

2010 JIM KUHN LEADERSHIP AWARD

*California Alfalfa & Forage Association,
Representing the Forage Growers of California*

Seth Hoyt, California and Western States Hay Analyst

It may be impossible to be 100% right if you're constantly analyzing the hay market, but that doesn't stop Seth Hoyt from trying as he produces his weekly Hoyt Report. Despite the volatility that can rapidly turn hay prices in another direction, Hoyt is known for his ability to be ahead of the curve and pinpoint factors that are changing the market. His success is due to his passion for analyzing markets, for the many contacts that know and trust him and his dedication to providing up-to-date information for the alfalfa and forage industry.

Hoyt's many contributions in his long career have earned him the 2010 Jim Kuhn Leadership Award presented by the California Alfalfa and Forage Association (CAFA). The annual award was established in 2005 when Kuhn, an industry icon, innovator and founding member of CAFA was killed in a vehicle accident near his ranch in El Centro, CA. Nominees are judged on their knowledge of alfalfa, record of leadership and the depth of their lasting contributions to the California alfalfa industry.



In the many years he has been involved in agriculture, Hoyt has been recognized for his excellence, starting at a young age. He grew up on the family farm near Elk Grove where he received cattle and hay marketing experience. In his senior year of high school he received the Star Livestock Farmer of California award from the Future Farmers of America (FFA). After graduating from high school he attended California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), San Luis Obispo where he studied Farm Management and earned an FFA American Farmer Degree in his junior year.

Hoyt began his career in the early 1970's as a Livestock Receiving Manager at a California packing plant where he also served as a cattle and sheep buyer and purchased alfalfa hay for thousands of sheep. In 1974 he joined the Market News Branch in the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). During a 23 year career he was an Assistant and Senior Marketing Specialist, reporting on hay, grain and livestock markets. Hoyt was eventually promoted to a position in Sacramento to supervise the hay, livestock, grain, egg, and poultry market reporting and in 1994 he became Chief of the Branch.

When the CDFA Branch program closed in 1996 Hoyt managed the California Agricultural Export Program and a year later he served as Officer-In-Charge of the USDA Livestock and Grain Market News in Moses Lake, WA. At Moses Lake he received an award from the USDA for excellence with customer service. He reported on the California hay market and also supervised cattle and hay reporting for the Pacific Northwest. Then in 1998 Hoyt joined the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service in Sacramento as a Senior Agricultural Economist. He was a State employee in a Federal program and stayed on the job until retiring the end of 2007.

Although Hoyt's job was primarily as an agricultural statistician it didn't stop him from doing on his own time what he enjoys the most; reporting on the hay market in California and other western states. Always generous with his time, he has been a sought-after speaker and has spoken numerous times at the California Alfalfa & Forage Symposium. He has a large following due to his thorough and informative speeches and articles which continues with his weekly Hoyt Report (www.thehoytreport.com).

"As a USDA and CDFA statistician, Seth had a long career providing accurate market information to the hay industry," says Tom Ellis, a Grimes, CA alfalfa grower and CAFA board member. His commitment continues, says Ellis, and he has expanded the scope of factors surrounding the hay market. "His work is respected and appreciated."

Although the USDA still has its weekly market report, it left a void when it dropped its popular California newsletter. Hoyt's hay market newsletter fills the void. His announcement of the new service in 2008 was well received. Sid Howard of the Alturas Ranches, Alturas, CA, was "delighted to hear" that Hoyt was providing "much needed information on hay markets. Howard notes that he relied on his information "to market and sell some 50,000 tons of hay each year for 25 years." He sums up Hoyt's contributions by saying "he's a great person and has done a great service and does his work with diligence and honor."

Seth and his wife of 41 years, Barbara, live in Lone (Amador County), and have raised 12 children, five of whom were adopted. In January of this year the Hoyt's' son, Seth Hoyt, Jr. was appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to a judgeship in San Joaquin County Superior Court.