

## Profile of Panoche Water District and Drainage District

Panoche Water District serves about 38,000 acres and Panoche Drainage District serves approximately 44,000 acres, overlapping Panoche Water District and other nearby lands in and around Firebaugh. Typical crops include almonds, tomatoes, cotton, wheat, asparagus, pistachios and alfalfa.



### Conservation Improvements

The District receives water from the Central Valley Project via the Delta Mendota Canal and the San Luis Canal. It is continually making improvements to reduce water losses and increase water delivery reliability and flexibility, improve drainage water management, and implement policies that promote efficient water use. Some of these include: lining irrigation laterals; installing new

turnouts on the San Luis Canal to increase water delivery flexibility and reduce energy use; creating a tiered water pricing schedule where the price per acre foot of water increases substantially as more water is used; establishing a no-tailwater discharge policy for all growers within the District; and providing loans to help growers improve on-farm irrigation systems.

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*“Approximately 70% of the District has been converted to high efficiency irrigation systems, mostly sub-surface drip and micro-sprinklers. The Water District facilitates low interest loan and grant funding for installation of these systems to increase the conversion rate.”*

*-Marcos Hedrick, District Water Master*

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According to District Water Master, Marcos Hedrick, “The improved water conveyance systems increase the District’s responsiveness to growers’ water demands allowing water to be regulated and

applied in relation to crop need. These projects have also reduced the volume of subsurface drainage water which must be managed at considerable cost.” In addition, the San Joaquin River Improvement Project has greatly reduced subsurface drain water discharges to the San Joaquin River. The project includes 6,000 acres of farmland, of which about 4,300 acres are planted with salt-tolerant crops and irrigated with subsurface drainage water. The salt-tolerant crops uptake and filter the water, the crops are then sold and the profits are re-invested in the project.

The major challenge faced in implementing these programs has been funding. Portions of most of these programs were funded with assistance from the USBR and California Propositions. Hedrick predicts that future implementation and expansion of these programs will continue to be hindered by funding limitations.

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*“The tiered water pricing program was implemented to encourage water use efficiency, particularly during the pre-irrigation season.”*

*-Marcos Hedrick*

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