

Newsom could put a halt to farms losing fire insurance

The head of the California FAIR Plan, the state’s “insurer of last resort,” says her hands are tied when it comes to the increasing number of farmers who are seeing their rates double or even triple—or are losing fire coverage entirely.

Lawmakers last week discussed the issue and potential solutions, including a proposal to adjust the state’s insurance codes to include farm coverage and the potential for Gov. Gavin Newsom to take this action immediately through an executive order.

“We realize there's no magic bullet that's going to get us out of this crisis,” said John Norwood, a legislative advocate for Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of California, during an informational committee hearing on the issue at the State Senate. “This has been 50 years in the making.”

As wildfire activity has increased in California in recent years, lawmakers and state agencies have raced to bail out residents living in the wildland-urban interface who have lost their fire insurance coverage.

In 2018 the insurance commissioner allowed for one-year moratoriums on nonrenewals for



Barn fire

residential customers following catastrophic wildfires. The moratoriums have covered more than 2.4 million policyholders, accounting for 18% of the state’s residential insurance market. But the commissioner lacks the authority to enact a similar statute for commercial properties and policyholders, according to the insurance department’s senior deputy commissioner, who said insurance companies have also faced losses due to hurricanes in the Southeast, flooding in the Midwest and storms in the Northeast.

And now “commercial agriculture has been captured in the greater insurance availability issue and drama,” said Robert Spiegel, a policy advocate for the California Farm Bureau.

The 2020 LNU Lightning Complex and Glass fires alone accounted for more than \$175 million in direct agricultural damages to property and more than \$35 million in infrastructure losses, according to Spiegel.

A vice president for American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA) pointed out that California was not alone. Smoke damage and evacuations accounted for 20% of the agricultural losses in both California and Colorado, and 35% in Oregon and Washington.

With the increasing risk to property, the insurance market has responded accordingly, said Spiegel.

While exact numbers are hard to come by for impacted farms and ranches, the Farm Bureau estimates that nearly 500 operations in the North Coast wine region have lost coverage, with dozens more in the Central Coast and in Southern California counties. Even farmers in remote Modoc County have been impacted. Norwood said “only a couple” insurers are writing property insurance in all of Tahoe and the northern Sierra Nevada range, and the problem extends to wine-producing regions throughout the state.

“We’ve heard of at least one situation where the lender for a family winery force-placed insurance coverage for a million dollars, which the insurer cannot afford,” said Norwood. “And now the winery is looking at foreclosure.”

Michael Miiller, director of government relations for the California Association of Winegrape Growers, explained that farmers also need coverage just to provide ongoing funding, since acquiring a line of credit tends to require insurance.

Committee Chair Susan Rubio of Los Angeles County said that along with farmers and ranchers, the timber industry, prescribed burners, home builders and campground operators have shared the same concerns with her.

“That continued productive conversation from stakeholders is welcome, as it is an incredibly complex undertaking,” said Rubio.

The Farm Bureau is sponsoring Rubio’s Senate Bill 11, which would make farms eligible for the California FAIR Plan under the state’s insurance code.

Along with SB 11, lawmakers could add an urgency clause to give the measure more priority in this legislative session and urge the governor to issue an executive order for an immediate change while also extending the cap on commercial limits for claims from \$3 to \$10 million, said Norwood.

FAIR Plan President Anneliese Jivan said she has been working with the Farm Bureau on providing a solution, but her authorities are limited by the insurance code.



Sen. Susan Rubio, D-Baldwin Park

Emboldened by the new information revealed in the hearing, several lawmakers committed to revising the FAIR Plan.

“We need to make insurance accessible to people that want to build in our state,” said Sen. Ben Hueso of Logan Heights, “because we’re facing a fire crisis. We’re facing a pandemic. We’re facing an affordable housing shortage.”

Sen. Bill Dodd of Napa said in his district a small winery now without insurance had been facing a \$200,000-a-year premium, while the FAIR Plan was offering just \$10,000—though the coverage would have been considerably limited.

“The FAIR Plan obviously is a big boon to a lot of homeowners, but also to commercial and agricultural property owners,” said Dodd. “It’s really important that we keep them active in this marketplace.”

Spiegel said fixing the FAIR Plan is one solution, but “not necessarily the long-term solution.” The Farm Bureau has been working on this for seven months with Jivan as well as APCIA and the Personal Insurance Federation of California. Clarifying that the plan is authorized to underwrite policies for agricultural property would allow farms, ranches, dairies and wineries to have basic insurance and “stack or layer” additional coverage as needed.

Norwood cautioned, however, that the underlying issue will continue to persist.

“The availability of insurance for homeowners and other businesses in California is simply not going to improve until the reinsurance community sees real results in substantially reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires in this state,” he said.

Farm labor economist: It’s time to confront the ‘old way of thinking’

Agricultural labor problems “don’t fade away” as the share of employment goes down, and a shrinking sector will require even more effort to protect workers, according to UC Davis Agricultural Economist Philip Martin, who has written a new book on the topic.

“The paradox is that even as agricultural employment gets less important, farm workers get more vulnerable,” said Martin, during a lecture last week for the Migration Policy Centre at the



Farm workers harvesting crops.

European University Institute. “They’re joined, especially in rich countries, by migrant workers who often have restricted rights.”

Agriculture remains a major employer throughout the world, Martin explained, with nearly one out of every four people employed in the sector. Most of these people are farmers and their families, and they are not paid a regular wage. Increasingly the largest individual employers, however, are farm labor contractors, who have been “very difficult for governments to regulate effectively,” he said.

COVID-19 sped up many trends in farm employment, with more guestworkers in 2020, despite market disruption from the shutdown of the service industry and the sudden availability of unemployed restaurant workers. Although H-2A workers cost more than domestic ones, they are known to be reliable, loyal and willing to work extra hours, which creates a form of labor insurance for employers, said Martin.

Yet issues persist.

“There will never be enough inspectors to have effective enforcement in agriculture,” he said, citing his recent study on enforcing labor laws in that sector. “In the United States, we only actually inspect about 100 farms a month and about 70% of them have violations.”

A challenge for employers, on the other hand, is that they must constantly organize new workers, since the most capable ones are the first to leave the sector for other work. The labor shortage will be further exacerbated if visa portability is allowed for H-2A workers, which would likely lead to those workers gravitating to higher wage jobs and better working conditions, he said.

Interest in mechanization is also rapidly spreading, along with a rise in the share of low-cost fruits and vegetables imported into the U.S., which Martin called a newcomer advantage for Mexican farmers, especially when 61% of tomatoes in the U.S. are imported.

“When I go to a tomato farm in Mexico, it looks a lot like a factory,” he said. “When I go to a tomato farm in the U.S., it's old. Everything is old. ... Who's going to put investment into a declining sector?”

He also questioned investments in a mechanized system for raisins when the U.S. industry is in decline due to Turkish imports.

Technology has also failed to keep pace with consumers, who have shifted their preferences toward commodities that are more difficult to mechanize.

“I don't know exactly where the answer lies,” Martin acknowledged. “Government intervention in one way produces something that requires government intervention in the other way.”



UC Davis Professor Emeritus Philip Martin

Subsidizing the wine sector, for example, could lead to too much wine.

The trend in agricultural policy, he said, is to move away from rewarding farmers for how much they produce to instead give a guaranteed income for those employed in the sector. This “may work” in Europe, where countries have been providing subsidies for the fresh produce sector. The U.S., however, has been subsidizing already mechanized crops like cotton, corn, wheat and soybeans.

Martin said the “hardest single thing in thinking about migration, labor and the future of agriculture” is building flexibility into the system on the demand side of the labor market rather than the supply side.

“There's a whole history of food production going up, but fewer people being employed in the sector,” he said. “As we improve conditions, we also create incentives either for labor saving machines or for trade.”

He argued it is time to confront the “old way of thinking”—labor laws that protect workers once they get out of agriculture—with a new, “ever-more dependent” guestworker policy.

Elon Musk's plan to close rural broadband gap

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk aims to vastly enhance connectivity and service speeds in some of the most rural areas of the country through a satellite-based service that has raised the hackles of land-based competitors who are questioning his company's promises.

Satellite internet service has often disappointed customers in the past, but the Federal Communications Commission authorized Musk’s SpaceX to build, deploy and operate a system comprising 4,425 satellites for the provision of fixed-satellite service in 2018.

SpaceX has committed to connecting 642,925 U.S. locations, including housing units and small businesses, in 35 states.

In October, SpaceX launched a public beta test of its Starlink internet service, and on March 4 launched another 60 satellites into orbit. SpaceX currently has over 1,200 satellites in operation, according to SpaceNews.

In December, the FCC awarded \$886 million out of \$9.2 billion in funding provided under Phase I of the agency’s Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. RDOF is a two-phased program providing \$20.4 billion over 10 years to providers who commit to offering a minimum of 25 megabits per second download and 3 Mbps upload speeds in underserved and unserved areas.



Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk. Photo: NASA

SpaceX's satellite policy director is David Goldman, a former aide to the House Energy and Commerce Committee who previously served as a legal adviser to FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel, now the agency's interim chair.

Satellite broadband has come a long way in terms of speeds, said Tom Stroup, president of the Satellite Industry Association, which represents roughly 50 members including satellite operators, manufacturers, and launch companies.

He said the industry still has some challenges, especially when it comes to public perception, and some consumers are not aware of the current capabilities of the industry when it comes to offering high-speed internet.

“Many people who have had experience with satellite broadband ten-plus years ago would not know that we currently have 25/3 speeds or even faster,” he said.

A SpaceX spokesman declined to be interviewed about the company's plans, instead offering links to videos about the service.

The company says its speeds will improve as it launches more satellites, installs additional ground stations and improves networking software.

A survey for PCMag found that in October, Starlink offered an average download speed of 79.5 megabits per second and an average upload speed of 13.8 Mbps. By comparison, USDA will fund broadband projects that offer speeds of just 25/3 Mbps.



Tom Stroup, Satellite Industry Association

Starlink isn't cheap: Subscribers must pay \$499 for equipment and then \$99 a month for the service, which is now being used in Ohio, Washington, Virginia, Vermont, and Maine.

In February, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association and other groups sent a report to the FCC challenging Starlink’s ability to do what it has promised and appealing to the agency to examine funding applications for low-earth orbiting satellite broadband networks.

According to the report, Starlink would face a capacity shortfall by 2028 and that more than 56% of Starlink’s RDOF subscribers would not be fully served.

“Based upon the publicly available information that we had at the time the paper was prepared, it looked to us like they were going to have a challenge in meeting that, at least in certain parts of the country, and if they took on too many customers, perhaps across the country,” said Michael Romano, senior vice president for industry affairs and business development for NTCA-Rural Broadband Association.

Romano said the report is intended to be a means of evaluating satellite broadband technology.

“You won’t know if people are going to perform or fail perhaps for four or five or six years, at least. That is why this upfront vetting and due diligence becomes so important,” he said.

The FCC funding awarded in December is expected to provide service to 5.2 million locations nationwide. Rural electric cooperatives qualified for \$1.1 billion in funding to serve some 618,476 locations.

Even as the FCC ramps up its rural broadband funding, Congress is considering an even bigger infusion of spending through an upcoming infrastructure bill, and some lawmakers are pushing the government to require higher service speeds.

Earlier this month, Sens. Angus King, I-Maine, Michael Bennet, D-Colo., Joe Manchin, D-W. Va., and Rob Portman, R-Ohio, sent a letter to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and other administration officials pushing for a federal broadband standard requiring symmetrical speeds — speeds in the same direction — of 100 Mbps.



Mike Romano, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Over the next five years, if current trends hold, data needs are expected to increase annually by at least 25% per year, according to the International Data Corporation, the senators argued in their letter.

Ryan Yates, managing director of public policy at the American Farm Bureau Federation, said his organization is supportive of all efforts to get rural Americans connected.

“Coming out of this year through this COVID-19 pandemic, it has been even more apparent where those gaps in broadband connectivity could have a tremendous impact in the rural landscape,” Yates told *Agri-Pulse*.

Yates said newer satellite technology being developed to provide more options for internet access and availability is a positive thing. But he added that there can be a trade-off between cost and service speeds.

“If you have access to broadband, but it is so incredibly expensive that you can’t afford to buy it, then you might as well not have it, so you really have to figure out what that balance is,” he said.

When it comes to carbon markets, farmers should have plenty of questions

Farmers face a bewildering set of choices and requirements as new carbon payment plans and markets are proliferating. Producers risk getting entangled financially if they don’t ask the right questions upfront.

“For most growers right now this is really confusing. There are too many options,” Aldyen Donnelly, co-founder and director of carbon economics for Nori Inc., said during a Farm Foundation online forum on Tuesday. Nori is operating a pilot program to pay farmers for removing carbon from the atmosphere.

The rules for existing programs, which are being driven largely by corporate commitments to offset greenhouse gas emissions, can vary wildly on such issues as whether farmers will get paid based on their farming practices or for the amount of carbon they keep out of the atmosphere. Another issue has to do with how long practices or carbon sequestration must be maintained by the farmer or landowner.

Nori and Truterra, an arm of the Land O’Lakes farmer cooperative that has partnered with Nori, both have lists of questions they say farmers should ask before signing up for a carbon program.

Among them:

- When and how much will you get paid?
- What are you committing to do and for long do you have to do it?
- Who sets the price for credits?
- Will a lien get attached to your property?
- Will you be contractually bound to maintain certain cropping or livestock management practices?
- Will you still own the farm data used to qualify for credits or payments?

Among the variety of programs now underway, payment rates or prices for carbon credits can be determined in different ways. In Nori's case, farmers consign their credits to the company at a minimum floor price that the producer wants. The company charges a 15% transaction fee. Indigo Ag has been signing up farmers who will make 10-year commitments to sequester soil carbon at a payment rate of \$15 per verified ton.

The Ecosystem Services Market Consortium, whose founders include food and agribusiness companies such as General Mills and Cargill, intends to open a broad-based private carbon market in 2022, paying farmers for a range of emission-reducing practices.

Cargill Inc. has undertaken several partnerships to test payments for ecosystem services. A project in Iowa has been paying some farmers \$35 to \$50 an acre.

Bayer offers payments to farmers who commit to minimum tillage or the use of cover crops. The commitments generate credits that Bayer will use to offset some of its own emissions or potentially be purchased by other companies.



Lisa Streck, Bayer

“We’ve tried to structure our program for simplicity at this time,” said Lisa Streck, carbon business model grower lead for Bayer Crop Science. “We’ll continue to reevaluate our program as we learn more.”

Payment rates are just the start. Cristine Morgan, chief scientific officer for the Soil Health Institute, said one of the biggest questions facing farmers is whether they will get paid for past practices or only for additional practices they undertake to increase soil carbon.

Limiting payments to additional practices seems "too narrow," when the overall goal should be to get as many farmers as possible to adopt more environmentally friendly farming practices, she said.

In Nori's case, farmers can get credit for practices they started anytime over the last decade.

Indigo Ag says credit purchasers are only willing to pay for new practices farmers undertake. "Credits generated as a result of practice changes are valuable because they represent new benefits to soil carbon and emissions reductions, above and beyond 'business as usual,'" according to Indigo's FAQ for growers.

Another key question, especially if credits are based on the amount of carbon a grower keeps in the soil, is how to measure and track that progress.

The Soil Health Institute is developing sampling equipment that is intended to reduce the cost and time it takes to measure soil carbon. Carbon amounts vary widely from place to place in a single field and are generally highest near the surface.

SHI received a \$3.25 million grant in 2020 from the Energy Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy to develop the “DeepC” sampling system, which uses probes to check carbon levels.

For carbon markets to be viable, Morgan said "ultimately what we need to do is be able to verify or measure or report with some level of certainty that we actually have had a change in carbon in our soil."

Among the questions that are still unanswered is what role the government will play in carbon markets or in facilitating payments to farmers. The Biden administration has been considering the potential use of the USDA's Commodity Credit Corp. to establish a carbon bank that could buy credits and essentially put a floor under their value.

Meanwhile on Capitol Hill, lawmakers are developing legislation aimed at accelerating the development of carbon markets by authorizing USDA to certify services that would verify the validity of credits that farmers want to sell.

Ken McCarty, a dairy producer who co-owns operations in Kansas and Ohio that follow various practices to improve soil health and conserve water, said the government needs to ensure carbon markets are fair and ethically run. McCarty's operation received financing from Danone North America for water conservation measures.

“One of the biggest negative impacts we can have is having a bad marketplace that frankly screws over farmers,” he said. “That’s going to hurt the rate of adoption.”

McCarty suggested that it’s not too early for farmers to start preparing for a carbon marketplace by collecting the records they have on soil sampling and metrics such as fertilizer applications and fuel use.

“Once you have that data, the ability to enter into these conversations becomes that much easier,” he said. “Don’t be afraid to start with a pen and a pad.”

That's essentially what his operation is doing now as the owners decide how to market their farms' environmental benefits. "We're building the plane as we're flying it. We're implementing a tremendous amount of regenerative ag practices, while at the same time we're trying to build the system to quantify the impact that that's having," McCarty said.

News Briefs:

New tool could build trust for Delta climate adaptation plans. As scientists and policy makers work on the Delta Adapts plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, they’re considering climate impacts on agricultural lands, wildlife and society. The Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (DPIIC) met virtually on Monday to review habitat restoration efforts, preview a tool for incorporating multiple perspectives in adaptation models, and discuss how to develop strategies that focus on appropriate risks for different parts of the California delta. Some areas will be more vulnerable to sea level rise, while others will likely face more intense storms. “You’re going to need different adaptation strategies,” said Andrew Schwarz, a senior member of the Delta Stewardship Council’s Delta Adapts team. Leticia Grenier, director of the Resilient Landscapes Program at the San Francisco Estuary Institute, demonstrated a modeling tool that allows each interest—such as agriculture or fisheries—to contribute information to all of the adaptation scenarios. The tool then creates models that calculate the impacts of specific proposals on each constituency. CDFA Secretary Karen Ross said the tool and its holistic approach have the potential to build trust among many disparate groups. “When you're involving so many private land owners with nonprofits and with government entities, we have to remember that kind of engagement, and building trust one

project at a time, to get to the kind of landscape change that we want to see,” Ross said. CDFG also shared early results from its series of climate change meetings with farmers and ranchers. It plans to get a report from those sessions out for public comment by the end of the month. The DPIIC is charged with implementing the 2013 Delta Plan to manage the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta’s natural resources.

NMFS review could lead to new ESA listing. The National Marine Fisheries Service is reviewing a petition to consider whether or not spring-run Chinook salmon in Northern California and southern Oregon rivers are genetically distinct from fall-run Chinook salmon, potentially qualifying the fish for endangered species status. “We find that the petition presents substantial scientific and commercial information indicating the petitioned action may be warranted,” the agency said in a Federal Register notice, which also solicited additional research. In 1999, the agency identified the Southern Oregon and Northern California Coastal (SONCC) Chinook salmon Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) as including both spring-run and fall-run Chinook salmon and determined that the ESU did not warrant listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Rich Nawa, a Staff Ecologist for the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center who submitted the new petition, argues that there is new research indicating significant genetic differences underlying the spring- and fall-run life history types. However, John Carlos Garza, with the University of California, Santa Cruz, authored research last fall that said the spring-run and fall-run Chinook are genetically similar. “It’s like blue and brown eye color in humans--it just depends on what genotype you inherit from your parents,” wrote Garza. Scientific and commercial information pertinent to the petition must be sent to NMFS by May 17.

NRCS looks to fund new ‘climate smart’ projects under RCPP. USDA is seeking proposals to fund up to \$75 million in new projects under the Regional Conservation Partnership Program’s (RCPP) Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA), prioritizing projects related to climate smart agriculture and forestry. NRCS will fund up to 15 projects this year through AFA, where partners have more flexibility in working directly with agricultural producers to support the development of new conservation structures and approaches that would not otherwise be effectively implemented through the classic RCPP, the agency notes. “Collaboration and partnership are leading to advanced conservation delivery on working lands, both rural and urban,” said Terry Cosby, Acting Chief of NRCS. “We want to continue funding projects that harness the power of partnership and innovation to develop solutions that benefit producers while conserving our natural resources.” A significant portion of funds will address projects related to climate smart agriculture and forestry. These include projects related to carbon markets and new technologies. Meanwhile NRCS also strongly encourages proposals from RCPP projects that address the conservation needs of urban farmers in metropolitan areas, supporting access to healthy fresh food in historically underserved communities. NRCS is accepting AFA project proposals through May 28. Information about this request for proposals is available on [grants.gov](https://www.nrcs.gov/grants). A list of last year’s awarded projects can be found [here](#). Farmers, ranchers and private forest landowners apply for RCPP projects through project partners, like conservation districts, producer associations, water districts, state or local governments, American Indian tribes, institutions of higher education and nongovernmental organizations.

Farm Hands West: Roots joins ABC

The Almond Board of California has hired **Michael Roots** as a specialist on the field outreach and education team. He will help support growers and guide them through the California Almond Sustainability Program. Roots is a graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo where he majored in agricultural systems management. After graduation, he worked as a ranch foreman for Farmland Management Services, making his way up to the ranch manager position. He was also a manager at Whole Orchard Recycling.



Michael Roots

Bill Capsalis has been appointed executive director of Naturally Boulder. From 2016-2018, Capsalis served as the board chair of Naturally Boulder. He most recently served as the CEO of Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy Inc.

Interfresh has added **Lisa Cabuto** to its sales team at the company's Orange, Calif., sales offices. Cabuto brings more than 25 years of produce industry experience to the new position, previously working in positions in wholesale trade, the grower/shipper community, distributor/marketer community and as a retail buyer.

The National Mango Board elected new officers at its March board meeting. **Clark Golden** of New Jersey will serve as chair, and **Christopher Ciruli** of Arizona will serve as vice chair. Serving as secretary is **Michael Warren** of Florida, and elected as treasurer is **Marsela McGrane** of Los Angeles, Calif.

Progressive Produce CEO **Jim Leimkuhler** has announced he is stepping down from the helm, effective March 31. Leimkuhler has served 35 years in the produce industry with the last 25 years spent at Progressive Produce. He started out as the chief financial officer, and then was named president in 1996. He became a part owner of the company in 2003.

Robert "Bobby" Bianco, co-owner of Anthony Vineyards, passed away unexpectedly after undergoing a routine medical procedure. He was 78. He was recognized as one of the Coachella Valley's most esteemed grape growers and is also credited as the first grower in the U.S. to commercially grow red flame seedless grapes.

President Joe Biden will nominate **Janie Simms Hipp**, an agricultural law veteran and member of the Chickasaw Nation, to become the Agriculture Department's general counsel, USDA's chief legal officer. To read more on Hipp, click [here](#).

USDA also announced more senior leadership positions. **Sandra Eskin** has been named deputy undersecretary for food safety. Eskin previously worked at The Pew Charitable Trusts where she served as the project director for food safety. **Eyang Garrison** has been tapped to be the chief of staff in the office of the deputy secretary. Before coming to USDA, Garrison served as the deputy chief of staff and legislative director to then-Rep. **Marcia Fudge**, D-Ohio. **Jeremy Adamson** is now the policy adviser for trade and foreign agricultural affairs in the Foreign Agricultural



Janie Simms Hipp

Service. Most recently, Adamson served as the portfolio manager for Certis USA. He has also held roles with Corteva Agriscience and Nutrien. **Edyael Casaperalta** has been named senior policy adviser for the Rural Utilities Services agency. She most recently served as a project manager for AMERIND, helping to support Indigenous and underrepresented communities in telecommunications matters.

The Bipartisan Policy Center has announced the members of its Farm and Forest Carbon Solutions Task Force, which will be co-chaired by former Sens. **Heidi Heitkamp** and **Saxby Chambliss**. The members are: **Cornelius Blanding**, Federation of Southern Cooperatives; **Jad Daley**, American Forests; **Callie Eideberg**, Environmental Defense Fund; **Ara Erickson**, Weyerhaeuser; **Whit Fosburgh**, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership; **Kathleen Frangione**, Amazon; **Dan Glickman**, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and senior fellow at BPC; **Krysta Harden**, U.S. Dairy Export Council; **Bob Izlar**, University of Georgia Center for Forest Business; **Leonard Jordan**, LJ Conservation Matters and former acting chief of USDA's NRCS; **A.G. Kawamura**, former California Secretary of Agriculture; **Tom Martin**, American Forest Foundation; **Ben Mosely**, USA Rice; **Collin O'Mara**, National Wildlife Federation; **Laura Wood Peterson**, LWP Consulting, ranch operator, and adviser for Indigo Ag; **Tom Schultz**, Idaho Forest Group; **Brian Thalmann**, Minnesota/National Corn Growers Association; and **Bryan Van Stippen**, National Indian Carbon Coalition.

Former House Ag Committee Chair **Collin Peterson** has joined forces with Combest Sell & Associates, a lobbying firm with food and agriculture clients. Peterson previously served 15 terms in the House of Representatives as a Minnesota Democrat. He is barred from lobbying his former Capitol Hill colleagues until January 2022. To read more on Peterson, click [here](#).

Cargill has selected **Jamie Miller** to be the company's new chief financial officer, effective June 1. Miller previously worked at GE, where she was the senior vice president and CFO. She joined the company in 2008 and worked in various leadership positions, including serving as president and CEO of GE Transportation. Miller succeeds **David Dines**, who will retire from Cargill on Sept. 2, after 29 years with the company.

Cargill also announced new leadership changes that will go into effect in April. Jon Nash will lead the global protein and salt enterprise. He succeeds Brian Sikes, who has been promoted to COO. **Pilar Cruz** has been named chief sustainability officer. She joined the company in 2002 and most recently worked in the global aqua nutrition business. **Ruth Kimmelshue** will take over as leader of Cargill's animal nutrition and health business. She joined the company in 2015 as a member of the executive team and has been involved in leading its sustainability campaigns as the company's first chief sustainability officer. **Julian Chase** will be assuming the additional duties of leading its business operations and supply chains. **David Webster** will succeed **Frank van Lierde**, leader of food ingredients and bioindustrial business functions, who announced his retirement after 32 years with Cargill. Webster most recently led the company's animal nutrition and health business segment.

The board of Danone has decided that **Emmanuel Faber** will step down as chairman and CEO. Faber was first selected to serve as CEO in 2014 and added chairman to his responsibilities in 2015. Danone has appointed **Gilles Schnepf** to become chairman of the board, effective immediately. Schnepf has been an operating adviser of Clayton, Dubilier & Rice since last year. Before that, he served over 30 years with Legrand in various leadership positions. The board has also decided to tap **Véronique Penchienati-Bosetta**, currently CEO of Danone International, and **Shane Grant**, currently CEO of Danone North America, to jointly lead the business while the search for a new CEO is underway. Penchienati-Bosetta joined Danone in 2001 in marketing and general manager roles before being appointed as executive vice president of growth and

innovation in 2017. Grant previously served as executive vice president and CEO of Danone North America. Before joining Danone, Grant spent almost 20 years with The Coca-Cola Company.



Barb Glenn

After leading the organization for seven years, **Barb Glenn**, CEO of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, announced she will retire from her position this fall. Glenn has served the agriculture industry over a 40-year career. To read more on Glenn's career, click [here](#).

Peggy Browne has joined the Senate Ag Committee's minority staff as a senior professional staff member covering the conservation and climate change portfolio. Browne previously worked at USDA as the deputy administrator for field operations in the Farm Service Agency. **Mary Catherine Cromley** has come over to the committee as a legislative assistant after working in Sen. **John Boozman's**, R-Ark., personal office as a legislative aide.

House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member **Glenn Thompson** added and promoted some of his staff. **Joshua Maxwell** has been promoted to policy director. He most recently served as senior professional staff handling the

conservation, forestry, energy, and credit portfolio. He also worked on the 2008, 2014, and 2018 farm bills. **Jennifer Tiller** has been promoted to deputy staff director after previously serving as senior professional staff. She will also be handling the nutrition and trade portfolio. Coming over from Thompson's personal staff are **John Busovsky** and **Taylor McCarty**. Busovsky will serve as a professional staff member handling the conservation and forestry portfolios. McCarty previously served as communications director in Thompson's personal office and will serve as the committee's Republican communication director. New to the panel is Erin Wilson, who will serve as the director of member services and coalitions. Wilson previously served as legislative director for Rep. **Fred Keller**, R-Pa. Before that, she worked at USDA from 2017-2019, most recently as a policy and congressional adviser.

HP Hood, a U.S. food and beverage manufacturer, has hired **Robbie Lock** as its new sustainability manager. Before joining Hood, Lock was the sustainability manager with VF Corporation and managed a Starbucks and McDonald's collaboration on sustainable paper cups.

Best regards,

Sara Wyant
Editor

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