Newsletter of the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association

The Cotton Chronicle

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September 2026 Volume 36, Issue 09

Industry Calendar

CCGGA Research Meeting
Sept. 15

CCGGA Board Meeting
Sept. 16

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Association Testifies at Joint Ag Committee Hearing

Association President/CEO Roger A. Isom testified before a special Joint Hearing of the **Assembly and Senate Ag Committees** on "The State of Agricultural Production in California". Isom was asked to testify about the current state of food and fiber processing. In his comments, Isom highlighted the numerous increased costs impacting the industry and the inability to pass along those costs. Isom pointed out the increased costs in electricity and natural gas, increased minimum wage and workers compensation costs, the cost of California-only regulations such as nighttime lighting, workplace violence, indoor and outdoor heat illness, and wildfire smoke, and the new single-use packaging regulation. Isom suggested funding the all-important incentive programs like FARMER to replace tractors, Ag Burn Alternative Funds to help offset chipping and incorporating of orchard and vineyard removals, Food Processing Investment Program (FPIP) to help processors upgrade their energy systems and SWEEP to help farmers upgrade their irrigation systems. Isom reminded the hearing audience of Ag Committee Chairwoman Soria's comments made earlier this year "if we are going to ask more of agriculture, then we must give them the support and resources", to which Isom responded "I couldn't agree with you more!"

Federal Water Project Allocation Increased by 3%

The Bureau of Reclamation is increasing Central Valley Project 2026 water supply allocations for south-of-Delta contractors reflecting improved water supply conditions and operational flexibility. "Increasing water allocations means more reliable water for California's farmers, families and communities, supporting food production, local economies and greater affordability," said **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Andrea Travnicek**. "Reclamation continues to carefully monitor hydrologic conditions and operate the Central Valley Project to make the most efficient use of available water supplies," said **Reclamation's California-Great Basin Acting Regional Director Adam Nickels**. "While conditions this year have been dynamic, careful monitoring and water supply management provide for updated water allocations to our south-of-Delta contractors while continuing to meet project operational requirements. We remain committed to working closely with our water users and partners to maximize water supply reliability for California communities, agriculture, and the environment." Based on current hydrology and updated forecasts, Reclamation is announcing the following changes to CVP water supply allocations:

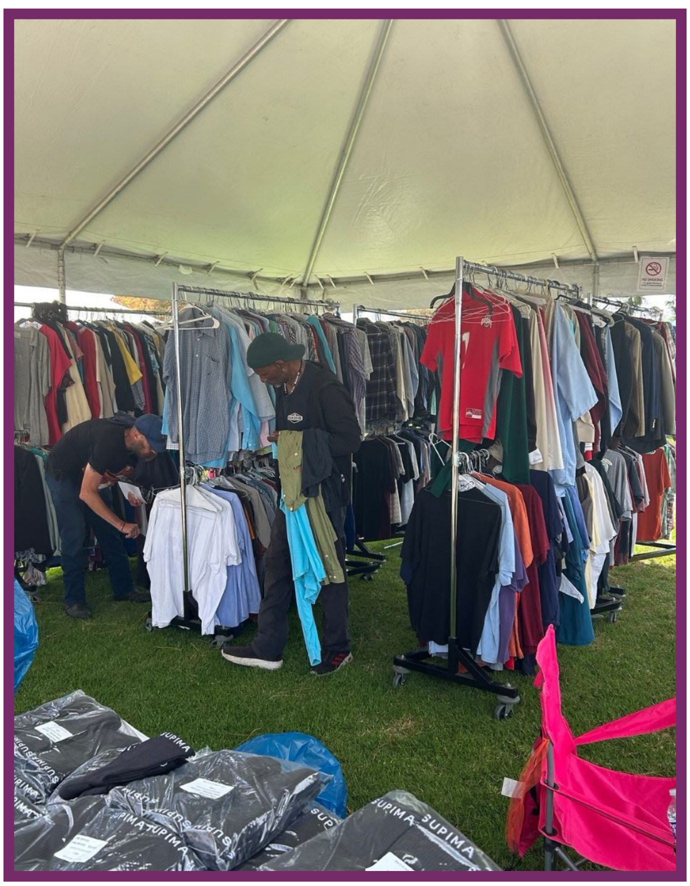
South-of-Delta Contractors

- Irrigation water service and repayment contractors south-of-Delta are increased from 25% to 28% of their contract total.
- Municipal and Industrial water service, and repayment contractors are increased from 75% to 78% of their historic use, or public health and safety needs, whichever is greater.

All other allocation amounts announced May 19 remain unchanged.

Association Donates Cotton Socks for 8th year to Veterans in San Diego

An idea that started eight years ago when **J.G. Boswell's Tom Gaffney** was our chairman has grown to be a big deal for veterans in San Diego, home to the nation's largest population of homeless veterans. Gaffney, a navy veteran



himself, fully supported the idea when it was presented to the Association by then **Senator Toni Atkins** and with the Board's support and the tremendous generosity of **Supima, the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association (CCGGA)** has delivered approximately 11,200 pairs of cotton socks made from pima cotton grown right here in California. The **Veterans Village of San Diego** hosts an annual event known as ***Stand Down***, where an entire weekend is dedicated to helping homeless veterans get back up on their feet with job, medical and housing assistance as well as new clothes. The single most requested item is socks, and **CCGGA** and **Supima** are proud to contribute these socks each year.

USDA Extends Deadline for SDRP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is extending the deadline for farmers to apply for Stages 1 and 2 of the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program (SDRP) to Sept. 30, 2026. Additionally, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) is providing greater flexibility for farmers who experienced quality losses on eligible crops. Now, when applying for this key program, farmers who experienced quality-related discounts can use verifiable and reliable documentation to show quality losses due to natural disasters occurring 2023 and 2024. Farmers also now have the flexibility to use a quality loss percentage for crops having a final use that is different from their intended use. FSA Administrator Bill Beam said "We're extending the program deadline, giving producers additional time and flexibility to document quality-related losses resulting from natural disasters. Coupled with these program enhancements, the extension helps simplify program requirements, encourages participation, and ensures more eligible producers can access the assistance they need." SDRP provides more than $16 billion in disaster relief payments to producers who suffered revenue, quality or production losses to crops, trees, bushes, or vines due to qualifying disaster events in calendar years 2023 and 2024. These payments are authorized under the American Relief Act, 2025.

Producers with indemnified losses can apply through SDRP Stage 1, which leverages Federal Crop Insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data as the basis for calculating payments. Producers with non-indemnified (including shallow losses), uncovered (uninsured), and quality losses can apply for Stage 2 assistance. Eligible producers can receive SDRP payments for both Stages 1 and 2, if applicable, and for one or both calendar years

2023 and 2024, depending on losses.

For more information on SDRP, visit fsa.usda.gov/sdrp. Producers can request an application or make an appointment online with their FSA county office.

Association Participates in Meeting with Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick

Association **President/CEO Roger A. Isom** attended an important meeting with **Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick** in Bakersfield. Hosted by **Congressman Vince Fong**, close to 30 industry leaders from agriculture, oil, construction, manufacturing and education met with Secretary Lutnick. Isom spoke on the impacts of retaliatory tariffs, especially those on cotton, almonds and pistachios headed to China and on walnuts going to India. Isom highlighted the corresponding lost market share to Australian almonds and Chilean walnuts. Isom commented "Addressing the tariff issue is vitally important, and to have the opportunity to sit next to Commerce Secretary Lutnick and convey it directly to him is huge!"

Major Push Underway to Pause Packaging Regulation

As the state legislature gets ready to wind down this year's legislative session, an all-out push is underway at the State Capitol to pause implementation of SB 54, the Single-Use Packaging Regulation. Recently, 22 Assemblymembers and one Senator sent a letter to **Senate President Pro Tem Monique Limón and Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas** requesting legislative action to address affordability concerns related to the regulation. The legislators expressed serious concerns about implementation costs and how those costs will be passed on to consumers. The letter specifically requested a delay in the assessment and collection of fees for 2026 and 2027 and committed to developing a reform package during the 2027–2028 legislative session to address affordability concerns. This was followed by a letter signed by 67 organizations, including the **California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association and the Western Tree Nut Association**, raising major concerns about cost impacts recently released by the Circular Action Alliance, which oversees implementation of the packaging regulation. Those costs include $2 billion in fees in the first year, $17.2 billion in fees over the next five years, and total compliance costs of $78 billion over five years. The Association has been, and continues to be, in contact with legislators to push for the pause. **Association President and CEO Roger A. Isom** stated, "Once again, California has pushed the envelope in pursuit of insurmountable environmental goals without considering the consequences for the very people they represent and claim to protect. The state needs to stop, take a step back, and find another way to reduce plastic pollution."

CalOSHA Releases Latest Draft Changes to Indoor and Outdoor Heat Illness Regulations

CalOSHA has released their latest proposed changes to the Indoor (§3396) and Outdoor (§3395) Heat Illness Standards. CalOSHA somewhat addressed one of the biggest concerns in the previous draft with regards to the acclimatization requirements. Previously, the draft regulations required a phased-in work schedule for new or returning employees that had been away from the job for more than 14 days. The phased-in work schedule mandated employees only work 20% of their normal work schedule on the 1st day, 40% on the 2nd day, 60% on the 3rd day, 80% on the 4th day, and then full schedule on the 5th day. Under the proposed changes, they have now provided an alternative option that requires specific training at the beginning of the shift for each of those same days. They have also provided a less restrictive requirement for returning employees that allows them to work 50% of their normal work schedule on the first day, 60% on the 2nd day, and 80% on the 3rd day. CalOSHA has also added a peculiar new section to both regulations that reads as follows:

The Division may require an employer to take additional actions to prevent employee heat illness in employees through the issuance of an Order to Take Special Action. Such additional actions may include, but are not limited to, the use of wearable technology that monitors the user's physiological responses to heat stress, where the employer is responsible for ensuring that health data is kept secure and not used to discriminate against employees.

There could be several issues with this kind of requirement, and the Association is looking into these. Comments are due on September 21st and the Association will be weighing in on the proposed changes.

Association Participates in Meeting on USMCA

Farmers for Free Trade and **Congressman Jim Costa** hosted a meeting in Fresno to discuss the United States-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement (USMCA). Also in attendance was **California Secretary of Agriculture Karen Ross**, along with several agricultural organizations representing blueberries, citrus, table grapes, tree nuts, cotton, vegetables, strawberries and many other crops. **Association President/CEO Roger A. Isom** represented the Association and commented "We need to get this done. Nothing good comes from tariffs. Mexico and Canada are important trade partners for cotton and tee nuts, and we can ill afford to lose market share to other countries who won't face the same tariffs we do." **Farmers for Free Trade** is hosting a national series of USMCA roundtables that will bring together farmers, trade experts, and elected officials in congressional districts across the country to discuss the critical importance of strengthening and renewing the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement ahead of its 2026 review period.

Association Raises Concerns with Revised Workplace Violence Prevention Standard

The Association recently joined a coalition in submitting comments to Cal/OSHA regarding proposed revisions to the Workplace Violence Prevention Standard for general industry. The coalition acknowledged several helpful changes, including language limiting required engineering controls "to the extent feasible," clarification that an Employee Assistance Program may help satisfy trauma-counseling obligations, and the removal of "stalking" as a specific workplace violence hazard. However, significant concerns remain regarding the clarity and feasibility of the proposed requirements. These include identifying staffing levels and uncontrolled public access as workplace violence hazards. The coalition also opposed a new provision requiring employers to establish a process for employees to escalate concerns above their direct supervisor when they believe a reported hazard has not been "adequately addressed." Employers are already required to maintain effective procedures for employees to report workplace violence concerns. The proposed language does not clearly establish who determines whether a concern was adequately addressed and could create uncertainty for both employers and employees.

The Association will continue working to advocate for a clear, practical, and effective standard without imposing vague or unworkable requirements on employers.