

**MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**  
**(ALL MEETINGS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC)**

**Location:** Video Conference  
GoToWebinar

**Contact:** Joshua Eddy, Exec. Director  
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**MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 6, 2020**  
**Video Conference Meeting**

Item  
No.

**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> at approximately 10:00 a.m., President Don Cameron presiding.

**(2) ROLL CALL**

Roll call taken by Joshua Eddy, Executive Director.

**Present:**

Don Cameron	Nancy Casady	Andrew Thulin
Bryce Lundberg	Joy Sterling	Donald Bransford
Ashley Boren	Helene Dillard	Christopher Valadez
Martha Montoya	Rachelle Arizmendi	Crystal Hayling
Mike Gallo		

**Absent:**

Jeff Huckaby	Eric Holst
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**(3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Board member Andy Thulin moved to approve the minutes of the September 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. Board member Ashley Boren seconded the motion and a unanimous vote (9-0) carried the motion. Board members Nancy Casady, Bryce Lundberg, Martha Montoya and Chris Valadez were not present for the vote.

**(4) DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE**

Secretary Karen Ross provided a brief update to the Board. The update included CDFA personnel announcements. Kathy Diaz is the new director of CDFA's Marketing Services Division, following the retirement of Jeff Cesca. New retirements and retirement announcements include Don Shippelhouse (Dairy Programs) and Nick Condos, director of Plant Health and Pest Protection Services. Other updates included the CA GROWN announcement that October is Farm to Farmworker Month and that Cherie Watte Angulo is the new executive director of the organization.

Other departmental items included the announcement of the first application phase of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP), recent dairy hearings and petitions related to quota, and Farmer Equity Report briefings to Legislative Offices. In closing, CDFA continues fairground activations for COVID-19 and wildfires.

The update concluded without formal action by the Board.

**(5) LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Deputy Secretary Rachael O'Brien provided a legislative update to the Board. Items included a summary of the bills impacting California agriculture and issues that could be seen in the next legislative cycle.

The discussion concluded without formal action by the Board.

**(6) PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD – Broadband Update**

The Board heard a presentation from the California Department of Technology and CDFA on broadband connectivity, with a focus on expanding service within rural communities.

Speakers included:

- Justin Cohan-Shapiro, California Department of Technology
- Stephanie Tom, California Department of Technology
- Arturo Barajas, California Department of Food and Agriculture

The discussion concluded without formal action by the Board.

**(7) PUBLIC COMMENT**

Following the presentation, the Board received two public comments:

Speakers:

- Bob Gore, The Gualco Group, Inc.
- Mary-Ann Warmerdam, Rural Counties Representative of California (RCRC)

No further public comments were received on this item. Public comments can be viewed at: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/LiveMediaStream.html>

Public comment concluded without formal action by the Board.

**(8) PANEL DISCUSSION – Sacramento River Science Partnership**

The Board heard a panel discussion on the Sacramento River Science Partnership – a consortium of public/private stakeholders working to enhance collaboration on the Sacramento River for multi-environmental benefits.

Speakers:

- Thad Bettner, Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District
- Evan Sawyer, NOAA Fisheries (West Coast Region)

The discussion concluded without formal action by the Board.

**(9) PANEL DISCUSSION – Water Recharge and Sustainability**

The Board heard a panel discussion on water recharge and sustainability programs. The discussion included an overview of Flood-Managed Aquifer Recharge Flood-MAR and Sustainable Conservation's Groundwater Recharge Assessment Tool (GRAT).

Speakers included:

- James Wieking, California Department of Water Resources
- Dr. Daniel Mountjoy, Sustainable Conservation

The discussion concluded without formal action by the Board.

**(10) BOARD DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following the presentations and discussions, the Board took the following actions. Staff was directed to develop the following Staff Draft Letters for Board consideration:

- DRAFT Letter on Broadband (Pilot Program)
- DRAFT Letter on Farm to Family Tax Credit

In addition, staff was directed to work on an outreach strategy related to water issues, with a focus on the Central Valley.

No further discussion or recommendations occurred.

**(11) PUBLIC COMMENT**

One public comment was submitted following the meeting.

Speaker:

- Robert Tse, USDA Rural Development

Public comment is enclosed within Attachment A.

Public comments concluded without formal action by the Board.

**(12) CLOSING COMMENTS AND ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting concluded at approximately 1:00 p.m.

## ATTACHMENT A: SUBMITTED PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment: Robert Tse

Board of Ag Meeting Oct 6, 2020 Comments

Thank you, Secretary Karen Ross, Board Chair Don Cameron, and Broadband Board Member Joy Sterling. And a shout out to Josh Eddy and Arturo Barajas. Congratulations for the inclusion of CDFA to the California Broadband Council.

The Governor's Broadband Executive Order and call for a new state action plan is an opportunity to create an inclusive 21<sup>st</sup> century rural and agricultural broadband economy

With Covid, It is important that the Rural Broadband Infrastructure discussion focus on **Broadband USE:** Telehealth, Tele-Education (aka distance learning), Telework, and Tele-agriculture. [4 Tele's]

We need a Disaster and Covid Resilient Broadband Infrastructure.

I have these suggestions:

- Continue with the effort to light up Fairgrounds for public safety, and to be nodes for ultra-high-speed broadband economic development.
- Explore the Broadband Cooperative Model to bring broadband to rural areas. We have the successful 80-year legacy of Rural Electric Cooperatives to draw on.
- Incorporate California tribes into a broadband strategy. Many have qualified for the FCC 2.5 Ghz free spectrum offer. [Wireless LTE] This is an asset that will help connect rural and remote California.
- Create broadband signal maps of farm fields with enough granularity to present a realistic picture of broadband availability. Lack of farm field access to broadband is a major constraint to adoption of agriculture technology and continued economic vitality of the agriculture sector. //
  - Agriculture technology if supported by farm field broadband access, offers multiple benefits that include business economic, climate impact mitigation, monetization of ecosystem services and meeting regulatory regimes. Accurate farm field broadband maps are the key.

Thank you for your time.