



Irrigation Season Begins March 5

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MERCED, CA - Merced Irrigation District will begin irrigation season operations on Monday, March 5. Orders will be taken beginning at 6 a.m. The price for in-District water is \$18.25 per acre-foot.

MID Irrigation Operations will commence diversions to the system through the Main Canal and North Side Canal on March 2 to fill the District's 800 miles of canals, pipelines, Lake Yosemite and other waterways.

"This has been an extremely dry winter and in order to avoid curtailment in water supply, it will take a joint effort from MID operators and growers," said Deputy General Manager of Water Resources Hicham Eltal.

The District is completing a handful of capital improvements and facilities maintenance projects that will result in more efficient water delivery to its customers. This work may render some portions of the distribution system unavailable for a short time while work is completed.

Based on the existing snowpack, California could witness the driest year on record, in terms of snowmelt runoff to its reservoirs. The Merced River is no exception. However, given the high level of carryover surface water storage from 2011 in Lake McClure, MID is projecting it will have no-curtailment for the season at this time. The full water supply projection is based on the understanding that cooperative efforts between growers and MID will allow for efficient operations, based on the following:

- MID will engage conjunctive groundwater pumping to supplement surface water deliveries.
- There will be no Sphere of Influence (SOI) Sales. However the MID Board of Directors may revisit SOI deliveries if the water supply picture changes positively in the next 3 months.
- For 2012, MID must suspend off-peak deliveries, constant flows, constant heads, and continuous flows (except for rice growers).

- Growers, will be asked to use available heads of water on a rotation basis to ensure every vital drop of water is put to use.
- Please call as early as possible to place your order. DSO's will try to sequence deliveries between growers on a given lateral or sublateral. Most of the losses in the canal system are due to seepage through the system, and increasing the practice of rotational deliveries can help minimize excess seepage losses.

MID's Customer Services Department requests that all crop applications and owner/tenant agreements be completed and returned as soon as possible. Those interested in purchasing water are encouraged to notify MID in advance, helping the district assess its diversion plans. In addition to MID beginning to accept water orders on Monday, March 5, DSOs will be in their respective operating areas at that time.

MID's office is located at 744 W. 20th Street, Merced, CA 95340. As in previous years, irrigation orders may be placed 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the irrigation season by calling (209) 722-2720 or toll-free at (800) 750-2720. Customers may also use MID's automated water ordering system at (866) 825-2475 or place orders online at www.mercedid.org.

For more information, please contact Hicham Eltal, Deputy General Manager-Water Resources, at (209) 722-5761. For more information about the District and its services, please visit www.mercedid.org.

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