

# Water, Crop and SGMA Topics

by Steve Knell, General Manager

There's good news and bad news on the water front for 2018. The good news is; OID and SSJID should get all the water they need to meet crop water demand in their service areas. The bad news is; we may be going back into another dry period. The National Weather Service is predicting a bit more precipitation towards the middle of March which will help.

The extremes we see locally in weather patterns and across our nation makes one think about global warming. Whether that's the case or not is debatable but for us in agriculture, when things turn dry, we all need to get on the conservation band wagon. In case you didn't know; 97% of earth's water is saltwater in the oceans, 4% can be found in the polar ice caps and 1% of the remaining water is freshwater. Shockingly, 99% of the 1% of freshwater is groundwater. Think about it.

I support our State's commitment to Making Conservation a Way of Life. We should all adopt and begin practicing living our lives consuming less water. If everybody does their fair share, in the end, the benefit to all of us will be worth it.

Not to brag, but OID and the farmers we serve have been doing their share for a number of years now. There is always more to do but we are ahead of most irrigation districts in the state. We have over a decade of experience under our belts investing in automation, high efficiency irrigation systems, bettering irrigation scheduling practices, conversions to less water intensive crops and it's making a measurable difference.

Since 2001 OID's annual river diversions have dropped 30,000 acre feet. That's a reduction of 12% in water use. During this same period OID added 10,000 acres to its irrigated service area. That's an increase of 16% in service lands. That's a remarkable accomplishment. Growing more food

to feed our nation and the world while preserving our natural resources is what conservation is all about!

In the right-hand column of this newsletter is the latest 2017 Crop Report. OID produces this report for the State Water Resources Control Board as a requirement under the law.

While irrigated Pasture has been the dominant crop in OID's service area for what seems forever, that distinction no longer holds true. In 2017 Almonds surpassed Pasture as this headline crop. Together, Almonds and Pasture make up 72% of the irrigated crop acreage in OID.

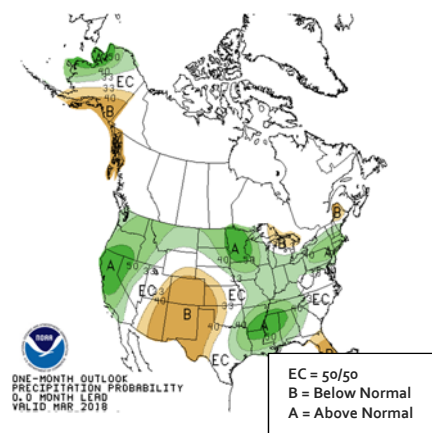
Almonds at 38%, Pasture at 34%, Corn at 13% and Walnuts at 8%, make up 93% of the irrigated crop acreage in OID. Almonds and walnut plantings continue in OID at about 2,000 acres per year and we see little slowing.

In fact, as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) evolves and groundwater pumping contracts to sustainable yields in the Central Valley, 10's of 1,000's of tree and vine crop acreage will be going fallow. Some estimates are that 3 million acre feet of reduced groundwater pumping is needed to get to groundwater sustainability. That retired acreage will likely create a void in the supply chain leading to more plantings in areas that have sustainable groundwater, like OID.

SGMA will be economically challenging as agriculture adjusts to the idea of tightened water resources. Politics will enter the debate as land values change. All the while this is going on the population will continue to grow and the ability to produce food for our nation will continue to be taxed. There is no clear certainty in the Central Valley's future under SGMA but hopefully with collaborative thinking, innovation and practical approaches we will reach effective solutions with the least impacts to our agricultural way of life.

2017 OID CROP REPORT (Net Irrigated Acreage)	
CROP	IRRIGATED ACREAGE (92.5% of Gross)
Alfalfa	300
Almonds	24,026
Cherries	55
Clover	339
Corn	8,550
Dry	65
Eucalyptus	30
Fallow	1,463
Fish	45
Golf Course	123
Grapes	1,033
Hay	63
Oats	18
Olives	9
Pasture	21,893
Peaches	103
Pecan	3
Pistachios	115
Pomegranates	7
Pond	119
Rice	558
Strawberries	0
Sudan	38
Vegetables	2
Walnuts	4,895
Yard	62
Total	63,915

## Precipitation Probability for the month of March



## New Melones Inflow

October	50,294 acre feet
November	51,083
December	56,645
January	56,506
February	26,527

Total inflow as of February 1, 2018 241,527.  
Total inflow is 69% of 15-year average.



Oakdale Irrigation District  
1205 East F Street  
Oakdale, CA 95361  
(209) 847-0341  
[www.oakdaleirrigation.com](http://www.oakdaleirrigation.com)