

## State looks to water trading and carbon markets to balance budget

As the state prepares for an eventual slowdown along with costly climate resilience investments and the economic impacts of sweeping new regulations, agencies are looking to new revenue sources to supplement programs. One option being quietly explored is specialized trading markets, for both water trading and sustainable agriculture programs.



A state-sanctioned water trading market would soften the blow felt by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which is set to begin implementation in two days. It also buys time for more funding to open up for water storage and conveyance projects, as agencies dole out existing bond money and Congress weighs new infrastructure bills.

In his initial budget proposal for 2020, Gov. Gavin Newsom allocated \$60 million to support such water trading pilot projects, along with water banking and land use planning projects.

Farmers in Ventura County have now launched the first open water market under SGMA, according to Sandi Matsumoto, an associate water director for The Nature Conservancy. Faced with a 40% cut in groundwater use, the farmers of Fox Canyon were looking to develop a flexible market that could adapt as cutbacks deepen. It officially opened on Jan. 6.

**“We believe the market can be one way to help farmers manage the transition and also can be protective and maybe even beneficial to the environment,” Matsumoto said this week at the annual conference for the California Irrigation Institute.**

The Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District is also experimenting with a water trading platform that General Manager Eric Averett likens to Craigslist. It simply connects a buyer to a seller, he explained. They then complete the transaction outside of the platform through the district.

With climate-smart agriculture programs being trimmed again this year, a carbon farming market is also looking more appealing to the administration. Gov. Gavin Newsom gave “a haircut” to the whole suite of incentives programs for emissions reductions, as the Department of Finance anticipates cap-and-trade revenues to begin to decline.

**“We have known from the beginning that there would come a time when cap-and-trade revenues would plateau and then start to go down because of fewer credits,” CDFA Sec. Karen Ross told *Agri-Pulse* in a recent interview. “If we became overly dependent on only cap-and-trade dollars, we would lead people off to not the best sunrise.”** both

To add more long-term certainty to these programs, the administration is diversifying its revenue portfolio, with new proposals for a climate and water bond and a low-interest loan program for climate mitigation and adaptation projects. Newsom is also looking to public-private partnerships to replace some of that funding.

**“It’s important we think about the role of the public sector not as a place where there’s endless streams of money,”** said Lenny Mendonca, who directs Newsom’s economic



Sandi Matsumoto, associate water director for The Nature Conservancy

development office, in discussing the loan program at an agtech forum in Woodland last week. “This is about the government being a smart partner in catalyzing investments.”

One of those partnerships took place in May, as the Air Resources Board teamed up with the nonprofit organization Perennial Farming to launch the Restore California program for carbon farming. It works by levying a 1% voluntary surcharge on diners at participating restaurants. The fund supports farmers in converting to carbon sequestration practices like cover cropping and composting, which are also supported under CDFA’s Healthy Soils Program.

“Climate action would either be funded by the public or by the government,” explained Anthony Mynt, director of partnerships for Restore California. “This is somewhere in between.”

The program now has 50 participating restaurants and hopes to have as many as 500 by the end of 2021, according to Mynt. He said if every California restaurant were in the program, it’d bring in \$1 billion a year. Mynt was pitching a partnership with CDFA last week at a meeting of its scientific advisory panel. Funding support from Healthy Soils would help expand the program.

A coalition of businesses and organizations also presented the panel with a proposal to monetize the Healthy Soils climate benefits, this time through a carbon offset market. Similar to California’s cap-and-trade market, businesses would voluntarily purchase credits to offset their own carbon footprint.

**“We are looking to create a new revenue stream for farmers for a new agricultural product, one that is recognized as a benefit to society,”** said Nicole Lederer of the green business advocacy group Environmental Entrepreneurs.

Paul Zorner, CEO of Locus Agricultural Solutions, calculated that this type of program could supplement a farmer’s income with as much as \$80 per acre each year in the most productive farmland.

CDFA’s added funding would support satellite imaging, soil monitoring and other technology that would help reduce some of the financial risk, while at the same time encourage agtech growth in this area.

“It’s likely the private market will complement, if not overshadow, government support once the tap is turned on,” said Lederer.

**Don Cameron, who sits on the panel and is also president of the State Board of Food and Agriculture, was skeptical farmers would buy in to the program, given the existing challenges and uncertainties with SGMA and other new regulations.**

Zorner said he was seeing a lot of receptivity among growers for both the soil health benefit and for combating climate change.

CDFA staff are reviewing the details of both proposals. The advisory panel will vote on them in its next meeting. Meanwhile, the coalition has also been meeting with the Air Resources Board, the governor’s cabinet and lawmakers to find the right vehicle for advancing a California provision. They are also working with the legislators behind one of four proposals for a climate resilience bond. That bill does include \$45 million in grant money for farms that improve soil health and sequester carbon.



CDFA Sec. Karen Ross with Lenny Mendonca, Director of the Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development

The coalition has already been successful in securing an agricultural carbon removal provision in the 2018 Farm Bill, with demonstration projects kicking off last year. Yet Congress has appropriated less for the projects than what Newsom allocated for Healthy Soils last year, which was \$28 million. To the coalition, it’s one of several signs the administration may be the most receptive audience for this type of project.

Speaking at the Woodland agtech event, Karen Ross mentioned “all the companies that have grown out of that original renewable resource.”

“Other than forestry,” she said, “no other sector operating on the land has the capacity to sequester carbon and to be a part of the solution.”

## **Five questions with California Organic CEO Kelly Damewood**

Kelly Damewood rose to the position of CEO of the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) just as the nonprofit organization released a report calling for the state to more than double its organic acreage over the next decade. A year later, CCOF is set to release its policy recommendations for meeting that goal.

Before taking the reins, Damewood served as CCOF policy director for two years, which was her first career move after completing law school.

She spoke with *Agri-Pulse* recently about how organic is influencing conventional farming practices as well as the governor's policy priorities.

### **1. What is your perspective on Gov. Gavin Newsom's administration?**

His recent proposed budget had some exciting funding opportunities that could serve the organic community. It seems like his administration is committed to continuing to invest in climate-smart agriculture programs and that would include the Healthy Soils and water efficiency programs.

Through the Healthy Soils Program, we are looking to find funding to help farmers develop organic systems plans, which is the first step to transitioning to organic production.

It's also exciting to see proposals moving forward on bringing organic food into school lunches in California. We've been working with coalition partners and allies to find the means for schools to source more organic foods.



There's this exciting notion where people are moving beyond the traditional term of a healthy diet and not just defining healthy diet by nutritional quality and quantity of food, but also looking at how the food made it to the plate. This includes making sure a healthy diet is a diet that results in a food system that conserves natural resources, advances social justice, protects animal welfare, builds community wealth and sustains food well into the future.

This more holistic concept of a healthy diet seems to be in play with healthcare institutions, which are making commitments to purchase more organic food. They recognize they have a big role to play in making sure their communities have access to healthy food and the food is grown in a way that protects their community's health.

### **2. Is there a middle ground in working with farmers on organic practices without the certification?**

I'm seeing an exciting trend where long-established organic practices, like cover crops and crop rotations, are more widely adopted by a wide variety of farmers. Practices that build soil health are good practices.

The more resources and discussions we have, as well as training, technical assistance and funding we can provide to help farmers build soil health and bring biodiversity back to their farms, the better off our food system is.

It's a three-year transition period to go from land that's been farmed conventionally to organic. We do have a program to work with farmers through those years to make sure they're in

compliance and at the end they're ready to go. Sometimes we see people in that period who think they're in compliance and there may be one thing that's off and it's a no-go. The program has been helpful for that.

### **3. What are you eyeing this year for the Legislature?**

We're about to wrap up the second installment of a two-part project called A Roadmap to an Organic California. We set a goal to double the amount of land farmed organically by 2030. We hope to far surpass that goal.

We have pulled together the resources to make the case of the benefits of organic agriculture to California. In February at our annual meeting and conference, we will be releasing our policy report, which has almost 40 different policy recommendations to advance organic agriculture in the state of California. We will be taking that to the capital on February 19 with our farmer members, food manufacturers, retailers – all our partners. That's our agenda for the next 10 years.

We're ready to put organic front and center and think about what the organics agenda is and what we need to accomplish moving forward.

If I had to pinpoint two key themes that we'd like to see policymakers think about with organic, it would be climate resilience and health equity.

We want to make sure that when our policymakers are talking about climate change and solutions, we want organic to be a part of that conversation and one of the first things that comes to mind.

### **4. How did that project coalesce?**

We started this effort a few years ago, when we felt like we were constantly responding to other initiatives or other agendas. Organic has come a long way from its modest, humble, grassroots origins here in California to now being a prominent sector of our California economy. It felt like it was time to figure out what the next era of organic looks like.

Organic is still stuck at less than 4% of California agricultural lands, and we're less than 1% of ag in the United States. Yet (California is) the largest producer of organic products.

How do we move the needle in getting more farmland into organic, because it has so many social, economic and environmental benefits?

We broke it into two pieces. First, we really needed to get clear on the science and make the clear case for going organic. That was our Benefits Report.

Then we launched the policy planning section. We did a lot of outreach to put together those policy recommendations. We hosted stakeholder meetings with representatives from the California Farm Bureau, from CDFR, social justice – a whole diversity of people.



The final result is comprehensive. CCOF won't be able to do it alone and some policies we may not be able to spearhead. But we wanted an organic agenda for any of our partners or policymakers to be able to pick up and feel confident in running behind.

Part of our policy recommendation is to recognize you can't just increase the supply of organic agriculture. We have to continue to maintain demand and grow demand so that there is a market and we keep organic farmers whole. That's an important piece of the puzzle.

## 5. What other details can you share about the upcoming report?

The health equity piece is such an important piece. Too often we're focused on fresh produce, while the most vulnerable populations need the best food possible – that statement I've heard a lot among our partners, and that resonates with me.

Right now, certain organic products aren't eligible for WIC (food stamps for women and children), and that seems like a real disconnect. The state could change that.

## Hemp rule needs multiple changes, USDA told in comments

State agriculture departments and a broad cross-section of the hemp industry are telling USDA its rule governing domestic production will hurt the nascent industry by imposing sampling and testing requirements that are virtually impossible to meet.

At least 30 states have told the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture they "will have to revise their own laws in order to comply" with the rule's requirements," NASDA President Barb Glenn said. "Without some flexibility, this could exacerbate competitive differences between the states and hamper growth of the national industry."

"NASDA is concerned that in several key areas the rule either lacks clarity or fails to provide the flexibility many states will need to meet the federal requirements in a way that best facilitates the development of hemp production," the association said in comments released Jan. 28.

Among NASDA's recommendations: **Remove the requirement that hemp samples be tested for THC at laboratories registered with the Drug Enforcement Administration; allow states to work with state law enforcement officials, not DEA, to dispose of noncompliant hemp; and raise the "negligence" threshold for THC content from 0.5% to 1%.** USDA's interim rulemaking specifies that producers will not commit negligent violations if they use "reasonable efforts to grow hemp" and the plant does not have a THC concentration of more than 0.5%. Growers who exceed the negligence threshold in three of five years would be prohibited from growing hemp for five years.



Barb Glenn, NASDA

The legalization of hemp in the 2018 farm bill forced USDA to come up with nationwide regulations, which were published in an Interim Final Rule in November. The comment period

for the IFR ends Jan. 29, but USDA already has received more than 2,000 comments, many of them highly critical of the department's regulations.

In fact, many states are planning to stick with the looser parameters of the 2014 farm bill's pilot program, which gives them the primary authority to set standards for testing and harvesting, instead of submitting a plan for approval by USDA. The 2018 farm bill calls for states to administer a USDA-approved plan, but also lets states operate under the purview of the pilot program until Oct. 31.

But the 2018 bill's rulemaking "imposes requirements that: are costly for regulators and producers; difficult to administer and comply with; and are a significant economic disincentive to grow hemp, particularly as a commodity crop for seed and fiber," New York's Department of Agriculture & Markets said.

**Sampling and testing requirements received a large share of the criticism in comments. The rule requires growers to take samples from the plant's flowers in a 15-day window before harvesting to get the "truest measurement" of the level of THC in the plant. (The new hemp law requires THC be no higher than 0.3 % by dry weight.) Then the sample has to be tested by a laboratory registered with the DEA.**

"The 15-day testing window creates inherent, unreasonable, and undue stress and risk on the state ag departments and on the industrial hemp grower," said Sara Kietzer, a Minnesota hemp grower. Her state's Department of Agriculture (MDA) said "it is not practical to have a farmer's hemp harvest dictated by our ability to sample and test a field. It is imperative that sampling and testing requirements are practical while still ensuring the industry is meeting requirements of the law."

Vote Hemp, which identifies itself as "the nation's leading and longest-serving advocacy organization for federal policy regarding [U.S.] hemp farming and hemp product manufacturing," offered more detail, saying "after extensive discussions with farmers, laboratories and state regulators, it is clear that allowing only 15 days between sampling and harvest is inadequate and unworkable due to labor constraints, weather, and the lack of DEA-registered laboratories."

The group said, using USDA's own information, that there are only 44 DEA-registered laboratories that meet USDA requirements in the nation, with many states having either one or none.

**"For example, Tennessee had 3,200 hemp production licenses in 2019 (under the previous 2014 farm bill), but only one DEA-registered laboratory is currently listed for the whole state," making it "impossible for a single laboratory to properly analyze samples from each of these licensees within the time frame specified in the IFR," Vote Hemp said.**

Some growers can take weeks to harvest their crops because of "labor-intensive hand harvesting methods," Vote Hemp said. "Existing mechanical harvesting methods are either unavailable for hemp plants or cost-prohibitive to average farmers."

The group recommended USDA allow for 45 days between sampling and harvest.

Requiring samples be taken only from flowers in the top third of the plant also came in for criticism. Flowering tops typically have higher THC concentrations than the lower two-thirds of the plant, and restricting sampling to those flowers will not provide an accurate representation of the amount of THC, some commenters said.

Kietzer suggested testing “the whole plant” to get an accurate representation of THC levels, especially since hemp has uses beyond production of cannabidiol, or CBD — as biomass and industrial components. Vote Hemp recommended sampling floral materials from the top, middle and bottom third of the plant.

The MDA recommended USDA allow states and tribes to include post-harvest testing in their plans. Minnesota, which is sticking with the pilot program for 2020, said the varieties of hemp plants grown for CBD “are not stable and are highly variable.”

“CBD production can result in passing a pre-harvest test, only to find THC levels have spiked later,” MDA said. “In this case, it is likely some processors would not accept the crop. Allowing for post-harvest testing ensures the harvested material complies with federal and state law.”

MDA also said that “hemp crops that test above the 0.3% total THC limit but under negligible levels should be allowed to enter commerce under a regulatory scheme that requires remediation and testing after remediation to ensure final products meet the definition of industrial hemp.”

For example, if the hemp is above 0.3% THC, it could be blended with hemp that tests lower in THC, MDA said, adding that law enforcement authorities in the state say “they do not consider negligible amounts of THC (1%-3%) worth investigation.”



*Eric Steenstra, Vote Hemp*

Under the rule, hemp crops above the “acceptable hemp THC level” would have to be destroyed by someone authorized under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) to handle marijuana, such as a DEA agent. The acceptable level “is when the application of the measurement of uncertainty to the reported [THC] concentration level on a dry weight basis produces a distribution or range that includes 0.3% or less,” according to the IFR.

So, for example, if the THC level tests at 0.35% and the “measurement of uncertainty is  $\pm 0.06\%$ , the measured [THC] content concentration level on a dry weight basis for this sample ranges from 0.29% to 0.41%,” and 0.35% would be within the acceptable range.

Vote Hemp, however, said the farm bill mentions “disposal,” not “destruction,” which “poses a great risk of economic hardship on hemp farmers, who may invest upwards of \$35,000 per acre for planting.”

“Congress did not intend for USDA to be bound by the CSA or DEA regulations for the disposal of a noncompliant crop which was not done intentionally or knowingly,” Vote Hemp said.

“Congress explicitly granted USDA sole authority to regulate all plants produced pursuant to the 2018 farm bill, including noncompliant hemp.”



USDA said the IFR the rule will be effective for two years, and then will be replaced by a final rule. The department did not respond to a question about when changes would be made to the IFR. Vote Hemp President Eric Steenstra said his group is urging USDA to issue another IFR “as soon as possible.”

## Roundup settlement talks continue as speculation builds

Attorneys for Bayer and thousands of plaintiffs around the country who allege Roundup caused their cancer are trying to negotiate a settlement of the litigation.

The clearest sign that talks had reached a critical stage came last week when a trial scheduled to begin in state court in St. Louis was delayed indefinitely so negotiations could continue.

Bayer, which bought Monsanto in 2018 for \$63 billion and inherited its herbicide cases, said the parties had agreed to the delay so they could “continue the mediation process in good faith under the auspices of Ken Feinberg, and avoid the distractions that can arise from trials.

**“While Bayer is constructively engaged in the mediation process, there is no comprehensive agreement at this time,” the company said. “There also is no certainty or timetable for a comprehensive resolution.”**

Feinberg, one of the best-known mediators in the country, was appointed by federal judge Vincent Chhabria, who is presiding over federal Roundup cases in California. He is perhaps best known for serving as special master of the federal government's Sept. 11th Victim Compensation Fund, but he also served as administrator of the BP Deepwater Horizon Disaster Victim Compensation Fund.

Feinberg’s comments over the past few weeks to news organizations have fueled speculation about a settlement.

He told Bloomberg News earlier this month he was “cautiously optimistic” a comprehensive deal would be reached in about a month. He also said the caseload was as high as 85,000, about twice the number previously reported by Bayer. (Bayer called Feinberg’s number “a speculative estimate about the numbers of plaintiffs who might be included in a potential settlement.”)

Feinberg seemed to tamp down the optimism in a subsequent Reuters report, telling that news organization he was “cautiously optimistic that a settlement will ultimately be reached.”

Then, a few days ago — after Bloomberg cited “people with direct knowledge of the negotiations” to report the settlement amount being discussed was around \$10 billion — Feinberg told Bloomberg in an email that “any details about what may constitute a comprehensive agreement are pure speculation as to both dollars and eligibility criteria.”

Feinberg did not respond to email or phone messages asking for comment.



*Ken Feinberg*

Close to 80% of Bayer investors expect the company will settle for approximately \$10 billion to \$16 billion, Bernstein analyst Gunther Zechmann told *Agri-Pulse*. Zechmann said the numbers came from a survey he conducted.

**Stephen Tillery, a lawyer in St. Louis who has represented plaintiffs in “toxic tort” litigation but is not involved in the Roundup litigation, said both sides are in a difficult spot in deciding whether to move ahead with further litigation.**

Bayer has lost three cases in the trial courts, where juries together awarded more than \$2 billion to plaintiffs. Those awards were reduced by judges in those cases to less than \$200 million, and Bayer has appealed the verdicts. The federal 9th Circuit Court of Appeals could take up one appeal this spring, but a decision is far from imminent.

While a win by Bayer in the appellate courts would gravely hurt plaintiffs’ prospects, another loss by Bayer in the trial courts would raise the cost of any potential settlement for Bayer and further embolden plaintiffs.

“Everybody has everything to lose,” said Tillery, the senior member of Korein Tillery law firm in St. Louis. “Bayer is essentially betting the ranch if they proceed” with litigation.

## **News Briefs:**

**NRCS unveils tool to streamline conservation program delivery.** The Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service is beginning to use a new tool this week to help staff implement conservation programs more smoothly. The tool, known as the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) is designed to help NRCS staff effectively implement 2018 Farm Bill programs. “The goal is to have one center piece of technology, where one of our employees can work hand-in-hand with the producer,” NRCS Chief Lohr told a House Agriculture Subcommittee Tuesday. According to USDA, the program streamlines methodologies by utilizing national and local geospatial data, address resource concern questions, determine program impact points, and configure funding pools able to be modified to address local needs. House Ag Committee Chairman Collin Peterson, D-Minn., blasted Lohr during the hearing, saying the tool will just create more bureaucracy. “I don’t see that it is going to do any good other than give people a chance to come in and lobby your department — come up with more damn crazy regulations that are going to screw things up,” Peterson said. Peterson worries the program will be like what happened with the Farm Service Agency’s Environmental Benefits Index for the Conservation Reserve Program. He noted when that was developed, groups came in to lobby for crop seed mixes to be planted on environmentally sensitive land, which ended up costing some \$600 an acre. Lohr defended the administration saying the tool was designed to help staff determine the best suited assistance for the farmer’s operation. He said he would report back to Peterson on progress of the program after this week.

**Kellogg to phase out glyphosate use.** Food giant Kellogg plans to eliminate the use of glyphosate in its wheat and oat supply chains by 2025. The company quietly made the announcement on its “Open for Breakfast” website. The announcement stems from use of glyphosate as a desiccant — or drying agent — before wheat or oat harvest. “Although this practice is not widespread in our wheat and oat supply chains, we are working with our suppliers to phase out using glyphosate as pre-harvest drying agent in our wheat and oat supply chain in

our major markets, including the U.S., by the end of 2025,” the company said on its [website](#). Kellogg and other food companies are under pressure from organizations like the Environmental Working Group to curtail or eliminate their glyphosate use. Last year, EWG and a host of food companies, many of them exclusively organic, [petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency](#) to lower the threshold of glyphosate allowed in oat products to 0.1 parts per million instead of the current level of 30 ppm. Ag interests pushed back, saying the effort lacked a scientific basis. Kellogg does not mention EWG or the petitioning effort in its announcement, but a linked webpage quotes EWG lobbyist Scott Faber praising the company’s efforts to dig “into how farmers are using pesticides, particularly glyphosate, and pushing to understand if there are viable alternatives.”

**Food service chefs see sustainability, ‘plant-forward’ alternatives as key trends.** A new report from Aramark, the largest food service company in the nation, says consumers are expected to push for more plant-based alternatives and a focus on sustainability in the new year’s dietary choices. The report is based on the thoughts of three Aramark chefs and what they’re expecting from their consumers. The top trend they’re anticipating is a “plant-forward” approach that encourages “putting more plants on the plate” as a “natural way to reduce the amount of meat in a meal.” The chefs specifically cite plant-based alternatives to milk and protein, but also say alternatives to conventional flour like banana flour and split-pea flour could become more available in 2020. The chefs also see sustainability as a major driver in consumer choices in 2020. “Consumers want to know the story behind their food. In addition to shorter ingredient lists, products will showcase how they match up with evolving values,” they say. Specifically, they point to the inclusion of more plant-forward meals, information about the product or ingredient’s sourcing, and a desire for more eco-friendly packaging. The chefs also expect consumers to push for more antioxidant-heavy superfoods and an increase in international flavors available at Aramark facilities, which range from cafeterias on college campuses to municipalities and companies.

## **Farm Hands West: Adesina joins Bayer**

**Kellie Adesina** has joined Bayer's crop science division as the new director of federal government affairs. She previously served as chief counsel for House Agriculture Chairman **Collin Peterson**, D-Minn. She also worked at USDA during the Obama Administration in the office of the general counsel.

Ippolito International in Salinas, Calif., has hires **Lara Grossman** and **Roberto Ornelas** to its sales and marketing staff. Grossman has been hired to the role of marketing manager and previously worked for Robinson Fresh as a category manager. She also worked at Bayer Crop Science as a produce chain manager, and at Tanimura & Antle as the director of marketing and business development. Ornelas is the new sales and commodity manager and most recently worked for Tanimura & Antle as a product manager of specialty crops.

Radicle Growth, an acceleration fund, has added **Claudia Roessler**, director of agriculture at Microsoft, as the newest venture partner. Roessler has spent more than two decades at Microsoft and has worked to develop tech solutions within agriculture ecosystems.

**Brian Cook** has been selected to serve as the new chairman of the Fresh Produce & Floral Council (FPFC). Cook currently serves as the president of Pete’s, a hydroponic greenhouse grower located in Carpinteria, Calif. Cook assumed his new responsibilities as chairman on Jan.

25. The FPFC also elected **Sean McClure** of Bonduelle Fresh Americas, as chairman-elect; **Michael Schutt** of Raley's Supermarkets as treasurer; and **Kori Martin** of The Oppenheimer Group as secretary. Outgoing chairman **Andrew Bivens** of Westlake Produce Co. will remain on the board. FPFC also welcomed incoming board members **Bill Coombs** of DLJ Produce, **Kelly Craner** of B&C Fresh, **Natalie Machado** of FreshSource, **Marta Moreno** of Rose-Gonzales Plants, **Veronica Rodarte** of Progressive Produce, **Rachelle Schulken** of Renaissance Food Group and **Caitlin Tierney** of 99 Cents Only Stores.



*Kaitlynn Glover*

The Public Lands Council (PLC) has named **Kaitlynn Glover** as its new executive director. Glover will serve as the chief lobbyist for the organization, representing cattle and sheep producers in western states on resource issues affecting their operations. Glover most recently worked for Sen. **John Barrasso**, R-Wyo., as his legislative assistant for agriculture and public lands. Barrasso's office has not yet filled Glover's position of ag legislative assistant.

**Kathryn Graves Unger** is now the vice president of North America government relations for Cargill. She previously served as the managing director of Cargill Aqua Nutrition.

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) has hired **Charlotte Kirk Baer** to serve as managing director for the organization's Food and Environment Program. Baer comes to UCS after 14 years at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), where she managed grant programs.

The Consumer Brands Association announced **Ellen Davis** will join the organization's senior leadership team as executive vice president of industry engagement, effective March 2. Davis most recently served as senior vice president at the National Retail Federation and president of the NRF Foundation.

**Jocelyn Broman** has started in the office of Rep. **Paul Cook**, R-Calif., as a legislative assistant covering the agriculture, energy, environmental protection, and natural resources portfolio. Broman comes from Sen. **Ben Sasse**'s, R-Neb., office where she served as a legislative correspondent.

**Zack Laven** has been promoted to senior legislative assistant covering the agriculture, energy, environmental protection, natural resources, and transportation portfolio for Rep. **David Schweikert**, R-Ariz.

**Lindsey Curnutte** is now the communications director for Rep. **Ken Buck**, R-Colo. She previously worked for Heritage Action for America.

The National Academy of Sciences awarded **Zach Lippman**, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Howard Hughes Medical Institute, with the 2020 Prize in Food and Agriculture Science. Lippman got the \$100,000 prize for his work to accelerate crop improvement. His work is aimed at the challenges of increasing crop productivity in the face of declining agricultural land and population growth. The NAS Prize, endowed by the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is awarded annually to a scientist who has made an extraordinary contribution to agriculture.

The International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) announced the new officers elected to the executive council as well as new directors for the group's five industry segment boards. **Dan Zagzebski**, president and CEO of Great Lakes Cheese Co., Inc., is the new chair; **David Ahlem**, president and CEO of Hilmar Cheese Company, has been elected to vice chair; **Stan Ryan**, president and CEO of Darigold, is the new secretary; and **David Nelsen**, vice president of manufacturing at Albertsons Companies, was elected treasurer. To see the directors elected to the industry segment boards, click [here](#).

Secretary of Agriculture **Sonny Perdue** has appointed 18 members and 18 alternate members to serve on The Cotton Board. To see those elected to the board, click [here](#). The appointees will serve three-year terms, ending Dec. 31, 2022.

The American Agricultural Law Association (AALA) announced individuals elected to its 2019-2020 board of directors. They are as follows: **Mike Traxinger**, president; **Pat Dillon**, president-elect; **Amber Miller**, past president; **Blair Dunn**, director; **Erin Herbold-Swalwell**, director; **Jake Parker**, director; **Ross Pifer**, director; **Joe Miller**, director; and **Kimberly Bousquet**, director. Departing from the board are **Jennifer Zwagerman**, 2018-19 past president; **Tylor Buswell**, director; and **Tiffany Dowell Lashmet**, director.

**John Melle** announced his retirement as the assistant U.S. trade representative for the Western hemisphere at USTR. Melle joined USTR in 1988 and was appointed to his current position in March 2011. His responsibilities include developing, coordinating and implementing the United States' trade policy for the Western hemisphere. In 2017, Melle was appointed chief negotiator for the trade talks, resulting in the United States - Mexico - Canada Agreement (USMCA). He helped managed the negotiations lead by the U.S. Trade Representative. Before joining USTR, Melle served two years at the Department of Energy. His last day at USTR is January 31.

Dairy Advocate **James Samuel "Sam" Stone**, passed away on Jan. 22 at the age of 81. Stone began his dairy cooperative career in 1969 with Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI), in San Antonio. His work in government relations began at AMPI in 1974. He worked on numerous farm bills, the Margin Protection Program, environmental regulations and trade deals as an advocate for the dairy industry. He served as vice president of government relations for Dairy Farmers of America and as treasurer of the Dairy Educational Political Action Committee. He also served in the U.S. Army's 49th Armored Division in 1961 and 1962.

**Best regards,**

**Sara Wyant**  
**Editor**

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