



# SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

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

## MINUTES

### SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, June 23, 2025

**Present:** Kamal Bagri, Jose Chavez, Steven Freeman, Chuck Hammond, Michelle Leinfelder-Miles, Richard Marchini, Sonya Miller, Linda Ormond, Terry Ann Paoletti, Joseph Seimas, Ken Vogel

**Excused:** Felix Ogbah, Terry Violet

**Absent:** Josh Cheney, Stephen Ding, Michael Fisher, Andrew Genasci, Pedro Mendez Joseph Nicolini, Robert Rickman, Roseanna Silva

**Guests:** Scott Tyrrell, Chief of Staff, Supervisor Rickman's Office

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- I. **Call to Order** – Chair Vogel called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and proceeded with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. **Introduction of New Agricultural Advisory Board Members**
  - a. Chair Vogel introduced new Board Members:
    - i. Steven Freeman, District 2 Representative
    - ii. Sonya Miller, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – March 24, 2025, minutes approved; M/S Marchini/Freeman
- IV. **Correspondence** – May 12, 2025, Letter sent from Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer Kamaljit Bagri to Nancy Ward, California Office of Emergency Services Director requesting that San Joaquin County be considered for a Secretarial Disaster Declaration designation for cherry crop due to adverse climatic conditions which greatly impacted cherry production quantity.
- V. **Legislative Updates**
  - a. Kamal Bagri reported that the Joint Legislative Committee has approved an audit on Restricted Materials permits. Restricted Materials permits are issued in lieu of Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to satisfy California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. In San Joaquin County, approximately 2,500 grower operator

identification numbers and Restricted Materials permits are issued and we are one of the top ten counties for pesticide use in the state of California. Environmental groups have advocated increased scrutiny over the permitting process, with more restrictions on fumigants. The increased restrictions have an impact on the agricultural industry.

## **VI. New Business**

### **a. Agricultural Commissioner's Report**

- i. Abandoned orchards have an adverse impact on neighboring growers and the Agricultural Commissioner's Office is currently responding to six complaints. One of the abandoned orchards has been languishing since 2021 and required court-issued warrants to address the problems. This abandoned orchard case took years to address, due to the complexities of multiple owners on a 40-acre parcel. One of the major concerns with abandoned orchards is with pests infesting neighboring properties.
- ii. An Assembly Bill AB-732 is proposed to proceed with fine actions of \$500 per acre on abandoned agricultural properties. The concern is that owners are likely to be experiencing financial hardship and unable to pay fines, therefore, the financial burden to clean up abandoned orchards may fall on impacted counties.
- iii. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office received a Notification of Deferral from the United States Department of Agriculture dated June 3, 2025, regarding the request from San Joaquin County to be considered for a Secretarial Disaster Declaration for the 2024 Walnut Crop.
- iv. Kamal Bagri provided the Board with a copy of a letter sent May 12, 2025, to the California Office of Emergency Services requesting a Secretarial Disaster Declaration for the cherry crop. As outlined in the letter to Director Nancy Ward, adverse climatic conditions greatly impacted the 2025 Cherry Crop with the overall crop loss to be 1.39 tons/acre. The average yield for the 2025 crop is estimated at 1.82 tons/acre. The five-year average yield for San Joaquin County, based upon annual crop reports, is 3.21 tons/acre. The cherry crops suffered a 43.41% reduction in yield. At the five-year average price of \$3,682 per ton, this represents a financial loss to the growers of \$101,336,004.
- v. The 2024 San Joaquin County Crop Report is anticipated to be released late August 2025 with a presentation to the County Board of Supervisors.
- vi. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office is working on updating the Robert J. Cabral Agricultural Center Facility Use Policy and Fee Schedule. The last update was approved by the Board of Supervisors in September 2015.

## **VII. Discussion Items Announcements**

- a. Code Enforcement on agricultural properties was discussed with issues including excessive truck parking, container haulers, junk cars, and recreation vehicle storage. Non-conforming use complaints are reviewed by the Community Development Department. It can be a lengthy process to address problems, requiring time for property owners to respond. However, it is important to report code enforcement issues in order to mitigate the problems.
- b. The Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee (AGTAC) is a committee of the Community Development Department. It was suggested to have a representative from CDD come to a future meeting to provide more information on the AGTAC.

- c. The Agricultural Grievance Committee is a committee of the Agricultural Advisory Board formed on an as-needed basis to resolve issues at the lowest possible level. A plaintiff may request a hearing through the Agricultural Advisory Board Chair; the chair will then appoint Board Members to serve on the Grievance Committee. Some issues, such as noise complaints, are difficult to address. The “Right to Farm Ordinance” provides guidelines.
- d. An article that was recently published in Ag News, “Farmers Liquidate Assets as Banks Retreat” was discussed. According to the article, “California farmers are selling land, water, equipment and other assets to raise the cash they need to grow their crops this year as a struggling farm economy affects lending activity by banks.”
- e. The San Joaquin County Livestock Pass Program was launched in fall of 2024 for the purpose of issuing identification documents to qualified commercial livestock producer and their managerial employees that may be used to request access to ranch property during or following a flood, storm, fire, earthquake, or other such disaster.

**VIII. Adjournment** – Meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

**Next Quarterly Meeting September 22, 2025, at 10 a.m.**

Submitted By:

Patricia Lord, Secretary for the Board

Attachments:

1. May12, 2025, Letter from Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer, Kamaljit Bagri, to Director Nancy Ward, California Office of Emergency Services, requesting Secretarial Disaster Declaration for the 2025 Cherry Crop.
2. Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee Fact Sheet.
3. Latest Ag News article May 2025