Applications for the 2016-2017 Farm Unit Fallowing Program will be distributed in early May.

Landowners and farm units will receive general program information and are encouraged to coordinate any interest they may have among their respective parties.

There will be one solicitation for the 2016-2017 falling program. Please do not wait for a second offer.

The IID Board of Directors has approved a target volume of 128,000 acre-feet to be generated by the 2016-2017 fallowing program. Should the volume be higher after calculation changes, offers to fallow in excess of the farm unit target will be accepted proportionally on an acre-foot/per acre basis.

Farm units will receive information on falling program yields for each field they are farming and their acre-foot target participation for the farm unit.

Accepted fields will be fallowed from July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. The payment rate is $175 per acre-foot (80 percent shared among landowners in the farm unit who authorized participation and 20 percent to the farm unit manager).

Offers to fallow should be considered final, representing the maximum/minimum acreage the farm unit is offering to fallow. IID will attempt to accept minimum size fields (less than 20 acres) or a minimum sized partial field (20 acres) from each farm unit, even if it is in excess of the farm unit target.

Applications for the 2016-2017 Farm Unit Fallowing Program must be submitted by June 1.

Drainshed (TMDL) meetings

Growers and ag land owners who are required to meet conditional ag waiver regulations (previously known as the voluntary TMDL program) should attend one of the upcoming drainshed meetings conducted by the Imperial County Farm Bureau.

The following meetings (which last about an hour) are scheduled:

- **Tuesday, May 17** – Stockmen’s Club, Brawley; 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- **Wednesday, May 18** – Farm Bureau, El Centro; 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- **Thursday, May 19** – Imperial Palms Resort at Barbara Worth, Holtville, 9:30 a.m.

Reminder notices of the meetings will soon be distributed by the Farm Bureau.
Leach for soil and crop benefits

Growers are reminded of the many benefits of leaching in order to improve soil conditions and crop production.

Leaching allows water to thoroughly wet the soil, causing salts to dissolve and move into lower soil stratifications and subsurface tile drains. Pushing the salt away from the root zone can provide better crop growth and improve yields.

“If you don’t control the salts in your field, crops begin to suffer,” said Mike Pacheco, Water Department manager. “IID encourages farmers to leach, when appropriate, in order to improve the productivity of their fields.”

Given the current 2016 water use forecast and the availability of water in the Agricultural Water Clearinghouse, growers should determine if a leaching event would be beneficial to their fields between crops.

In addition to leaching salts, this irrigation method can help growers monitor tile lines, refill the field’s soil moisture profile, assist with weed control and potentially manage pathogens.

A few things to remember about leaching:

- **The percentage of surface runoff allowed when water is being used to irrigate plowed or flat unseeded ground shall be 5 percent for the last day of said irrigation; no measurable waste shall be allowed for any previous day.**
- **Fields need to be well leveled, having adequate drainage to permit movement of water through the soil.**
- **Ponded water must not exceed a depth of more than 1 ½ feet.**
- **Applications for leaching water need to be made at the water division office where the property is located.**
- **Adequate protection must be provided to adjacent properties against flooding from the ponded area before applications for leaching water will be granted.**
- **Approvals are subject to field inspections.**
- **A drying period of 30 days should follow each leaching period.**

A complete list of water regulations is available at: [www.iid.com/waterregulations](http://www.iid.com/waterregulations).

Check your water bills

Because errors can affect water history and conservation calculations, agricultural water customers are asked to review their water bills for accuracy and provide zanjeros with accurate information on water deliveries and run times.

This careful monitoring helps ensure that water is being accurately tracked to the gate, minimizing inaccuracies, benefitting the district’s many programs, including equitable distribution, on-farm conservation, etc.

Water customers can check their bills online using the web portal ([https://mywateraccount.iid.com/](https://mywateraccount.iid.com/)).

Keep current with important dates and deadlines

IID’s website has a dedicated page to help water customers plan for upcoming deadlines and events. Topics include:

- **Fallowing Program**
- **Apportionment & Equitable Distribution Plan**
- **On-Farm Conservation**
- **System Conservation**

To view the latest on all of IID’s programs and to register for email alerts, visit: [www.iid.com/waterdates](http://www.iid.com/waterdates)