



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
CALIFORNIA CITRUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCAC)  
March 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes  
1031 South Mount Vernon Ave, Bakersfield, CA 93307**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

John S. Gless  
Gustavo Carranza  
Brad Bishel – Chair  
Tom Mayhew  
Lisa Tate  
George McEwen  
Sonya Carrillo  
David Haas Jr.  
Maribel Nenna – Vice Chair

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

Gary Keough – National Agricultural  
Statistics Service (NASS)  
Amanda Zito – Fresno Co.  
Eddy Greynolds – Kern Co.  
Tesfaye Jimma – Tulare Co.  
Sofia Hernandez – Fresno Co.  
Jeffery Klitz – Fresno Co.  
Sam Botkin – CA Citrus  
Growers Association

**CDFA**

Karrie Batchelor  
Stacey Hughes  
Sarah Cardoni  
Kelley Aubushon

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Gregorio Rundini

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chair Brad Bishel.

**ITEM 2: INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL**

Roll was called by Sarah Cardoni, a quorum was established, and self-introductions were made.

**ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**ITEM 4: REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 15, 2022 MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Bishel requested a motion to approve the November 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

**MOTION:** Tom Mayhew moved to approve the November 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes as submitted. Vice Chair Maribel Nenna seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

**ITEM 5: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT**

Cardoni provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. There are currently two producer member vacancies: one representing Navels or Valencias; and one representing mandarins. Members whose terms will expire September 30, 2023, and are eligible for reappointment are: Gustavo Carranza; Chair Brad Bishel; Tom Mayhew; Sonya Carrillo; David Haas Jr.; Vice Chair Maribel Nenna; and George McEwen.

## **ITEM 6: COUNTY ACTIVITY AND EXPENSE SUMMARY FY 2022/23**

Karrie Batchelor presented the County Activity and Expense Summary for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022/23 crop year. Harvesting began October 10, 2022, and mandatory maturity testing ended on December 5, 2022. There were 3,190 lots and 3,098,173 containers inspected, with 3,044 maturity tests conducted by the five contracted counties: Fresno, Kern, Riverside, Tulare, and Ventura. Sixty percent of the County Agreements funding has been expended, with \$256,191 of \$430,026 invoiced through December 31, 2022.

## **ITEM 7: BUDGET REVIEW**

### **i. FY 2023/24 PROPOSED NASS BUDGET**

Gary Keough, NASS Pacific Region Director, presented the FY 2023/24 NASS Budget. Total proposed expenditures for FY 2023/24 are \$562,876 and include: \$44,725 for Salaries and Benefits; \$41,321 in Operating Expenses; \$142,171 for the Navel Objective Measurement (OM) Survey; \$91,000 for the Valencia OM Survey; \$90,000 for the Citrus Acreage Survey; \$73,828 for the Cara Cara OM Survey; \$84,000 for the Mandarin OM Survey; with a projected gas tax credit of \$4,169. Keough noted that cost increases were due to the federal wage and mileage rate increases.

Lisa Tate asked why the Salary and Benefits and Operating and Expenses have significantly increased. Keough explained that NASS costs are simply provided to the CDFA Marketing Services and are included in their larger proposed budget in which they calculate. NASS administrative cost increases were due to the new 2023 federal wage rate and increased mileage rates. A request to CDFA Marketing Services for clarification of their administrative costs would need to be made.

Stacey Hughes gave a brief history of the Citrus Program and explained how the monies collected can only be allocated for an orange maturity inspection program, citrus freeze inspection program, and crop statistical data. All Inspection and Compliance Branch administrative costs for the Citrus Program are absorbed in the Standardization Program's budget. CDFA Marketing Services historically did not charge administrative costs; however, began doing so in FY 2017/18.

Tate requested that the CDFA Marketing Services provide a more detailed budget and explanation for cost increases. Keough offered to get clarification of CDFA Marketing Services' administrative costs and present them at the next meeting.

### **a. Clementine OM Survey Estimate**

Keough provided the Clementine OM Survey cost estimate and discussed the survey's conditions and requirements. Two cost estimates were provided; one using a coefficient of variation (CV) of 10%, which is similar to that used for Valencias, and totals \$65,600; and another using a more accurate CV of 6.5%, which is similar to that used for Navels, and totals \$90,400. These estimated costs would be for the first year only and are higher due to costs associated with locating sample trees.

The initial Clementine OM Survey could be published by 2024. Keough explained that for the first three years, the report would only include average fruit set and average fruit diameter and would cover the previous year's utilized production. After year three, it

would include the forecast production. Batchelor inquired if the prediction model for mandarins could be used, as clementines are merely a variety of mandarins, in order to publish the production forecast in the first year. Keogh will explore if something similar could be used for clementines once the mandarin model is complete.

Harvest times and data collection for other surveys were discussed to determine the appropriate time for sampling clementines. For Valencias, harvest is March through October with data collection in mid-January through the end of February. For Navels, harvest is October through June with data collection occurring at the end of June. For mandarins, harvest is January through April with data collection occurring July through early December. For clementines, harvest is October through January.

Discussion ensued regarding the appropriate time and method for data collection for clementines. It was determined that the survey should be published by August 15<sup>th</sup> to be of value to the industry. Keogh questioned whether clementines were uniform in size during harvest. If the size at harvest is the same, then an average set per tree could be used to estimate the forecast. The CCAC responded that clementines had different sizes; therefore, that calculation would not be appropriate.

Keogh suggested a sample window of June through July for an August 15<sup>th</sup> publication. Concerns were voiced that the fruit would be too small to measure at this point of the season. August 15<sup>th</sup> would be the optimal date to measure fruit; though, this is when the report is needed by industry. Also factoring into the determination of the sampling date is the drop date, which is finished in all regions by mid-June.

Members questioned whether there is truly a need for the Clementine OM Survey. Chair Bishel urged that increased foreign fruit is putting pressure on the domestic clementine marketing window and sees value in the data and continuing the discussion. Vice Chair Maribel Nenna inquired about the clementine acreage. Keogh reported that as of 2022, there were 9,966 bearing and 411 nonbearing acres of clementines. This is approximately one third less than the 28,000 bearing and 1,000 nonbearing acres of Murcott and Tango mandarins.

Tate inquired if funding could be provided this year to do a preliminary sampling for clementines to determine data collection methods and sample window. Keogh responded that a preliminary field evaluation could be beneficial on July 1<sup>st</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup> to determine if there is enough fruit to count at that point in the season. Between five and 10 field visits across growing areas would be needed and could be completed for less than \$2,000. Hughes proposed adding an amendment to the FY 2023/24 Proposed NASS Budget to include an additional \$2,000 for exploratory field work for a potential Clementine OM Survey and the CCAC agreed.

Vice Chair Nenna questioned whether an OM survey for lemons has been considered. It would be beneficial to the industry given the significant amount of acreage that has been recently planted and would strengthen their marketing. Keogh brought to attention the Citrus Acreage Survey that is conducted every two years that includes the estimated value of production for lemons. Samples could be drawn for an OM survey at that time; however, additional staff would need to be hired to accommodate the increased workload.

Keogh suggested a conference call to discuss specifics and the CCAC debated whether a subcommittee should be formed to explore the need for a Lemon OM Survey. The decision to form the subcommittee was not made due to the lack of marketing knowledge. Vice Chair Nenna will present this to the California Citrus Mutual Marketing Committee for their input and will provide a report to the CCAC at the next meeting.

Chair Bishel inquired about the 18% cost increase in the Valencia OM Survey and questioned the accuracy of an estimate with a smaller sample size to reduce costs. Valencias used to be a bigger part of the industry and now has one third the acreage it had 20 years ago. It was suggested that only \$79,000 be allocated to the Valencia OM Survey and that the sample size be reduced to coincide with the reduction of acreage. Members agreed to move forward if accuracy could be maintained with a 20% reduction in costs. Keogh added that the true cost for the Valencia OM Survey is \$84,000 and already exceeds the \$77,000 budgeted for the current fiscal year.

Hughes brought to attention that in FY 2017/18, the CCAC examined crop forecast survey methodologies and reevaluated the sample sizes for Navels and Valencias. A motion was made for NASS to improve the CV data for Navels and relax the CV data for Valencias. NASS accomplished this by increasing the sample size of Navels to 760 and decreasing the sample size of Valencias to 290.

Members requested the Valencia OM Survey be placed as an agenda item until resolved. Chair Bishel requested that NASS provide the minimum sample size required for an accurate survey. Keogh agreed to provide an answer at the next meeting.

ii. FY 2023/24 PROJECTED REVENUE/PROPOSED ASSESSMENT RATES

Batchelor presented the FY 2023/24 Projected Revenue. Batchelor explained that the program has been running a negative budget and recommended an increase in assessments to take effect October 2023. At their current levels, the program will not meet its objectives of administering an orange maturity inspection program, citrus freeze inspection program, and providing industry with crop statistical data. It is fiscally responsible to maintain a six-month operating reserve of about \$500,000. At the request of the CCAC, an additional \$1.2 million is maintained to adequately fund the freeze inspection program, which was the cost of the most expensive freeze that occurred to date. Thus, the reserve level target is \$1.7 million.

Current assessment rates are: 3 mills for Navels and Valencias; 2 mills for mandarins; and 1 mill for lemons. Proposed assessment rates are: 7 mills for Navels; 3 mills for Valencias; 4 mills for mandarins; and 1 mill for lemons. With the proposed increased assessment rates, the projected revenue for FY 2023/24 is \$738,613. This would bring the proposed ending reserve balance to \$1,628,277.

**MOTION:** George McEwen moved to increase the assessment rates for Navels to 7 mills per carton, mandarins to 4 mills per carton and leave the Valencia and lemon assessment rates at the current levels, as presented. Chair Brad Bishel seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

iii. FY 2023/24 PROPOSED CITRUS PROGRAM BUDGET

Batchelor presented the FY 2023/24 Proposed Citrus Program Budget. The projected beginning fund balance is \$1,876,458. With the increased assessment rates, proposed revenue by commodity is: \$527,521 for Navel and Valencias; \$41,020 for lemons; and \$170,072 for mandarins. When adding \$35,296 in Ag Fund interest and \$1,383 in late fees, the total proposed revenue is \$775,292, bringing the total available cash for FY 2023/24 to \$2,651,750.

Proposed expenditures are \$992,902 and include \$562,876 for NASS and CDFA Marketing Services and \$430,026 in County Agreements. With a projected gas tax credit of \$10,000 and a cash adjustment for statewide costs of \$40,571, there is an ending balance of \$1,628,277. With the amendment to the FY 2023/24 Proposed NASS Budget to include an additional \$2,000 for exploratory field work for a potential Clementine OM Survey, NASS and CDFA Marketing Services will increase to \$564,876, and will bring the ending balance to \$1,626,277.

**MOTION:** John S. Gless moved to approve the FY 2023/24 Proposed Citrus Program Budget with the amendment to the FY 2023/24 Proposed NASS Budget to include an additional \$2,000 for exploratory field work for a potential Clementine OM Survey. Lisa Tate seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

**ITEM 8: PROGRAM UPDATES**

Batchelor reported that a few experimental containers have been use by industry since the fall of 2022.

**ITEM 9: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 16, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and will be held in person at the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Agenda items will include lemon marketing and NASS follow up discussions on the Valencia OM Survey, Clementine field evaluation results, and CDFA Marketing Services administrative costs.

**ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m. by Chair Bishel.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Karrie Batchelor, Agriculture Program Supervisor I  
Inspection and Compliance Branch  
Inspection Services