



# The Cotton Chronicle

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[www.ccgga.org](http://www.ccgga.org)

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## Industry Calendar

Mar 23  
Ginners School—  
Corcoran, CA

April 27—29  
WCSA Annual  
Convention—  
Incline Village, NV

Visit web calendar  
for details

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## Growers Association Holds 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Visalia

The California Cotton Growers Association recently held their 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at the Visalia Convention Center. With assistance from the **UC Cooperative Extension** and **UC IPM** folks, the Association kicked off this year's meeting with three important and informative "breakout sessions." **Pete Goodell** of the UC IPM moderated the discussion on ***Pest Management: Challenges & Solutions***, which included presentations by Pete himself, a panel discussion with **Larry Godfrey, UC Davis; Dr. Vonny Barlow, UCCE Riverside; Nick Groenenberg,**

**and Jim Razor, JG Boswell Company;** and several crop protection company presentations by **Bayer CropScience, Dow AgroSciences, FMC Corporation, Syngenta and AMVAC.** **Bob Hutmacher, State Cotton Specialist with UCCE,** moderated the ***Advances in Variety Performance & Fusarium Resistance***, which included a discussion by Hutmacher himself, and presentations by **Bayer CropScience, Phytgen Cottonseed and Delta & Pine Land Co./Monsanto.** The third breakout panel was led by **Dan Munk of UCCE,** and covered water issues including a presentation by **Woody Miller of Valley Pump;** and **Lauren Noland Hajik, of Kahn, Soares and Conway;** and



**Dan Munk** himself. During the business portion of the meeting, presentations were made by **Mike Carter, of Brooks Brothers, David Earley of Cotton Incorporated,** and an overview of the Association's activities by the **Association's own Christopher McGlothlin and Jodi Raley,** and a presentation on the **Water Priorities Initiative** by **Aubrey Bettencourt** of the **California Water Alliance.** The final speaker of the day was **Vice President of Washington Operations for the National Cotton Council, Mr. Reece Langley.** Overall, the meeting was very successful, and was attended by over 120 people during the day. The Association would like to extend a very special thanks to all of the meeting's very generous sponsors and all of the speakers who took time out of their busy schedules to come and address the membership at this historic meeting! Thank you!

### Module Truck Legislation Introduced

**Assemblyman Adam Gray** (21<sup>st</sup> District) has introduced legislation for cotton module movers on behalf of the California Cotton Ginners and Growers Associations (CCGGA). The legislation, Assembly Bill 2023, would increase the length limit exemption from the current limit



of 48 feet. To accommodate the air pollution control equipment and other modifications, that extend the nose of the cotton module trucks, it is necessary to increase this limitation. This past cotton harvest season, several cotton module movers were cited by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) for exceeding the legal limit of 48 feet. There is also an issue with axle weight limitations and the Association is currently working to see if this can be included in this legislation.

### CCGGA President/CEO Roger Isom Speaks at Farm Show

**CCGGA President/CEO Roger Isom** recently spoke at the Women in Agriculture for Mentoring and Empowerment (WAME) on a special panel on "Effective Lobbying for Agriculture". Joining Isom on the panel were **Assemblywoman Shannon Grove, California Citrus Mutual's Alys-**

**sa Houtby, and former Iowa State Representative Annette Sweeney.** Isom discussed the current legislative



environment in Sacramento, and the need to work on both sides of the aisle. Isom also highlighted the efforts by CCGGA to reach out to urban legislators to get them to the San Joaquin valley to visit farms, hullers and processors and also to visit their Districts to understand their situations and most pressing issues. "Finding commonalities" was the theme Isom pressed upon the group and encouraged all in attendance to get involved and become part of the movement to help promote and support agriculture. Thanks to WAME for the invitation and for putting together such an important event.

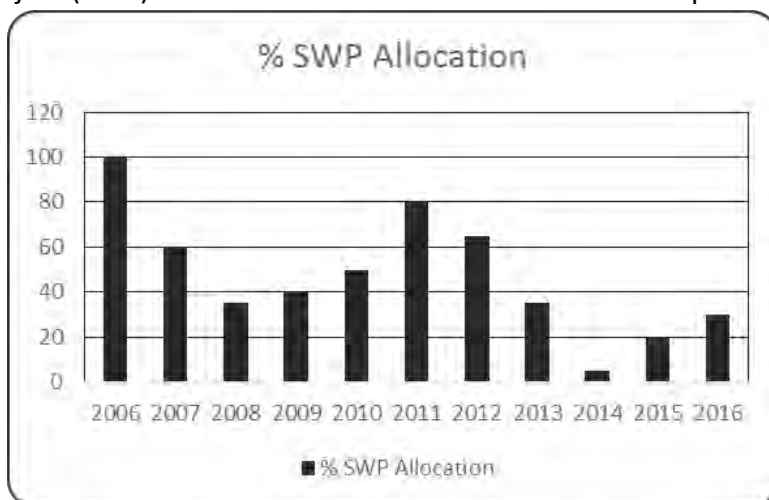
### CCGGA Part of Major Ag Legislative Dinner

On Wednesday, February 18th, members of the Agricultural Presidents Council (APC) met with State Legislators for the annual APC Kitchen Dinner in Sacramento. The California Cotton Ginners and Growers Associations, as well as other members of the APC, were given a chance to discuss upcoming events and bills with state representatives, and members also took the time to discuss issues that are affecting agriculture. This dinner is held at the "Kitchen Restaurant" in Sacramento, and it gives an opportunity for agricultural leaders to interact with state representatives in a more personal setting. CCGGA hosted Assemblyman **Jim Patterson,** Senator **Cathleen Galgiani,** and Assemblywoman **Kristin Olsen.** Also meeting with CCGGA was Assemblyman **Jimmy Gomez,** as well as Senator **Bob Wieckowski,** and Assemblyman **Sebastian Ridley-Thomas.** Representing CCGGA was **President/CEO Roger Isom** (who is the current Chairman of the APC), **Director of Regulatory Affairs Jodi Raley,** Ginners Board Chairman

**Tom Pires** and Growers Board Chairman **Steve Wilbur**. Isom, Raley, Pires and Wilbur got the chance to speak with representatives about issues that the industry is facing, such as the impact of the protracted drought, above-ground tank issue, as well as the current state of the cotton industry. Ag President's Council member associations in attendance included the **Western Agricultural Processors Association, California Fresh Fruit Association, California Citrus Mutual, California Rice Commission, Western Plant Health Association, Far West Equipment Dealers, California Strawberry Association, and the California Agricultural Aircraft Association**. The Kitchen Dinner is an annual event intended to find common ground between agricultural and primarily urban legislators. In addition to the incredible dinner, representatives are provided a California Agriculture bag filled with donations of California grown agricultural products, including mini cotton bales and cotton handkerchiefs from the Association.

### State Increases State Water Project Allocation

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) increased its water delivery estimate (allocation) for most recipients to 30 percent of requests for the calendar year. However, recipients are being warned that extended dry weather could force an allocation reduction. "Today's increase, although good news, does not mean the drought is ending," said **DWR Director Mark Cowin**. "After more than four dry years, we still have a critical water shortage. We need a lot more wet weather this winter to take the edge off the drought. The announcement is the second incremental increase in the State Water Project (SWP) allocation since an initial allocation of 10 per-



cent was announced in December. An increase to 15 percent was announced on January 26, after storms began to build the Sierra Nevada snowpack and bring significant rainfall to the drought-parched state. The 29 public agen-

cies that receive SWP water (State Water Project Contractors) requested 4,172,786 acre-feet of water for 2016. With today's allocation increase, they will receive 1,268,724 acre-feet. The 30 percent allocation announced today may be increased if storms bring more rain and snow. Unfortunately, SWP pumping in the Delta has been limited this winter in order to minimize harm to native fish species. DWR estimates that 458,000 acre-feet of water – enough to supply 3.4 million people for a year – could have been captured if the new intakes, tunnels, and operating criteria proposed by California WaterFix had been in place. That project proposal is now undergoing environmental review. Meanwhile, key reservoirs are rising from early winter storms, but most remain low. Lake Oroville in Butte County, the State Water Project's principal reservoir, on February 24<sup>th</sup> was holding 1,808,410 acre-feet, 51 percent of its 3.5 million acre-foot capacity and 74 percent of its historical average for the date. Shasta Lake north of Redding, California's and the federal Central Valley Project's (CVP) largest reservoir, was holding 2,690,554 acre-feet, 59 percent of its 4.5 million acre-foot capacity and 82 percent of its historical average. San Luis Reservoir, a critical south-of-Delta pool for both the SWP and CVP, was holding 854,623 acre-feet, 42 percent of its 2 million acre-foot capacity and 50 percent of normal for the date.

### Flubendiamide Update – EPA Notice of Intent to Cancel

On March 1, 2016 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency filed a formal Notice of Intent to Cancel the registration of Flubendiamide (Belt). This came as a direct result of Bayer's refusal to voluntarily cancel the product. Belt is registered for more than 200 crops including cotton used to control pests such as armyworms. Following EPA's proposal to cancel all products containing Flubendiamide, it triggered a 30 day period at the end of which the registrants will request an administrative law hearing. During this time, grower communities such as ours will gather comments to provide for use in the hearing. While the product is under review distributors, retailers and farmers can continue to buy, sell and use the product. Additionally, United States and global tolerance are not and will not be affected by these proceedings. The California Cotton Ginners and Growers Associations is working closely with Bayer to determine the role the Association can play as well as next action items to be taken to ensure the product remains available.

### Phil Hansen Named Chairman of the California Cotton Growers Association

The Board of Directors of the California Cotton Growers



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Association has elected **Phil Hansen** as the new Chairman for the California Cotton Growers Association. Hansen replaces outgoing Chairman **Steve Wilbur**, who served as

Chairman since 2014. Phil is from Kings County and is a partner in Hansen Ranches. The announcement took place at the Association's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Visalia, California on March 9<sup>th</sup>. At the meeting, the following officers were elected:

**Chairman – Phil Hansen, Kings County**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman – Bryan Bone, Kern County**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman – Gary Martin, Fresno County**  
**Secretary/ Treasurer – Geoff Toledo, Kings County**



Incoming Chairman, Phil Hansen presents Steve Wilbur with Chairmen's Plaque.



Left to Right: Phil Hansen, Bryan Bone, Gary Martin, Geoff Toledo



# SUPER BOLLS

Tulare grower consistently reaches top yields



Luke Bebereia

Years ago, business guru Jim Collins (author of seminal management/leadership books *Built to Last* and *Good to Great*) spoke to a group of college students. He gave them 10 pieces of advice. Number 4 on that list was: What is your questions-to-statements ratio and can you double it? “Imagine going into every situation not with how to be *interesting*, but how to be *interested*, how to ask questions and how to learn from everybody you meet,” Collins said. While Luke Bebereia, Tulare County cotton grower, may not have been in the room the day of Collins’ speech, he’s been following that advice for decades. “I’m one of the younger cotton growers in the area,” he says. “And I started pretty young when my father passed away. To learn, I had to watch others and ask a lot of questions.”

“I was very fortunate to have really good cotton farmers for neighbors,” he continues. “The Clarks and the Wattes are some of the best cotton growers around. They taught me a lot. They still do.”

That accumulation of learning resulted in quite a cotton growing year for Bebereia in 2015, despite it being a year where most of his acreage was planted to a new variety. “I heard about 764 (PHY 764 WRF) from my neighbors,”

he says. “We grew it on hundreds of acres and had the best-looking fields we’ve ever had. Our highest yielding field of 764 went 4.6 bales. Our lowest-yielding field 4.1 bales – and that was on a field that we didn’t think would ever reach four bales.”

**“Our highest yielding field of 764 went 4.6 bales...”**

## Ground Prep

Like many of the veteran cotton growers, Bebereia believes reaching high yields begins months before a seed is even dropped in the ground. “Good ground prep is the beginning of the high-yield process,” he says. “After harvest, we shred the fields, put cow manure down at about 20 ton per acre, then disc twice, then chisel it, then disc once or twice again. All the tractor work – it’s labor and equipment and fuel – but we have a lot of equipment and people on staff, so we can knock it all out pretty fast.”



Bebereia admits that process isn't exactly minimum till, but knows the extra passes are worth it. "You watch the guys that do a really good job year after year, and they work their ground. They rip it. They disc it. They do it the right way. Once in a while, someone will try to shortcut the process. It may work for a year, but after that you'll see yields start to drop, whether it is cotton or corn."

Fields are bedded up with crop rotation flexibility in mind. "Everything is furrowed for cotton, corn or beans," he says. "We want the flexibility to choose the crop as late as possible in the spring."

### Planting and Seed Selection

"Earlier planted cotton generally does a little better," he says. "So we watch the ground temperature and weather patterns and plant as soon as we can. Ten days of warm weather before and after planting is ideal. We want the cotton nice and healthy in case an April storm comes through. This year we had a really good planting season – one of the best we ever had."

Bebereia had seen PHY 764 WRF perform well on neighboring farms in 2014. In 2015, he grew 325 acres of it. "You always get a little nervous with a new variety," he says. "We don't want to be in training mode for three years to figure it out. It needs to work the first year."

It worked. "Every field we picked of 764 went over four bales," he says. "And I'm not a four-bale grower every year. In 2014, we averaged 3.7 bales."

### 2016 Plans

Bebereia expects cotton acreage in his area to be higher in 2016. "Corn is usually the alternative crop and the current price for corn is down," he says. "Plus, corn uses more water than cotton." He expects to plant 500-600 acres of cotton in 2016, with as much of that in PHY 764 WRF as possible.

And while cotton prices aren't at all-time highs, he thinks that Acala prices above a dollar a pound can pencil out on his farm. "I think the roller ginned cotton is here to stay," he says. "All our cotton was roller ginned. Combine that with four-bale fields and you can make a good return."

## To Learn More

*Contact your cottonseed dealer or your PhytoGen representative.*

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