

## MEMO

**To:** Lower San Joaquin River Committee

**From:** Chester Anderson, Watershed Coordinator, Middle San Joaquin River Watershed

**Date:** 10/8/2013

**Subject:** Impact of Salinity in the San Joaquin River on Agriculture Questionnaire

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In order to better understand the impacts of salinity on agriculture and along with my other outreach efforts regarding water quality issues, I asked a few growers and crop advisors about the impact of salinity on crops, the sources of salinity and how growers deal with salinity in irrigation water. What I learned is that growers utilize leaching, acid, gypsum, mechanical methods and other means to deal with the salinity – all dependent on soil test results, the desired crops and the availability of different sources of irrigation water.

My understanding is that the LSJRC needs to: 1) quantify what the impact salinity in the San Joaquin River has on agriculture, 2) how growers and Irrigation Districts mitigate the effects of the salinity, and 3) quantify what the costs of saline water in the San Joaquin River from the Merced River to Vernalis is on agriculture. To obtain this information I suggest that we interview growers and crop advisors *as well as* Irrigation and Water Districts.

Using the questionnaire and information gathered to date as a starting point I suggest that the LSJRC interview a select number of growers and crop advisors to better tailor the questionnaire and to better understand what information is available to the LSJRC in order to: quantify the impacts of salinity on agriculture, identify exactly what the salinity issues are for growers, identify what data and information is available to the LSJRC, better quantify the issue, identify how to obtain and compile the necessary information, and better identify what the relevant questions are.

To accomplish this task I will bring a list of suggested entities to the next (October) meeting for the LSJRC to pre-interview in order to refine the existing questionnaire. To finish the rest of the task I anticipate it will take about 3 hours to better understand what the LSJRC wants from the questionnaire, 16 hours to talk to identified growers and crop advisors, 4 hours compiling results of the interviews, and 4 hours revising the existing questionnaire based on the results of the interviews. Then I will report back to the LSJRC (or a subcommittee prior to the meeting?) at the November meeting with suggestions for how to move forward with the questionnaire and to make sure that the needs of the LSJRC are met with the final questionnaire and/or with other approaches designed to gather the necessary information.

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