



The Cotton Chronicle

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Industry Calendar

July 13

Pima Matching—
Visalia

July 26-28

Grower Owned Gins
Meeting—
Tahoe

August 31

Supima & Western
Cotton Shippers
Annual Meetings—
Harris Ranch

Visit web calendar
for details

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Industry Leader, Advocate & Friend Mark Watte Passes Away

Longtime industry advocate **Mark Watte** passed

away this past month after a valiant battle with cancer.

Watte was a tireless, passionate and unselfish voice for all of agriculture. Association President/CEO **Roger Isom** stated “the

California agricultural industry is grieving. We have lost one of our true champions. Mark’s rise to the Chairmanship of Cotton Incorporated was symbolic of his enduring drive to promote cotton and all of agriculture as the best in the world. His courageous bout with cancer was emblematic of his toughness and “can do” attitude no matter the circumstances. Mark Watte inspired all of us to get up, get involved and speak our minds. While we mourn his passing, I can assure you that Mark is chastising us right now to pick up the flag and get back to it. Get back to promoting, supporting and fighting for the greatest agricultural land in the world.” Past Association President/CEO **Earl P. Williams**, who knew Watte well, said “The industry has lost an outstanding leader and all that knew him have lost a real and true friend. The industry is better off having had his inspirational and “cut to the chase” leadership. A wonderful person and proud to say I had the honor of his friendship.” Watte was a partner in George Watte & Sons, a 3,000-acre diversified farming operation in Tula-

re, California, including cotton, alfalfa, corn silage, black-eyed peas, pistachios and a 1,000 jersey cow dairy. Watte graduated from Cal



Poly San Luis Obispo with a degree in Agricultural Business in 1974. He then distinguished himself as one of the true leaders within the California agricultural community and the U.S.

cotton industry. Watte demonstrated his leadership through participation in several organizations, including the Consolidated Peoples Ditch Co; the Friant Water Authority; the Tulare Board of Public Utilities; and the Kaweah Delta Water Conservation District, on which he served as Vice Chair, and Past Chairman of the World Ag Expo. He was also an advisor to the California Cotton Growers Association and most recently became Chairman of Cotton Incorporated, a national organization conducting research and tasked with the worldwide promotion of US cotton. Over the course of his career Watte has received numerous recognitions, including: the 2000 Tulare Farmer of the Year (an award shared with his brother and business partner, Brian Watte); 2013 Tulare Man of the Year; Tulare County Agriculturist of the Year; and is a recipient of the 2015 High Cotton Award, presented by Delta Farm Press. Donations can be made to the Watte/Griesbach Memorial Fund, 627 Beatrice Dr., Tulare; or the Tulare Hospital Foundation in Tulare.

Heat Stress Regulation Coming to Inside the Building?

The Association, as part of an industry coalition, has actively opposed legislation, **AB 1167 (Leyva)**, which would force Cal/OSHA to develop and implement a specific standard to protect workers from indoor heat illness. We feel strongly this bill is unnecessary. Existing laws and regulations require employers to identify and address worksite hazards. We have not seen any evidence that suggests this is problem exits, especially in agricultural processing facilities. If the legislation were to go through, facilities would be required to develop, implement, train and enforce yet another regulation with little, if any, benefit. In addition, it would create, yet another venue by which employers could be fined or sued on. We believe facilities should already be, and most likely are, providing a workplace free from excessive and overbearing heat. The Association continues to oppose this legislation.

Ag Overtime Legislation – Here We Go Again!

Following on the heels of legislation to increase the state’s minimum wage to the highest in the country, the California State Legislature took on eliminating the ag provisions for overtime in state labor law. **AB 2757**, carried by **Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez (80th Assembly District)**, was introduced this year to address overtime in the agricultural industry. This bill would have removed the exemption for agricultural workers that excludes them from the daily and weekly overtime requirements, which requires overtime compensation for working in excess of 8 hours in one workday or 40 hours in a workweek. Currently, agricultural workers in California trigger overtime compensation in excess of 10 hours per day and more than six days in any one workweek. To help soften the blow, the author amended the bill to “phase in the overtime provisions” over a four year period, as follows:

- ◇ **January 1, 2019** - any person employed in an agricultural occupation shall receive one and one-half times that employee’s regular rate of pay for **all hours worked over nine and one-half hours in any workday or over 55 hours in any workweek.**
- ◇ **January 1, 2020** - any person employed in an agricultural occupation shall receive one and one-half times that employee’s regular rate of pay for **all hours worked over nine hours in any workday or over 50 hours in any workweek.**
- ◇ **January 1, 2021** - any person employed in an agricultural occupation shall receive one and one-half times that employee’s regular rate of pay for **all hours worked over eight and one-half hours in any workday or over 45 hours in any workweek.**
- ◇ **January 1, 2022** - any person employed in an agricultural occupation shall receive one and one-half times that employee’s regular rate of pay for **all hours worked over eight hours in any workday or over 40 hours in any workweek.**

The provisions currently in statute already make California

non-competitive, and this bill will only make it worse. Several states have no overtime provisions at all including Arizona, Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, and many more. In fact, the only states requiring overtime on agricultural employees are Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, and Hawaii. On June 2nd of this year, this bill was defeated on the Assembly floor by a vote of 38 to 35. Key Assemblymembers from agricultural areas in the state either voted against it, such as **Assemblymembers Dahle, Gallagher, Gray, Mathis, Olsen, Patterson, Grove and Cooper**; or did not vote at all (same affect), such as **Assemblymembers Bigelow, Irwin and Eggman**. Unfortunately, agricultural area **Assemblymembers Rudy Salas and Joaquin Arambula** voted for the bill. Though it was defeated, this is California, and less than one week later **Assemblywoman Gonzalez** gutted and amended another one of her bills (**AB 1066**) inserting this same ag overtime language. AB 1066 is already in the Senate and passed out of the Senate Labor and Employment Committee in late June. So, as they say, “it ain’t over ‘til it’s over!” Time to get back to work!

Association Co-Hosts Assemblyman Frank Bigelow

The **California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association (CCGGA)** co-hosted **Assemblyman Frank Bigelow (5th Assembly District)** at the Association Offices in Fresno this



Assemblyman Frank Bigelow with President/CEO Roger Isom

past week. Issues discussed include increased regulatory burden and the regulatory environment in general, the critical biomass disaster, pesticide issues and the California political landscape. **Assemblyman Bigelow** has been a longtime friend to agriculture and it was a great opportunity to visit with the Assemblyman and farmer! Representing the Association at this event were **President/CEO Roger Isom, Director of Technical Services Christopher McGlothlin and Director of Regulatory Affairs Jodi Raley**. Co-hosting the event were the **Western Agricultural Processors Association (WAPA), California Citrus Mutual, California Fresh Fruit Association, the Nisei Farmers League, Western Plant Health Association, California Dairies Incorporated and Allied Grape Growers.**

Association Blasts NMFS Proposal

The Association submitted a letter to **Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell** urging the Department to reconsider the proposal by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to limit Shasta releases to 8,000 cfs for temperature protection for salmonids. Doing so would cost the Central Valley Project (CVP) over 400,000 ac-ft of water, most of which had already been factored into this year's water plans. The elimination of this water will have far reaching impacts to all water users. To add to the mess, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is requesting 300,000 ac-ft to be released later this summer for Delta smelt protection, meaning even more water could be lost from an already devastated valley.

Association Opposes Wild and Scenic Designation for San Joaquin River

The Association has weighed in on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposed designation of a 7.5 mile stretch of the San Joaquin River above Millerton Lake as "wild and scenic." Such a designation would eliminate any possibility of the construction of Temperance Flat Dam and Reservoir. The Association wrote a letter this week to **Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell** opposing the proposed listing as not meeting the criteria for "wild and scenic," which requires the river to be "free flowing." The proposed area falls between Kerckhoff Dam and Kerckhoff Powerhouse which has the water running through tunnels thereby largely bypassing the area. As such, it could not possibly meet the very basic criteria of "free flowing" and the Association urged the Secretary to not list the San Joaquin River as "wild and scenic."

CDFA Announces Irrigation Improvement Funding

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has announced, in coordination with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR), a competitive grant application process for the 2016 State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) **Round II**. The 2016 SWEEP program is funded through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund referred to as the "California Climate Investment" program. The program's objective is to provide financial incentives for California agricultural operations to invest in water irrigation systems that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and save water. The 2016 SWEEP Round II will disperse up to \$18 million to California agricultural operations investing in irrigation systems that reduce GHG emissions and save water. The maximum grant award is \$200,000 with a recommended 50 percent match of the

total project cost. The maximum grant duration is 12 months and grant funds cannot be expended before December 1, 2016 or after November 30, 2017. Therefore, project installation must be completed no later than November 30, 2017. The irrigation project must be on a California agricultural operation. An agricultural operation entity cannot receive a total cumulative SWEEP funding amount of more than \$600,000. Projects must reduce GHG emissions and save water. Applicants must provide supporting documentation directly related to actual, on-farm water consumption and GHG emissions during the prior growing season to be eligible for funding. The application period began on June 20, 2016, and the deadline to submit a grant application is Friday, August 5, 2016.

- Water Savings Weather, Soil or Plant Based Sensors for Irrigation Scheduling. Examples include soil moisture or plant sensors (NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 449) with electronic data output or electronic weather station linked to irrigation controller, for growers to ensure efficient irrigation scheduling.
- Use of evapotranspiration (ET) based irrigation scheduling, such as the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) on existing or proposed projects to optimize water efficiency for crops.
- Telemetry components that allow the electronic communication between technology devices are eligible for funding through SWEEP.
- Micro-Irrigation or Drip Systems Use of micro-irrigation or drip systems, including sub-surface drip systems. Should follow NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 441.

CV Salts Committee Presents to Regional Water Board

On Wednesday, June 22nd, members of the Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV SALTS) presented on the progress of a Salt and Nitrate Management Plan for the Central Valley. Presentations were made by the Executive Committee, with Dr. Tim Moore of Risk Sciences, providing more background on the specific topic. CV-SALTS has been meeting once a month for the past decade, in the efforts to develop a feasible solution to groundwater quality throughout the Central Valley region. The specific program presented at the board hearing discusses the viable options for water with excess nitrogen levels, as well as the growing salinity issues within aquifers.

California Air Resources Board Discusses 2030 Scoping Plan, Short Lived Climate Pollutants

On Thursday, June 23rd, the California Air Resources Board held a hearing in Sacramento to discuss their proposed budget, as well as an informal hearing on potential future targets for the upcoming 2030 Scoping Plan. The proposed budget presented by ARB is asking the State

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Legislature for \$500 million dollars for incentive programs and funding opportunities, as well as money for community outreach and enforcement. ARB presented a similar amount for their budget this time last year, and was only able to procure 20% of their initial ask. It is not yet known to what amount the legislature will be able to appropriate to the Air Resources Board, but many are hopeful that it is enough to increase the incentive funding to local Air Districts. This incentive money is used to replace old well pump engines as well as other equipment used in agriculture through programs such as the Tractor Replacement Program and the Tractor Trade Up Program. The last portion of the meeting included an update from ARB staff on the targets for the 2030 scoping plan. The plan has not been made public yet, and staff made sure to keep the focus of the presentation broad as it is still developing the focus of the plan.

CCGGA Defends Crop Protection Tools for Cotton

The **California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association** has been fiercely fighting for crop protection tools for cotton production. Below are the most recent products CCGGA has submitted written comments or testimony.

Chlorpyrifos, Malathion & Diazinon—These three products were under review for draft Biological Evaluations,

findings that would be factored into final Biological Opinions. The Association conveyed the importance of each product for its efficacy, resistance management, and lack of available tools for control. The Association also noted the extreme conservatism taken into account to determine which Endangered Species would be affected.

Aldicarb—While not currently available in California, the Association commented on how much California producers would benefit if it were to be available to be used. Treating early season array insects and Lygus, Aldicarb would provide an alternate MOA with minimal risk and worker exposure.

Sulfoxaflor—CCGGA commented on the proposed registration for Sulfoxaflor due to the fact that the registration removed cotton, citrus and other indeterminate blooming crops. This was done under the assumption that honey bees would be present in the field at the time of blooming. Sulfoxaflor would provide effective control of Lygus, a pest affecting over 40% of US cotton acreage in 2015. CCGGA noted that there was not a risk benefit analysis completed for the removal of the above crops nor any measure taken to address valid mitigation measures. The Associations requested that on these points, EPA reconsider their proposal.