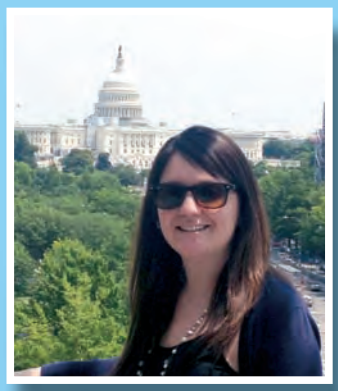
Advocating for agribusiness on Capitol Hill



In May, Morrison & Company consultant Toni Scott had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. as a member of the current class of the California Farm Bureau Federation's "Leadership Farm Bureau" program.

Each year, program participants team up with staff and officers from the California Farm Bureau Federation, as well as farmers and ranchers from around the state, to advocate for agriculture on a national level.

This year's trip was particularly impactful, considering the continued discussions surrounding the 2012 Farm Bill. Toni had the unique opportunity to share her direct experience with Farm Bill programs. In meetings with members of Congress, Toni was able to relate the invaluable impact of the Specialty Crop Block Grant, Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG), and Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). In the last grant cycle for the Value Added Producer Grant, Morrison & Company helped seven clients secure a combined $1.7 million in funding; Morrison & Company proposals account for 46.5 percent of all VAPG funding awarded in California since 2002. In the 2011 grant cycle, Morrison & Company secured the largest REAP grant award in the state and the largest REAP loan guarantee in the nation. We have also helped clients secure $1.8 million in Specialty Crop Block Grant funding. All of these programs provide an investment that directly creates jobs and greater marketing opportunities for our clients in food and agriculture.

In addition to meeting with members of Congress, Toni also had the chance to meet with representatives from the Chilean embassy to learn more about their agriculture industry and the policies that are supporting their continued rise as a global competitor. Learning about the agriculture experience in Chile was inspiring and helped Toni develop an even stronger appreciation for the role innovation plays both at home and abroad.

Morrison & Company is committed to the continuing professional development of our team. All are encouraged and supported in their participation in industry organizations and efforts that provide opportunities to serve and help broaden our experience.

As of the print date of this newsletter, 2012 Farm Bill legislation had been passed by the Senate but not the House. Morrison & Company has been keeping a close eye on discussions. Follow our blog at www.morrisonco.net or www.morrisongrants.com for updates.

Toni and her Leadership Farm Bureau classmates stand with Congressman John Garamendi (back).

Toni at the Chilean Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Toni Scott, center, with Congressman Wally Herger (right) and fellow Leadership Farm Bureau participant Sam Mudd (left).