



SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

2101 E. Earhart Avenue, Suite 100, Stockton, CA 95206

MINUTES

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, March 23, 2026

Present: Kamaljit Bagri, Jose Chavez, Josh Cheney, Steven Freeman, Andrew Genasci, Chuck Hammond, Michelle Leinfelder-Miles, Holden Lomeli, Richard Marchini, Joseph Nicolini, Felix Ogbah, Terry Ann Paoletti, Robert Rickman, Joseph Seimas, Roseanna Silva, Kenneth Vogel

Excused: Sara Bautista, Steven Ding, Michael Fisher, Pedro Mendez, Sonya Miller, Linda Ormonde, Terry Violet, Terry Violet

Staff: Gavin Cline, Board Aide for Supervisor Ding's Office

I. Call to Order – 10:00 AM by Chair Vogel and followed by Pledge of Allegiance

II. Introduction of New Agricultural Advisory Board Members

- a. Holden Lomeli, Second District Member, is currently studying Agriculture Business at Delta College, then planning to transfer to Stanislaus State. He has worked several cherry seasons, and when he learned of the vacancy on the Board, he wanted to get more involved with the agricultural community.

III. Approval of Minutes – September 22, 2025, and December 8, 2025, meeting minutes approved unanimously with M/S Rickman/Marchini

IV. Correspondence – “Save the Date” for Taste of San Joaquin on April 2 from 6:00-9:00 PM at the Lodi Grape Festival grounds.

V. Legislative Updates

- a. Kamal Bagri –Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights & Measures
 - i. The California Agricultural Commissioner and Sealers Association is working to secure funding for pest prevention programs. Agricultural Commissioner Bagri met with the California State Assembly Republican Minority Leader, Honorable Heath Flora, last month to discuss high-risk pest prevention funding to the Commissioners. \$5.5 million is designated for pest prevention in the legislature; however, through appropriations, California Agricultural Commissioners receive only \$3.06 million for our pest prevention high risk program.

- ii. There have not been any changes in the law regarding registration fees for the pest control businesses that operate in the county since 1970. CACASA is seeking an author for the bill that will allow increases in fees based on costs to the local Agricultural Commissioner's Office. The fees would need to be approved by the Board of Supervisors once bill passes.
 - iii. The California Department of Food and Agriculture's Pierces' Disease and Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board provide funding for research and outreach projects aimed at protecting vineyards from Pierce's disease. AB 230 would extend the operation of this to March 1, 2036. This bill would also extend the operation of the Pierce's Disease and Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board to March 1, 2036.

- b. Andrew Genasci, Executive Director, San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation
 - i. At the recent San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation meeting, there were discussions regarding over 20 bills in the legislature affecting water in California. Andrew Genasci, Executive Director of SJFB, discussed California Assembly Bill, AB 2447, the Water: Nitrogen Pollution Reduction Act which would establish caps on nitrogen use. Under the act, the state board and the regional boards prescribe waste discharge requirements for the discharge of waste that could affect the waters of the state.
 - ii. California's AB 1585 – American Wine Truth in Labeling Bill, is a bipartisan legislation effort to require that any wine labeled “American” sold or bottled in California be made entirely from American-grown grapes. Under existing federal rules, a wine labeled “American” can legally contain up to 25% foreign-grown grapes while still carry the American appellation.
 - iii. Another bill on the state level is an overtime tax credit. Public Law 119-21, enacted July 4, 2025, includes a section that mandates “no tax on overtime” by introducing a federal tax deduction for “qualified overtime compensation.” This is relevant for workers in the production industry, where overtime is common. California and federal law define overtime differently. California often requires overtime pay when one works more than eight hours in a day, while federal law only requires overtime pay when one works more than 40 hours in a week. The new deduction only applies to federally mandated overtime. There are concerns about overtime and the impact on farm workers.

- c. Robert Rickman, Supervisor – District 5
 - i. The Supervisor's Office is opposing the “Vehicle Mileage Tax”, Assembly Bill 1421, currently moving through the California Legislature, seeking to prolong the state's investigation into a mileage-based system that could eventually replace the gas tax.
 - ii. The Supervisor's Office is opposing proposed Pacific Gas and Electric fee increases in 2027.
 - iii. The Supervisor's Office is also tracking California Senate Bill 1392 (“Leno's Law”) would update the state's smog check requirements for qualifying collector motor vehicles.

- d. Gavin Cline, Supervisor Steven Ding's District 4 - Office Representative

- i. The Supervisor's Office is supporting Senate Bill 872, legislation that would help protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and essential levee repairs in the Delta.
- ii. Supervisor Ding had the opportunity to speak at the Delta Stewardship Council and urged the Council to reject the Department of Water Resources with Delta Tunnel consistency certification. The Supervisor will continue to advocate protecting our delta communities. The Delta Tunnel is not the solution.

VI. New Business

a. Agricultural Commissioner's Report

- i. Commissioner Bagri provided a presentation on Assembly Bill 732, Abandoned Orchards Bill. Enacted in 2025, AB 732 focuses on agricultural management of neglected or abandoned crops that pose a risk to surrounding farms due to pests or plant diseases. Under the California Food and Agricultural Code 5551, such crops were considered public nuisances, and counties could place a lien on the property if the landowner failed to remove or destroy the problem crop. AB 732 introduces civil penalties as an alternative to liens. County agricultural commissioners may levy civil fines instead of imposing liens. Penalties can be up to \$500 per acre, increasing to \$1,000 per acre if violations are not addressed within a specified timeframe. Landowners who take good faith action to rectify the violation within 30 days of notice are exempt from penalties. For most active farms, day-to-day operations may not change, but absentee landowners or financially constrained operations could face higher costs if fields are left unattended. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office works closely with the University of California Cooperative Extension Advisors; they are experts on diseases and pests. The Board discussed several examples of abandoned properties and the challenges associated with enforcement and abatement. Key points are that it adds more flexibility to the active measures, hoping for faster response and stronger protection for agriculture. A sunset clause is built into this pilot program until January 1, 2035.
- ii. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office has been receiving reports about rat infestation in Fresno County, Madera County and Kings County. California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is conducting a survey. Our department is working with California Agricultural Pest Control Advisors Association (CAPCA); they have some funding to purchase specific bait stations for rats and work with counties that sell bait. Traps will be available for San Joaquin County growers at no cost when purchasing rat bait.
- iii. San Joaquin County is currently dealing with two small quarantines at two different ornamental nurseries. One specimen find was with Sudden Oak Death (SOD) and staff worked on the process of destroying the affected plants. The second find was a "Q-rated" pest which mean there is no rating by the state on this pest. The biggest issue is the first finding in the United States which poses questions regarding fumigation requirements to get rid of the pest.
- iv. Another issue is Nutria in San Joaquin County. The Agricultural Commissioner had a meeting with representatives from California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Nutria poses a public safety risk by burrowing that can damage levees, canals and flood control systems. The CDFW program is surveying hot spots and seeking funding for eradication. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office does not receive funding; they are liaisons with growers, local partners, as well as the state and federal agencies to provide support.

- v. Burn Letters were discussed and the two-tier funding up to \$1,300 per acre for chipping. Prior to conducting any agricultural burning, authorization to burn must be obtained from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. District Rule 4103 requires the county agricultural commissioner to determine that there is no economically feasible alternative means of eliminating the disease or pest other than burning, and there is the presence of a disease or pest that will cause substantial, quantifiable reduction in yield or poses a threat to the health of adjacent vines, trees, or plants in the field proposed to be burned.
- vi. San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District (SJRCDD) is accepting applications for assistance managing noxious weeds along perimeters of properties and adjacent rights-of ways. The Agricultural Commissioner's office established an MOU to provide funding to growers for Noxious weed abatement through SJRCDD.
- vii. A Spring Continuing Education meeting scheduled for April 2 from 9-11 AM at the Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center will discuss new regulations regarding fumigants with restrictions around school property. The Board discussed a recent incident with use of pesticide on the school property in Patterson, in Stanislaus County, where 19 children were affected.

b. UCCE Director's Report, Michelle Leinfelder-Miles

- i. The University of California Cooperative Extension has crop production manuals that cover planting to harvesting, nitrogen management to pest management, and many other areas. When we are talking with our community about the four "Rs" of nitrogen management that includes the right rate, the right source, the right time and the right place. Considerations include the type of fertilizer and type of nitrogen, placement of fertilizer, and timing. Our department is available to help with any questions. Statewide, our staff led a couple of meetings, one in Modesto, and one in Yuba City, all about nitrogen management. This is the kind of ongoing education we provide, and we do not advocate that certain rates be followed explicitly. All our guidelines would give a range of nitrogen rates because there are considerations for place, time and source.
- ii. The department has conducted interviews for an Orchard Systems Advisor; this person would work on walnuts, cherries, apples, olives and other minor fruit crops. The hiring process is currently with UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Director is also requesting an additional advisor, possibly on environmental horticulture and nursery.
- iii. The 4-H Program has a new part-time staff and is doing great things including a presentation day for children. The program included everything from baking cookies to talking about breeding rabbits. The Department has not hosted a presentation day since before the COVID emergency. We are really excited about having the program back. We are going to have a fashion review for kids involved in the sewing project. Potentially this summer we would like an Open House for 4-H where clubs can put up pop-up displays.

VII. Discussion items and Announcements

- a. Andrew Genasci, Executive Director, SJFB, discussed the Golden Mussel damage to infrastructure and the need for funding, whether state or federal, to help with this. The Golden Mussels are in the pipes and will eventually plug them. There is no predator for

them in our area and they spread fast. They are not just causing infrastructure damage, but ecological damage. This species is highly adaptable, capable of surviving in a wide range of temperatures and salinities, which allows it to establish in diverse freshwater systems.

VIII. Upcoming 2026 Quarterly Meetings on Mondays at 10 AM

- a. June 8
- b. September 21
- c. December 7

IX. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM

Summary Meeting Minutes
Prepared By: Patricia Lord
Board Secretary