



The Cotton Chronicle

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May 2024

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Industry Calendar

CCGGA Annual Meeting
May 14, 2024

Personal Protective Equipment Webinar
May 20, 2024

CCGGA Board Meeting
June 6, 2024

CCGGA Staff

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2024 American Pima Grade Standards Guide Box Review And Standards Matching

Wednesday, July 17, 2024
Visalia, CA Classing Office
10:00am

Please join us to review, comment, and approve the six guide boxes of the 2024 American Pima Grade Standards. Once approved, the guide boxes will be used as the reference to match all the 2024 American Pima Grade Standards. The guide box review and the standards matching will both take place the morning of July 17th.

Industry participation is key to this process, and we hope you all can come and be a part of this important annual event.

For additional information please contact:

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Bureau Increases Water Allocations – Slightly

The Bureau of Reclamation announced another increase in the Central Valley Project 2024 water supply allocation for south-of-Delta contractors and those in the Friant Division. While all north-of-Delta CVP contractors are currently at 100% of their supplies, south-of-Delta agricultural contractors are being increased from 35% to 40%. Last month, on April

18, the Friant Division Class 1 allocation was increased from 95% to 100% and the Class 2 allocation increased from 0% to 5%. "Hydrologic conditions have improved enough that we are able to provide this gradual increase," said **California-Great Basin Regional Director Karl Stock**. "We realize that our contractors were hoping to see a greater amount of water, and we understand how critical irrigation is to California agriculture and the surrounding communi-

ties. However, continued uncertainty in long-term hydrology and regulatory constraints necessitate Reclamation's approach with available water supplies." According to the Bureau, as the water year progresses, changes in hydrology, actions that impact operations, and opportunities to deliver additional water will influence future allocations. In response, **Association President/CEO Roger Isom** commented "While we appreciate any increase in the allocation, in many ways this is too little, too late. Planting decisions are done. Given the current reservoir conditions throughout the state as well as the snowpack, we are disappointed with the minimal allocation. The regulatory restrictions in the delta are truly hurting the Valley and every single person that lives here. Less water means less farming, which means less jobs."

Association Hosts Annual Ginners School & Managerial Seminar

Last Month, CCGGA hosted the annual Ginners School & Managerial Seminar at J.G. Boswell Companies' Gin #3. The event aims to provide multiple safety trainings for gin employees, as well as test their knowledge on current safety requirements for ginning equipment through the Safety Contest. In all, gin employees heard presentations on Early Action Plan – Fire Prevention from WAPA's Esmeralda Miranda, Forklift Safety from WAPA's Rita Ruiz, Ladder Safety from J.G. Boswell's Jacqueline Alvarado and Maricela Aguilar, Module Feeder Safety from J.G. Boswell's Jose Cantu and Jose Alvarez, and employees were provided their required one-hour Sexual Harassment training thanks to AgSafe's Rigo Ceja. The Safety contest was extremely competitive this year, with the Olam's Ray Aquino taking the top prize with a correct score of 44 out of 50 questions answered correctly.



Managerial staff heard engaging presentations from **Zenith Agribusiness's Bill Krycia** on Safety and Regulatory update, and 2024 Labor Law Changes from **Barsamian & Moody's Catherine Houlihan**. The Association would like to recognize our event

sponsors – **L.P. Brown, R & C Supply, and Robinson's Sheet Metal**. We would also like to extend a huge "Thank You" to **J.G. Boswell Company, AgSafe, Barsamian & Moody and Zenith Agribusiness Solutions** for assistance with trainings and helping organize the event. We look forward to seeing you all next year. Stay Safe!

EPA Publishes Update on Herbicide Strategy Progress

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is releasing an update to its draft Herbicide Strategy, which is part of the Agency's plan to improve how it meets its Endangered Species Act (ESA) obligations. The revised draft strategy is in response to comments received on the initial draft. The draft strategy, which EPA released for public comments in July 2023, describes whether, how much, and where mitigations may be needed to protect listed species from agricultural uses of conventional herbicides. The goal is for EPA to use the strategy to proactively determine mitigations for registration and registration review actions for herbicides even before EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) formally complete the lengthy ESA determination on whether an herbicide has effects on a listed species. EPA received extensive comments on the draft strategy, who identified concerns with specific aspects of the draft strategy and suggested revisions. EPA plans to make a number of improvements to the draft based on this feedback, with the primary changes falling into three categories.

- **Making the strategy easier to understand.** Many commenters noted the complexity of the strategy to determine the amount of mitigation a label requires for a particular pesticide—up to nine points of mitigation. In response, EPA is simplifying its approach, such as by using four tiers—none, low, medium, high—to describe the amount of mitigation that may be needed for each herbicide. EPA also plans to create educational materials that concisely explain the four-tier mitigation approach.
- **Increasing flexibility for growers to implement the mitigation measures in the strategy.** EPA expects to expand its mitigation measures, especially for specialty crops such as cherries and mint, to include new measures such as erosion barriers, reservoir tillage, and soil carbon amendments. EPA is also working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other organizations to identify other measures to add to the mitigation menu that can reduce pesticide runoff and erosion.
- **Reducing the amount of mitigation that may be needed** when growers have already adopted voluntary practices to reduce pesticide runoff or where runoff potential is lower due to geography. For example, in areas of the country with flat lands or minimal precipitation where runoff potential is low, growers may need less or no additional measures to use agricultural herbicides, compared to what is currently in the draft strategy. EPA is also considering whether growers could meet any necessary mitigation requirements if they

participate in agricultural conservation programs or work with qualified experts to design and implement mitigation measures.

EPA is also working on other changes to the Herbicide Strategy and how it is implemented. For many listed species, the maps used in the draft strategy for determining where mitigation measures would apply are often too broad, covering areas not needed to conserve the species. EPA is working with FWS and others to develop a process for refining maps for hundreds of species. Through this work, EPA expects that the land area subject to the pesticide restrictions under the final strategy could shrink for many species. The Agency expects to publish the final strategy in August 2024.

Association Leadership Ascends Upon the Capitol

Leadership and Staff from the **California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association (CCGGA)** and the **Western Agricultural Processors Association (WAPA)** spent two days in Sacramento to address critical concerns on legislation and regulations. The Associations met with **Senator Toni Atkins, Assemblyman Greg Wallis, Assemblyman James Gallagher, Assemblywoman Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio, Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, Assemblyman Heath Flora, Senator Richard Roth, Assemblywoman Jasmeet Bains, Assemblywoman Esmeralda Soria, and Assemblyman Juan Alanis.** The group also met with staff from **Senator Josh Becker, Senator Anna Caballero, Senator Lena Gonzalez, Senator Angelique Ashby, Assemblyman Josh Hoover, Senator Shannon Grove, Senator Roger Niello, Assemblyman Josh Lowenthal and Assemblywoman Lori Wilson.**



Several issues were discussed included AB 1963, the bill to ban paraquat; AB 2522, the bill to severely limit FGARs, Ag Burning, Sulfoxaflor (Transform) for lygus control on cotton, CDPR's budget increase request, ZEV truck and forklift rules, electricity rates and infrastructure deficiencies, SWRCB fees, and FARMER funding. If those 18 meetings were not enough the second day was spent on regulatory issues meeting with the **Governor's**

Office, California Air Resources Board (CARB), California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture CDFA). Topics covered included pesticide bans and CDPR's budget requests, ZEV truck and forklift regulations, electricity rates and infrastructure, and invasive pests such as cottonseed bug, carpophilus beetle, and fruit flies. The group also met with Assembly candidates **David Tangipa and Ali Macedo.** The Association Staff including **President/CEO Roger Isom, Assistant Vice President Priscilla Rodrigues, and Director of Technical Services Christopher McGlothlin** were also present and participating.

Historic 2023 Water Year Boosts California's Groundwater Supplies

The **California Department of Water Resources (DWR)** has released the latest ***Semi-Annual Groundwater Conditions report***, and the data show that California achieved 4.1 million acre-feet of managed groundwater recharge during Water Year 2023. The report also details an increase in groundwater storage of 8.7 million acre-feet. This is the first year since 2019 that there has been a reported increase in groundwater storage. A significant reduction in groundwater pumping in 2023 also led to favorable groundwater conditions, including a decrease in land subsidence, or sinking of the land. Some areas that had previously experienced subsidence actually saw a rebound (uplift) in ground surface elevation from reduced pumping in the deeper aquifers and refilling of groundwater storage. This latest report includes, for the first time, groundwater sustainability plan Annual Report data reported by local groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) across 99 ground-

water basins which make up over 90 percent of the groundwater use in the State. **Paul Gosselin, DWR Deputy Director of Sustainable Water Management** stated, "The impressive recharge numbers in 2023 are the result of hard work by the local agencies combined with dedicated efforts from the state, but we must do more to be prepared to capture and store water when the wet years come." During the 2023 Water Year, more than 1.2 million acre-feet of groundwater recharge was permitted by state agencies, more than 400,000 acre-feet of flood water was recharged using the Governor's Executive Orders, and millions more acre-feet of managed and naturally occurring recharge

was achieved.

Survey on Biocontrol and Microbial control Options for Pest Management

The Association has been asked to survey growers to evaluate the knowledge and use of biocontrol and microbial control options for pest management in California. The survey is

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anonymous and is being conducted by **Dr. Surendra Dara**, an extension entomologist and professor from **Oregon State University**. The data will be used along with similar information from the Pacific Northwest to prepare a report to develop research and education strategies moving forward. We encourage all growers to participate in this anonymous survey found here:

https://oregonstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2t6szOEbmryTpNs

2024 Safety Workshops

The Association wrapped up safety training sessions for Tractor Train-the-Trainer in March 2024! We had a total of over 80 participants across four regional locations. These regional training workshops were conducted in partnership with the Western Agricultural Processors Association, Nisei Farmers League, Cali-



fornia Fresh Fruit Association, and Fresno County Farm Bureau, alongside Zenith Insurance, Fresno Equipment Company, and Kern Machinery. A special thank you to our site hosts: **Semi Tropic Coop**

Almond Huller, Mid Valley Cotton Growers, Inc., Minturn Huller Cooperative, Inc., Fresno County Farm Bureau, and T & P Farms Hulling & Shelling. There is still an opportunity to participate in the final training on Personal Protective Equipment via webinar. These workshops are for Owners, Managers, Supervisors, Safety Personnel or those who are responsible for training. Each workshop attendee will be provided with the information needed for understanding the rules, regulations and conducting effective safety training. The cost per training is \$60 per person for members and \$80 per person for non-members. Contact our office at (559) 252-0684 for more details.

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.