



The Cotton Chronicle

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September 2023

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Industry Calendar

Research Committee Meeting
Fresno, CA
Sept. 12, 2023

CCGGA Board Meeting
Fresno, CA
Sept. 13, 2023

Cotton Harvest Safety Training
Five Points, CA
Sept. 28, 2023

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Association Participates In Tour and Meeting with EPA Region IX



This past month the Association participated in an important meeting and farm tour that included EPA Region IX Administrator Martha Guzman, USDA NRCS State Conservationist Carlos Suarez, SJVAPCD Governing Board Chairman Vito Chiesa, ARB Board Member Tania Pacheco-Werner and SJVAPCD Air Pollution Control Officer Samir Sheikh, as well as the many key staff from each of these agencies. The farm tour focused on almond harvesting and chipping of vineyard materials, while the meeting focused on the continued need to work collaboratively as the industry continues to have to meet air quality standards that continue to be more restrictive each time they are modified.



Association President/CEO Roger Isom kicked off the industry portion of the meeting by highlighting the many successes agriculture has had in meeting the calls for action from agriculture including replacing pump engines, implementing conservation management practices (CMPs) and replacing

tractors on a voluntary basis. Joining the Association on the tour was the Nisei Farmers League, California Fresh Fruit Association, Madera County Farm Bureau and the host Fresno County Farm Bureau, as well as staff from the offices of **Senator Dianne Feinstein, Congressman Jim Costa, Congressman David Valadao, Congressman John Duarte, State Senators Anna Caballero and Shannon Grove, and Assemblymembers Devon Mathis and Esmeralda Soria.**

Association President/CEO Isom Joins CALF Board of Directors

Last month **Association President/CEO Roger Isom** joined the Board of Directors of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF). With so many members being graduates of the program, along with staff **Assistant Vice President Priscilla Rodriguez (Class 50)** and **Director of Technical Services Chris McGlothlin (Class 52)**, it only seems fitting for Isom to join the team at CALF. The California Agricultural Leadership Program is an advanced leadership development experience for emerging or mid-career leaders in agriculture. It is considered to be one of the premier leadership development programs in the United States. Isom is currently serving a three-year term until 2026.



Association Submits Comments to RMA on Prevent Planting

Following a year where the cotton industry in California was staring down the barrel of a 4th consecutive year of drought only to have the script flipped and have thousands of acres completely flooded out and thousands more too wet to plant on a timely manner, the Association provided comments on

the Risk Management Agency's proposed changes to the Prevent Plant regulations. The retroactive application of the requirement to plant at least one year out of four consecutive years was impossible to comply with given the multiple years of drought and the complete lack of notice or opportunity to comment and weigh in on the changes to the prevent plant provisions. RMA acknowledged the unintended consequences and opened the requirements up for comments. The Association submitted comments encouraging dropping the 1 in 4 requirement and outright eliminating the requirement to plant two consecutive years to "requalify" for the provisions. Initially, it was thought RMA would have accepted comments and made changes in time for the 2024 crop year, but it is looking less likely at the moment. For now, stay tuned as the Association continues to monitor this program closely.

Association Continues Opposition on Cal/OSHA's Proposed Indoor Heat Illness Standard

Cal/OSHA released a revised version of its proposed Indoor Heat Illness Regulation for a 15-day comment period. Unfortunately, the latest version does not improve the standard and in many ways is more confusing and tougher to comply with. Furthermore, Cal/OSHA ignored our primary concern, and that of hundreds of other organizations and businesses and that is the lack of definition for "feasible". Once temperatures inside the building exceed 87°F, the company must institute all feasible measures to bring the temperature below 87°F. Without definition, the issue is left to the inspector's subjective opinion. The Association, and many other organizations and businesses, are very concerned this would require air conditioning in gins, warehouses, etc. Estimated costs for a typical gin building exceed \$1 million per gin. The Association along with a coalition of business organizations and businesses submitted comments on this latest release once again opposing the regulation and asking for further changes to be made. It is anticipated Cal/OSHA will act before the end of the year.

Valley Air District Still Providing Incentives for Clean Ag Equipment

Continued FARMER program funding, coupled with strong participation by the agricultural industry has been, and continues to be, instrumental in achieving clean air benefits in Valley communities. The FARMER Program builds upon more than 25 years of collaboration and innovation between the Valley agricultural community, the District and CARB in addressing emissions from agricultural sources, particularly in the San Joaquin Valley. To date, the District has been allocated over \$400 million in FARMER Program funding during the first four funding cycles. "The District appreciates the state recognizing the public health benefit that results from the FARMER funding," stated **Samir Sheikh, Executive Director/Air Pollution Control Officer** for the Valley Air District. "The San Joaquin Valley agricultural sector feeds the world and programs like FARMER are

critical to supporting the ongoing transition to more sustainable and air-friendly practices." Valley agriculture, in partnership with the District and CARB, has invested more than \$1.7 billion in public and private funding towards replacing nearly 17,000 pieces of old, higher-polluting equipment and implementing other measures to reduce emissions associated with Valley agricultural operations. In March, the District approved increases to incentive levels for its Agriculture Tractor Replacement program and added two new incentive tiers for smaller farming operations. Operations of 100 acres and less in size can now receive up to 80% off the cost of equipment and operations between 101 and 500 acres in size can now receive up to 70% off the cost of equipment. Funding opportunities can be found on the program's webpage. Smaller farmers also receive an increased incentive under the District's Alternatives to Agricultural Burning program. Small farmers can find additional grant information on our small farmer resource page. Visit www.valleyair.org/grants or call the grants team at 559-230-5800 for more information.

Cotton Harvest Safety Training 2023

With preparation of cotton harvest kicking into gear, safety training should be on top of that list. On September 28, 2023 from 8:30-10:30 am Cotton Harvest Safety Training will be provided at no cost. This training will take place at the UC West Side Research and Extension Center in Five Points and will be held in both English and Spanish. Check-in will begin at 8 am and will cover topics on equipment safety, electrical hazards, heat illness prevention and road safety. The California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association (CCGGA) along with the Fresno County Farm Bureau are sponsors for the training event, with the training provided by Zenith. If you are interested in having your employees attend the event please RVSP on FCFB's website at www.fcfb.org or utilize this link: <https://www.fcfb.org/event-details/cotton-harvest-safety-training-3>

DWR Approves 10 Groundwater Basin Plans

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced the approval of groundwater sustainability plans for 10 non-critically over drafted groundwater basins located across California. The approved basins are East Bay Plain, East Contra Costa, Ukiah Valley, Sierra Valley, North San Benito, North American, South American, Butte, Vina, and Wyandotte Creek. These basins provide a significant portion of water supply for nearly three million Californians. "Local groundwater sustainability agencies have put a tremendous amount of work into these plans that will have long-term benefits for communities, agriculture, and the environment across California," said DWR Deputy Director of Groundwater Management Paul Gosselin. Groundwater agencies have been implementing their plans since they were adopted locally in mid- to late-2021. DWR has now made determinations for 46 groundwater basins. Of the 46, a total of 40 basins are approved, including the 10 basins

released today. Six basins are deemed inadequate and have transitioned to the State Water Resources Control Board intervention process. Additionally, DWR approved nine basins with alternatives to groundwater sustainability plans in July 2017. The 10 basins approved today are among the non-critically over drafted basins that submitted their plans to DWR in January 2022. The GSAs in 37 basins that were required to submit plans in 2022 and currently have plans under review by DWR should anticipate additional determination releases throughout 2023. DWR provides extensive planning as well as technical and financial assistance to support GSAs and local communities during SGMA implementation. In May 2022, DWR awarded \$150 million in grant funding for projects to improve water supply security, water quality, and groundwater supply reliability. In the coming weeks, DWR will announce final awards for nearly \$200 million in additional grant funding for SGMA implementation.

Broad-spectrum insecticides in cotton: finishing out the lygus season and shifting to aphids and whiteflies.

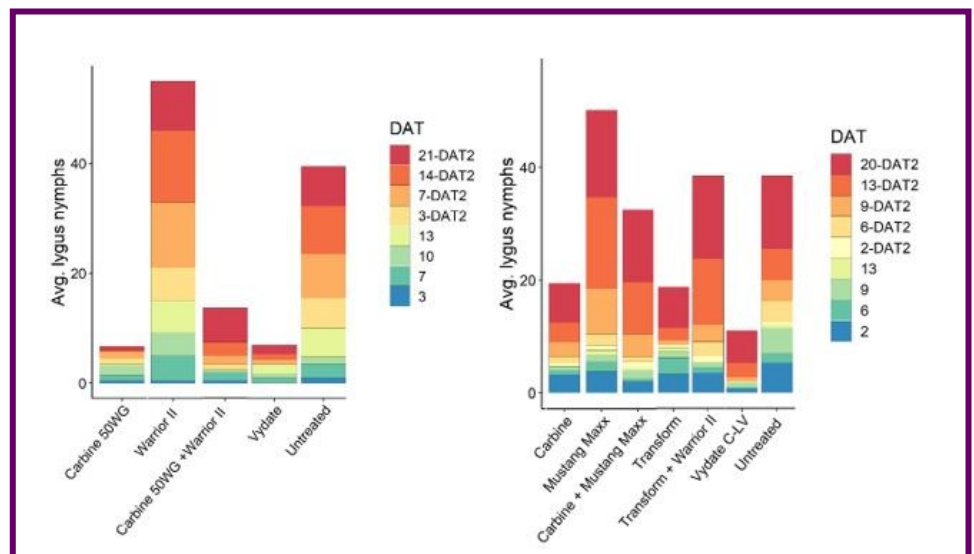
Ian Grettenberger, Asst. Specialist in Cooperative Extension,
University of California Davis

This has unfortunately been probably one of our worst seasons for the natural enemies in cotton fields in the last several years, at least. The heavy and sustained lygus pressure in many areas made it difficult to bring counts down and in some cases resulted in many applications. In addition, it has to be acknowledged that California growers do not have access to Transform/sulfoxaflor, which would have provided another selective tool. This management environment of heavy lygus pressure paired with a handful of good options meant that people relied on what was available, including many broad-spectrum materials like pyrethroids. With some final lygus applications still being considered and aphid and whitefly “season” imminent if not already here, it seems prudent to think critically about what we might be looking at as well as what can be done to set fields up for the best possible scenario for aphids and whiteflies.

- Even if not readily apparent, natural enemies can be present in fields or can move into fields and provide their biological control services. Unfortunately, detecting their benefits can sometimes be hard and their benefits can go unrecognized. Whiteflies may just not seem to take off in a field, which could be because eggs and nymphs simply are not surviving and cycling the population. The advantage of more using our more selective insecticides is you get direct efficacy/control on the target pest, as well as biological control services of the natural enemies you retained. In addition, you can get management benefits for

“secondary” pests like aphids or whiteflies from biological control, even if there is no direct effect of the insecticide on these pests.

- For any remaining sprays, I would suggest thinking very critically about including pyrethroids. We generally have seen across the board and for a number of years now (including data from my predecessor Larry Godfrey and research out of Arizona), a pyrethroid alone does not provide anything beyond (possibly) fleeting efficacy for lygus. When a single pyrethroid is combined with a more selective insecticide (e.g., Carbine), we have not seen a boost in efficacy in our trials (see selected trial data below). If anything, we have seen a slight “resurgence” of lygus, albeit a statistically nonsignificant one, likely due to detrimental effects on natural enemies.
- The questions you should ask yourself when considering tank-mixing a pyrethroid, or even other broad-spectrum material at this point: *Is the boost in efficacy I might get worth the detrimental effects on natural enemies? Can I get a better result by preserving the possibility of biocontrol?*
- While natural enemy populations likely have been severely impacted, there may still be the chance for them to immigrate into fields and/or recover before aphids and whiteflies take off. Trying to let these natural enemies recover could be critical to allowing biocontrol to function for these pests.
- Keep insecticide selectivity in mind as you begin to manage aphids and whiteflies. Avoiding broad-spectrum materials as long as possible could help natural enemy communities recover/establish during this period. There are a number of effective selective materials for both aphids and whiteflies (or both) that would be a good fit at this point.
- Finally, most folks are already doing this, but keep in mind what went out for lygus this season when thinking about what may still come, in particular for aphids and whiteflies. Many applications of broad-spectrum materials in a given



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field *absolutely* does not mean these pests will be bad in that field, but it is *absolutely* a substantial risk factor.

Two years (2021 and 2022) of insecticide efficacy data from our cotton lygus trials. Only selected materials are shown here. Data are presented as stacked bar charts, with each value a mean across replicates. DAT=days after treatment for the first and second application (spaced two weeks apart). Trials were conducted at the West Side Research and Extension Center.

State Water Board Set to Increase Fees....Again

Last month, State Board staff held a stakeholder meeting to discuss their anticipated budget for the 2023-2024 season. Like most meetings with the agency, staff is proposing a 5.8% increase to the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP). This is the 7th year in a row that staff has proposed an increase over 5% to programs that directly affect agriculture. While these stakeholder meetings have provided an opportunity for regulated industries to voice concerns over increases and soaring costs, staff made clear that they did not anticipate changing the proposed increase before the Board votes on this issue in September. State Board staff have attributed the increases as necessary to pay for additional employees and support understaffed programs reviewing submitted reports. An additional component of the bump in fees is a result of salary negotiations between the State Board and their unionized employees, where State Board staff noted that 4% of the proposed increase goes towards paying annual salary increases and retire-

ment contributions. Stakeholders were also informed that the 4% increase can be anticipated annually for the next few years to pay for employee benefits and salary. These fee increases, and the staff that has consistently presented them, have gone unchecked for far too long. There has been no State oversight as to how the agency is managing their current income. The consistent fee increases, and constant requests for more staff paid for by industry have not had to experience the oversight of an audit like many other local and state agencies have had to. The Association has begun engaging the legislature to look into providing funding through the General Fund, as well as potentially auditing the State Water Board. Stay tuned for more updates.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Cotton Chronicles, the monthly newsletter for the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association. To help reduce costs, we are asking everyone to consider receiving the electronic version of the Cotton Chronicles instead of paper. If you are willing to switch to the electronic version of the newsletter, please send an email to Michelle at michelle@ccgga.org requesting the change. Thank you for your consideration.