

COVID-19 regulation would disrupt the food supply chain, argue attorneys

A pair of lawsuits being heard in San Francisco Superior Court are challenging the legal authority of new COVID-19 worker safety requirements adopted in November by the California Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) Standards Board. A judge on Thursday heard arguments on the two cases and will decide next week whether to block the new regulations.

In one complaint, the National Retail Federation argues the provisions on paid leave for exposed employees and mandated testing are harmful to small businesses and would not prevent the spread of COVID-19, which has mostly occurred outside of workplaces.

In a separate case, a coalition of agricultural groups led by the Western Growers Association carries the same arguments and also seeks to strike out provisions on housing for temporary workers and transportation to job sites.

Along with Western Growers, the plaintiffs include the California Farm Bureau, the California Business Roundtable, the California Association of Winegrape Growers, the Grower-Shipper Association of Central California and the Ventura County Agricultural Association.

“From the perspective of these farmers, compliance would mean, in effect, a likely risk of insolvency and certainly the likely prospect of a disruption to the food supply chain,” said David Schwarz, the attorney representing the coalition.



The arguments by the two attorneys covered much of the same ground as the daylong hearing when the Cal/OSHA board approved the emergency standards.

Judge Ethan Schulman immediately dug into the National Retail Federation's arguments, calling them "schizophrenic" for claiming the regulations duplicate existing standards while also being "massively burdensome."

Arguing on behalf of the federation, attorney Jason Mills clarified that most of the regulations codify existing Cal/OSHA guidelines, but the board has also pushed too far on enforcing paid leave and testing, which forces employers to focus less on actually protecting workers.

Both lawsuits took issue with the need for an emergency standard. While Mills acknowledged the pandemic is a worldwide emergency, he said that alone is not a sufficient reason to add more regulations. Both attorneys seized on the fact that board staff were unable to find evidence that the vast majority of California workplaces are not already in compliance with COVID-19 requirements to control spread.

"What an employer can't control is what somebody does the other 16 hours of their day," said Mills. "They might not be spreading it when they're sleeping, but they are if they're at the Thanksgiving dinner and they are [if] they're out with friends."

Schulman countered that Western Growers was able to trace a small number of infections among agricultural workers to exposures outside of work. He asked if this type of evidence would exempt a business from having to provide paid leave and benefits, as the regulation intends to allow. Mills replied that the regulation actually incentivizes employees to say the exposure came from work, which sets up a fight with the employer. He added that a worker could say they lost their sense of taste for 90 days—a recognized symptom of the virus—and still qualify for leave with full salary and benefits, which could destroy a small business.

William Downer, the state's attorney, argued the point of the regulation was not about tracing infections back to the source but about keeping potentially infectious employees out of the workplace, and the paid compensation was to ensure the employee did not fear losing earnings for reporting an illness or testing positive. Without employer testing, workers would have to rely on their own devices for testing, he added.

Downer described the board as a "quasi-legislative body" that is not required to have scientific studies to support the need for regulations, though it did find "an overrepresentation of temporary farmworkers testing positive" and more than 7,000 complaints sent to Cal/OSHA. Mills said the board never explained what those complaints were about, if they were substantiated and if the regulation addressed the concerns.

Downer explained that Cal/OSHA investigations over the summer and testimony at the board hearing—including from workers at the Foster Farms outbreaks—indicated the previous regulatory strategy was not successful and new enforcement tools were needed.

Schulman recognized that the ag coalition had a much stronger case than the retailers for irreparable harm posed to farmers.

Schwarz elaborated on that notion, saying the spacing requirements for transportation would cut in half the amount of workers that could be bussed to a job site, further exacerbating the existing labor shortage.

"There's not enough buses in this land of ours that could be identified and purchased in a reasonable amount of time," said Schwarz. "There are not enough licensed drivers. There's not enough hours in the day to move people from one place to another."

Complying with the regulations, he said, would lead to farmers not harvesting fields because of the lack of labor.

“These employers are not able to say, ‘Well, we’ll make it up at the back end’,” he said. “You don’t get to repurpose spoiled milk any more than you get to repackage rotten vegetables.”



David Schwarz of Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP

He pointed out that the federal and state governments considered it a matter of national security to maintain the food supply during the pandemic.

Schwarz also took issue with comments submitted by Attorney General Xavier Becerra describing workers as living in “company towns” at the mercy of their employers. Schwarz said this denigrates the workers and does not reflect the realities of the labor market, in which the workers are in high demand and often move across a number of job sites.

Downer contested that removing the transportation and housing provisions, or the paid leave and testing requirements, “strikes at the heart of this emergency standard,” adding: “If your honor does find [a labor code] violation, the entire regulation will not survive.”

The plaintiffs have a high bar to reach as they submit their final briefs this week. Schulman said he was reluctant to have a court decide how an agency should implement public health regulations during a pandemic, especially when the only precedent was just one case relating to religious freedom.

“Judges are not public health authorities, and judges are not scientific experts,” he said. “We can’t get involved in the minutiae of how an agency decides to try and protect the public, where the stakes are so high and so serious.”

Will CME's water futures market help as a risk management tool?

A new financial tool that allows water users and investors to hedge on the future price of California water rights settled its first contracts Jan. 20.

“And it was really exciting,” Tim McCourt, global head of equity index and alternative investment products at the CME Group, said the next day. The CME Group’s NASDAQ Veles California Water Index (NQH2O) futures market was launched in December. It became possible following the establishment of the California water index in 2018.

WestWater Research developed an algorithm for price discovery, which is based on transactions for water access from surface water and four groundwater basins (Central, Chino, Main and Mojave). Veles, a financial firm focused on water, and NASDAQ established the index using WestWater’s pricing tool. Once the index was created, financial instruments such as the futures contract could follow.

The index calculates the spot market price, in dollars per acre foot, each week. McCourt said the January expiration settled 32 contracts. As of this week, there had been 180 trades on the contract.

“All great milestones for a futures contract that’s just about a month old,” he said. The first contracts settled at \$506.66 per acre foot.

The water futures contract is financially settled, meaning there is no physical delivery of water. McCourt says it’s a good risk management tool for water users who want to protect themselves from sudden increases in the spot price, and he says it could also lead to more efficient water management.



Tim McCourt, CME Group

“With the price transparency and efficiency provided by the futures market, you can now make a very informed decision about consumption or provision of water at that certain time,” McCourt said.

Alan Boyce is executive chairman of Materra Farming, which grows dates, pistachios, tomatoes and other crops in California’s Imperial and Central valleys. He has been watching the launch of the futures market because of its potential to help protect him from high prices on the spot market.

“We have so many variables we can’t control, if I could just lock in the price of water, that’d be good,” he said. Or, if the market suggests the water he needs will become more expensive, he could choose to not plant his cannery tomatoes and sell whatever water rights he has to a neighbor. But Boyce hasn’t gotten involved in the market yet because he says the futures contract needs more players.

“If I’m going to use it as a hedge, then I need to be able to get in and out,” he said. And that means there needs to be enough activity “so that when I want to transact, I’m not moving the market.”

CME Group has a “market maker” program to entice investors, McCourt says. They will provide balance as players who are not vested in the actual use of the water.

“We have liquidity providers that help marry, for lack of a better word, the natural suppliers and the natural demanders,” McCourt said. Though he declined to name specific participants, he says the water futures might be of interest to managers of sustainable investment portfolios.

“You also have investment firms who are looking at investing in water as a diversified investment allocation,” he said.

Boyce says the ability to protect against higher prices could also lead to more farms investing in water efficiency so they ultimately use less water. Right now, he says there are big water market users who buy and sell frequently and are more well-versed in the existing systems. That gives them an advantage over smaller operators.

“The futures market’s gonna benefit the smaller guy a lot,” Boyce said.

But some California water managers, users and market observers are less confident the futures contract will do much. Tom Birmingham is general manager of Westlands Water District, which manages water for western Fresno and Kings counties. The creation of the futures contract, he says, seems to reflect growing interest in California's water scarcity and how the state is trying to manage that, including the existence of the spot market.

"Somebody saw it as an opportunity to make some money," Birmingham said. That's not a criticism, he adds, because the growing interest in California water reflects real challenges that agricultural users, especially, face. But hedging in the futures market does not strike him as particularly advantageous over other market tools.

"When you think about it in the context of a tool to hedge on the price of water, you're just making a bet," he said. "And there are potentially safer bets that you might be able to make."

The California State Board of Food and Agriculture focused its Feb. 2 meeting on the water market and the futures contract.

Roland Fumasi, head of RaboResearch Food & Agribusiness, offered his perspective as an ag lender. He says most California crops are not part of existing commodity futures contracts, which means the concept of using this risk management tool will be brand new to most producers.

"I think overall right now, it's all about us being in the learning and experimentation phase," he said. "I think we're a ways out from producers in California using this to actively hedge on a regular basis."

"At the end of the day, there, there is no new water, there is no new conveyance, as a result of this futures trading. And even more importantly, it doesn't mitigate a single acre from being fallowed due to SGMA (Sustainable Groundwater Management Act) or any other regulation that is coming at us down the pipe," said Jared Plumlee, vice president of farming at Booth Ranches, which grows citrus.

He added that it doesn't seem likely water districts would want to put public funds into the financial markets, even as a risk management strategy. "It's just too early to tell what the impact is going to be if, if there is one at all."

"Financial risk is a fact," said Ellen Hanak, vice president and director of the Water Policy Center at the Public Policy Institute of California. "If you look at how businesses try to manage, they often will try to use various kinds of financial instruments to manage financial risk."

Hanak presented at the board meeting and also spoke with *Agri-Pulse* in an interview earlier. She said even though the futures market will not directly help with any of the water scarcity and transport challenges in California, the new futures contract is attracting more out-of-state attention to the spot market.

"The more people understand how the actual market works and what kind of protections are in place, and the more there's a conversation about how to grow this market in a way that is environmentally and socially responsible, the better," she said.



Roland Fumasi, RaboResearch

Is water infrastructure or green technology better for stimulating California's economy?

Gov. Gavin Newsom last month unveiled a five-year infrastructure plan to help stimulate economic recovery in California. A significant portion of the plan includes a \$4.1 billion climate and environment package, a quarter of which is aimed at transitioning the state to zero-emission vehicles.

A report by the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office finds that such green stimulus plans could help over the long term, but may not help businesses and the economy immediately recover from the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

“We find it unlikely that state-funded green stimulus would have large effects on overall short-term economic conditions,” the researchers wrote, recommending instead that the Legislature focus on other benefits, especially for reducing the amount of damage inflicted by climate change.

Agricultural economists, along with farm groups, have made the same argument for investing in water infrastructure as an economic stimulus.

More than 200 agricultural organizations sent letters recently to President Joe Biden and members of Congress arguing that water infrastructure projects are exactly what rural communities in the West need right now.

“Beyond longer-term impacts to the West, these infrastructure projects would also bring vital construction jobs, which will greatly benefit rural communities impacted by COVID-19 in their efforts to recover,” reads the letter to Biden. **“Water infrastructure investments not only provide immediate short-term economic benefits and create jobs — vital to a nation facing massive job loss — they are the foundation that the economy will need for the foreseeable future.”**

The coalition, which includes dozens of California organizations, argues policymakers in recent years have been solving water shortages by moving water away from irrigated agriculture.

“If this continues, we will see rising conflict between agricultural, rural, urban and environmental stakeholders, as well as a further decline in our national food security,” they write.



UC Berkeley Economist David Sunding

Before the coalition sent the letters, Congress passed, and then–President Donald Trump signed, a package of stimulus measures. Yet water-related provisions in that package do little to address critical aging infrastructure in the West or to resolve water conflicts between urban and rural users.

The provisions recommend funding from the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act for a number of California water projects, such as improvements to the Sites Reservoir, Friant-Kern Canal, Delta-Mendota Canal and others.

Dennis Nuxoll, vice president of federal government affairs at the Western Growers Association, noted while one proposal to create a revolving fund for repairing aging water infrastructure is

promising, no money was attached and more work remains to be done.



Dennis Nuxoll, Western Growers

The California Water Commission, the body that oversees the distribution of such state and federal water infrastructure dollars, has been hosting a number of meetings and workshops to explore how the state can finance such improvements for conveyance and what economic gains may result. The commission plans to present a report of its findings to the administration by midyear.

“Infrastructure spending is some of the most potent kind of public spending,” UC Berkeley agricultural economics Professor David Sunding noted at one recent commission meeting. “It’s why we talk so much about infrastructure in this country as being a good kind of public investment.”

Sunding has been working with a coalition known as the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley. The coalition has offered the governor and lawmakers a list of policy recommendations for water infrastructure investments that would better prepare the valley for water uncertainty and scarcity as the state implements the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), as droughts grow more extreme and frequent under climate change forecasts and as surface water delivery is increasingly disrupted by environmental conflicts.

Water infrastructure investments can stimulate the economy in two ways, Sunding explained. Since water is used by virtually every sector, it creates economic activity and benefits for urban and agricultural sectors alike, along with indirect benefits to the region and state. It directly accounts for more acres cultivated and more high-value crops grown, and creates demand for the services of farmworkers, truckers and food processing workers, with a ripple effect of benefits throughout the economy.

The other half of the economic stimulus comes in the form of construction jobs, engineering and design activities, and ongoing operations — which all require labor and other inputs, Sunding said.

Economists have for decades studied the amount that agricultural and urban water users would pay to ensure a stable supply. That value directly translates to the amount of economic benefit that water users experience from project investments, said Sunding, adding that there are many readily available examples of projects that have generated regional benefits roughly equal to the costs of construction and operation.

“This is one reason that politicians and other policymakers love infrastructure spending,” he said. “Members of both parties are in favor.”

In a recent blog post, Ellen Hanak, a researcher leading the Water Policy Center at the Public Policy Institute of California, pointed to investments following the 2008 recession.

“The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [ARRA] made \$13.5 billion available for 'shovel-ready' water infrastructure projects to support economic recovery,” writes Hanak.

“Although California saw little net benefit in some ARRA-funded areas, like flood management, the state’s water supply and wastewater utilities received a major boost.”

Hanak and her colleagues argue that funding clean drinking water in poor communities and boosting the water system’s resilience to climate change would serve California well.

Sunding noted that another benefit to water users is reliability for delivering water in dry years when users would be willing to pay more to avoid a shortage.

Less tangible are the economic benefits to disadvantaged communities. Sunding has been studying this in detail in parts of Southern California as well as the western and southern areas of the San Joaquin Valley, which contain many of the state’s poorest communities.

“It's hard to believe in California, in the state with so much economic power and wealth, that there are census tracts, neighborhoods where upwards of three-quarters of families live below the state poverty line,” he said. “Those families tend to be concentrated in agricultural work.”

Sunding pointed out that the state’s new environmental justice tool shows how policies that affect agriculture have led to regional economic impacts as well.

At the same time, SGMA is projected to reduce state and local tax revenue by more than \$500 million per year, according to a report Sunding published in 2020. Water projects could mitigate these impacts and avoid some of those losses.

Sunding argued that jobs lost in farming due to a lack of water supply will have “huge economic and social costs,” especially in agriculture, “where the workforce is at the bottom end of the socioeconomic spectrum in many cases” and there may be no other jobs available for them.

“Losing jobs in agriculture or other parts of the economy may lead to out-migration or worse: a condition of chronic unemployment,” he said.

Richard McCann, a co-founder and partner of the economic consulting firm M.Cubed, added if agriculture shrinks too much in a region, then community services disappear as well.

“It accelerates in such a way that the farmers who were there and still operating may not have the services for their production to continue,” said McCann. “That may actually push out more agricultural production.”

Sunding pointed out that big infrastructure undertakings like the Central Valley Project were initially built as community development efforts to uplift local economies.

When state lawmakers shot down a bill last year proposing \$400 million for repairing parts of the Friant-Kern Canal, opponents had argued the agricultural water users and residents of that region should be footing the cost.

“That way lies madness,” said Sunding of this type of argument, which is expressed frequently by some economists as well. “We are one state.”

If every policy is evaluated through the lens of who benefits and who should pay, “it's going to be very hard to make decisions,” he said.

And time is running out for those decisions. Scientists at the Department of Water Resources have found that increases in sea level rise will reduce water deliveries out of the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta by as much as 50% by 2100.

“Without a doubt, the impacts will spill beyond [direct water users],” said Sunding. “There are implications for the entire state, whether you happen to be in an area that's using water directly from the Delta or not.”

Stephen Hatchett, an economist with the consulting firm ERA Economics, cautioned that as an economic stimulus plan, most water infrastructure investments — even those rare projects that are shovel-ready — are not the best tools for short-term recovery.

“I usually think of water projects, because they are construction intensive, as being more useful for longer-term, regional economic development,” he said.

Vilsack seeks to sell ag on climate policies, offers help on market concentration

Tom Vilsack is reassuring farmers and their allies in Congress that the Biden administration’s drive to address climate change will provide significant economic benefits without jeopardizing demand for biofuels.

During his Senate confirmation hearing Tuesday, Vilsack affirmed that he wanted to use USDA’s Commodity Credit Corp. spending authority to create an agricultural carbon bank but portrayed it as a way to demonstrate that the markets would work.

“It is a great tool for us to create the kind of structure that will inform future farm bills about what will encourage carbon sequestration, what will encourage precision agriculture, what will encourage soil health and regenerative agricultural practices,” said Vilsack, whose nomination was approved by the committee shortly after the hearing.



Ag Secretary nominee Tom Vilsack appeared virtually for his Feb. 2, 2021 confirmation hearing before the Senate Ag Committee. (Photo: Joy Philippi)

Directly speaking to an issue raised in recent weeks by the committee's top Republican, John Boozman of Arkansas, Vilsack said "there is a concern that a carbon sequestration bank would potentially benefit investors or benefit third parties. It has to be structured and devised and designed in a way that the principal beneficiaries are farmers. Why? Because we want them to do this, we want to encourage it."

Vilsack also pledged to “aggressively pursue” farmer input on the administration’s climate policy. Executive orders signed by President Joe Biden last week called for doubling the amount of land conserved in the United States and directed USDA “to collect input from farmers, ranchers, and other stakeholders on how to use federal programs to encourage adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices.”

He insisted that there would be significant demand for biofuels for years to come, both in conventional motor vehicles but also in aviation and marine applications. **Repeatedly citing his own older vehicle, a 2006 Ford Focus, Vilsack said the transition to electric vehicles would take a long time. “There are a lot of reasons why this administration (and) future administrations will continue investing in the biofuel industry,” he said.**

He also said he would push ahead with expanding the fueling infrastructure for higher ethanol blends. “We will continue to look for ways to provide assistance, because it's about strong markets for farmers and it's about jobs in rural areas.”

Vilsack also promised to do what he could to address the impact of consolidation in meat processing and other sectors. He suggested working with the Justice Department to reconstitute a task force to study the practices in the sector, a step he undertook during the Obama administration.

He didn’t answer directly when Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, asked him whether he would bring back a rule he issued in the final weeks of the Obama administration to make it easier for individual livestock and poultry producers to win cases challenging processor practices. The Trump administration withdrew that rule and replaced it in December with a version more favorable to processors.

Vilsack instead emphasized what he sees as a need for increased processing capacity, citing the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said a \$60 million grant program authorized by the omnibus bill enacted in December is a good start; the measure would subsidize small meat processors seeking to retool their operations so they can qualify for federal inspection, enabling them to sell products across state lines. Federal efforts to increase processing capacity have “got to be much, much bigger than that in my view,” he said.

He didn't rule out resurrecting country-of-origin labeling requirements for meat, but only if there is a way to ensure that the World Trade Organization finds them legal. Congress repealed previous COOL rules after the WTO authorized Canada and Mexico to retaliate against U.S. exports.

The Obama administration “attempted on three occasions to sort of strengthen the country-of-origin labeling unsuccessfully because the WTO challenges by our Canadian friends, which would have resulted obviously in retaliation,” Vilsack said.

“I am absolutely willing to listen to anybody and everybody who's got an idea about how we can circumvent, or how we can get to a point where the WTO doesn't necessarily slap it down.”



Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich. (Photo: Joy Philippi)

Trade wasn't a major topic of the hearing, but Vilsack assured Boozman he would work closely with the U.S. Trade Representative to ensure trade agreements are properly enforced, including the new U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

He also said he would use USDA's undersecretary of trade to promote U.S. products overseas and cited Southeast Asia and Africa, in the longer term, as lucrative potential markets for American farmers.

No doubt drawing on his experience with the U.S. Dairy Export Council, he also pitched climate-friendly farming as critical to U.S. trade in the future. Vilsack is credited with pushing the U.S. dairy industry to commit last year to becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

He said that technology would be "critically important" in making U.S. agriculture more sustainable. **"I can tell you we're facing competition on not just the quality, not just the safety, not just the taste, not just the price, we're also now facing competition on whether or not, whatever it is we're selling, has been sustainably produced," Vilsack said.**

"So, to the extent that we can make the case to the world that what's being raised, what's being grown, what's being sold outside the U.S. is being raised and grown in the most sustainable animal-friendly environments, we can make the case, and provide a market advantage to the U.S. So, innovation becomes critically important."

Rural development wasn't a major topic of the hearing, although Vilsack repeatedly portrayed climate change, biofuel production and biobased manufacturing as major opportunities for improving rural economies.

Vilsack's nomination has been criticized on the left, but he has strong support in the Senate. "I know that you will not only bring experience but new ideas," Michigan Democrat Debbie Stabenow, the Ag Committee's incoming chairwoman, told Vilsack.

Addressing concerns that he had done too little to address racial injustice at the department during his eight-year tenure in the Obama administration, Vilsack said it was time to **"fully, deeply and completely address the long-standing inequities, unfairness and discrimination that has been the history of USDA programs for far too long."**

He did not provide any details of changes he would make, but said he looked "to a future where all are treated equitably, fairly, where there is zero tolerance for discrimination, where programs actually open up opportunity for all who need help and lift the burden of persistent poverty for those most in need."

New House Ag Republican members represent top ag districts

The House Agriculture Committee is getting seven new Republican members, who represent some of the most productive farming regions in the country. Democrats have yet to release their full roster of committee members, but House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced late Tuesday that Rep. Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif., would be on the panel again for this Congress.

Panetta also serves on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, which handles trade and tax policy.

The committee has new leadership with Rep. David Scott, D-Ga., as chairman and Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson of Pennsylvania as the ranking Republican. New members will be coming into a committee that likely will focus on prioritizing nutrition programs and prioritize how farmers can help ameliorate climate change through conservation practices. Here’s a preview:



Rep. Kat Cammack
R-Florida



Rep. Michael Cloud
R-Texas



Rep. Randy Feenstra
R-Iowa



Rep. Michelle Fischbach
R-Minnesota



Rep. Tracey Mann
R-Kansas



Rep. Mary Miller
R-Illinois



Rep. Barry Moore
R-Alabama

Rep. Randy Feenstra, R-Iowa, represents Iowa’s 4th District, which ranks second nationally in terms of ag production, according to the [2017 Census of Agriculture](#). The district sprawls across northwestern and north-central Iowa, one of the most fertile regions of the country. According to his [website](#), Feenstra says he’ll work on agricultural market price transparency, protecting the Renewable Fuel Standard, expanding broadband access and boosting Iowa’s relationship with top trading partners. A seat on the Ag Committee is a big gain for the northwest Iowa district after former Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, was [stripped of his seat](#) in January 2019 because of his controversial comments. [Feenstra beat King](#) in the Republican primary in June.

Rep. Tracey Mann, R-Kan., serves Kansas’ 1st District, which covers about two-thirds of the state, running from the Colorado border to Manhattan, home of Kansas State University. Mann replaces Sen. Roger Marshall, R-Kan., who ran for the Senate seat vacated by the retirement of former Senate Ag Committee Chair Pat Roberts, R-Kan. Mann is a former Kansas lieutenant governor and holds a degree in agricultural economics. In an interview with *Agri-Pulse*, he listed three top priorities on the committee: protect crop insurance, stop over-regulation of agriculture, and promote “free and fair trade” around the world. “In my view, the distance from farm to fork has never been farther and we have to have people who stand up to an urban Congress and advocate for agriculture,” Mann said. His district ranks third for ag production.

Rep. Michelle Fischbach, R-Minn., unseated then-Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, D-Minn., to represent Minnesota’s 7th District, which includes most of western Minnesota. She formerly served as lieutenant governor of Minnesota and prior to that, president of the Minnesota Senate. Fischbach told *Agri-Pulse* in September her priorities include improving the food supply

chain to minimize disruptions from a pandemic, fighting for biofuel producers, and holding China accountable on trade. Her district ranks sixth in U.S. ag production.

Rep. Mary Miller, R-Ill., replaces retired Republican Rep. John Shimkus in Illinois' 15th District. Along with her husband, Miller manages a farm near Oakland, Ill. Her district produces corn and soybeans and covers most of the southeastern part of the state. She brings a more populist outlook than is traditional for Republicans on the Ag Committee; Miller is a critic of the meatpacking industry and told *Agri-Pulse* last year she supports breaking up the four largest packers “so we can have true competition.” She also supports mandatory country-of-origin labeling for meat. The district ranks 19th in ag production.

Rep. Barry Moore, R-Ala., serves Alabama’s 2nd District and replaces the recently retired Martha Roby. Moore is a small-business owner who grew up on a farm in the southeastern part of the state and served in the National Guard for six years. Growing up on a farm drove Moore’s passion to earn a degree in agricultural science from Auburn University in 1992. His district ranks 72nd in ag production.

Rep. Michael Cloud, R-Texas, is a small-business owner and has represented the 27th District of Texas since 2018. It covers part of the Gulf coastline from Corpus Christi to Wharton County near Houston, and Bastrop County near Austin. He’ll be the only Texas Republican on the committee. Farmers in his district grow significant amounts of cotton, sorghum and rice, although it ranks just 90th in ag production. Two districts in west Texas that won't have seats on the committee, the 13th represented by first-term Rep. Ronny Johnson and the 19th represented by Jodey Arrington, rank among the top 15 districts in U.S. production. Cloud's priorities include ensuring the federal government doesn't over-regulate how Texas farmers manage their land.

Rep. Kat Cammack, R-Fla., said her main priority on the committee will be expanding access to high-speed internet in rural areas. She represents the 3rd District, which is in the north-central part of the state. The district ranks just 211th nationally in ag production, but according to her congressional website, it’s known for peanut, livestock, blueberry, dairy, hay, and timber production. It was represented by her former boss, Rep. Ted Yoho, who retired. She was deputy chief of staff for Yoho when she left his office and returned to Florida in 2019. Cammack, 32, is the youngest Republican serving in Congress. She was raised on a cattle farm and her family also operates a commercial sandblasting business.

American farmers anxiously wait on Biden’s plan for China

China is emptying out U.S. corn and soybean supplies, helping make the 2020-21 marketing year a success for American farmers. That’s ramping up the pressure on the new Biden administration to work out a sustainable trading connection between the countries even as the political relationship remains fraught.

“We’re encouraged by the numbers that we’re seeing, but we haven’t taken an eye off the long-term stability of the relationship,” Lesly McNitt, director of public policy and trade for the National Corn Growers Association, tells *Agri-Pulse*. “Long-term certainty and stability is a priority that we would like to see the U.S. and Chinese governments work toward.”

Chinese buyers went on a shopping spree for corn last week, making commitments to purchase about 5.5 million metric tons of U.S. corn for delivery in the 2020-21 marketing year. Those purchases included a single export grain sale announcement from USDA on Friday for 2.1 million tons.

But the situation is complicated, according to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has been suggesting in recent days that the Biden administration can cooperate with the Chinese on some things while at the same time remaining critical of the government.

He says he stands firmly behind his belief that the Chinese government committed genocide against the Uyghurs, a religious minority in the country, but also maintains the U.S. and China can work together.

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Tuesday the U.S. will take a “multi-layered” approach to how it deals with China. She also confirmed that there are no plans yet for a call between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping.



President Joe Biden takes part in a 2012 meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Biden was the Vice President of the Obama administration at the time.

The U.S.-China relationship “is arguably the most important relationship that we have in the world going forward,” Blinken said last week in his first press conference after being sworn in. “It’s going to shape a lot of the future that we all live, and increasingly that relationship has some adversarial aspects to it. It has competitive ones. And it also still has cooperative ones.”

The example he gave on cooperation was combating global warming, but it’s the future of international trade that has groups like the U.S. Grains Council, the National Corn Growers Association and the U.S. Soybean Export Council concerned.

After a depressed year in trade in 2019 amid rising tariffs being set by both the U.S. and China, 2020 offered renewed optimism thanks to the trade war détente reached in February. Neither side lifted its tariffs as part of the Economic and Trade Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People’s Republic of China, better known as the “phase one” deal, but China did agree to purchase \$80 billion worth of U.S. ag commodities over two years, and the country soon began exempting U.S. commodities from tariffs.

Biden has said he has no intention of immediately lifting the U.S. tariffs on China, and Missouri Corn Growers Association CEO Gary Marshall says he hopes the U.S. and China will continue to uphold the trade agreement.

“We’re hoping that the Biden administration continues the second year of the China agreement,” he told *Agri-Pulse*. “There’s been no indication that they’re not going to do that. We think it’s going to be a fantastic year for corn exports, not only to China, but around the world.”

As to whether the U.S. and China will lift their tariffs, that hasn’t been decided, Blinken said Monday.

“We’re reviewing all of that,” he told MSNBC’s Andrea Mitchell in an interview. “We have to make sure that any time we act, the first question we ask ourselves is: Is this advancing the interests of our own people? Is it making them more prosperous? Is it advancing their security? Is it extending their values? That’s the first question we have to ask. And so when it comes to something like a tariff, is it doing more harm to us than it is to the country they’re being wielded against? That’s the question we’re asking.”



Secretary of State Anthony Blinken

Jim Mulhern, CEO of the National Milk Producers Federation, says dairy farmers are also counting on the Biden administration to carry out the “full implementation of the phase one U.S.-China trade agreement,” but stressed that he would like to see an end to the “market-damaging retaliatory tariffs on U.S. dairy exports to China.”

Meanwhile, China has been on a charm offensive. The Global Times, a state-run media outlet, ran an article on the “message of cooperation to the US” that Communist Party officials are expressing to the Biden administration. The article, below an illustration of shaking hands in front of a backdrop of both countries’ flags, quotes Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng saying, “Anything is possible when China and the United States choose to cooperate.”

And the massive 2.1-million-ton corn purchase China made Friday may have been a message itself, said Arlan Suderman, chief commodities economist for StoneX Group Inc.

“Why make such a big purchase right now versus buying all along that would have less market influence?” he said. “These are just a lot of questions that are unanswered.”

In other words, why not make more frequent smaller purchases that don’t have the effect of driving up prices for future business? And the purchases, he stressed, come at a time when some Communist Party officials are advocating self-sufficiency.

And China has reentered the U.S. ethanol market, buying 8.6 million gallons in November – the largest purchase the Chinese have made since 2018, according to the Renewable Fuels Association.

China’s failure through much of 2020 to make big purchases of ethanol was considered a stumbling block to reaching the first-year goal of the “phase one” deal, but now that trade looks like it is resuming at a record pace.

Archer-Daniels-Midland Company Executive Vice President and CFO Ray Guy Young said in the company’s fourth quarter earnings call he believes China has already committed to buy 200 million gallons of the corn-based biofuel in 2021.

“I’ve been saying it all along,” McNitt said. “Ethanol is a big opportunity and we’re coming up on the first year of the U.S.-China ‘phase one’ deal and China is still a little bit behind the ball on its purchase commitments. Ethanol would be a significant way to move the needle.”

Demand for plant-based protein alternatives surges amid labeling battles

Environmentally conscious consumers are showing increased interest in plant-based alternatives to meat and dairy products, creating new demand for some crops. But the labeling debate looms large.

“Plant-based protein and sustainability go hand in hand, and we anticipate that interest in them will only continue to grow in 2021,” according to the International Food Information Council, an industry group that tracks consumer behavior.

According to IFIC’s 2020 Food and Health Survey, 59% of Americans say it’s important that the food they purchase or consume is produced in an environmentally sustainable way. A separate IFIC survey, conducted in November, found about two in every three consumers had tried at least one new type of plant-based protein product during the year; 28% had tried a meat alternative, and 24% had tried a milk substitute. More affluent Americans and consumers under 45 were the most likely to have tried plant-based proteins.

The meat and dairy industries can take heart that 76% of consumers still consider themselves omnivores, while only 2% identify as vegans and 9% as vegetarians. Vegans avoid all animal products, including dairy and eggs.

And dairy industry leaders point out that, while the percentage growth in plant-based milk alternatives was strong, it paled compared to the dollar growth of real milk during the pandemic. “In sheer sales growth, plant-based beverages aren’t on the same playing field as milk,” pointed out the National Milk Producers Federation. (See table below.)

COVID: Mar 9, 2020 through Dec 27, 2020			
Dollar Share of Combined Dairy + Non-Dairy Alts	Products	% Dollar Growth vs. Same Period Year Ago	Dollar Growth \$Millions
100.0%	Total Milk + Alternatives	10.6%	\$1,381.1
85.4%	Total Fluid Milk	8.7%	\$986.4
14.6%	Total Milk Alternatives	23.2%	\$394.7

But food industry giants continue bringing out new plant-based products. In January, PepsiCo Inc. announced it was forming The PLANeT Partnership with Beyond Meat Inc. to produce and market new snacks and beverages made from plant-based protein. Ram Krishnan, PepsiCo's global chief commercial officer, said plant-based proteins were a "new frontier in our efforts to build a more sustainable food system and be a positive force for people and the planet, while meeting consumer demand for an expanded portfolio of more nutritious products."

Meanwhile, McDonald's has quietly started testing a McPlant burger, developed with Beyond Meat, in Denmark and Sweden, Bloomberg News reported this week.

Last year, coffee giant Starbucks announced a multi-decade goal of becoming a resource-positive company, defined as giving more than it takes from the planet, by setting 2030 target reductions for carbon, water, and waste. As part of these goals, the company will offer more plant-based

menu items and support dairy producers who participate in the Dairy Net Zero Initiative, a program that seeks to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

“Starbucks continues to offer more plant-based menu items across the globe, building on our ongoing sustainability commitments and global aspirations to be a positive resource company,” says a spokesperson for the Seattle-based firm.

Starbucks began offering soy-based milk alternatives in the United States in 1997. In 2015, 2016, and 2020, it added almond-, coconut- and oat-based milk alternatives, respectively. Last year, Starbucks also introduced a meatless breakfast sandwich, featuring plant-based Impossible products.



Carl Jorgensen, PBFA

According to research from the Plant-Based Foods Association, U.S. retail sales of plant-based foods grew 11.4% from April 2018 to April 2019, bringing the total market value to \$5 billion. The value of the plant-based meat category rose 18% to \$939 million, with refrigerated meat alternatives up 63%.

Sales of milk alternatives grew 5% over the same period, accounting for \$2 billion of the overall market, while sales of yogurt alternatives grew 31% to \$283 million, butter alternatives rose 8.4% to \$198 million, and cheese alternatives climbed 18% to \$189 million.

Carl Jorgensen, agriculture consultant for PBFA, says the organization expects to see much higher sales numbers for plant-based meat alternatives in 2020. “The pandemic supercharged growth in the plant-based meat sector due to an emphasis on healthier eating, focus on strengthening the immune system, and keeping the weight off,” Jorgensen said.

Globally, Swiss banking giant UBS is forecasting plant-based meat sales will reach \$50 billion by 2025, or 2.5% of total meat consumption by volume.

Jorgensen argues that U.S. agriculture is missing out on the opportunity to grow the crops used in these products because most of the ingredients used in plant-based meats in the United States are imported.

The trend over the past few years for both meat and dairy alternatives has been away from soy ingredients and toward pulses. Dry peas are the fastest-growing pulse source used for plant-based meat alternatives.

PBFA partnered with researchers at the University of Illinois to determine the number of acres that would be needed to grow pulses for the meat alternative market in the United States. **Using an estimated \$1.1 billion in 2020 meat-alternative sales, the research showed 188 million pounds of pulses requiring an estimated 263,775 acres would be needed from American farmers.**

Likewise, for the non-dairy market, almonds supplanted soybeans several years ago, and today oats are the second most-used ingredient in non-dairy options, followed by soy, which continues to decline.

“In a few years, oat milk will move into the number-one position. Oats are a more sustainable crop than almonds,” Jorgensen said. “We will see a big opportunity for American farmers to grow oats.”

Today, the majority of oats used in plant-based dairy alternatives are imported from Canada and Scandinavia. While many northern-tier farmers grow oats, they grow them mostly for forage or as a cover crop.

“As new seed varieties become available, we will see higher test weights in the Midwest, and those oats will be directed to the plant-based market,” Jorgensen said.

The U.S. dairy industry has tried for years to get the plant-based foods industry to stop using dairy-specific terms such as milk, cheese, yogurt, and butter on non-dairy products. In fact, longstanding federal Food and Drug Administration regulations define “milk” as a product that comes from a lactating animal, but the Trump administration and prior administrations have not enforced the standards.

“This issue has been going nowhere,” says attorney Clay Detlefsen, senior vice president of regulatory and environmental affairs for the National Milk Producers Federation. “We have really focused on trying to compel or force FDA to do the right thing.”



Clay Detlefsen, NMPF

NMPF filed a citizen petition with FDA in February 2019, which FDA failed to take action on, and then sent a letter to the FDA ombudsman this past October.

“We are asking FDA to follow the existing laws. If you don’t like the laws, then get them changed, but in the meantime abide by the law,” Detlefsen said. “At some point, FDA’s inaction results in rewriting the current laws that are already on the book.”

While Democrats and independents are more likely to embrace plant-based products, Detlefsen says it doesn’t matter that the incoming Congress and administration will be controlled by Democrats, because the law is the law.

NMPF may seek to use the Senate hearings for the nominees for Health and Human Services secretary and FDA commissioner to raise the issue.

“We will push the non-litigation option as far as possible, but I am not taking litigation off the table,” Detlefsen said.

Meanwhile, there have been efforts at the state level to restrict labeling of plant-based proteins. The California Department of Food and Agriculture sent a letter in late 2019 to Miyoko’s Creamery asking it to stop using “butter,” “lactose-free,” and “cruelty-free” on its plant-based foods.

But Miyoko’s hit back, filing a federal lawsuit claiming First Amendment rights, and the U.S. District Court of Northern California granted the company a preliminary injunction against enforcement while the litigation plays out.

Federal and state labeling bills have also been introduced to prevent plant-based foods from being labeled with dairy terms, and some states have passed similar legislation regarding meat labeling. Many of these bills are now tied up in the courts.

News Briefs:

California NRCS accepting applications for popular conservation program.

Producers interested in applying for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, a competitive USDA cost-share conservation program, should sign up soon to qualify for the first round in 2021. EQIP applications are accepted by NRCS year-round. The second batching period for Fiscal Year 2021 EQIP applications in California closes on March 3, 2021 with funding decisions to be made on March 17, 2021. The third batching period closes on June 9, 2021 with funding decisions to be made on June 23, 2021. EQIP is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The program provides financial and technical assistance to producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits. California NRCS State Conservationist Carlos Suarez says the department invested over \$94 million in fiscal year 2020 in the state's farm, ranch and non-industrial forestland using EQIP. "Investments were made primarily in forest restoration, water conservation, water quality, soil and rangeland health, air quality, and wildlife habitat," he said. Applications must include a conservation plan that is created by the landowner and NRCS, detailing what will be done to improve the specific natural resource condition the producer is addressing along with a timeline. Applications are screened and ranked on an ongoing basis and the best projects will receive top consideration.

Farmer sentiment slips slightly in January. A monthly survey of the state of mind for producers shows respondents have fairly consistent views about their current status but have growing concern about what lies ahead. The Ag Economy Barometer, a monthly measurement of farmer sentiment from Purdue University and the CME Group, dipped seven points in January largely on a decline in the barometer's Index of Future Expectations. That index has dropped about 19% since October while a similar measurement of current conditions has risen about 12% in the same time period. "The ongoing strength in the Current Conditions Index appears to be driven by the ongoing rally in crop prices, while the deterioration in the Futures Expectations Index seems to be motivated by longer-run concerns about policies that could impact U.S. agriculture in the future," Jim Mintert with Purdue University's Center for Commercial Agriculture, said in a statement. Farmers specifically anticipate more restrictive environmental regulations, higher estate taxes, and higher income taxes in the next five years. A growing percentage of producers — 43% in the most recent survey — also expect higher farmland prices in the next year. The January survey also gauged the willingness of producers to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Of the survey's 400 respondents, 58% said they will get vaccinated as soon as possible, another 14% said they plan to get vaccinated, but not right away, and 28% said they did not plan to get vaccinated.

Study suggests fine-tuning Food Box focus. A [new study](#) on USDA's Farmers to Families Food Box Program suggests the initiative could be tweaked to better aim its benefits to small- and mid-sized farmers as well as minority- and women-owned operations. The study, completed by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and Harvard Law School's Food Law and Policy Clinic, offers a critique and recommendations moving forward while also pointing to several positive accomplishments of the program. Overall, the study identified several successes: getting fresh food to many people who faced new or increased food insecurity, keeping some distribution workers employed, and initially providing an opportunity to recoup some income for farms that lost farmers market and other direct-to-consumer sales. But the

report also found that in subsequent rounds, changes led to more contracts going to bigger distributors that didn't necessarily prioritize partnerships with small and mid-sized or minority-owned farms, despite USDA saying that was a goal. In announcing the \$1.5 billion fifth-round in early January, USDA said at that point more than 132 million boxes had been delivered through the Farmers to Families Food Box program. "This new round of Farmers to Families Food Boxes will go a long way in helping American families access nutritious and healthy meals as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic," outgoing Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said on Jan. 4. USDA has not yet said whether there will be another round after the current installment ends in April.

Farm Hands West: Dumas joins Courchesne Larose

The Senate Agriculture Committee is expanding its membership with three new Democrats, including Sen. **Cory Booker**, D-N.J., a vegan who's a sharp critic of large-scale livestock farming as well as checkoff programs. He also has pushed for big increases in conservation spending to address climate change. The other new members: Newly elected Sen. Raphael Warnock of Georgia and Sen. **Ben Ray Lujan** of New Mexico. Lujan had a near-perfect record with the League of Conservation Voters as a House member. Pennsylvania Democrat **Bob Casey** is leaving the panel. Republicans haven't announced their membership yet, but freshman Kansas Sen. **Roger Marshall**, R-Kan., is expected to get a seat. The committee's incoming chairwoman, **Debbie Stabenow** of Michigan, has also taken a seat on the Environment and Public Works Committee, which will broaden her influence when it comes to climate policy.

Montreal native, **Danny Dumas** has been hired by Courchesne Larose, a Canadian wholesaler, to be the new president of Courchesne Larose USA. Dumas was most recently the senior vice president of North American sales, marketing and product management for Del Monte Fresh, a position he resigned from in May 2020.

United Natural Foods has named **Dorn Wenninger** its senior vice president of produce. Bringing more than 25 years of experience in the procurement, sales, marketing, and operations of packaged foods and retail companies, Wenninger most recently served as vice president perishables for Walmart Mexico.

Mastronardi Produce, a distributor of fresh fruits and vegetables based in Canada, has brought on **Caitlin Tierney** to expand the company's western region as the new business director of western operations. Tierney has held roles with SpartanNash, Fresh Direct, Fresh & Easy and 99 Cents Only Stores, as well as a seed-side marketing role with Bayer CropScience Specialty Seeds, and also sits on the board of directors for the Fresh Produce and Floral Council.

Before leaving his office, Secretary of Agriculture **Sonny Perdue** selected the members to serve on the National Honey Board. Newly elected and serving a three-year term are **Christopher Olney**, **Joan Gunter**, and **Greg Olsen**. **Michelle Poulk**, who served a vice-chairperson in 2020, was elected as the new chairperson and **Maren Marten**, who joined the board in 2019, will now serve as vice-chairperson. **Lisa Hansel** was re-elected as secretary treasurer.



Danny Dumas

Marrone Bio Innovations appointed **Suping “Sue” Cheung** to be the new chief financial officer, effective Feb. 18. Cheung brings 28 years of experience to the position. She is a certified public accountant and previously was the CFO of QuickLogic Corp. She succeeds **James Boyd**, who will be retiring.

Rachel Garland has joined Nutrien's government and industry affairs team, handling legislative issues and industry relations for the company in the Florida, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi territories. Before joining Nutrien, Garland was at the Florida Department of Agriculture working as Commissioner **Adam Putnam**'s federal affairs director and Commissioner **Nikki Fried**'s rural outreach director.

USDA has announced individuals who will fill key staff positions. **Rebecca Piazza** has been named senior adviser for delivery in the Office of the Undersecretary for the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services. Most recently, she served as vice president of program delivery at Nava Public Benefit Corporation. **Steffanie Bezruki** was selected to be chief of staff in Rural Business Services. Bezruki spent the last seven years on Capitol Hill, most recently as Former Rep. Abby Finkenauer’s, D-Iowa, legislative director. **Abbey Meller** is now a confidential assistant in the Office of Congressional Relations. She previously served as an organizing associate at the Center for American Progress. **Paul Zeiss** will report to the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs as a confidential assistant. Before joining USDA, Zeiss served in various capacities on President Joe Biden’s campaign, most recently as a field organizer. **Tharun Vemulapalli** was named confidential assistant in the Office of the Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation. Vemulapalli previously served as a field organizer for the Democratic Party.

Samuel Negatu now works at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative as the director of congressional affairs. He previously served as the legislative director to Rep. **Jimmy Gomez**, D-Calif.

Sarah Collins has replaced **Vivian Moeglein** as chief of staff for Rep. **Bruce Westerman**, R-Ark. Collins most recently worked at Tyson Foods as senior manager of government relations. Moeglein now serves as the Republican staff director for the House Natural Resources Committee.

Rob MacGregor now serves as a Republican professional staff member for the House Natural Resources Committee under Rep. **Bruce Westerman**, R-Ark. MacGregor previously worked at the Department of Agriculture as a senior adviser.

Savannah Block has left Capitol Hill and has moved to the private sector to start a new job with Novozymes as a government relations associate. Block previously worked in Sen. John Hoeven’s, R-N.D., office as a legislative aide covering the agriculture and food, animal welfare, and telecommunications portfolio. Her first day was on Monday.



Savannah Block

Greg Dotson is now the Democratic chief counsel for the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, under Sen. **Tom Carper**, D-Del. He previously worked for the Center for American Progress as a senior fellow and before that was the vice president for energy policy. Dotson is also a professor at the University of Oregon School of Law. He replaces **Andrew Rogers**, who has taken a job with the Federal Highway

Administration as the new chief counsel. **Taylor Meredith** has joined the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee as a counsel for the panel's Republicans. Meredith comes to the Hill from the Environmental Protection Agency where she most recently served as a senior adviser to the administrator.

John Tanner is the Republican deputy staff director for the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He previously served as the principal deputy assistant secretary at the Department of the Interior for the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Division.

Jennifer Cox is now the chief of staff for Sen. **Mark Kelly**, D-Ariz. She previously served as Kelly's campaign manager.

Kirtan Mehta now serves as chief of staff for the office of Sen. **John Hickenlooper**, D-Colo. Mehta previously worked for Robinhood Markets.

Sage Saffron has joined the National Milk Producers Federation helping to advance sustainability practices in the dairy industry. Saffron recently completed an internship with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture as the Fall 2020 public policy intern.

Susan Shultz has been tapped to lead the American Sheep Industry Association as its next president. Shultz had served as vice president the past two years and as secretary/treasurer the two years before that. Shultz operates Bunker Hill Farm with her husband, Bill, and their son, Joe, in Ohio.

The World Poultry Foundation board of directors has elected **Elton Maddox** as chairman, succeeding **Eric Joiner** who recently announced that he is retiring after 10 years in the position. Maddox began his career in the poultry industry in 1974 at Wayne Farms. He eventually became the company's chairman of the board and retired from his post in 2019. He has also served as president of the Georgia Poultry Federation and the Georgia Poultry Processors Association, and as chairman of the board of the Georgia Poultry Improvement Association and the National Chicken Council.

Best regards,

Sara Wyant
Editor

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