

USA

By L. G. Carter

The destruction of the American West—starring big agribusiness and the government that supports it

Way out West the big farmers fly Lear jets, have private airstrips on gargantuan factory farms, control politicians in both major parties, and harvest barreelfuls of taxpayer-subsidy money. They also dry up rivers, pollute aquifers, and conscript an army of Third World families to bring in the crops at below-poverty-line wages. Grotesque deformities in ducks and geese, poisoned national wildlife refuges, massive fish kills, and pesticide-sprayed fields littered with thousands of dead birds are common, and unpunished, deprivations in California's agricultural heartland, despite numerous state and federal wildlife-protection laws.

Meanwhile, the small farmers, whom Thomas Jefferson called the backbone of democracy, continue to disappear from the American landscape at a rate of more than 100,000 a year as a result of governmental and banking policies and the greed of food processors and exporters.

By 1989 only 1.9 percent of Americans lived on farms (compared to 90 percent in 1900), and the 1989 figure is misleading at that because the U.S. Department of Agriculture lists as a "farm" anyplace selling as little as \$1,000 worth of agricultural products.

The capital of America's Agropolis is California's San Joaquin Valley, a cornucopia of more than 200 crops that generates \$14 billion a year in gross farm income. And the uncrowned king of Agropolis is J. G. Boswell II, a reclusive, unassuming man who calls himself a simple cowboy. In fact he grows more cotton than any other individual in the world. No one knows how rich he is, but his power is vividly illustrated by some of his "accomplishments" during the past half century:

- Along with a handful of other big growers, he got the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (funded, of course, by the American taxpayer) to build four "flood control" dams on rivers flowing out of the Sierra Nevada so Boswell et al. could safely farm the bottom of what was once the

biggest body of water west of the Mississippi River, the legendary Tulare Lake. Boswell now controls rights to public water that could well be worth nearly \$1 billion. His property in California alone is estimated at 250,000 acres.

- When big-rainfall winters reflood the old Tulare Lake Basin, Boswell collects millions of dollars in federal subsidies for not growing crops on the bottom of a natural lake bed.

- Boswell persuaded the U.S. Supreme

Court to let the richest grower with the most land in a California water district—namely, himself—control district water policy, creating what Justice William O. Douglas called a "corporate kingdom undreamed of by those who wrote our Constitution."

- Boswell got his lawyers to set up a trust for his employees in 1989 to evade federal acreage limitations for cheap federal irrigation supplies in the Westlands Water District, reaping an extra \$2 million a year in water subsidies, according to a General Accounting Office study.

- In 1982 Boswell was instrumental in blocking a "peripheral canal" to shunt fresh northern-California water around the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

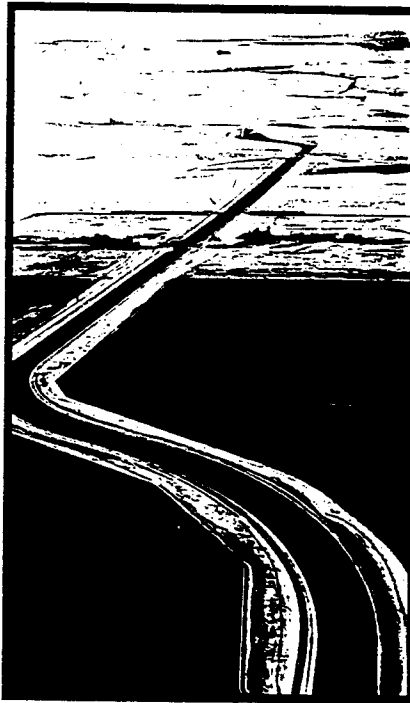
region in order to retain possible future access to north-coast California rivers.

- As the U.S. Justice Department looks the other way, his 3,000-acre Tulare Basin evaporation ponds for toxic farm drainage water are triggering deformities in migratory ducks and shore birds supposedly protected by federal law.

- Boswell has so far not taken any responsibility for a massive fish and wildlife kill on a 25-mile stretch of canal in his cotton kingdom that in the late summer of 1997 destroyed 100 million fish and thousands of birds.

This sad spectacle is what is known as agribusiness.

Boswell has plenty of company in irrigation country out West, where growers have industrialized the fields and gained control of entire rivers. These corporate farmers usually don't live down on the farm. In California they often live in man-



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sions in the city. One zip code in an exclusive neighborhood in Fresno—the nation's farm capital—receives more farm-subsidy checks than anywhere else. Fresno was the top farm-subsidy city in America between 1985 and 1995, with area residents receiving 22,419 checks totaling \$103.4 million in taxpayer farm subsidies.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, just six percent of our farms—the so-called mega-farms—produce 59 percent of the crops in America. Eighty percent of the beef slaughter in America is controlled by just four meat-packing conglomerates, which more than doubled their market share in the past 18 years.

Boswell's domain is the Tulare Lake Basin, comprising parts of Kern, Kings, and Tulare counties in central California. His water rights are a real gusher, all granted from the public: They are equivalent to the needs of a city of three million people and are worth nearly \$1 billion, more than twice the value of the land, according to a 1989 article in *Forbes* magazine, thus placing Boswell in the billionaire club. He also has extensive cotton lands in Arizona, pioneered

the cotton industry in Australia, and has long been involved in urban development and real estate in Southern California and Arizona.

Boswell, who helped launch the political careers of three governors—Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, Ronald Reagan, and Pete Wilson—is legendary for his behind-the-scenes ability to avoid legal problems or get water laws either interpreted liberally or simply rewritten.

In 1969, when heavy rains hit California and the old Tulare Lake bed began to fill up, Boswell, as the largest landowner in the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District, shunted floodwater away from a planned district overflow area because he wanted to plant that area to cotton. Instead the water flowed into the lake, flooding his land and that of other nearby landowners, including the Salyer brothers, the second-largest growers in the lake basin. The Salyer Corporation sued the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District over an existing California water-code section that allowed one vote for every acre—in other words, giving the largest landowner the most votes and control of district policy and elections. Boswell simply used his acreage-based votes to direct the water-district board to flood out his neighbors' fields and keep the planned floodwater storage basin dry.

The Salyer suit finally worked its way up to the U.S. Supreme Court, and in 1973 a young Nixon High Court appointee named William Rehnquist, fresh from a law firm in Phoenix, wrote the majority decision, which in effect ruled for the Boswell corporation, arguing that even though water districts were political subdivisions of the state of California, the one-man, one-vote rule should not apply because the largest landholders had the most at stake during flood situations. Constitutional-law textbooks now refer to this decision as an "anomaly" in the American franchise system based upon the hallowed democratic tradition that corporations do not get to vote—and one person, no matter how rich, gets only one vote.

Justice Douglas castigated the Rehnquist ruling in a strongly worded dissent: "It is indeed grotesque to think of corporations voting within the framework of political representation of people," he wrote. "One corporation can outvote 77 individuals in this district."

Boswell, who has escaped major media attention for decades despite his enormous wealth and influence in agriculture, is famous for reaping government windfalls while decrying government support programs. When the rivers of the Southern Sierra flooded the Tulare Lake Basin, as they had done from time immemorial, Boswell collected more than \$10 million in federal flood-relief money because his canals and water-delivery systems and cotton fields—located on the lake bed—had been flooded out or damaged. In addition, according to the *Washington Post*, Boswell got \$3.7 million worth of grain from the controversial payment-in-kind program "for idling land that was under floodwater and could not have been planted."

In 1982 Congress, prodded by Western-state lawmakers, "reformed" the 1902 Reclamation Law, which President Theodore Roosevelt had pushed through Congress to put "family farmers" onto the Western deserts. The 1982 bill (1) eliminated the residency requirement, which had never been enforced (so the big growers can continue living in their mansions in town) and (2) raised the acreage limitation for receiving cheap federally subsidized water from 160 acres (which was routinely circumvented) to 960 acres. Even 960 acres wasn't enough for Big Ag. The loopholes in the 1982 "reform" law were large enough to drive John Deere tractors through, and Boswell and the other big Western growers promptly found ways to evade the 960-acre limitation, primarily through leasing arrangements and complex trusts.

In 1989 the U.S. General Accounting Office said Boswell had set up a trust for 326 salaried employees to evade the



960-acre cheap-water cap on his 23,238 acres in the Westlands. Those acres continued to be farmed as one unit by Boswell, who has managed to reap \$2 million a year in water subsidies alone from the trust arrangement.

Boswell doesn't have to worry about wildlife laws either. Routine botulism outbreaks in the Tulare Basin, which can kill tens of thousands of migratory birds at a time, are usually attributable to agricultural and irrigation activities, yet enforcement actions are rarely undertaken by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In September 1997 an estimated 100 million fish and 2,300 federally protected birds died in an unexplained disaster along a 25-mile canal on the Boswell holdings. Local game wardens said they could not remember a bigger wildlife die-off in the valley. Crime investigators from the federal and state wildlife agencies were quoted in local newspapers as saying they would uncover the source of the deaths (one potential cause was pesticides) and prosecute those responsible. Nearly a year later no action had been taken.

Boswell has now retired to Ketchum, Idaho, and his son James runs the cotton empire from his home in suburban Los Angeles, although it is believed the elder Boswell still holds the reins.

While Boswell has escaped media scrutiny, he and his cohorts face an ominous threat, which, fittingly enough, they brought upon themselves. Irrigated agriculture on millions of acres of unsuitable soils in the American West is destroying aquifers, salting up land, and poisoning wildlife that once filled the rivers and wetlands west of the Mississippi.

A trace element called selenium, leached from the soil by flood irrigation and dissolved in drainage water flowing from the big irrigation projects, is moving into downstream food chains and causing deformities in migratory birds at—of all places—national wildlife refuges throughout the West. And selenium isn't the only problem. Depending on the soils being drained, the drainwater can also contain dangerous levels of dissolved boron, molybdenum, mercury, arsenic, lead, vanadium, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, sulfates, and even uranium.

Drainage water from irrigated agriculture is created because searing summertime temperatures in California and Western desert lands bring salts, trace elements, and heavy metals to the surface on ancient-seabed shale soils. This witch's brew of chemicals slowly rises into the root zone of crops, threatening

productivity. Irrigation waters imported from other areas carry more salts. Flood irrigation in areas with subterranean clay layers further exacerbates the problem of shallow salty groundwater. Agricultural scientists have known for decades that the only way to keep crop production up is to lower the water table below the root zone by pumping the toxic wastewaters out of the ground and sending them somewhere else.

"Since the 1930s an army of government scientists has provided a plethora of disturbing hard facts about selenium," says Joe Skorupa, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist who investigated the bird deformities at Boswell's pond. "Unlike other major pollution problems, however, such as acid rain, oil spills, or smog, the government has not only failed to move an inch toward protecting the American public and a wide diversity of public-trust resources, but, incomprehensibly, actually continues to completely exempt agricultural pollution from the Clean Water Act. In the San Joaquin Valley alone, every year of inaction adds the equivalent of about 13,000 Exxon Valdez spills of selenium-tainted wastewater to the legacy of runaway pollution that our children and grandchildren one day will despise today's spineless federal government for."

Skorupa, a fierce critic of the Department of the Interior's alleged selenium policy, adds, "The truly tragic public-policy aspect of all this is that most of the selenium pollution is as economically senseless as it is environmentally senseless, and those facts have been documented in excruciating detail by the federal government's own General Accounting Office. What may amount to America's biggest dirty little secret has been impervious to rational policy-making for more than 60 years, and counting."

The West's selenium trouble, like many problems in irrigated agriculture, is magnified in the western San Joaquin Valley, where Boswell and other growers in the Westlands have successfully evaded any serious federal efforts at a cleanup or prosecution under wildlife laws.

For more than a decade, attorneys from the U.S. Justice Department, under pressure from elected officials who are under pressure from their agribusiness patrons, have simply refused to enforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a tough bird-protection law with penalties that include both prison time and stiff fines. The treaty has been invoked only once, in 1985, against the federal government itself, to close down farm-drainwater evaporation ponds at the Kesterson National Wildlife Refuge in central

California, scene of the first confirmed bird deformities from selenium, discovered in 1983.

Boswell and the other big growers have also managed to avoid paying for the mess their drainage water created. In 1995 the Interior Department's Inspector General's Office also reported that Westlands Water District growers (Boswell has 23,000 acres in the Westlands) had managed to evade the \$110-million tab for the Kesterson cleanup and related drainage studies. The \$110-million bill was accumulating interest at the rate of \$7 million a year, with the taxpayers picking up the tab.

But the Kesterson cleanup tab pales in comparison to the boondoggle desalination plant in Yuma, Arizona, where Reclamation Bureau engineers have tried without success for decades to pull the farm-pollution toxins and salts from the Colorado River, which is tainted by agricultural return flow. Another Interior Inspector General's report, issued in 1993, said \$660 million had been spent on the Yuma desalting plant with no success, and the bureau planned to spend another \$1.5 billion by the year 2010, with no guarantee of any success.

The Environmental Protection Agency has been impotent to stop the farm-drainage pollution of rivers and wetlands because farm runoff was exempted from the Clean Water Act in 1977, including the highly toxic end-of-the-pipe subsurface drainage loaded with selenium as well as surface runoff. Indeed, as the *Stockton (California) Record* reported on June 19, 1998, the E.P.A.—siding with agribusiness—now wants to set standards for selenium and other trace elements and heavy metals in California that officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service contend will not protect many species of fish in the San Francisco Bay-Delta region.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, and his four immediate predecessors—Manuel Lujan, Donald Hodel, William Clark, and James Watt—have tried to cover up the Western drainage problem (Watt), to exercise benign neglect (Clark and Hodel), to claim ignorance (Lujan), or just to leave it for the next guy (Babbitt), because the only economically viable solution seems to be to retire the badlands being irrigated. And that solution is political suicide in farm country.

Only Hodel, who, ironically, is an oilman, tried to do the right thing in 1985 when he ordered Kesterson closed because his attorneys told him that Reclamation Bureau officials might be breaking criminal laws operating the Kesterson ponds. But even Hodel quickly experienced an agribusiness backlash and soon fell silent, allowing Kesterson to stay open another 18 months.

No wildlife refuge receiving toxic farm-drainage water in the West has been closed to the inflow of poisons since the Kesterson debacle 15 years ago, although selenium levels high enough to cause deformities have been confirmed at numerous wildlife refuges in several Western states and at a number of evaporation facilities operated by either local water districts (like Boswell's) or private corporations.

Interior Secretary Lujan, in an August 1991 visit to Yosemite National Park, claimed he was unaware of the bird killings and deformities, which by then had been documented for eight years and were confirmed in several states. Lujan said he did not know why aides would not keep him informed.

Environmentalists say the continued bird deformities and government paralysis or inability to halt the aquatic and avian food-chain poisoning demonstrates the still-potent clout of California agribusiness, which produced some \$24.5 billion worth of food and fiber in 1996, but today represents less than three percent of the trillion-dollar annual California economy, which is nowadays primarily fueled by computers and electronics, defense, banking, and tourism.

Marc Reisner explained the *Alice in Wonderland* quality of California agribusiness this way in a 1993 revised version of his book *Cadillac Desert*: "Enough water for greater Los Angeles was still being used, in 1986, to raise irrigated pasture for livestock. A roughly equal amount—enough for 20 million people at home, at play, and at work—was used that year to raise alfalfa, also for horses, sheep, and (mainly) cows.... In 1985, however, the pasture crop was worth about \$100 million, while Southern California's economy was worth \$300 billion, but irrigated pasture used more water than Los Angeles and San Diego combined. When you added cotton (a price-supported crop worth about \$900 million that year) to alfalfa and pasture, you had a livestock industry and a cotton industry consuming much more water than everyone in urban California—and producing [only] as much wealth in a year as the urban economy rings up in three or four days."

Not only are huge tonnages of California's river water required to grow cotton and food for dairy and beef cows raised in the central California desert, a 1997 Pacific Gas & Electric Company report on the 450-mile-long Central Valley (Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys combined) estimated that agricultural groundwater overdraft (extracting more than can be replenished annually) totals 15 percent of the entire state's annual net groundwater use. At current agricultural extraction rates, the San Joaquin Valley's groundwater sup-

ply will disappear in the next few decades.

To make matters worse, the Central Valley now has 1,600 dairies, the vast majority in the San Joaquin Valley, and the 850,000 cows on those dairies create as much natural waste as a city of 21 million people. There are only three state regulators to oversee disposal of this mountain of manure and river of cow urine, which is either kept in leaky lagoons that pollute the aquifer with nitrates or dumped into the San Joaquin River, which runs down the center of the valley. The San Joaquin River is often called the most-abused river in the U.S., and in 1997 was named one of the nation's ten most-endangered rivers by American Rivers, a Washington-based advocacy group.

A May 1998 U.S. Geological Survey Report on San Joaquin Valley groundwater supplies, serving more than 2.5 million valley residents, said San Joaquin groundwater is among the poorest in quality in the U.S. The report said 25 percent of valley wells had nitrate lev-

els—probably from fertilizers—that violated national drinking-water standards, and more than half the wells tested positive for pesticides, many of which don't have drinking-water standards.

While ripping off the liquid gold of California's rivers has been an agribusiness specialty for decades, scientists say current methods of disposing of farm drainage may be the final environmental insult that ruins not only aquifers and rivers, and destroys wildlife, but also ruins the very farms that are creating the toxic effluent.

A February 1998 federal-state study of the drainage problem in the western San Joaquin Valley noted 869,000 acres would have a shallow-groundwater problem by the year 2000, and more than 410,000 acres would have salinity and boron problems "sufficiently high to limit agriculture."

To combat the salty-groundwater problem, California growers in the past four decades have installed 33,000 miles of subsurface drainpipes to collect these shallow saline groundwaters and pump them somewhere else—to the nearest river, a public or private evaporation pond, or a low-lying national wildlife wetlands refuge. This "solution" has been

bad for the receiving waters and fish and wildlife in every case.

Although estimates of present and future "problem water" are hard to pin down in an atmosphere of non-regulation, U.S. Geological Survey scientist Theresa Presser, who has been studying the selenium problem in California for nearly two decades, estimates that 150 billion gallons of toxic farm subsurface drainage water is generated annually in the Golden State. While the farm wastewater from the San Joaquin Valley flows north into the San Joaquin River or festers in evaporation ponds, the drainage from the Coachella and Imperial valleys at the southern end of the state enters the polluted Salton Sea. Huge fish and bird die-offs are a regular occurrence there, and biologists say the Salton could become utterly lifeless in the near future as the continued influx of salts and toxins in the drainage overwhelms all aquatic species.

While birds were dying by the thousands at Kesterson, Boswell had the audacity in the summer of 1984 to send

Interior Secretary Hodel had enough when advisers told him local Bureau of Reclamation officials might be violating the criminal provisions of the Migratory Treaty Act by keeping Kesterson open. On the Ides of March 1985 he announced that he was closing Kesterson. The announcement sent shock waves through irrigated agriculture that are still felt to this day.

By 1986 the Kesterson ponds had been dried out and Interior scientists looking around the West were discovering selenium contamination in Boswell's local water-district drainwater evaporation ponds in the Tulare Basin, at the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge in Southern California, at the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada (in combination with mercury), and at dozens of other national wildlife refuges around the West. While federal officials began the process of endless studies, no action was taken to halt the selenium poisoning of the wildlife-refuge system, which continues to this day.

A national blue-ribbon 26-member panel of wildlife experts issued a scathing report in August 1991, charging directors of the nation's premier wildlife research center, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Patuxent Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, with harassing field-level biologists and attempting to downplay the threat of the growing selenium-pollution problem. The report, obviously referring to federal biologist Harry Ohlendorf (who'd discovered the deformities at Kesterson), pesticide researchers Chuck Henny and Larry Blus, and Joe Skorupa (who had investigated the bird deformities at the Boswell ponds), said government scientists "had paid a personal price for upholding good science in the face of heavy political, bureaucratic, and social pressures." Felix Smith, the federal biologist who first blew the whistle at the Kesterson refuge, was named in news reports as being hounded into early retirement for trying to protect migratory birds.

In a 1994 *Audubon* magazine article reporter Ted Williams discussed harassment of field-level federal biologists and quoted Felix Smith as saying that the day Fish and Wildlife Service officials agreed to take drainage at Kesterson "was the day we made a bargain with the devil."

When Kesterson erupted in the news in the summer of 1984, President Reagan's old California friend Bill Clark had just taken over as secretary of the Interior; he promised that a solution to the drainage-disposal problem was near, adopting the time-honored political tactic of ordering a lengthy state-federal study. His ploy worked. A \$50-million state-federal study commenced in 1985 with much fanfare, and ended in 1990 with a whimper. It was full of good recommendations, including

"It's clear that no one in the Clinton administration is going to make a hard decision about getting toxic soils in the West out of production."

California Water Commission members on a tour of his 3,165-acre evaporation-pond complex and have his drainage-district manager, Steve Hall, claim that selenium had not been found in the Tulare Basin soils or evaporation ponds. This, of course, could not have been true, as the bird deformities at the Boswell ponds (first tested and confirmed in 1987) turned out to be far worse than at Kesterson. Hall could only have meant there hadn't been any selenium tests yet of Boswell's drainage. In the manner of other Boswell employees who have moved on to bigger and better things in Water World, Hall is now executive director of the Association of California Water Agencies, where he continues to espouse western San Joaquin Valley agriculture's views on water issues.

Throughout 1984 the Kesterson problem continued to worsen. By early 1985 neighboring cattle ranchers Jim and Karen Claus had won a State Water Resources Control Board cleanup order for Kesterson. A CBS "60 Minutes" segment aired on March 10, 1985, showing the ugly ducklings at Kesterson and embarrassed Reclamation officials fumbling to explain the debacle.

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one for retiring hundreds of thousands of acres of bad land. It was also promptly shelved.

The Reclamation Bureau has finally launched a modest program to retire the first 12,000 acres of high-selenium soils in the Westlands. At that pace it will take 200 years to retire all the bad land just in the 600,000-acre Westlands. No one even talks about the millions of acres of high-selenium farmland all around the West that should be taken out of production.

Congress passed another reclamation reform bill in 1992 to put more federal irrigation water back into California's depleted rivers and the San Francisco Bay-Delta to help revive the moribund salmon runs, but Westland growers, backed by valley politicians, have been working ceaselessly to rescind or weaken that law.

Fish and Wildlife's Skorupa complained in the *Audubon* article that he took a solid case for criminal acts at the Boswell killing ponds to Justice Department attorneys just before the 1992 election but that the federal prosecutors got cold feet and weak spines.

"We were told we had an excellent

case," Skorupa told *Audubon's* Williams, "that they had every confidence that it was winnable, but that until we went and got someone at least at the secretarial level in Interior to give a clear policy directive, the Justice Department would not pursue it."

Skorupa says that about half of 161 federal irrigation-project drainage sites in the West studied between 1986 and 1993 have selenium levels high enough to trigger embryotoxicity, which can include deformities. What is more depressing is that federal irrigation projects make up only about a quarter of all irrigated agriculture in the Western United States. The other 75 percent of the irrigated land in the West has not even been looked at for selenium poisoning.

Eleven years after the first confirmed selenium-caused bird deformities at the Boswell ponds, the Department of Justice, with Janet Reno presently at the helm, still has taken no action against Boswell, and any possible prosecutions for the bird deaths Skorupa painstakingly documented beginning in 1987 are falling prey to the statute of limitations. An angry Skorupa can only shake his head.

Although the government has had serious warnings about selenium problems in the West for more than 50 years, the Department of the Interior was still claiming in 1997 that selenium had been

an "unforeseen consequence of irrigation drainage." That '97 report from the National Irrigation Water Quality Program also claimed that "because complete investigation of every irrigated area in the Western United States is impractical, managers need to be able to predict where selenium contamination is likely."


But it's not impractical at all, insists Theresa Presser, who was one of the first to document the widespread selenium contamination in the western San Joaquin Valley. According to Presser, selenium contamination is also likely not only where soils have selenium ejected from ancient volcanoes during the Cretaceous age, but also where ancient seabed soils have been uplifted by geologic activity over eons, such as California's Coast Range. In other words, human irrigation and export of the resulting drainage water into evaporation ponds or wetlands is doing in a few years what nature took millions of years to do.

It's clear that no one in the Clinton administration is going to make the hard decisions about getting the toxic soils in the West out of production. In late May 1998 the E.P.A. held a conference in Washington, D.C., that was attended almost entirely by big selenium polluters—oil companies, mining companies, major agribusiness, coal-burning utilities. They all argued against any E.P.A. review of the current standards for selenium in rivers, lakes, and marshes, which scientists say is at least twice as high as it should be and which may lead to the extinction of at least 20 species of fish and wildlife.

Boswell and the other agribusiness lords are determined not to become extinct themselves. Last March a consortium of state and federal agencies that dances to the tune of agribusiness announced a new plan to build a peripheral canal around the Delta and import yet more northern California river water to the selenium fields of the western San Joaquin Valley.

In July the Western Water Policy Review Commission, created by Congress in 1992, issued its report, three years behind schedule. The report identified agricultural wastewater as the single largest source of pollution in the West, recommended phasing out federal water subsidies, and specifically suggested that subsurface drainage water, which triggers the bird deformities, be brought under the Clean Water Act and regulated because it is an end-of-the-pipe type of pollution.

The response of the growers was typical. "The sooner this report gets put on a shelf and starts gathering dust the better," said Jason Peltier, manager of the Central Valley Project Water Association.

Dinosaurs swing big tails going down. 

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