



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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MID Announces Start of Irrigation Season

Merced, California. March 10, 2006. The Merced Irrigation District's (MID) Board of Directors at its meeting held on Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2006, authorized the start of the 2006 irrigation season when conditions merit. Following a staff report, the Board and staff members agreed that conditions were currently merited and a start date of March 1, 2006, was set. Since the Feb. 21 Board action, areas of the District have received over 1.50 inches of precipitation, delaying the start.

With dryer and colder conditions on the horizon, the staff reported to the Board at its March 7 Board meeting that water will be diverted into major canals and reservoirs from Lake McClure as soon as possible, with the official start of the 2006 irrigation season as March 9. The distribution system operators (DSOs) are currently in their areas and water orders are now being accepted by the Customer Services Department.

MID growers that farm in the Livingston or Snelling areas can call (800) 750-2720 to place an order. Pre-irrigation for row crops, irrigation for alfalfa and trees make up the majority of irrigation demand at the present time. Surplus and saleable water will be made available in 2006 on an "if an when available basis" to lands outside the irrigation district boundary but inside its sphere of influence (SOI).

At this time, it is estimated that irrigation water will be available to SOI lands through July 15, but that date could move up if conditions warrant. This year's cost for water includes:

Standby Fee: \$24/acre
Irrigation Fee: \$15.25/acre-foot
SOI Irrigation Fee: \$35/acre-foot
State Fee Recovery Charge: \$1/acre-foot

The MID Customer Services Department requests that all crop applications, owner/tenant agreements and SOI water forms be completed and returned to the MID office – 744 W. 20th St., Merced, CA, 95340 – as soon as possible.

For more information contact: Ted Selb, Deputy General Manager at (209) 722-5761. For more information about the District and its services, please visit www.mercedid.org.

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