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Special thanks to the Almond Board of California for their support of the California water issues segments and for co-sponsoring the reception.



**Sheraton Grand Sacramento
Sacramento, CA**

All times listed below are in Pacific.

slido

Please [click here](#) to ask questions during the event on Slido.

7:00 AM CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:00 AM WELCOME

- Sara Wyant, founder and editor, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

8:05 AM HOW CAN WE BUILD A MORE RESILIENT FOOD & AG SYSTEM?

Moderator: Sara Wyant

- Senator Melissa Hurtado (D-Sanger)

8:20 AM WHAT'S THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ANOTHER YEAR OF DROUGHT, INFLATIONARY PRESSURES AND LABOR CHALLENGES?

Moderator: Sara Wyant

- David Magaña, Ph.D., senior analyst, RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness

9:00 AM DROUGHT/WATER RESOURCES UPDATE

Moderator: Brad Hooker, associate editor, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

- Wade Crowfoot, Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency

9:30 AM PROSPECTS FOR OCEAN SHIPPING REFORM AND REGAINING WEST COAST EXPORT MARKETS

Moderator: Sara Wyant

- Rep. John Garamendi, D-Calif.

10:00 AM BREAK

10:30 AM NEW INNOVATIONS, INCENTIVES TO GROW FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND OTHER CROPS WITH LESS WATER

Moderator: Spencer Chase, managing editor, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.

- Val Fishman, chief development officer, Common Good Water
- Jonathan Destler, CEO, Opti-Harvest, Inc.
- Daniele Zaccaria, Ph.D., ag. water management specialist, University of California, Davis
- Stephanie Pedroni, new technologies coordinator, global vegetable R&D, Bayer Crop Science

11:15 AM ADAPTING TO CHANGING WATER CYCLES: NASA'S PARTNERSHIP WITH AGRICULTURE

Moderator: Spencer Chase

- Karen St. Germain, Ph.D., director, earth science division, science mission directorate, NASA

11:45 AM LUNCH

- 12:30 PM** **A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND FARMING**
Moderator: Sara Wyant
- Secretary Ann Veneman, former Secretary of Agriculture, USDA
- 1:00 PM** **OVERCOMING REGULATORY CHALLENGES ON THE PATHWAY TO CLIMATE-SMART FOOD & AGRICULTURE**
Moderator: Spencer Chase
- Steve Heckeroth, founder and chief innovation officer, Solectrac
 - Adam Tarr, director, Invariant
 - Scott Dahlman, director, state government affairs, western region, CropLife America
 - Vonnie Estes, vice president of technology, International Fresh Produce Association
- 1:45 PM** **RETHINKING COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND TRAINING TO ADVANCE FOOD AND AG INDUSTRIES**
Moderator: Spencer Chase
- Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture
 - Walt Duflock, vice president of innovation, Western Growers
 - Gabe Youtsey, chief innovation officer, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources
 - Ashley Swearengin, president and CEO, Central Valley Community Foundation
- 2:30 PM** **PERSPECTIVE**
Moderator: Brad Hooker
- Senator Brian Dahle (R-Bieber)
- 3:00 PM** **BREAK**
- 3:30 PM** **WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY LOOK LIKE FOR CALIFORNIA AND WHAT'S THE IMPACT ON FOOD & AGRICULTURE?**
Moderator: Brad Hooker
- Michael Boccadoro, president, West Coast Advisors
 - Julee Malinowski-Ball, partner, Public Policy Advocates
 - Kevin Johnston, associate counsel, California Farm Bureau Federation
- 4:15 PM** **INDUSTRY LEADERS LOOK AHEAD AT WHAT'S NEXT**
Moderator: Sara Wyant
- Dave Puglia, president and CEO, Western Growers
 - Richard Waycott, president and CEO, Almond Board of California
 - Ian LeMay, president, California Fresh Fruit Association
 - Jamie Johansson, president, California Farm Bureau Federation
 - Karissa Kruse, president, Sonoma County Winegrowers
- 5:10 PM** **CLOSING COMMENTS**
- Sara Wyant, founder and editor, Agri-Pulse Communications, Inc.
- 5:15 PM** **IN-PERSON: Customer Appreciation Reception**
- 7:00 PM** **MEETING ADJOURNS**



Senator Melissa Hurtado

Senator Melissa Hurtado is the youngest woman ever elected to the California State Senate. Her district in the Central Valley is home to some of the richest and most fertile farmland in the world. In the Legislature, Hurtado is known to work across party lines to improve the quality of life for residents and to ensure rural voices are heard at all levels of government. She focuses on rural community issues, access to clean air and water, food insecurity, inequities in environmental policies, agriculture and access to health care in rural communities. Hurtado is the first from her family to graduate from college. She received her degree in Political Science from Sacramento State University.



David Magaña

David Magaña, Ph.D., is a vice president and senior analyst for Rabobank's RaboResearch Food and Agribusiness group. He is responsible for covering the U.S. and North American fresh fruit, vegetable and tree nut industries. Previously, he served as deputy director of economic research for FIRA - Banco de Mexico. His research experience includes agricultural market integration under the NAFTA, consumer trends in fresh fruit and vegetable markets, food security and food price dynamics, among other related topics. Magaña earned his bachelor's from Universidad Autónoma Chapingo and a master's and Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Texas A&M University.



Secretary Wade Crowfoot

Secretary Wade Crowfoot became California's Natural Resources Secretary in January 2019, appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom. He oversees an agency of 21,000 employees who protect and manage California's natural environment. This includes stewarding the state's forests and natural lands, rivers and waterways, and coast and ocean, protecting fish and wildlife and overseeing energy development. Prior to serving as Secretary, Crowfoot led the Water Foundation, a nonprofit philanthropy that builds shared water solutions across the American West. Secretary Crowfoot received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1996

and earned a master's degree in public policy from the London School of Economics in 2004, graduating with honors.



Representative John Garamendi

Congressman Garamendi is a lifelong public servant, rancher and Californian. He currently serves on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. He is the former Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation and served as a member of the House Agriculture Committee. Garamendi authored and passed the bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Act in response to fees charged to American exporters like the farmers in his district. He is now working to continue his work on the maritime shipping industry by supporting the Ocean Shipping Antitrust Enforcement Act to increase competition with ocean carriers and bring down costs for

American exporters. The congressman grew up on a family ranch on Mokelumne Hill, California, before attending UC Berkeley where he received a degree in business.



Val Fishman

Val Fishman leads market development for Common Good Water's Ag Water Conservation Program. She brings together those who want to save water with farmers who have the power to save it. This is accomplished through the installation of best-in-class drip irrigation and precision crop management practices that result in cutting water demand in half on the highest water use crops. Farmers receive payments for saving water while companies and governments purchase the benefits resulting from the improved method. Beyond water savings, a host of environmental, social and economic benefits are realized – such as sequestering carbon, improving soil health, and

optimizing some of the most productive agricultural lands for a future of farming in extremes such as droughts and floods. Her work over the past decade catalyzed business partnerships to save or restore water across North America.



Jonathan Destler

Jonathan Destler is the founder and CEO of Opti-Harvest Inc. He has spent over 25 years working as an entrepreneur and executive as well as a trusted adviser and business strategist to early stage and emerging growth companies. He has a broad range of experience in the fields of corporate finance, corporate development, capital formation and financial communications. Destler is also the founder and president of Touchstone Advisors Inc., a management consulting firm based in Los Angeles. Destler began his career on Wall Street as a private investor and financier helping numerous emerging growth companies secure financing and formulate their capital and public market strategies.



Daniele Zaccaria

Daniele Zaccaria, Ph.D., is associate professor and agricultural water management specialist in cooperative extension at the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources of the University of California, Davis. His expertise and current work focuses on irrigation management under limited and impaired water supply, determination of crop evapotranspiration and water productivity, adaptation and mitigation to drought and drought preparation. He also works on design, performance analysis, and modernization of irrigation systems across farm, district and scheme scales, and on developing viable agricultural water management solutions. Zaccaria completed his Ph.D. in Civil and

Environmental Engineering – Irrigation Engineering Division at Utah State University. He completed his Master of Science in Land and Water Resources Management at the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (CIHEAM-MAI Bari).



Stephanie Pedroni

Stephanie Pedroni is the new technologies coordinator of global vegetable R&D at Bayer Crop Science. Over the past 13 years, Pedroni has introduced innovative solutions to deliver desirable genetics into Bayer’s breeding pipelines and products and also developed a passion for working in the agricultural industry. Previously, she was a researcher at the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Lab where she focused on studying equine genetics. In 2009 she traded horses for plants and joined the Vegetable Seeds R&D division in what is now Bayer Crop Science (previously Monsanto). Pedroni is a graduate of the University of California at Davis, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in

Animal Science and her master’s degree in Genetics.



Karen St. Germain

Karen St. Germain, Ph.D., is the Division Director of the Earth Science Division in the Science Mission Directorate at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). She provides executive leadership, strategic direction, and overall management for the agency’s Earth Science portfolio, including a fleet of 24 satellites that are currently viewing our home planet from space. St. Germain came to NASA from the NOAA Satellite and Information Service, where she served as the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Systems (DAAS), with responsibility for leading the development of the nation’s operational weather satellite systems. St. Germain holds a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical

engineering from Union College and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Massachusetts. She is also a Distinguished Graduate of the National War College, National Defense University, where she earned a Master of Science degree in National Security Strategy.



Secretary Ann Veneman

Secretary Ann Veneman served in various positions in the USDA including Secretary from 2001 to 2005. She was also secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture from 1995 to 1999. Most recently, Veneman served as the executive director of the United Nations Children’s Fund from 2005 to 2010. She currently serves on the board of directors for Nestlé S.A. and Full Harvest, as well as a number of nonprofit and advisory boards. She also co-chairs the Bipartisan Policy Center’s Prevention Initiative and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Task Force. Veneman holds degrees from the University of California, Davis, the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of California, Hastings College of the Law.



Steve Heckerth

Steve Heckerth is chief innovation officer and chairman of the board at Soletrac. He is an expert in designing, fabricating and building electric tractors and vehicles. His experience spans over 40 years in the renewable energy industry. Heckerth worked as the Director of Building Integrated Photovoltaics for the largest thin-film solar manufacturer in the world, designing PV roofing products. Steve founded MendoMotive and Electrac in 1993 to develop and build EVs and electric tractors. He founded Soletrac LLC in 2012 to take electric tractors into commercial production. He was the Principal Investigator on two grants completed in 2016 that moved the electric tractor closer to a commercially viable product. Heckerth converted the LLC to a California Benefit Corporation and Certified B-Corp in 2019. He holds several patents on electric tractor innovations.



Adam Tarr

Adam Tarr is director at Invariant where he advises clients across a range of food, agriculture, and environment issues. Most recently, he served as a senior professional staff member, focusing on climate and conservation policy for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. He helped craft the Climate Smart Ag provisions of the Build Back Better legislation and directed oversight of the Department of Agriculture’s implementation of the Farm Bill conservation title. Before his role with the committee, Tarr worked at USDA during the Obama Administration, serving in numerous roles including as chief of staff in the Office for Food Safety and as a senior adviser to Secretary Tom Vilsack for climate change. He also handled agriculture, environment, energy, and appropriations issues for Sen. Bob Casey and former Sen. Arlen Specter. Tarr received his bachelor’s degree from Penn State University.



Scott Dahlman

Scott Dahlman is the director of state government affairs for CropLife America, a trade association representing manufacturers, formulators and distributors of pesticides. He directs the legislative efforts in the western region covering 13 states. Before coming to CropLife America, he represented agricultural interests on the west coast in roles for FMC Corporation, Oregonians for Food & Shelter and the Washington Farm Bureau. Dahlman grew up in Oregon and attended Western Oregon University, where he obtained a B.S. in political science. He currently lives in Idaho with his wife, Megan, and two young sons.



Vonnie Estes

Vonnie Estes is vice president of technology at the International Fresh Produce Association. She pours her passion for agriculture, technology and sustainability into her roles, bringing technology to the produce industry across the entire supply chain. Through her role, she champions and connects technology companies with the growing and selling of healthy food. Estes produces an insightful weekly podcast, Fresh Takes on Tech, on technology and fresh food production. She recently launched The Fresh Field Catalyst, an accelerator to bring new tech into the produce industry. She also sits on the board of directors of Stoney Creek Colors, Creatus Biosciences and Kula Bio and advisory boards of Treasure 8 and IN2. Estes received her BS in Horticulture at New Mexico State University and her MS in Plant Pathology at the University of California, Davis.



Secretary Karen Ross

Karen Ross was reappointed Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture on Jan. 9, 2019, by Governor Gavin Newsom. She was initially appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in 2011. Before joining CDFA, Secretary Ross was chief of staff for U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, a position she accepted in 2009. Prior to that appointment, she served as President of the California Association of Winegrape Growers from 1996 to 2009, and as Vice President of the Agricultural Council of California from 1989 to 1996. Ross grew up as a 4-H kid on a farm in western Nebraska. She and her husband, Barry, own 800 acres of the family farm where her younger brother, a fourth-generation farmer, grows no-till wheat and feed grains, incorporating cover crops and rotational grazing for beef production. Ross has a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and is a graduate of the Nebraska Ag Leadership Program.



Walt Duflock

Walt Duflock is a fifth-generation family farmer from Monterey County whose operation includes cattle, wine grapes and specialty crops. He has 30 years of startup experience in Silicon Valley, including working at eBay and three other companies. He also helped build the top AgriFoodTech Accelerator at SVG-THRIVE. Duflock is currently the vice president of innovation at Western Growers, focused on harvest automation and food safety detection and prevention solutions. Duflock received his business degree from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and his J.D. from Santa Clara University School of Law.



Gabe Youtsey

Gabe Youtsey is chief innovation officer at the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR), where he works on the commercialization of novel food and agriculture technologies to address pressing industry, community and global challenges. He is co-founder of the VINE AgriFood innovation, which supports commercialization and scaling of novel food, agriculture, and climate technologies. Youtsey is a board member of the Linux AgStack Foundation and AI Institute for Next Generation Food Systems. As a technology executive, he has led complex national project teams and multi-organizational strategy for industries including software, retail, banking, construction, finance, food and agriculture.



Ashley Swearingin

Ashley Swearingin is president and CEO of the Central Valley Community Foundation, a charitable foundation serving the six counties of Central California and providing over \$100 million in funding to over 650 community benefit organizations over the last decade. Prior to joining CVCF, she served as Mayor of the City of Fresno from 2009 through 2016. As mayor, she implemented substantial changes to improve the delivery of city services, revitalize the downtown and urban core, promote business and job growth, address chronic homelessness and stabilize the city's financial position. Swearingin holds MBA and BS degrees from California State University, Fresno.



Senator Brian Dahle

Senator Dahle was elected to represent the 1st Senate District in 2019. Previously, he represented California's First Assembly District from 2012 until 2019, becoming the Assembly Republican Leader in 2017. He currently serves on several committees, including Environmental Quality and Transportation. Dahle is also running for Governor. He works across party lines for job creation and economic development in the rural North State and throughout California, pushing policies that keep families on their farms, protect water rights and support the business community. In addition to his service in elected office, he continues to operate his family's farm and seed business in Bieber.



Michael Boccadoro

Michael Boccadoro is President of West Coast Advisors. As President, Boccadoro is responsible for overseeing the firm's public affairs, regulatory affairs and sustainability practices. Before launching West Coast Advisors, he served as Managing Director of a trailblazing public affairs and crisis management firm. He also spent seven years as a senior consultant to the California Legislature. Boccadoro has worked with the state's dairy industry for more than 27 years and continues to serve as the Executive Director of Dairy Cares, the sector's highly effective sustainability coalition. Boccadoro received his B.A. in economics and political science from the University of California, Davis.



Julee Malinowski-Ball

Julee Malinowski-Ball is a partner with Public Policy Advocates. Regarded as one of Sacramento's top energy and environmental consultants, Malinowski-Ball has advocated on behalf of her clients' policies related to climate, air quality, renewable energy, water quality, supply and infrastructure, distributed generation, forest health and low carbon transportation. Her experience includes working not only with the Legislature, but also with the state's numerous regulatory agencies, boards and commissions, including the California Department of Water Resources, California Energy Commission and the California Air Resources Board. Malinowski-Ball received a degree in Political Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a master's degree in Government Studies from California State University, Sacramento.



Kevin Johnston

Kevin Johnston is an Associate Counsel at California Farm Bureau Federation. He focuses on electricity rates, renewable energy and electric reliability, primarily at the Public Utilities Commission. Prior to joining Farm Bureau, he spent five years practicing law in Oregon working at the Oregon Legislature and in private practice. Johnston earned his J.D. from Lewis & Clark Law School in Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources Law. He received his B.S. in Environmental Systems from UC San Diego.



Dave Puglia

Dave Puglia was selected President and CEO of Western Growers in 2019. Since joining the organization in 2005, he has focused on leading public policy initiatives affecting the agriculture industry in California and other western states. Before joining Western Growers, Puglia served for seven years in the California Attorney General's Office, first as Press Secretary and then as Director of Public Affairs and Communications. Puglia is currently Vice Chair of the Public Policy Institute of California's Water Policy Center Advisory Council and has served on several industry-related boards and advisory councils. A

Sacramento native, Puglia earned a bachelor's degree in Government-Journalism from Sacramento State University and resides with his wife Lezlie in Orange County, California.



Richard Waycott

Richard Waycott is the Almond Board of California's (ABC) President and CEO. He joined the organization in 2002. Prior to heading up the ABC, Waycott worked for over 20 years, mostly in Latin America, in the food manufacturing and agribusiness industries, with extensive experience in the consumer products and B-to-B grains and oilseeds market segments. Waycott's experience complements the other professionals at the Almond Board by bringing strategic leadership to the global development of the California almond industry. Almond production and worldwide almond shipments, as well as the activities of the ABC, have grown tremendously over the past two decades, with

Almond Board programs now touching every aspect of the industry's interests.



Ian LeMay

Ian LeMay currently serves as the President of the California Fresh Fruit Association. The association is a voluntary public policy organization that works on behalf of its members – growers, shippers, marketers and associates – on issues that specifically affect member commodities: fresh grapes, kiwis, pomegranates, cherries, blueberries, peaches, pears, apricots, nectarines, interspecific varieties, plums, apples and persimmons. Previously, he served as district director for Congressman Jim Costa and also as a California Market Specialist for the Lindsay Corporation. LeMay earned a Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture Business from California Polytechnic State University,

San Luis Obispo.



Jamie Johansson

Jamie Johansson was elected president of the California Farm Bureau in December 2017 and was re-elected in 2019. Johansson previously served as first vice president for two years. In 2021, he was elected to the American Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors. Johansson grows olives and citrus fruit in Oroville and operates an olive oil company, Lodestar Farms. He is a co-founder of the Sierra Oro Farm Trail Association and a former board member of the California Olive Oil Council. Johansson attended the University of Alabama and Colorado State University, where he studied political science.



Karissa Kruse

Karissa Kruse is president of the Sonoma County Winegrowers. She has guided the strategy and implementation of Sonoma County's commitment to become America's first 100% certified sustainable wine region. She has 20 years of experience in various aspects of marketing, brand management, strategic planning and business development. Kruse has worked for companies such as General Mills, Universal Studios, Mattel and Dairy Management. She is a partner in a small winery, Argot Wines, and the owner of a 12-acre vineyard on Sonoma Mountain. Kruse earned a B.S. in Economics and an MBA in Marketing from Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.