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New Success Stories and Interviews on Agricultural Water Stewardship Show Sustainable Water Management

December 8, 2011 – Oakland, CA: Farmers throughout California are adopting more sustainable water management practices. The Pacific Institute has released five new case studies and four new video interviews, adding to their *California Farm Water Success Stories* series showing how agricultural water stewardship practices are at work on-the-ground, at the farm and irrigation-district level. Now all twelve case studies and eight interviews are available online at www.pacinst.org/reports/success_stories.

In addition, the Pacific Institute and other members of the California Roundtable on Water and Food Supply have launched a new *interactive database and map*, featuring innovative and effective efforts around California to improve on-farm and regional water management. The *interactive database and map* is available on the California Agricultural Water Stewardship Initiative site at www.agwaterstewards.org and contains more than 30 case studies – including the Pacific Institute’s success stories – and is searchable by location, production type, irrigation method, and stewardship practice.

“Farmers, irrigation districts, and local organizations are finding innovative ways to protect water quantity and quality, saving energy and saving money, augmenting stream flows, and storing water for inevitable dry periods,” said the Pacific Institute’s Dr. Juliet Christian-Smith, a member of the Roundtable. “To claim it can’t be done, or that there isn’t more we can do, just doesn’t make sense. These case studies show how, and are a great practical resource for growers and water managers.”

Peer-to-peer education, a cornerstone of the case study database, is one of the main ways farmers get the information to inform their decision-making. Dave Cavanaugh, owner of a nursery in the Pajaro Valley foothills, says: “If farmers look at the questions, there are things that might make sense to them that wouldn’t to engineers and hydrologists.”

The new Pacific Institute case studies illustrate:

- effective water management through regional efforts (Groundwater Management in the Pajaro Valley and Integrated Regional Water Management Planning in the Kings Basin);
- the advantages of volumetric water pricing (Alta Irrigation District);
- how strong collaborations can lead to water quality improvements (Oakdale Ranch); and
- how a range of rainwater capture, re-use, land management, and drip irrigation can transform urban agriculture (Sustainable Water Management for Urban Agriculture).

“With diminishing water supply and future uncertainty from climate change, figuring out the best ways to manage our scarce water resources will be increasingly critical,” said Christian-Smith. Presenting these new case studies is part of the Pacific Institute’s ongoing analysis of successful examples of sustainable water policies and practices, demonstrating how innovative growers and irrigation districts are already beginning to move California toward more equitable and efficient



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water management and use. Such viable alternatives to traditional approaches can help California meet current and future water management challenges.

Based in Oakland, California, the Pacific Institute is a nonpartisan research institute that works to create a healthier planet and sustainable communities. Through interdisciplinary research and partnering with stakeholders, the Institute produces solutions that advance environmental protection, economic development, and social equity – in California, nationally, and internationally.

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