



The Cotton Chronicle

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Industry Calendar

Nov 17
Joint Steering Mtg
Fresno

Dec 1
Board Meeting
Fresno

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James G. Boswell Foundation Creates Fund to Support Campus Farm

Thanks to a \$100,000 philanthropic investment to the [Ag One Foundation](#) at Fresno State, the **J. G. Boswell Foundation** has established an endowment to support the [University Agricultural Laboratory](#) in memory of its longtime company farm manager, **Dave Cosyns**. Cosyns began a 45-year career with the company after he graduated from Fresno State in 1971, and managed its Kern County operations until his passing in 2016. He developed his love of farming at a young age in his family's farming operation in Orange County and later in Tulare. The endowment will help to support the Fresno State farm, officially known as the University Agricultural Laboratory. Its 20 units and 1,000 acres provides students, faculty, staff and community members endless opportunities for hands-on training and research in areas that reflect and benefit the nation's leading agricultural region. The Boswell company and foundation has contributed more than \$1.5 million to Fresno State. Prior support also includes a \$1.2 million endowment for an endowed chair position in the [plant science department](#) that is currently held by [Dr. Sharon Benes](#). The company is a frequent employer for Fresno State graduates, including **Jim Razor**, a vice president for processing and the current Ag One Foundation president. "Dave Cosyns was the consummate farmer and an accomplished industry member," said Razor. "He was known for his passion for farming, genuine character and vast knowledge of the agricultural industry. This fund is a tribute to his many contributions, which will help support and train new generations of agricultural leaders."

State Releases Draft Guidelines for SGMA Implementation Grants

The **California Department of Water Resources (DWR)** has released the draft guidelines and [Proposal Solicitation Package](#) (PSP) for the [Sustainable Groundwater Management \(SGM\) Grant Program's](#) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Implementation Funding.

DWR plans to deliver the funding in at least two funding solicitations:

- **Round 1 will provide over \$150 million by spring 2022 to regional groundwater agencies in critically overdrafted basins for planning and implementation projects to help comply with SGMA.**
- **Future solicitation in 2022-2023 will provide over \$204 million from various funding sources, including anticipated General Fund appropriations in Fiscal Years (FY) 2022/23 and 2023/24, remaining FY 2021/22 General Funds, remaining Proposition 68 Implementation funds, and any funds not awarded in Round 1, for planning and implementation projects to help comply with SGMA. If any funds are available after Round 2, future funding solicitations will be provided.**

The public comment period began on October 13 and ends on November 29, 2021. Following the review and consideration of public comments, DWR will release the final 2021 Guidelines and PSP and solicit proposals for Round 1. A public meeting will be held on November 16, 2021 at 2:00 PM as a Zoom webinar. Please

register for the public meeting at:
<https://ca-water.gov.zoom.us/join/join?j=2Zcudu6rpzkqE9Z8XtCx17gINmFalDZI4cj>

California Legislative Recap for 2021

The 2021 legislative session was an interesting one still subject to COVID restrictions limiting access to the Capitol, but bolstered by a big surplus budget. All in all, things could have been far worse. The following is a very brief summary on the bills we felt were most important to the tree nut industry during this year's session.

AB 73 (R. Rivas)

Current law requires the State Department of Public Health and the Office of Emergency Services to establish a personal protective equipment (PPE) stockpile required for all health care workers and essential workers, as defined, in the state during a 90-day pandemic or other health emergency. This bill would specifically include wildfire smoke events among health emergencies for these purposes and would include agricultural workers in the definition of essential workers. The bill passed out of the Assembly 78-0, passed out of the Senate 37-0 and was signed by the Governor on September 27, 2021.

AB 377 (R. Rivas)

This bill would require, by January 1, 2023, the State Water Resources Control Board and regional boards to prioritize enforcement of all water quality standard violations that are causing or contributing to an exceedance of a water quality standard in a surface water of the state. The bill would require the state and regional boards, by January 1, 2025, to evaluate impaired state surface waters and report to the Legislature a plan to bring all water segments into attainment by January 1, 2050. The bill was held on the Assembly Suspense File and may be acted upon January 2022.

AB 616 (Stone)

This was the big bill of the session. Current law requires the Agricultural Labor Relations Board to certify the results of an election conducted by secret ballot of employees in a collective bargaining unit to designate a collective bargaining representative, unless the board determines there are sufficient grounds to refuse to do so. Current law further provides that if the board refuses to certify an election because of employer misconduct that would render slight the chances of a new election reflecting the free

and fair choice of employees, the labor organization shall be certified as the bargaining representative for the bargaining unit. This bill would refer to the secret ballot election as a polling place election. The bill passed out of the Assembly 50-17, passed out of the Senate 24-11, but was **vetoed** by the Governor on September 22, 2021.

AB 1395 (Muratsuchi)

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 requires the State Air Resources Board to prepare and approve a scoping plan for achieving the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to update the scoping plan at least once every 5 years. This bill, the California Climate Crisis Act, would declare the policy of the state both to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and achieve and maintain net negative greenhouse gas emissions thereafter, and to ensure that by 2045, statewide anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are reduced to at least 90% below the 1990 levels. The bill passed out of the Assembly 42-21, but failed passage in the Senate 14-12. Reconsideration was granted and may be acted upon in January 2022.

SB 95 (Skinner)

This bill would provide for COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave for covered employees, as defined, who are unable to work or telework due to certain reasons related to COVID-19, including that the employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. The bill would entitle a covered employee to 80 hours of COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave if that employee either works full time or was scheduled to work, on average, at least 40 hours per week for the employer in the 2 weeks preceding the date the covered employee took COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave. The bill would provide a different calculation for supplemental paid sick leave for a covered employee who is a firefighter subject to certain work schedule requirements and for a covered employee working fewer or variable hours, as specified. The bill passed out of the Senate 22-2, passed out of the Assembly 57-19 and was signed by the Governor on March 19, 2021.

SB 559 (Hurtado)

This bill would establish the Water Conveyance Restoration Fund in the State Treasury to be administered by the

Department of Water Resources in consultation with the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The bill would require all monies deposited in the fund to be expended, upon appropriation by the Legislature, in support of subsidence repair costs, including environmental planning, permitting, design, and construction and necessary road and bridge upgrades required to accommodate capacity improvements. The bill would require the Director of Water Resources to apportion money appropriated from the fund, subject to specified requirements, for the Friant-Kern Canal, Delta-Mendota Canal, San Luis Field Division of the California Aqueduct, and San Joaquin Division of the California Aqueduct. The bill was moved to the Inactive File and may be acted upon in January 2022.

Budget Act of 2021

The Legislature passed this year's budget in stages, and spends \$262.5 billion in total state funds, consisting of approximately \$196.4 billion from the General Fund, \$61.2 billion from special funds, and \$4.9 billion from bond funds. Of note, the Budget includes:

- **\$31 million for the Governor's Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan Fund;**
- **\$65 million to address drought impacts on fish and wildlife (habitat restoration);**
- **\$40 million for Water Resilience Projects;**
- **\$170 million for the FARMER program, plus an additional \$42.5 million in Carl Moyer funds directed to agriculture;**
- **\$32 million for methane reduction programs;**
- **\$50 million designated for Land Resource Protection which would include repurposing irrigated ag lands;**
- **\$180 million for SGMA implementation (this is \$120 million more than the previous budget); and**
- **\$7 million for CDFA to help farmers transition to organics.**

The budget also includes \$90 million in General Funds over the next two years for the Department of Pesticide Regulations. These monies are in place of a tiered mill assessment proposed by the Department but rejected by the Legislature. The Department did receive an additional appropriation of \$10 million to study different approaches to the mill assessment that help transition the State to safer products.

NRCS Announces Conservation Funding Opportunities for FY2022

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced fiscal year 2022 assistance opportunities for agricultural producers and private landowners for key programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). While NRCS accepts applications for these programs year-round, producers and landowners should apply by state-specific, application cutoff dates to be considered for this year's funding.

California Application Cutoff Dates

- Sign-up Period 1 for EQIP: December 10, 2021
 - Sign-up Period 2 for EQIP: April 1, 2022
 - EQIP - Sage Grouse Initiative: May 6, 2022
 - CSP: April 1, 2022
- ACEP: December 1, 2021

Applying for Assistance

NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round. State Technical Committees, composed of producers and landowners, work with NRCS to set state-specific, ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding. These dates account for producer needs, staff workload, and ensure potential participants have ample opportunity to apply. Producers should apply by California-specific ranking dates to be considered for funding in the current cycle. Funding is provided through a competitive process. Ranking dates for all programs and states are available at nrcs.usda.gov/staterankingdates. Applications received after application deadlines will be automatically deferred to the next funding period. Producers, landowners and forest managers interested in applying for assistance should contact the NRCS at their local USDA Service Center.

Program Options

EQIP provides cost share assistance for producers to use 170-plus conservation practices to address a wide variety of resource concerns. CSP helps producers take their conservation activities to the next level through comprehensive conservation and advanced conservation activities. ACEP helps producers enroll wetlands, grasslands and farmlands into easements for long-term protection.

California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association
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US Cotton Trust Protocol

Article provided by National Cotton Council

House Conducts Supply Chain Hearing

The House Agriculture Committee held a hearing on "The Immediate Challenges to our Nation's Food Supply Chain." Hearing witnesses included Jon Schwalls, Southern Valley Fruit and Vegetable, Inc.; Ed Cinco, Schwebel's Baking Co.; Greg Ferrara, National Grocers Association; Mike Durkin, Leprino Foods Co.; Jon Samson, Agricultural & Food Transporters Conference; and Rod Wells, GROW-MARK, Inc.

The NCC joined members of the Agriculture Transportation Working Group in filing hearing record comments. The comments at www.cotton.org/issues/2021/upload/21supcomnov.pdf noted that, "The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent surge in consumer demand has resulted in major supply chain disruptions, including in the food and agricultural supply chain." The comments also outlined numerous policy changes that could be implemented to assist the situation.

Air District's Alternatives to Open Ag Burning Rolling On

Earlier this month, the Association heard a presentation from the San Joaquin Valley APCD (Air District) in regards to the progress of their Alternatives to Open Ag Burning

program. The Air District has received over 300 applications for alternative burn projects since the beginning of September. These applications cover activities such as chipping and incorporation, the purchase of chipping and grinding equipment, as well as the removal of stakes and wire found in various commodities. The Air District has updated some of the conditions to the program after its initial launch. Updates include the allowance of funding to go towards the removal of stakes and other support material and the removal of a \$60,000 cap per entity for applications.

To date, the Air District has already paid out \$7 million in incentives for equipment purchases, and \$10 million for crop removal and incorporation projects. If you are interested in applying, please check out the Air District's website for more information.



HAPPY THANKSGIVING

