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February 3, 2014

The Honorable Karen Ross  
California Department of Food and Agriculture  
1220 'N' Street, Suite 400  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Ross:

As we begin our driest water year on record, California farmers and ranchers will be facing unprecedented challenges in the months ahead. The California Department of Food and Agriculture will need to work proactively in providing outreach and assistance to farmers, and farmworkers, impacted by this drought.

The Department has done an excellent job in coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, other state agencies, and community-based organizations in helping to promote available federal/state assistance programs to growers. We greatly appreciate the work the Department has done in compiling this information.

As we move forward, the Board is eager to work with the Department in helping to accomplish the recommendations listed below that we believe are important during this crisis period.

- **Farmer/Farmworker Forums:** Working with federal/state agencies, CDFA should host a number of small forums throughout the state providing information on available assistance programs.
- **Food Bank Assistance:** CDFA should continue to work with California Emergency Food Link, California Association of Food Banks, the Fresno Community Food Bank, and others in addressing food needs with the Central Valley.
- **USDA Section 32 – Disaster Assistance:** CDFA, in coordination with the Brown Administration, should request USDA disaster assistance for farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers through Section 32 funding to address needs that cannot be met through other disaster assistance programs.
- **Drought Damage to California Agriculture:** CDFA, in coordination with the University of California, the California State University system, and others, should develop a report documenting the impact of this drought upon California's agricultural sector.



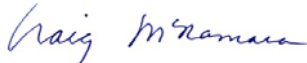
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In addition to the above recommendations, the Board is offering our monthly meetings to be a public forum on drought related issues. Our upcoming meeting on March 4<sup>th</sup> will focus on a drought update within the Central Valley. We look forward to coordinating with you on additional meeting opportunities in other drought impacted regions of the state.

This drought will have significant impacts on our agricultural community and we must work collectively with our state, federal and community partners to bring resources and assistance to regions and local communities that need it most. This Board stands ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Craig McNamara". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Craig McNamara  
President

