

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
ANIMAL HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY SERVICES (AHFSS)
MEAT, POULTRY AND EGG SAFETY BRANCH (MPES)
SHELL EGG ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)
MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 9, 2025**

California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street, Auditorium
Sacramento, CA 95814

Item
No.

(1) ROLL CALL

Mr. Michael Gemperle, Chair, called the SEAC meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Roll call was taken; a quorum was established at 9:05 a.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDEES:

Michael Gemperle, Chair - *remote*
Andrew Demler, Vice Chair - *remote*
David Will, Chino Valley Ranchers - *remote*
Steve Mahrt, Petaluma Farms – *remote*
Kaliko Orian, Kaliko Farms – *remote*
Glenn Hickman, Hickman Family Farms - *remote*
Michael Sencer, Hidden Villa Ranch – *remote*
Cathy Roache, CACASA Representative (non-voting) - *remote*
John Bedell, Alternate – *in-person*

ABSENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Lupe Gutierrez, NuCal Foods
Frank Hilliker, Alternate
Public Member (vacant)

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Debbie Murdock, Pacific Egg and Poultry Association (PEPA), (non-voting) – *in-person*

CDFA:

Dr. Fernando Umayam	Dr. Elizabeth Cox
Michael Abbott	Casey Luna
Lisa Quiroz	Brittany Cardoza
Penny Arana	Rachel Andrade
Sedona Quiroz-Lopez	

(2) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Vote to approve meeting minutes from August 26, 2025.

Motion #1: Mr. Michael Sencer made a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Andrew Demler seconded the motion. All members agreed with no abstentions. The motion passed unanimously.

(3) **BORDER STATIONS UPDATE**

Egg Safety and Quality Management (ESQM) staff presented on Border Patrol Stations (BPS) statistics for truck loads, cases and assessments up to October 2025, as well as holds, “Be On the Look Out” (BOLO) shipments and “Not for California” shipments. ESQM staff visited Mountain Pass and Needles border stations to observe processes and assist with process improvement, like electronic forms and clarification on differences between ESQM and Prop 12 programs.

(4) **PROGRAM UPDATES**

ESQM responded to a Salmonella Enteritidis (SE) outbreak with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) in Yolo and Sacramento counties. The outbreak was found in both the processing plant and barn, suspected to originate from cross-contamination between boilers and egg layers. A recall was issued for the eggs sold in farmers markets and restaurants and can be found on the CDPH website.

ESQM staff continues to assist with highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) response efforts, preparing for the winter season. A vacant Environmental Scientist position is currently being advertised.

(5) **BRANCH UPDATES**

California Assembly Bill (AB) 888 has been approved and will be effective as of January 1, 2026; MPES is developing outreach and education strategies for stakeholders, agencies and industry. ESQM conducted a program meeting in Pismo Beach. Michelle Moran was hired as a Senior Environmental Scientist for pet food.

The California Dairy Research Foundation (CDRF) continues to develop a Best Management Practice (BMP) document for composting poultry and livestock mortalities during a rendering disruption in accordance with AB 411. This will include training modules for producers to learn about proper construction of composting piles. The contract is estimated to be completed by June 2026. No licensing or registration is required from producers at this time.

(6) **DIVISION UPDATES**

Dr. Annette Jones will be retiring on December 31st, 2025 after 20 years as State Veterinarian and Director of AHFSS. The Department is conducting interviews for her successor. The transition is anticipated to be smooth, as all key CDFA positions are currently well-staffed.

(7) **HPAI UPDATES**

HPAI is circulating in wild birds across the State. The Animal Health Branch (AHB) continues to conduct statewide surveillance, testing and monitoring of dairies. There have been no detections of HPAI in dairies north of Interstate 80. There are very low levels of

HPAI in a few dairies, with minimal threat to poultry. Staff attribute a portion of this to good biosecurity practices and thanks the industry for their continued diligence.

In October and November, HPAI was detected at three poultry producer premises in Sonoma County and one backyard premises in El Dorado County. Genomics indicated it is a wild bird strain and either common source or lateral spread transmission. AHB epidemiologists are working with producers to identify the route of introduction for mitigation purposes, though a definitive cause is difficult to confirm.

The poultry on industry premises have been depopulated and disposal is underway. Backyard premises with no epidemiological links or high-risk considerations have the option not to depopulate but their birds often succumb to the virus anyway. Most premises use composting as their carcass disposal method; one premises used silage bags/ag bags, which may prove to be a good option. Poultry producers within a 10km radius of the infected premises are under mandatory surveillance; those premises continue to test negative. The first control area is expected to meet the requirements for release in the next week. The remaining two control areas will stay in place until requirements are met for release.

The Board asked about dairy surveillance and testing. Staff explained that dairies within quarantine and surveillance zones are tested by AHB and the Milk and Dairy Food Safety (MDFS) branch. They also inquired if dairies have a mortality reporting requirement for cattle as poultry premises do. Staff confirmed that MDFS and AHB have protocols in place with guidance from veterinarians to detect signs of HPAI in cattle, including decreased milk production. The Board asked for the overall infection rate in wild birds. CDFA collaborates with California Department of Fish and Wildlife on wild bird surveillance. Staff will request that information and share when possible.

(8) AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE RECAP

The Board summarized the main topics of the audit subcommittee meeting, largely regarding the proposal of an amendment to Proposition (Prop) 12 to allow for greater flexibility in audit schedules and intensity, which currently requires annual audits of every barn on a premises. They intend to propose randomized barn sampling and longer validity times between audits, citing biosecurity concerns and long-term barn structures. In future discussions, the Board will coordinate with producer advocacy groups and CDFA staff to develop regulatory language for these proposed changes.

No suggestions were made for the Shell Egg Food Safety (SEFS) inspections besides coordinating Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and SEFS audits when feasible.

(9) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Discussion of current and potential changes to SEAC membership. Mr. Sam Kang has resigned from SEAC as a public member, leaving the position vacant. Mr. Glenn Hickman and Ms. Cathy Roache will be retiring from their employment soon; however, they will remain SEAC members until further notice.

(10) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda Items:

- HPAI Update
- Budget Subcommittee (to be held before the next meeting)
 - Members: Andrew Demler, David Will, Michael Gemperle

(11) UPCOMING SEAC MEETING DATES

The next Shell Egg Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on March 18th, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

(12) ADJOURN

Motion #2: Mr. David Will motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sencer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Sedona Quiroz-Lopez