



SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

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

MINUTES

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, December 9, 2024

- Present:** Kamal Bagri, Jose Chavez, Josh Cheney, Chuck Hammond, Brent Holtz, Richard Marchini, Felix Ogbah, Terry Ann Paoletti, Robert Rickman, Rosie Silva, Terry Violett, Ken Vogel
- Excused:** Andrew Genasci, Joseph Nicolini, Joseph Seimas
- Absent:** Brandon Bates, George Biagi, Stephen Ding, Michael Fisher, Robert Ferguson, Jeff Torres,
- Guests:** Robert O'Rourke – County Counsel, Omar Luna – Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, Brandon Nakagawa - SSJID
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- I. Call to Order** – Chair Vogel called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.
- II. Approval of Minutes** – September 16, 2024, minutes approved; M/S Rickman/Marchini
- III. Correspondence** – Letter received dated October 15, 2024
- IV. Update from South San Joaquin Irrigation District (SSJID)**
- a. Presentation by Brandon Nakagawa, Water Resources Coordinator
- Mr. Nakagawa provided some background information on the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GWS). The GWS plan is due for an update in January 2025 with groundwater sustainability plans including winter irrigation, re-charge the groundwater basin in Tulare, and irrigation districts working on issues. Brandon noted that the State Water Board fees are high and there are challenges with compliance and water quality degradation. Brandon cited concerns with domestic well mitigation meeting ground-water levels if they fall below 2015 levels due to pumping. There are also challenges with older wells and mechanical failure if down if domestic wells are going dry. Mr. Nakagawa discussed “technical” versus “guidance” and that more data is needed monitoring wells. Representative Marchini mentioned saltwater intrusion and concerns with arsenic and nitrates from urban areas. There were concerns raised with astronomical fees to mitigate land subsidence, such as, in

East Madera County. A plan is needed to curtail pumping. Fairness is a big issue. Each GSA is responsible for raising funds or reducing pumping. Projects are lined up by funding. Commissioner Bagri mentioned “white areas” that are not covered by a District; the County has taken on responsibility. Brandon informed the Agricultural Advisory Board that the draft updated GWS Plan will be posted on the website with the goal of submitting the plan to the Water Resources Board by the end of January 2025. It is getting harder to reduce overdrafts to a sustainable level. Brandon stated that primary agricultural irrigation is a priority. Brent Holtz, UCCE representative asked how the state is planning to implement SIGMA? Brandon acknowledged that enforcement is an issue.

V. Legislative Updates

a. Assembly Bill 1864

Agricultural Commissioner Kamal Bagri commented on Assembly Bill 1864. California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA) has sent a letter of opposition to the Governor regarding AB1864 with pesticide application notifications to include private schools. The Office of Education does not have a comprehensive list of private schools with defined boundaries. The Bill would impose more burden on the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office.

VI. New Business

a. Agricultural Commissioner’s Report

- i. Kamal Bagri reported Spray Days where the public can see information on when pesticide applications are scheduled. Now all N.O.I.s need to be filed electronically. Growers in the eastern part of the county may have difficulty with internet connections. As Agricultural Commissioner in Stanislaus County, Kamal needed to respond to activists with N.O.I.s and extra requirements imposed with more mitigation measures.
- ii. The Agricultural Commissioner’s Health Officer, Dr. Maggie Park, presented updates to agencies including Public Health, EMS/MHOAC, Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, Office of Emergency Services, Department of Environmental Health. Distribution of PPE to dairy workers, poultry workers, and other workers at risk due to potential exposure was discussed. H5NI had not been detected in San Joaquin County dairy herds or products.
- iii. The State Office of Emergency Services is working with the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office and reviewing data to determine if a disaster declaration is needed for the walnut crop.
- iv. Pesticide Permit Renewals are being issued with continuing education programs and over 700 participants at the Robert Cabral Agricultural Center. The recent PAC had 56 attendees and 54 passed the exam.

b. Hemp Ordinance

Robert O’Rourke, Deputy County Counsel and Omar Luna, Deputy Agricultural Commission discussed the hemp ordinance. The Hemp Ordinance of December 2021 established a “temporary” moratorium on hemp production. Other counties, Contra Costa and Alameda, for example, have lifted the moratorium with restrictions. Southern Counties allow hemp production, as well as north of Sacramento. Sheriff’s Office is investigating cannabis under disguise as hemp, with human trafficking. Kamal mentioned that the County is seeking input on whether

to lift the moratorium or keep restrictions on hemp permanent. The Board discussed the pros and cons of various options.

- i. Hammond Motion/Seconded by Nicolini, (Rickman abstained) Unanimous support to draft a letter from the Agricultural Advisory Board Chair to the Community Development Department regarding Application Number: PA-2400268 (GP/DT TA).

VII. Announcements

- a. Brent Holtz announced that effective January 2025 Michelle Linefelder-Miles will be the new UCCE Director.

VIII. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m., next meeting March 24, 2025

Submitted By:

Patricia Lord, Secretary for the Board