

**California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)  
Minutes**

of the Meeting/Video Conferencing  
of the Nursery Advisory Board (NAB)  
Held on Thursday, December 18, 2025  
1220 N Street, Room 133  
Sacramento, CA 95833

**NURSERY ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS**

**Voting Members Present:** David Cox, Mike Doiron, Michael Frantz, James Hessler, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Daniel Waterhouse

**Voting Members Absent:** Dustin Hooper, Bruce Jensen, Phillip Johnson, Carl Pongs, Josh Puckett

**Ex Officio Nonvoting Members Present:** Jolene Dessert, John Keller, Loren Oki, Isabella Quinonez, Emily Robidart Rooney, Gerry Spinelli

**Ex Officio Nonvoting Members Absent:** Kamal Bagri, Wolfgang Schweigkofler

**OTHER ATTENDEES\***

Kyle Beucke, Tanya Goodson, Victoria Hornbaker, Joshua Kress, Brenda Lanini, Jasmine Minhas, Kelley Paugh, Michael Paule, Hanna Upton, Kristina Weber, Koren Widdel

\*As self-reported in the GoToWebinar application

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

David Cox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m. and conducted roll call. A quorum was present for the Board.

**WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

Cox welcomed everyone and reviewed the topics of discussion.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES**

Cox directed the Board to review the draft minutes prepared by program staff for the June 10, 2025, and September 18, 2025 meetings. A copy of the draft minutes had been distributed to the Board members and posted on the Department's website prior to the meeting. Cox opened the floor for any changes or corrections. The Board reviewed the minutes, and no changes or corrections were made.

**Board Motion #1**

The Board approved the minutes from the June 10, 2025 meeting.

Motion: James Hessler

Second: David Kirby

Details of Board Vote

In Favor: David Cox, Mike Doiron, Michael Frantz, James Hessler, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Daniel Waterhouse

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dustin Hooper, Bruce Jensen, Phillip Johnson, Carl Pongs, Josh Puckett

Board Motion #2

The Board approved the minutes from the September 18, 2025 meeting.

Motion: David Kirby

Second: James Hessler

Details of Board Vote

In Favor: David Cox, Mike Doiron, Michael Frantz, James Hessler, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Daniel Waterhouse

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dustin Hooper, Bruce Jensen, Phillip Johnson, Carl Pongs, Josh Puckett

**BRIEF UPDATES ON COTTON JASSID AND THRIPS PARVISPINUS**

The cotton jassid is an A rated pest of cotton, hibiscus, okra and other crops that was recently introduced to the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean. It has spread quickly there and there is a risk of it becoming established in California if it is introduced. Artificial spread via movement of infested plants is probably the highest-risk pathway into California.

*Thrips parvispinus* is a USDA reportable, A-rated thrips that has been found in nurseries and other regulatory settings in California. It may be present in the environment in California but as of this meeting is had not yet known to be established in the environment. Hosts include ornamentals (*Anthurium*, *Hoya*), fruits, and vegetables (including peppers).

**BRIEF UPDATE ON NEMATODE CERTIFICATION FOR FIELD GROWN NURSERY STOCK**

In the 1950s, use of laboratory methods revealed that nematode infestation of nursery stock was a serious issue. Nursery Stock Nematode Certification protocols (laboratory testing or soil treatment) were successful in reducing nematode infestations. However, there was recent concern from nurseries about the cost, use restrictions, and availability of current approved treatments for field grown nursery stock. At a Nursery Stock Nematode Certification Forum held on February 18, 2025, Dr. Andreas Westphal (University of California, Riverside) presented on a new certification protocol for utilizing anaerobic soil disinfestation as preplant soil treatment for perennial crop nurseries. Limitations to this protocol included high application cost and lack of information on certain optimal soil conditions for treatment efficacy. CDFA was unable

to consider incorporating this protocol as an approved treatment until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

## **PEST EXCLUSION BRANCH UPDATE**

### **Cotton Seed Bug**

Cotton seed bug (CSB) is an A-rated pest and is Federally actionable. Hosts include Malvaceae, but the primary crop of concern is cotton. The first find in California was in Los Angeles, in 2019. To date, it had been detected in 8 counties and in both Northern and Southern California. The 2024 CSB Commercial Cotton/Okra Survey included over 200 fields for a total of 14,764 acres. Zero CSB were detected in commercial cotton or okra. In 2025, using PPA 7721 funds, counties and CDFA in Southern California, detected CSB in several nurseries. The primary hosts were Hibiscus and Malva. Survey results included 10 nurseries with 8,781 positive plants; of these, 8,608 plants were treated, inspected, and released. A total of 173 plants were either treated and placed on hold or tagged for destruction.

### **Federal Deregulation of RIFA**

CDFA had received a request from USDA about what potential deregulation impacts would be for red imported fire ant (RIFA). No other specific updates had been provided at that time.

### **Brief Quarantines Update**

There were five counties with active invasive fruit fly quarantines based on detections in 2025. Santa Clara and Alameda counties had a Mediterranean fruit fly (MedFly) quarantine. Riverside and San Bernardino counties had an Oriental fruit fly (OFF) quarantine. Los Angeles County had a Caribbean fruit fly (CFF) quarantine.

State exterior quarantine updates:

- Guava root knot nematode – new quarantine regulation
- Spotted lantern fly – added South Carolina
- Japanese beetle – added Oregon
- Pink bollworm – enforcement ceased, regulation repeal pending

## **COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE**

### **CACASA Nursery, Seed and Apiary Committee**

Seed subvention sunsets in 2027. There are still funds available (\$120k per year) for counties who participate in seed enforcement activities. Apiary registrations are now open via BeeWhere. The Comprehensive Pest Prevention Program Analysis (C3PA) report to identify pathways was pending review.

### **CACASA Pest Prevention Committee**

The Committee's priority was restoring High Risk Pest Exclusion Program funding for inspection activities of incoming parcels at facilities such as airports and large shipping hubs and inspection of nursery stock from high risk areas.

## **NURSERY SERVICES PROGRAM UPDATE**

The License to Sell Nursery Stock's minimum license fee (per FAC 6723) of \$150 per license, was instituted with the A-quarter license period (starting January 1, 2026). Notifications went out to all nurseries in November 2025 to explain the change in fees.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE RECOMENDATIONS FOR BOARD VACANCIES**

Cox summarized the meeting of the Nominating Committee held on December 18, 2025. CDFA had received two applications for appointment for two vacant voting member positions: Josh Puckett and Chris Wichman. The Nominating Committee reviewed all applications received, and recommended reappointment of Josh Puckett and appointment of Chris Wichman to the Board. The Board discussed and accepted the recommendations from the Committee.

#### **Board Motion #3**

The Board recommended the reappointment of Josh Puckett to the Nursery Advisory Board as a voting member.

Motion: Mike Doiron

Second: David Kirby

#### **Details of Board Vote**

In Favor: David Cox, Mike Doiron, Michael Frantz, James Hessler, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Daniel Waterhouse

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dustin Hooper, Bruce Jensen, Phillip Johnson, Carl Pongs, Josh Puckett

#### **Board Motion #4**

The Board recommended the appointment of Chris Wichman to the Nursery Advisory Board as a voting member.

Motion: Michael Frantz

Second: James Hessler

#### **Details of Board Vote**

In Favor: David Cox, Mike Doiron, Michael Frantz, James Hessler, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Daniel Waterhouse

Against: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Dustin Hooper, Bruce Jensen, Phillip Johnson, Carl Pongs, Josh Puckett

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

After a brief discussion, the Board chose to table this discussion until the next meeting after a review and discussion to amend the Board Procedures.

### **DISCUSSION ON LETTER TO THE SECRETARY REGARDING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE CODE SECTION 242**

Cox reviewed the letter that he sent to Secretary Ross regarding the Program's indirect costs exceeding the 5% cap as stated in Food and Agriculture Code (FAC) Section 242. Board members David Cox and Dan Waterhouse had met with members of the CDFA Executive Office. CDFA explained that pro rata is assessed by the State and then CDFA distributes the shared cost to its programs. All items hitting indirect costs are considered a direct benefit to a program. The total indirect costs are exceeding the 5% limit stated in FAC § 242; several factors contribute the overage. FAC § 242 was written in 1967 and updated in the 1980s, and thus certain indirect costs such as IT costs did not exist when originally written. Emily Robidart Rooney shared that indirect costs exceeding written codes is a larger issue than just within CDFA. Rooney offered to help the Board when they meet again about this issue.

### **NURSERY SERVICE PROGRAM BUDGET AND FUND CONDITION FOR FY 2026/27**

Jasmine Minhas presented the Nursery Services Program's proposed spending plan and fund condition statement (attached NAB Budget and Fund condition). Projected increases in expenditures were due to increases in overhead cost, contracts, and administrative staff salaries. An expected increase in revenue for FY 26/27 was anticipated due to the Minimum License Fee of \$150 per license being implemented.

#### **Board Motion #5**

The Board recommended a proposed spending plan for FY 2026/27 of \$3,788,760, including estimated pro rata of \$170,290.

Motion: David Kirby  
Second: Mike Doiron

#### **Details of Board Vote**

In Favor: David Cox, Mike Doiron, Michael Frantz, James Hessler, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Daniel Waterhouse  
Against: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Dustin Hooper, Bruce Jensen, Phillip Johnson, Carl Pongs, Josh Puckett

### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

### **NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

- Election of officers
- Review and proposed amendments to the Board Procedures
- Response to the Board's letter to the Secretary regarding FAC § 242 from the CDFA Executive Office

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Michael Paule, Associate Governmental Program Analyst  
Nursery Services Program  
California Department of Food & Agriculture

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