanese market for California's frozen strawberries. However, during 5-6 months each year there is a huge void in China's retail market for fresh high quality strawberries, this opportunity is being watched closely by fresh strawberry shippers as China's market access is being pursued.

China is also importing, with increasing

demand, high quality fresh US citrus, cherries, stone fruit, grapes and apples, and many other agricultural products for China's rapidly growing middle and upper class population.

For more information on the UAL trade tour to China, please contact Mayumi or Samantha at (800) 223-4590.



Photo Courtesy of Mack Ramsay

Pacific Commerce Group (PCG) provides consulting services, special project analysis, implementation, and management to the food and agriculture industry. With 30 years of experience in the agricultural, food and food processing sectors, PCG specializes in handling Pacific-Asia-US trading, business/market opportunity assessments, joint-venture opportunities, product and ingredient sourcing.

PCG has organized commodity specific and general trade tour missions to China for opportunity assessments. PCG's main office is in Santa Ana, California with a branch office in Beijing, China. For more information please visit our website, [www.pacificcommerce.com](http://www.pacificcommerce.com).

## YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR UAL'S 2008 ANNUAL MEETING

### JOIN US FOR UAL'S 28TH ANNUAL MEETING



**Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort**  
Santa Barbara, CA  
January 23-25, 2008

In a green valley, encircled by gentle mountains and the blue Pacific hides Santa Barbara. Just at the city's edge, where palm trees meet the ocean's waves, you'll find the very place you've been dreaming of.

The 24 acre Spanish Colonial style Resort has something special for everyone - Hike, bike, visit Stearns Wharf, and popular attractions like the Zoo, Botanical Gardens, Courthouse and museums.

The perfect California beach-front luxury resort hotel. An oasis within an oasis. Charm. History. Sandy beaches. Red tile roofs. Cool rooms, warm faces and endless amenities. Uncomplicated. Relaxing. Romantic. Full of possibilities. Fess Parker's Doubletree Resort in Santa Barbara.

*Don't miss UAL's 28th Annual Meeting in Santa Barbara, one of the loveliest cities this side of paradise.*

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Don't miss UAL's 2008 Annual Meeting in Santa Barbara, one of the loveliest cities this side of paradise. Contact Samantha Heflin at (800) 223-4590 to be put on an advance reservation list. See you there!

### UAL WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS THIS PAST QUARTER

Central Coast Cooling, Inc.

Flood Ranch Company dba Rancho Sisquoc

Garland Consult and Clean

Holland Dairy

Jackson Landscape

Mountain View Dairy

Pacific Coast Mushroom, LLC

**T**he Fess Parker Doubletree Resort in Santa Barbara, is preparing to welcome you for UAL's 28th Annual Meeting. The meeting is scheduled for January 23-25, 2008, and will be a great experience for those who plan on attending.

In a green valley, encircled by gentle mountains and the blue Pacific hides

## ADIN HESTER ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF UNITED AGRIBUSINESS LEAGUE



Adin Hester, President of the Olive Growers Council of California, was elected Chairman of United Agribusiness League at the association's 2007 Annual Meeting in Henderson, Nevada.

Hester, who has served on the UAL Board of Directors since 2001, has been very active with the League since becoming a member.

Also elected as officers to the UAL Board were Frank Chavez, El Majo LLC, Laguna Niguel, as Vice Chairman and Chuck Nicols, Nichols Farms, Inc., Hanford, as Treasurer.

Other UAL Board members elected for the 2007 term were; Brian Edmonds, Fillmore-Piru Citrus Association, Piru; Paul Powell, Foothill Packing, Salinas; Pat Regan, Regan Distributors, Inc., Santa Ana; and James Taylor, Cacique Companies, Industry.

## NEW PRODUCE SAFETY CENTER

By Jim Downing  
The Sacramento Bee

The government's investigation of last year's outbreak of E. coli in bagged spinach concluded with no answers about cause, but has revealed the necessity for scientific help. The decision to found the produce-safety center grew out the industry's rapid realization, after the outbreaks last fall: that it needed to address consumers' food safety concerns aggressively.

"Research is absolutely critical" to understand how the bacteria spread and what can be done to stop them, Kevin Reilly, the lead investigator for the state, said at the time.

Produce industry leaders and the state of California responded with a contribution of \$4.65 million to create the Center for Produce Safety at the University of California, Davis. It will be the nation's first research program devoted solely to making fresh fruits and vegetables safer.

The Produce Marketing Association, contributed the initial \$2 million to the new center, which will be based at the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security on the UC Davis campus. Taylor Farms, a major produce company with headquarters in Salinas, donated

\$2 million.

The state Department of Food and Agriculture added \$500,000, with UC Davis contributing another \$150,000. Linda Harris, associate director of research at the Western Institute for Food Safety and Security, said the startup money, meant to last through 2008, will be awarded as competitive grants.



Photo Courtesy of LA Times

A board consisting of representatives from industry, academia and government will direct the program. But having an entire center devoted to problems in produce should allow researchers to take on longer-term projects.

"It will allow us to tackle the bigger questions," Harris said.

Michael Doyle, an expert on E. coli who

directs the Center for Food Safety at the University of Georgia, said there's no shortage of those big questions.

For instance, he said, there's little information on the prevalence and habitat preferences of the particularly dangerous strain of E. coli known as 0157:H7. Most surveys of E. coli in the environment have looked only for the so-called "generic" strain of the bacteria, which may not be correlated with the more harmful version.

A better understanding of 0157:H7 would help to focus efforts to contain it, he said. Doyle said much work still needs to be done to improve tests for dangerous micro-organisms. Other projects could focus on ways to reduce or eliminate populations of 0157:H7 at their main source, the guts of cattle.

Sales of fresh bagged greens tumbled after last year's first major E. coli episode, identified in September. That outbreak killed three people and sickened 205 in 26 states. The produce industry has been hit with lawsuits filed on behalf of the victims of that and other outbreaks.

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The measure includes elements long espoused by advocates of a broad immigration-policy change. They include more Border Patrol agents, a biometric card system to verify employment status, a program for future foreign workers and a plan that would allow the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants here to seek legal status.

The bill also incorporates the DREAM Act, which would make it easier for children who are illegal immigrants to go to college and then get jobs, and the AgJobs bill, which creates a guest-worker program for agriculture.

Illegal immigrants would within the next six years have to leave the United States for either Mexico or Canada, go to a processing center and re-enter the U.S. legally. Lawmakers were vague about exactly how long they would have to stay outside the country under what is being called the touchback provision. But staff members said they could stay as little as one day.

“We have questions about the operational viability and the political viability of (that provision),” said Frank Sharry, leader of the National Immigration Forum.

“I think it’s unrealistic, though, to expect these people to leave,” said Ana Maria Patina, a lawyer and Hispanic activist in Santa Ana.

Patina was skeptical that the government could create a program that would let illegal immigrants leave the country and return quickly.

And Amin David, leader of Los Amigos of Orange County, said even a short stay outside the country would worry fearful illegal immigrants.

“If I leave, then the big, heavy, steel door will close down, and I’m on the other side,” David said that people will think. He said the proposed \$2,000 fine – \$500 to apply for legal status initially and \$1,500 to get on the path to citizenship – will also be difficult for many immigrants to afford.

And Pat Shuff of Fullerton, a member of the California Coalition for Immigration Reform, believes such a law would encourage illegal immigration.

“We don’t need any new immigration laws – we need to enforce the ones we have,” she said.

The measure also says that before any legalization plan or new worker program were to start, the Department of Homeland Security would have to certify that better border surveillance is in place and that the employer-verification system is under way.

Contact the writer: (202) 628-6381 or [dbunis@ocregister.com](mailto:dbunis@ocregister.com)



Picture Courtesy of ImmigrantPost.com

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