**SCRIPT— WATER DESK**

**TITLE: CROP-SWITCHING DURING THE MEGADROUGHT**

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| **VIDEO** | **AUDIO** |
| **SUGGESTED LEAD-IN**  Nancy Caywood  Cotton Farmer  Kevin Moran  Environmental Defense Fund  David Dierig  Bridgestone Americas  Will Thelander  Farmer | **IN THE DROUGHT-STRICKEN SOUTHWEST, FARMERS ARE LOOKING TO ALTERNATIVE CROPS THAT USE LESS WATER. IN ARIZONA, A NEW CROP, A SOURCE OF NATURAL RUBBER, OFFERS REAL HOPE FOR FARMERS FACING A HOT AND DRY FUTURE.**  **---------------------------------------------------------------------------------**  SOT– “We’ve had drought cycles, but this is the first time we’ve ever seen a megadrought where it’s year after year.”  **THIS YEAR, THERE WILL BE NO ALFALFA CROP HERE.**  “You can hear this crunching. It’s just starting to dry up.”  **IN THIS PART OF ARIZONA, THERE’S NOT ENOUGH WATER TO IRRIGATE THESE FARMLANDS AS IN THE PAST. NEARBY, COLORADO RIVER WATER IS STORED IN LAKE MEAD FOR THREE STATES AND TWO STATES IN MEXICO. LAKE MEAD IS AT ITS LOWEST LEVEL SINCE IT WAS FILLED IN THE 1930’S.**  “It means that next year the farmers in this area will see two-thirds of their surface water go away…It’s going to be this way for a long time, and it requires us to adapt and come up with new solutions. (SOT) Crop switching – looking at lower water-use crops like guayule – is one of the solutions we want to be looking at; the ability to use half the water that alfalfa uses and still potentially have a viable farm and agricultural economy.”  **GUAYULE IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF ALTERNATIVE CROP THAT COULD TRANSFORM AGRICULTURE IN THE SOUTHWEST.**  SOT – “The rubber is all contained in the bark area.”  **GUAYULE IS A PROMISING A NEW SOURCE OF NATURAL RUBBER, AND THE BRIDGESTONE GROUP IS RESEARCHING AND DEVELOPING THE TECHNOLOGY NEEDED FOR ITS PRACTICAL USE IN MANUFACTURING TIRES AND OTHER PRODUCTS.**  SOT -- “And combined with other materials, the rubber on this 10-acre field would produce over 500 tires.”  **LOCAL FARMERS ARE WORKING ON FIELD TRIALS WITH GUAYULE. IT’S NATIVE TO THIS DESERT, AND CAN THRIVE ON A FRACTION OF THE WATER FARMERS CURRENTLY NEED.**  “The kind of watering we’re doing right now, when we’re flooding, we have to do that about every two weeks for the corn and the cotton; the guayule, that’s about once a month.”  “Without things like guayule that will use less water, the prospects of future generations being able to do this are not great in Arizona, to be completely honest with you.”  **GARY STRIEKER , REPORTING FOR THE WATER DESK** |