Video title:  Crop in the Crosshairs

Short description:

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO SAVE THE WATER SUPPLY FOR 40 MILLION AMERICANS.  IT HAS RELEASED THREE POSSIBLE PLANS TO PROTECT THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN, WHICH IS FACING RECORD LOW LEVELS FROM OVERUSE AND RISING TEMPERATURES.

THE FINAL DECISION WON’T BE MADE UNTIL SUMMER, BUT THERE IS A STRAIGHTFORWARD SOLUTION THAT COULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM RIGHT NOW.

BRAD HICKS EXPLAINS WHY IT’S NOT BEING DONE.

SCRIPT

ANDREW LEIMGRUBER…

Been farming here for four generations.

…IS THE AMERICAN FARMER WE IDEALIZE.   GOOD CHANCE YOU’VE EVEN EATEN SOMETHING HE’S GROWN.

Spring mix, carrots, onions.

BUT HIS FAMILY’S FARM IN CALIFORNIA’S IMPERIAL VALLEY IS NOW IN THE CROSSHAIRS OF THE COLORADO RIVER BASIN CRISIS.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WANTS THE SEVEN STATES THAT USE THE WATER TO MAKE HUGE CUTS,   AND A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY THE PLACE TO START ARE FARMS LIKE LEIMGRUBER’S.   BECAUSE IN ADDITION TO VEGGIES, HALF HIS ACREAGE IS ALFALFA.

(—SOT—)

S/Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club

“Such a thirsty crop, and ridiculous to be growing the the desert.  That just makes no sense whatsoever.”

ALFALFA IN THE IMPERIAL VALLEY USES A LOT OF WATER;

MORE FROM LAKE MEAD THAN THE ENTIRE STATE OF NEVADA.

(—SOT—)

S/John Entsminger, Southern Nevada Water Authority

“Just their use to grow alfalfa lowers the lake by 20 feet  every year.”

AND MUCH OF THAT ALFALFA IS EXPORTED TO CHINA, TRAVELING CHEAP ON EMPTY CONTAINER SHIPS HEADING HOME.

(—SOT—)

S/Kathryn Sorensen, Kyl Center for Water Policy

“It is valid to question whether we should be using that much water to grow alfalfa.”

SO WHY NOT GET RID OF IT?

(—SOT—)

S/Rhett Larson, Kyl Center for Water Policy

“That would move us a long way towards solving a lot of our water management problems. But it would create other problems.”

HIGHER DAIRY PRICES,  HARDSHIP FOR FARMING COMMUNITIES,

AND SOIL ISSUES.   ALFALFA HELPS GET THE GROUND READY FOR THOSE VEGETABLE CROPS.  IMPERIAL VALLEY FARMERS ALSO HAVE THE UPPER HAND – THE LAW THAT ALLOCATES THE RIVER WATER GIVES THEM TOP PRIORITY.   BUT IF THEY OVERPLAY THAT HAND, AND LAKE MEAD CAN NO LONGER SEND WATER DOWNSTREAM THROUGH HOOVER DAM, THEY’LL PAY A BIGGER PRICE THAN ANYONE.

(—SOT—)

S/Andrew Leimgruber, Farmer

“We have one source of water, the Colorado River.   If Lake Mead reaches Deadpool, then that's the end of humanity in Imperial County. I mean, it might as well be a doomsday.”

IN THE IMPERIAL VALLEY, BRAD HICKS, REPORTING.