

# El Paso valley growers deal with water, soil salinity

By Cindy Loggins Wise

West Texas pecan growers gathered on Jan. 19 in El Paso to discuss their two biggest challenges: water availability and soil salinity issues.

Jesus Reyes, the general manager of their El Paso County Water Improvement District #1,

brought relatively good news on the water availability situation, at least for this season. Pecan growers in the El Paso Valley initially have a 3.5-acre-feet allotment for 2011, which could be raised to the full 4-acre-feet allotment by April or May if snowfall is plentiful in the Colorado mountains this winter. The

valley's irrigation water comes from Elephant Butte Reservoir, 120 miles north of the valley.

This water improvement district provides irrigation for 69,010 acres of land, according to Reyes. The infrastructure includes 400 miles of canals and 350 miles of drains, and serves 32,000 customers. Cotton and

## Pecan Business Directory

<p><b>Orchard-Rite</b> Agricultural Tree Shakers Sales • Service • New • Used</p> <p><b>Dean Wilson</b> Cell 530-521-2164 Phone 530-894-2755</p> <p><b>SUN VALLEY, INC.</b> 575-644-0400</p> <p><b>PACIFIC DISTRIBUTING, Inc.</b> Your authorized Orchard-Rite® Shaker dealer www.orchard-rite.com</p>	<p><b>SUN VALLEY, INC.</b> From start to finish we've got your Pecan Equipment.</p> <p>Hatch, NM 575.644.0400 fax 575.267.3403 Las Cruces, NM 575.649.5145 Deming, NM 575.644.0400 sunvalley@sunvalleyinc.net</p>	<p><b>"The Goodie Gitter"</b></p> <p>Designed to remove the shell from the cracked pecan clear the trash and the cork from the meat.</p>  <p><b>Southern Nut 'n' Tree Equipment</b> 324 SH 16 South Goldthwaite TX 76844</p> <p>1.800.527.1825 or 325.938.5460 Email: sales@pecans.com Online: www.pecans.com</p> <p><b>Dealers Welcome</b></p>
 <p><b>Orchard and Vineyard Sprayers</b></p> <p>507 E. Dinuba Ave. (559) 638-6546 Reedley, CA 93654 FAX (559) 638-9262</p> <p><b>www.airofan.com</b></p>	<p><b>Pecan Tree Sprayers - Ag Air</b> Roger Wurdeman – Wurdeman &amp; Co. 970-352-3902 fax 970-352-2377</p> <p>Complete bottom to top penetration Heavy Duty Galvanized frame Spray Trees up to 100' tall Designed for Pecan Trees Best warranty in the industry</p>  <p><b>309 45th Avenue; Greeley, Colorado 80634</b> <b>www.wurdemanco.com</b></p>	<p><b>Accurate Laboratories, Inc.</b> Your Complete Calibration &amp; Scale Co.</p>  <p>4 x 4 Floor Scale w/ Digital Readout <b>\$1450.00</b></p> <p>To Order Call - Toll Free 1-877-213-5505 - or (405) 670-1388 - gmercer@accuratelab.net <b>www accuratelab.net</b></p>
<p><b>Tree Protectors</b></p> <p>Essential for all newly planted trees! Promotes growth. Protects against rodents, herbicides, sunburn and frost.</p>  <p>Vine Protectors, shipping boxes and other specialty agricultural products available. <b>800-241-3513 or (714) 547-9266</b> www.pacificwestern.com</p>  <p><b>PACIFIC WESTERN</b> SANTA ANA, CA</p>	<p><b>PBM SPRAYERS</b></p> <p><b>PBM Supply &amp; Mfg. Inc.</b></p> <p>324 Meyers Street 2870 C San Antonio Drive Chico, CA 95928-7175 Fowler, CA 93625-9799 1-800-688-1334 1-877-688-1334</p> <p><b>Custom sprayers</b> in a variety of sizes &amp; configurations.</p> <p><b>Dealer: Bisset Specialty 915-858-1000</b> <b>www.pbmsprayers.com</b></p>	<p><b>J &amp; J Supply, Inc.</b> Supplier of Quality Agricultural Packaging</p> <p>BULK Bags 3 lb, 5 lb, 10 lb, 50 lb Mesh Bags Burlap Bags Portable Bag Sewing Machines &amp; Accessories Plastic Bulk Bins</p> <p><b>Tree Bark Protectors</b></p> <p>Call us for all of your BAG and packaging needs.</p> <p>J &amp; J Supply, Inc. 575-541-8155 - Office 1010 Parkhill Drive 575-541-8811 - Fax Las Cruces, NM 88012 jim@jjsupplyinc.com</p> <p><b>www.jjsupplyinc.com</b></p>

alfalfa are other major crops produced in the El Paso Valley.

Irrigation water from Elephant Butte is typically shut off from October until around March 1. So, if pecan growers choose to water during the winter months, that water must be pumped from their own wells. The drawback is that the well water is high in salts, and is typically used as a last resort. In fact, another speaker, Dr. Seichi Miyamoto of TAMU told the growers, "If you have to use the well water all the time, forget about growing pecans."

Miyamoto addressed the problem of salinity management in the El Paso Valley. He cautioned those present, "If you don't have salt problems now, it is a potential problem for you." NMSU Agronomist Robert Flynn had just explained to the group that desert soils tend to be salty simply because there is a lack of rainfall to leach salts down into the soil.

Mild salt stress is difficult to distinguish from water-stressed trees, Miyamoto added. However, small leaves and delayed budbreak are two symptoms to watch for.

For those contemplating new plantings in the valley, soil selection is a major consideration. About half of the soil in the El Paso Valley is a silty clay loam, he said, which will require major modification to sustain pecan production. The type of modification required is a major undertaking and includes trenching,



**DR. SEICHI MIYAMOTO**

**Planning for the holidays now is a good thing...**

*Everything you need in one place!*  
Tins in all sizes and shapes, inserts, pads, reshipper boxes, and sealing solutions.

Showrooms in Houston, Dallas, & Atlanta  
1.800.644.8856 • [holidaytins.com/ps](http://holidaytins.com/ps)

**Holiday Tins™ & Containers**

[holidaytins.com](http://holidaytins.com)  
1.800.644.8856

**1.9% FOR 36 MO. ON LATE MODEL USED 4WD AND 3.9% FOR 36 MO.\* ON LATE MODEL USED 100+HP TRACTORS**

**QUALITY NEW AND USED CASE IH AGRICULTURE EQUIPMENT & MORE**  
[www.ironcityonline.com](http://www.ironcityonline.com)



Las Cruces, NM  
575-524-0356

Fabens, TX  
915-764-1068



**2003 CASE IH MXM120 MFD WITH LOADER**  
Deluxe Cab, Low Hours, Air, 120 Hp . . . . . **\$44,998**



**2008 CASE IH FARMALL 95C**  
95 HP Tractor, Only 680 Hours, Like New . . . . **\$36,899**

**LIFT TRUCK - INDUSTRIAL**

Hyster 5,000 lbs. . . . . \$5,500

**SKIDSTEER**

Call for availability!

**PLOW - MOLDBOARD**

Arts Way 166 . . . . . \$25,999

**ROW CROP CULTIVATOR**

2008 Buffalo 8 Row Cultivator. . . . . \$19,999

**SPRAYERS**

(2) 2008 Hardi MR925 Sprayer-Pull Type \$19,999 ea.  
Mertz Sprayer-Self Propelled . . . . . \$3250

**TRACTORS**

2007 Massey Ferguson 1533 . . . . . \$24,499  
1977 Massey Ferguson 230 . . . . . \$6,750  
**1998 Case IH C80 . . . . . \$6,985**  
2008 Farmall 95c . . . . . \$36,899  
**2006 Case IH MXU135 . . . . . \$56,899**  
1995 John Deere 7800 . . . . . \$39,859  
Ford 9N . . . . . \$2,499  
2009 Massey Ferguson GC2600HL . . . . . \$13,495  
**2004 Challenger MT525B . . . . . SOLD**  
**2004 Case IH MXM 120 . . . . . \$29,899**  
**2003 Case IH MXM120 . . . . . \$44,998**  
1998 Massey Ferguson 263 . . . . . \$9,985  
1981 John Deere 4440 . . . . . **SOLD**  
2000 Massey Ferguson 6280 . . . . . \$19,899  
2007 Massey Ferguson 6480 . . . . . \$57,485  
2004 Massey Ferguson 6490 . . . . . \$32,957



CNH Capital's Commercial Revolving Account provides financial assistance for parts and service when you need it, keeping your equipment running at its best with the quality parts and service you've come to expect from Case IH. Contact your local dealer or visit [www.cnhcapital.com](http://www.cnhcapital.com) today for details.

\*For commercial use only. Customer participation subject to credit qualification and approval by CNH Capital America LLC. See your Case IH dealer for details and eligibility requirements. Down payment may be required. Offer good for a limited time. Not all customers or applicants may qualify for this rate or term. CNH Capital America LLC standard terms and conditions will apply. Taxes, freight, set-up, delivery, additional options or attachments not included in suggested retail price. Offer subject to change or cancellation without notice. © 2009 CNH Capital America LLC. All rights reserved. CNH Capital and Case IH are registered trademarks of CNH America LLC. Printed in the USA.



From left, El Paso Valley growers John Eveler, Kevin Ivey and Art Ivey.

excavation, and chiseling or ripping. Clay layers which impede water movement down into the soil must be broken up so that salts can be leached. One approach which has proven to be effective, Miyamoto noted, is trenching down the tree row about five feet from the tree and then adding sand to the orchard floor to fill in the trench, thereby enhancing drainage. Making deep cracks and topdressing with sand to keep the cracks “open” is the desired outcome. Various, very extensive approaches to soil excavation have been employed in the valley.

A panel of growers discussed their approaches to salinity management. Art Ivey of Rio Bravo Farms emphasized that “the secret is drainage, particularly with clay soils. I do anything and everything I can to enhance drainage.” He puts out gypsum in significant volume in his trouble spots to help chemically change the salts in the soil into a leachable form that can be more easily pushed down through the soil. The gypsum is disked into the top three-four inches of soil “so that it doesn’t blow away.” He also does chiseling or ripping of the soil regularly — 26-32 inches deep down the middle of tree rows.

Kevin Ivey noted that “it is now fairly standard practice in the valley to excavate any soil you plan to plant to pecans.” The excavation process entails using a backhoe or similar equipment to dig down, break up and mix clay layers of soil with more sandy layers. He said they acquired a 100-acre planting that had suffered for years from salinity issues. Using a “ladder trencher”, they cut a trench 26 inches wide down the tree rows to break up the soil and provide better drainage. On other acreage, they regularly chisel down the row middles. He also pointed out that leveling your fields helps with salt control by providing even water distribution during irrigation.

Grower John Eveler of Oro Farms shared that one area of their farm suffered because of deep clay soil, to the extent that the trees were taken out, some of the clay was dug and hauled out, and then replaced by sand. That was only affordable,

# SUBMATIC TECHNOLOGIES

## WATER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

**Enter a New GALAXY**



**Galaxy Self-flushing Disc Filter**

**State of the Art Filtration**

- 50 to 5,000 GPM and up
- Automatic and pre-assembled (ready to use)
- Compact - fits in 6' x 8' area

**NEW PRODUCT GUIDE**

Includes everything you need for the ultimate water management systems: **Sprinklers, Driplines, Valves, Controllers, Injectors, Sensors, Hoses, Tubing** and much more.

- **Sprinklers**  
5 GPH to 5 GPM and up
- **Injectors**  
Proportional and other



**3804-D Woodbury Drive • Austin, TX 78704 • 512.440.7744 • Fax 512.440.7793**



# Pecan Revenue Insurance

*from your local Crop Insurance Agency...*

**Heartland Crop Insurance**  
 PO Box 765, 911 E. Central • Comanche, TX 76442  
**800.535.3669 • 325.356.2562**  
**Fax 325.356.2601**  
[heartlandins@verizon.net](mailto:heartlandins@verizon.net)

This entity is an equal opportunity provider. © 2005 Rural Community Insurance Agency, Inc. All rights reserved.

he pointed out, because they found a source that wanted the clay and agreed to take it away and replace it with the sand. "We also chisel every couple of years to combat compaction. And we have gone to a sod floor instead of clean tilling."

Marcelino Lozano of MBM Farms also emphasized the importance of breaking up those clay layers so that the inevitable salts could be leached down past the root zone. ■



Dr. Jaime Iglesias, standing, is El Paso's county ag extension agent who works with pecan growers. Also pictured is NMSU's Dr. Robert Flynn.



# DUKE PECAN

---

## NUTCRACKERS & NUT HARVESTERS



For pricing and availability contact:

DUKE COMPANY

P.O. BOX 555

WEST POINT, MS. 39773

Tel. 662-494-6767 • Fax 662-494-5360

bduke@dukepecan.com

# Texas Pecan Board salutes

# R.B. Bagley & Sons Inc.

## For Support of the Texas Pecan Check-Off



R.B. Bagley & sons is a leading "first-handler" in Texas with buying stations throughout pecan production areas of the state. Thank you for partnering with TPB by collecting and remitting the 1/2-cent pecan assessment. Supporters such as R.B. Bagley & Sons make it possible for the Texas Pecan Board to promote TEXAS PECANS!

Visit the Texas Pecan Board's newly re-designed website

www.texaspecans.org

to access forms for submitting your assessment for this year's crop, get more information on the check-off program, and see what Texas Pecan Board has been doing on behalf of the Texas pecan industry.

Texas Pecan Board, P.O. Box 5976, Bryan, TX 77805 • 877-8PECANS (877-873-2267) • www.texaspecans.org