



The Cotton Chronicle

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November 2023

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Industry Calendar

Dec. 12, 2023
CCGGA Board Meeting
Fresno, CA

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CCGGA Board Nominations Open Up for Ginners and Growers

It's time for nominations to be submitted for the upcoming election of Directors to open positions on the Board of Directors of the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association. There are four (4) Grower Director terms expiring this year, including **Geoff Toledo, Phil Hansen and Jim Razor of Kings County, and Tim Cox of Riverside County.** The positions are for these specific counties. There are also four (4) Ginner Director terms expiring this year, including **Tom Gaffney, Tom Pires and two vacancies.** All Nomination forms must be completed and returned to the Association office by **Wednesday, November 22nd, 2023.** Please take time to nominate one or more Ginner or Grower candidates in good standing with the Association (and yourself if you intend to be a candidate) and make sure that each person you name agrees to being nominated and files the **Candidate Statement** form required to be placed on the ballot for the upcoming election.

The form must be completed for each nomination, so please copy the form if you nominate more than one person and provide the form to each person you nominate. Thank you for your participation in the process. Please feel free to contact me at (559)252-0684 or via email at roger@ccgga.org if you have any questions.

Association Names in the News

Former Association Chairman Don Cameron was recently named as a "Top Dog Award Winner" by California State University Fresno. He was recognized as the award winner for the College of Science and Mathematics. The University stated "With a 30-

year career in agriculture, Don Cameron is a leader in the agricultural community and innovator in farming methods and solutions. He is credited with designing a water bank solution that was adopted by the state as part of its larger plan to create a more dependable water supply." Another **Former Association Chairman Stanley Creelman** was recently announced as 2024 World Ag Expo Chairman. "I am honored to serve as the 2024 World Ag Expo[®] Chairman," said Creelman. "There have been so many great leaders before me, it is humbling to be among them." Congratulations to both of these gentlemen!

The Cotton Board Releases 2022 Annual Report

The Cotton Board's 2022 Annual Report is now available online. To download the report, visit the Stakeholder Transparency section of cottonboard.org. The report offers a letter from Sonja Chapman, The Cotton Board's 2022 chairman. In Chapman's letter, she says, "The Cotton Board

maintains a strong collection rate, receives positive audit results, and engages in strong communication efforts. The exceptional professionals on staff at The Cotton Board and Cotton Incorporated are determined to move the industry forward, deliver a strong sustainability message to consumers and users of cotton, and increase downstream demand for cotton." The report features 2022 budget/financial information, an overview of the top-line strategic priorities of the Cotton Research and Promotion Program, and information on projects and

programs from 2022.



USDA Announces Appointments of Members, Alternates, and Advisors to Serve on The Cotton Board

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the appointment of 12 members, 12 alternate members, and two advisors to serve on The Cotton Board. All appointees will serve three-year terms starting January 1, 2024, through Dec. 31, 2026. Included in the new members are two California cotton growers **Matthew Cauzza and Doug Cardoza**. The complete breakdown is as follows:

Newly appointed members: Matthew Cauzza, Producer – CA; Kent Smith, Producer – NC; Michael Popp, Producer – TX; and Kirk Smithwick, Importer – AL.

Newly appointed alternate members: Doug Cardoza, Producer – CA; Kim K. LeQuire, Producer – NC; Miranda Barrett, Producer – TX; Kelly Gupta, Importer – TX; and Amanda Jean Wils, Importer – WI.

Reappointed members: Pace Hindsley, Producer – AR; William B. Guthrie, Producer – LA; Thomas Hayes, Producer – MS; Sigi Valverde, Producer – TX; Chuck Ward, Importer – NC; Scott Johnson, Importer – CA; Akiko Inui, Importer – NY; and Laurie Sutandar, Importer – OH.

Reappointed alternate members: Rafe Banks, Producer – AR; Rebecca Thom, Producer – LA; Patrick Johnson, Producer – MS; Jon Jones, Producer – TX; James McKinnon, Importer – NY; Svitlana Linska, Importer – IL; and Dhruv Agarwal, Importer – NC.

Newly appointed advisor: Damian Murrieta – AZ.

Reappointed advisor: Willie Scott – GA.

“I am pleased to welcome this group of leaders to The Cotton Board. I look forward to meeting the new appointees and leaning on the experience of those who have been reappointed. The Cotton Board has an extensive orientation program set up for early 2024 to ensure new Members, Alternates, and Advisors are fully up-to-speed and prepared to participate at our March 2024 board meeting,” said **Mark Nichols, Oklahoma cotton producer and current Chairman of The Cotton Board**. “On behalf of The Cotton Board, I would like to thank Secretary Vilsack for these timely appointments and thank the appointees for their willingness to share their time and expertise with the cotton industry,” said Nichols. Members, Alternates, and Consumer Advisors of The Cotton Board collaboratively represent the interests of both importers and producers to The Cotton Board and Cotton Incorporated. Their insight contributes to activities of the Cotton Research & Promotion Program targeted at improving the profitability of the entire cotton industry.

Governor Signs New Paid Sick Leave Bill Into Law

Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law SB 616, which expands California’s existing paid sick leave law – the

Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014. The new law’s modifications have widespread implications because they will apply to virtually all employees who work in California for 30 days or more in a year. Specifically, the new law will modify existing paid sick leave law by:



- Increasing the annual amount of PSL an employee is entitled to under either the frontload or accrual method from 24 hours or three days to **40 hours or five days**;
- For employers who utilize an accrual model other than one hour of leave for every

30 hours worked, increasing the number of PSL hours accrued to 40 hours by their 200th day of employment, in addition to accruing at least 24 hours of PSL by their 120th day of employment;

- Increasing the number of days of carried over PSL an employee can use each year from 24 hours or three days to 40 hours or five days;
- For employers who offer paid leave, increasing the number of days of paid leave an employee is eligible to receive from 24 hours or three days within nine months of employment to 40 hours or five days within six months;
- Increasing the cap on an employee’s accrual of PSL from 48 hours or six days to 80 hours or 10 days;
- Extending certain procedural and anti-retaliation provisions of existing law to employees who are covered by a valid collective bargaining agreement that provides for different paid sick leave obligations; and
- Preempting any local cities’ PSL ordinances with less generous leave requirements to establish the state-wide minimums described above.

These new requirements go into effect on January 1, 2024.

NEM Aggregation Decision Delayed Yet Again!

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has issued a Proposed Decision regarding how Net Energy Metering Aggregation (NEMA) will be handled in the new “Net Billing Tariff.” The Association through the effort of the Ag Energy Consumers Association (AECA) has been active in the proceeding and has already helped secure important elements to preserve ag participation in this crucial solar program. For example, ensuring that the “true-up” is annual, rather than monthly (as the IOUs want) is critical to operations that have varying seasonal load. After the main Net Billing Tariff program was finalized at the CPUC, they moved onto NEM Aggregation. AECA helped to create the NEM Aggregation program in the Legislature in 2012 with SB 594 (2021, Wolk) and has been working for months to keep the program available. The Proposed Decision, if implemented, would drastically limit, if not eliminate agricultural

customers' participation in NEMA. AECA has aggressively advocated for the decision to be revised through comments, meetings with all the CPUC commissioners, the CA Dept of Food and Agriculture, Governor Newsom's Cabinet staff and encouraged legislators to call on the CPUC to revise the decision. AECA recently led efforts resulting in 19 legislators signing a letter to the CPUC and Governor. This followed a joint ag letter signed by major agricultural organizations in the state. The vote on the decision has been delayed twice because of the pressure coming from AECA and others, and is now scheduled for November 4. AECA will continue to push for an alternate or revised decision to be proposed by the CPUC.

Association Recognized with Titan Award!

The Association was honored and recognized by JCS Marketing with the Industry's Titan Award recognizing the Association for its many achievements in the past several years as the Association came into existence. Accepting the award on behalf of the Association was **President/CEO Roger Isom**, who commented "I accept this award on behalf of the Association, its staff, its Board Members and every one of our members who have contributed to helping us achieve these many objectives." The award was delivered at the "My Ag Nite" event featuring **Fox News Host Jesse Waters** and put on by **JCS Marketing** the publisher of the **West Coast Nut Grower Guide** and many other publications. "My Ag Nite" was the brainchild of **JCS Marketing Owner Jason Scott**. Joining Isom at this prestigious event was **Assistant Vice President Priscilla Rodriguez** and **Safety and Food Safety Specialists Rita Ruiz and Esmeralda Miranda**.



Historic On-Farm Conservation Funding Assistance Available for Producers

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California has announced Fiscal Year 2024 (October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024) federal assistance opportunities for agricultural producers, including through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). While NRCS accepts applications for these programs year-round, interested applicants should apply no later than **November 3, 2023**, for the first application cutoff period. "We are excited to support California's produc-

ers with an historic investment in on-farm conservation this Fiscal Year," said **NRCS California State Conservationist Carlos Suarez**. "With the addition of the Inflation Reduction Act, we will be investing approximately 50 percent more federal funding to help producers address their unique resources concerns and help them achieve their stewardship goals." Through EQIP, CSP, and the Inflation Reduction Act, more than \$100 million is available for conservation practices and initiatives, including:

- through the National Air Quality Initiative (NAQI) to assist farmers in replacing outdated engines with new and cleaner-burning technology.
- activities that support wildlife habitat creation and enhancement on farms and ranches.
- NRCS and Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart partner projects to help improve water infrastructure, delivery, and application on farms.
- National Water Quality Initiative for targeted conservation actions to improve water quality in the Calleguas Creek and Salt River watersheds.

EQIP provides financial assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits. These include improved water and air quality, improved irrigation efficiency, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, forest restoration, and creating or enhancing wildlife habitat. CSP provides producers to earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities integrated within their agricultural operations. CSP enhancements like cover crops, ecologically-based pest management, and buffer strips help producers improve soil health while protecting water quality. Other CSP activities help sustain and increase pollinator and beneficial insect habitat in harmony with agriculture production on their land. Please contact your local NRCS office for more specific details.

Plan Approved to Increase San Luis Reservoir

The Department of the Interior and San Luis & Delta -Mendota Water Authority approved plans to implement the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project. The joint project will create an additional 130,000 acre-feet of storage space in San Luis Reservoir, the nation's largest off-stream reservoir, producing additional water supply for two million people, over one million acres of farmland and 135,000 acres of Pacific Flyway wetlands and critical wildlife habitat. Today's signing of the Record of Decision and Notice of Determination is the first approval of a major water storage project in California since 2011. A \$25 million investment to the project under the Law was announced in October 2022 and an additional \$10 million in July 2023. An additional \$60 million was authorized for project construction from the

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Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, for a total of \$95 million in federal contributions to date in construction costs. "Through President Biden's Investing in America agenda, Reclamation has reached a major milestone today for the B.F. Sisk Dam Raise and Reservoir Expansion Project, which will build water supply security for farmers and families in the region," said **Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Michael Brain**. "I'm thrilled to be here today with our state and local partners on the banks of San Luis Reservoir to make this important project a reality," said **Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Touton**. "Thanks to major investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this project will allow us to secure the B.F. Sisk Dam and contribute to California's water supply reliability through increased storage capacity at San Luis Reservoir. B.F. Sisk Dam is a 382-foot high earthfill embankment located on the west side of the Central Valley, about 12 miles west of Los Banos. The dam is over three miles long and impounds San Luis Reservoir, which has a current total capacity of around two million acre-feet of water. Previously, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided over \$100 million to the B.F. Sisk Dam for a project currently under construction that will increase the dam crest by 10 feet to improve seismic safety. Leveraging this existing project, Reclamation and the Authority are partnering to add an additional 10 feet to the dam through today's announcement to allow for expansion of the reservoir's storage capacity. The expanded space will store water that can be delivered to south-of-Delta water

contractors and wildlife refuges. "San Luis Reservoir has served as the hub of California's water system south of the Sacramento San Joaquin Bay-Delta since its completion in 1967," said **San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board Chair Cannon Michael**. "The ability to capture more water in the years it is available, particularly given California's changing climate, is a critical component of a more secure future for the communities, farms and wildlife dependent on the Central Valley Project for their water supply. We value our partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation and look forward to completion of this vital water storage project."

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.