

## What DPR's new regulations on 1,3-D could mean to farmers

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation has released new proposals for further mitigating the soil fumigant 1,3-D (1,3-dichloropropene), known by the brand name Telone. The department will be discussing the options at a workshop with stakeholders in Sacramento on Oct. 17. It is expected to finalize the regulations early next year.

DPR researchers have presented a range of potential options. **At the extreme end is a buffer zone extending up to 3,500 feet from application sites and lasting five days. Other options include limiting applications to 40 acres, tarping the ground for 14 days following each application or applying only when a soil moisture content of at least 70% is present.**

At this early stage in the regulatory process, however, the rules are far from being finalized. The debate currently centers on why DPR says there is a need for further mitigation, according to Jim Baxter, a regulatory affairs manager for Dow AgroSciences. Baxter has spent nearly 40 years engaging with agencies over Dow products. While Corteva Agriscience is the exclusive distributor of Telone, Dow is the manufacturer and official registrant.



DPR researcher Edgar Vidrio presents findings from 1,3-D air monitoring in a March meeting.

**Baxter and Dow scientists have been surprised by DPR's low screening level, an air concentration standard based on what is considered an acceptable exposure limit for health effects.** DPR is establishing 110 parts per billion as the screening level, a number it says is based on toxicology studies, benchmark dose responses and the right uncertainty factors.

“If you use EPA’s modern guidance and current value, the number would be 2,500 parts per billion,” Baxter told *Agri-Pulse* in an interview. “If there was a real acute concern, an acute

health concern, then you would have an extensive record of injury illness reports for decades. In fact, that's not what you find.”

Baxter explained that DPR came to this result through years of “compounding conservatism” in its risk assessments. DPR notes that the 110 ppb value depends in part on the uncertainty factor. CalEPA’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has added an additional 2x uncertainty factor. Baxter said CalEPA researchers have added 2x or 3x factors for parameters over multiple years of research to estimate how observed animal studies would apply to humans.

DPR also asserts that the need for further mitigation was prompted by high concentrations of 1,3-D in the air around the San Joaquin Valley towns of Shafter and Parlier. In July, department researchers reported air monitoring stations had recorded spikes in 2018 as high as 351% of the targeted 110 ppb. DPR spread that single 24-hour air concentration over a 13-week period to come up with a rolling 90-day average, which factors into its modeling for mitigation measures.

About 900 studies on 1,3-D are also being considered during the regulatory evaluation, according to Baxter. Those extend across six decades of use for 1,3-D.



Environmental Advocate Ann Katten of the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation urges a faster timeline on implementing new mitigation rules.

**If DPR severely limits the use of the fumigant – as it did with chlorpyrifos before canceling that insecticide – farmers would certainly be affected.** A handful of products containing 1,3-D are registered for use in California and only four companies are allowed to apply the product. Each application is performed by a trained and state-licensed professional, once they’ve obtained a permit from the local county agriculture commissioner.

**“Nowhere else in the country are there limitations to how much can be used in a six-by-six-mile township,” said Baxter. “That would be one of a laundry list of other restrictions that are in place in California.”**

In the most recent annual summary of pesticide use reports, 1,3-D had the highest acres treated for fumigants. DPR also recently reported that 1,3-D in 2018 had a slight increase in use over the year before.

The fumigant is commonly used on almonds, walnuts, grapevines, strawberries, sweet potatoes, carrots and tree fruit and has “no viable commercial-scale alternatives,” according to DPR.

“(1,3-D) offers unique physical-chemical properties, as well as biological properties, that are irreplaceable,” said Baxter.

**For a grower to invest in an almond orchard, he added, “The last thing in the world you're going to do is throw to chance whether or not you're going to have nematode damage in your crop.”**

To estimate the grower costs associated with the various mitigation options, DPR is working with the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Advocates from California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation and Pesticide Action Network North America have been actively engaged in DPR meetings on 1,3-D, encouraging stricter mitigations and a faster regulatory timeline.

**U.S. EPA is also expected to soon release its own draft human health and environmental risk assessments on 1,3-D.** The agency had projected to publish the assessments this month, but is now expected to release the findings in the first quarter of 2020.

Yet the EPA's scientific Cancer Assessment Review Committee (CARC) sent the initial draft of a report that could mean the agency will no longer classify 1,3-D as a probable human carcinogen. According to Baxter, it will "render a whole bunch of new science and the complete weight of evidence." **He called it a milestone 35 years in the making.**

## **Six questions for Sacramento County legislator Jim Cooper**

Assemblymember Jim Cooper is proud to represent a district that supplies Napa with its grapes. Assembly District 9 skirts the delta from South Sacramento down through Galt and into a portion of San Joaquin County – a region that accounts for more than \$3 billion in annual farm sales.

**Within that area, the Lodi region grows 20% of California's wine grapes, compared to 4% each in Napa and Sonoma Counties.** Cooper's district is also productive in cherries, nuts and dairy. Cooper, a moderate Democrat, chairs the Legislature's first Ag Caucus and serves on the Select Committee on Wine. He joined the Assembly in 2014.



Assemblymember Jim Cooper

Cooper spoke with *Agri-Pulse* about the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, funding research to halt a devastating wine grape disease and his frustrations with low engagement from ag.

### **1. What's your approach to representing agriculture in the legislature?**

My No. 1 priority is ag in the legislature. I'm the chair of the Ag Caucus. I started the first-ever California Ag Caucus this year.

In my time in the Assembly, I've been on over 50 ag tours. I've toured up and down the state.

It's how you know your districts, know the issues and know what our folks are facing. **Ag is a big industry in California. My frustration is that ag is big, very powerful, and has a lot of money and support, but does not flex that muscle.** That's probably been the most disappointing thing. Other industries come together on issues and they're in lockstep.

I'll give you a good example. With the Dynamex decision on independent contractors, the tech industry came together, including Lyft and Uber, and a lot of folks from different organizations.

Ag interests are so varied and ag is so siloed, you don't see that. That's been disheartening. Ag came together on water. Then on SB 1, (Senator) Atkins' water bill, ag was all over the place.

(SB 1) didn't work for my constituents.  
I also voted no on Ag Overtime.

**2. Do you educate other assemblymembers on ag issues?**

That's the reason I started the Ag Caucus. Two months ago, I got 3,000 pounds of pears and passed them out to my members, just to educate them on things like that. We get a lot of pears in my district. It's just an education process.

Some (legislators) have been great and gone on tours. Most are very busy. **You try to educate the building on how important ag is. For a lot of folks, not just politicians, they think ag comes from the grocery store.**

On December 2, we're doing a legislative tour for rice and the restoration of habitat. I'm going to host that.

**3. The Wine Committee has been active with trade issues this year and you recently urged the ratification of the USMCA as well. What are your thoughts on trade?**

(The committee) also authored several bills on pest control, with decreasing the glassy winged sharpshooter. I tried to get funding for that, because this is a big industry. **What's also troubling is this is a worldwide industry and trade is huge.**

We've got Mexico growing strawberries now. That competes directly with California. We've got citrus from Asia. We have wine and wine grapes from South America. Those folks don't have the water issues or the cost of water that we have. They don't have the regulations regarding pesticides and other things. Their labor costs are not what our labor costs are here. It's almost as if you're fighting with one hand behind your back.

Also, think about the regulations for climate change. You can't use a tractor here in California like you use it anywhere else in the world or the U.S. **We make it difficult for our farmers and ranchers to do business here in California. That's why we've seen a lot that have closed up.**

**4. How have you seen the sentiment with ag change over your time in the Assembly?**

They have legitimate concerns that are often dismissed. With the whole water thing, we've increased the population in California dramatically but there's no new storage for water. That's crazy. **We let the enviros call the shots. We've got to have an even conversation and it's usually one-sided.**

On ag, they're forced to play defense. They played a lot of defense. When they've got legislation that's impacting them significantly, they're forced to fight against that and try to stop the blows. It's a consistent barrage.



## 5. What are your thoughts on the governor's administration so far?

He's still getting settled in. It's a whole new team. There's a lot of work to do. I'm optimistic.

He's gone down and visited with farmers. It's got to have an impact. At some point, ag needs some relief somewhere. It has to happen. They can't sustain the pace while still being bombarded on all fronts.

## 6. What do you expect for the next year?

**Hopefully, the governor is going to be a lot more proactive with the valley – the heartland of California where the majority of our food is produced.** I think he realizes the importance of it. Personally, I want to have a dialogue with him and a relationship with him so I can bring up some of these issues that affect my district

There's just so many things. Ag is going mechanized. I've seen it in the five years I've been here. I've seen dramatic changes. Also, the trade issue is a big issue. I think we're going to see some bills in the future where they try to regulate mechanization. It's coming down the road.

Ag has to be better at informing people. In the wintertime, all those grapes you're buying a Costco, they're coming from South America, not from California. No one knows that. We have some of the toughest regulations so that we know our food is safe. But at what cost?

We need to do a better job of educating the public.

Sacramento and its mayor are always touting Farm to Fork. If it's so important and valuable to the state, what are we doing to help it? And that's the thing.

It helps with jobs and it brings in taxes. But we have got to be helpful and not an impediment.

## **Hemp transportation issue unresolved 10 months after farm bill**

Hemp growers already facing a learning curve when it comes to producing the crop this year are confronting a scarier prospect than low yields or a lack of processing facilities: the potential for seizure of their crop on the road.

It's happened several times already, according to news reports and discussions with those in the business — perhaps most notably in Idaho Jan. 24, when state troopers in Ada County pulled over a truck carrying more than three tons of hemp.

They arrested the driver and seized the hemp. The company shipping the product, Big Sky Scientific of Aurora, Colo., sued to get the product back, but the police are still holding it. The driver, who had been facing a sentence of five years to life for trafficking marijuana, pled down to a misdemeanor for not signing a bill of lading - documentation issued by the carrier to acknowledge the cargo - and will pay a reduced fine of \$1,000.

**It's an unintended but perhaps unavoidable consequence of the 2018 farm bill, which ended decades of criminalization of industrial hemp,** the low-THC cousin of marijuana,

whose high THC levels lend it psychoactive properties. To qualify as industrial hemp, the level of tetrahydrocannabinol cannot exceed 0.3%.

Despite the rising tide of marijuana legalization, many states still criminalize cannabis possession and four states have not legalized hemp production, creating confusion for hemp growers and companies seeking to commercialize the plant, which has myriad uses from medicine to food to fiber. Idaho is one of the states without legal hemp.

“We’re stuck in the middle,” says Collin Mooney, executive director of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, which advocates for safety standards in the trucking industry. CVSA is in the early stages of starting a task force to determine how to deal with hemp shipments.

**A major problem for law enforcement is “there really is no good roadside test” for THC levels,** says Abigail Potter, manager of safety and occupational health policy for the American Trucking Associations.



Abigail Potter

“Law enforcement is definitely behind in trying to deal with this,” Potter says. “The average law enforcement officer can’t tell the difference” between hemp and cannabis grown for medical or recreational purposes. ATA advises drivers to “act with extreme caution” and gather all necessary documentation to show that the hemp they are transporting is, indeed, hemp.

Jerry Sharp, a state trooper in Colorado who speaks to other troopers and groups who need education on the issue, says there are similarities between marijuana and hemp, but experience pays off.

In an interview with *Agri-Pulse*, Sharp said he recently stopped a truck carrying hemp plants that were heading for an outdoor grow. **“I very well could have ended up seizing all those plants,” he said, but he knew which farm it was from because he had visited it. After some verification, he sent the truck on its way.**

“Technology has to evolve” to where testing equipment is small and mobile enough that law enforcement can quantify THC levels by the side of the road, Sharp says.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, the prime mover behind the hemp language in the farm bill, has the same idea. He inserted language in an FY 2020 spending bill directing the Drug Enforcement Administration to work on identifying or developing “on-the-spot field testing technologies and devices to distinguish between hemp and marijuana.”

DEA would have to report back to the appropriations committee every six months until such technology is developed. The House version of the spending bill does not contain similar language.

**Another critical step will be the Agriculture Department’s release of an interim final rule implementing the farm bill’s hemp program.** Hemp industry proponents are optimistic USDA will address the transportation question, which USDA General Counsel Stephen Vaden already spoke to earlier this year.

In an opinion issued in May, Vaden said the farm bill legalized interstate transportation of hemp.

While helpful, Potter said the opinion does not carry the force of law. In the Idaho case, Ada County and the Idaho State Police have argued that only hemp produced in compliance with the yet-to-be issued USDA regulations is legal. Last month, the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals declined to rule on the substance of the farm bill language and sent the case to state court, as requested by Ada County and the ISP.



Stephen Vaden, USDA

Big Sky Scientific attorney Elijah Watkins of Stoel Rives in Boise agrees with the need for more technology: **“When someone’s pulled over for a DUI, people have the technology to measure the amount of alcohol,” he says.** His client is arguing in state court in Idaho that the farm bill is explicit in allowing interstate shipments of hemp.

A USDA spokesperson did not answer directly when asked whether the interim final rule, expected to be issued this fall, would cover transportation, but pointed to Vaden’s opinion.

“The forthcoming rule on the cultivation of hemp will address requirements as set forth by the 2018 Farm Bill, which include, but are not limited to, maintaining relevant information regarding land on which hemp is produced, procedures for testing THC levels of hemp, procedures for the effective disposal of plants that are produced in violation of the 2018 Farm Bill, and procedures for conducting annual inspections of hemp producers,” the spokesperson said.

“I’m very hopeful that it’ll get resolved” with issuance of the IFR, said Eric Steenstra, president of Vote Hemp.

## **Protecting US ag means training up expanded inspection force**

After a neighbor’s feisty, big-boned, short-haired Belgian Malinois bit through her hand at age 3, Valerie Woo, of Springfield, Va., thought she would be afraid of dogs for the rest of her life.

“I still have the scars from his teeth,” Woo told *Agri-Pulse*. “After that, it was just a blanket fear of dogs. I was just [as] afraid of a German Shepherd as I was of a Chihuahua.”

But several years later, Woo has overcome her fear and now serves as an Agricultural Specialist K-9 handler for U.S. Customs and Border Protection at Washington-Dulles International Airport.

**Woo is one of many handlers stationed at ports of entry across the country.** She and her detector dog Phillip are part of what the Department of Agriculture coined the “Beagle Brigade.” Woo and two other handlers use dogs to sniff out incoming passengers at Dulles who may be bringing prohibited food items into the country. Her story illustrates what it takes to expand CBP’s ag inspection force.

“What we are mainly looking for are fresh fruits and vegetables and meat products,” Woo said. This includes apples, mangos, citrus, beef, and pork.

**CBP specialists have been brought into the ag spotlight in recently because of the outbreak of African Swine Fever began that has devastated China's swine production.**

There have been 158 outbreaks of ASF in 32 Chinese provinces, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. ASF does not affect humans, but over 1 million pigs have been killed since the outbreak, according to the FAO. The disease has also spread to parts of Europe.

Earlier this year, the National Pork Producers Council asked the Department of Agriculture to provide some 600 more inspectors at the ports to prevent the disease from entering the U.S.

According to CBP estimates, there were 2,453 agriculture specialists as of March 16, 2019 — 700 short of the staffing target of 3,148 for FY 2019.

Greg Ibach, USDA's undersecretary for marketing and regulatory programs, said USDA is working on training more officers and dogs to be present at ports of entry.

“We have taken time to look in ethnic markets where a lot of these prohibited products sometimes show up and to find, if there are some, how they got into the U.S., which has helped us put up a lot more resistance to those illegal products coming in,” Ibach said.



Greg Ibach, USDA

He also said the department and CBP work closely so inspectors understand which products and countries USDA is worried about.

**“We’ve taken a lot of steps to try to put our defenses at the highest alert level,” Ibach said.** Both the House and Senate have also introduced legislation to increase funding for more inspectors like Woo.

But becoming a K-9 handler isn’t just a walk in the dog park. Once selected, handlers must complete an intensive 10 to 13-week training course at the USDA National Detector Dog Training Center in Newnan, Ga., just outside of Atlanta.

“It was rather difficult,” Woo said, chuckling as she recalled her clumsiness. Other than helping other handlers back at the port, Woo said this was the first time she had really worked with a dog.

“Getting the dog to try to do what I want it to do and listening to me while I am trying to figure out what I am supposed to be doing ... there are a lot of moving parts that go into that,” Woo said.

Woo did not always want to work with dogs, but about five years ago — after being an ag specialist with CBP for about five years — she started to entertain the idea. However, she hesitated to apply for the program not because of her prior fear of dogs but because she had a daughter and family. “Knowing that I was going to leave for two and a half months, it was a lot to think about,” Woo said.



But one of the handlers at Dulles retired and Woo started showing interest in the position. After her mother kept hearing her talk about it day after day, she pushed Woo to apply.

“It was one of the things that I thought very heavily about doing but wasn’t sure I’d ever get the opportunity to do it and it took me 10 years to get here,” Woo said.

Woo was in a class with five other inspectors ranging in locations from Miami to Honolulu, who had to work with nine dogs at the beginning of the training. Instruction mainly focused on how to take care of the dog, working with it and understanding the animal's body language.



Valerie Woo and her K-9, Phillip

**“We had 100 bags or so and set up a couple of exercises in various designs and configurations on the floor, and loaded some of them with the target odor,” Woo clarified.**

The dogs are then trained to paw at a bag or sit near it if they sniff an agricultural product. She said the training process requires a lot of patience because it has to be repeated day after day. Woo said some dogs were easier to work with than others.

“This other dog — I would have never been able to work him,” Woo stated. “He was very excitable, he would run around, he wanted to sniff the floor before he sniffed all of the bags. He spun me in circles [and] tripped me up, I just couldn’t work with him.”

According to CBP, the officer and canine continue training at their home port to maintain skills. All the students are given a chance to work with all nine dogs initially to figure out which of the dogs they work best with. As the weeks go by, dogs are paired with specific students. Around the third week of the program, she was assigned a primary canine named Phillip, who now works with her at Dulles.

She said she and Phillip “work together pretty well” but are still fine-tuning a few things.

## **Sustainability, tech helping drive nonrural students to ag sector jobs**

Corporations and organizations looking to serve the nation's farmers and ranchers are exploring a new pool of candidates to fill their open positions: students with backgrounds outside of traditional production agriculture.

**The challenge is making ag careers enticing to job candidates who don't have a farm background.**

Annual jobs available in agriculture are outpacing the number of college graduates with corresponding degrees, and that has prompted recruiters to look for candidates from cities and suburbs. **Some 35,400 new U.S. graduates with ag degrees are projected to fill 57,900 annual positions within the next year, according to a USDA-funded study by Purdue University. That leaves 22,500 jobs still available.**



Allen Featherstone, Kansas State

Allen Featherstone, who directs the agricultural economics department at Kansas State University, said the national trend is “fairly flat” in terms of the number of students majoring in ag fields. “The big shift is we do see a declining number of individuals from rural areas and do see a little bit of an increase in those from non-rural areas,” Featherstone said.

In urban areas, there is a recognition of the need for the ag sector to continue to improve to feed the increasing global population, he said. “There’s concerns about sustainability,” Featherstone said. “I think there are concerns about productivity and just the desire to improve the livelihood of not only people around the U.S. but people around the world.”

Mark Stewart, president and CEO of the Agriculture Future of America organization, told *Agri-Pulse* recent “Generation Z” graduates are often eager to make a difference in the world. “It is about that, more than salary and some other things,” Stewart said. **“Although those things matter, it is about purpose.”**

With fewer young people growing up on the farm, agribusiness firms must look at different ways to attract young people, he said. One way to do that is by “making ag the new NASA.”

“Every kid growing up in the '80s wanted to be an astronaut but may not have had parents who exposed them to space travel. It’s the same kind of concept,” he said.

**Jackie Klippenstein is a prime example of a non-rural student working in agriculture,** having grown up in Long Island, N.Y. Klippenstein, now the senior vice president with Dairy Farmers of America, said DFA has rethought how it recruits from colleges and universities, and even high schools.

“If you look at any innovation in the dairy space these days, they’re coming from biochemists and kids that came from different backgrounds,” Klippenstein said. She said DFA has begun working with schools such as The Lincoln University in Philadelphia and the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, which are historically black universities outside mainstream ag colleges.

“We’ve also started doing recruitment at high school career fairs where we hadn’t been doing that in the past,” Klippenstein told *Agri-Pulse*. The milk cooperative began recruiting there because some DFA positions require only a technical certification of some kind, not a four-year degree.

Meanwhile, members of the millennial generation can be picky about what employers they will work for, said Toree Pederson, president of Aligned, a nonprofit business coalition based in the Kansas City area.

**“They want family-friendly practices and they want companies who demonstrate sustainability,”** Pederson said during a panel discussion at the Ag Outlook Forum, co-hosted by *Agri-Pulse* and the Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City in September. “The reality is, they can be picky because there are two jobs for every one of them looking.”

**Pederson said new graduates care deeply about the world’s environment and want a company that feels the same way.** She said the agriculture sector has a great opportunity to fill these needs, but communication with students must start much earlier than college.

“It’s not just farming; they have to know about the jobs out there in this industry. We have to talk to them in grade school, middle school and then in high school,” Pederson noted.

As companies rely more heavily on non-rural employees, firms such as Corteva Agriscience are reconsidering traditional recruiting methods.

“Having that talent pipeline for the future, it can’t just be traditional internships and traditional job fairs and leadership development,” said Sharyl Sauer, global business platforms communications leader at Corteva. “We have to think of different ways to get non-ag people into our workforce.”



Jackie Klippenstein, DFA

One of the ways Corteva is doing that is through a pilot program called “The Forge,” an innovation center focusing on software development training. Corteva partnered with a consulting company to start a center in Jefferson, Iowa, just northwest of Des Moines.

“A student can go to this building in Jefferson, Iowa, and they will get tuition-free software and computer development skills training. **When they are done, they are ready for a high-tech job in ag or another career,**” she said.

The program benefits other businesses and government agencies as well as Corteva, she said.

“We are building our talent pipeline and we are also not just giving funding and walking away,” she said. “We are trying to create a relationship with those students so that when they graduate from ‘The Forge,’ they want to come and work for Corteva.”

## News Briefs:

**Almond Breeze targeted in lawsuits over true vanilla.** Two class-action lawsuits were filed against Sacramento’s Blue Diamond Growers in September in a New York federal court. The lawsuits assert the food producer’s marketing misleads consumers into believing Almond Breeze almond milk contains vanilla. The attorney for the plaintiffs, who has filed several similar suits over ice cream and other products, argues the ingredients do not contain vanilla, but “unspecified natural flavors.” They are seeking a \$5 million reward.

**Trade mission aims to increase exports to Vietnam, nearby countries.** USDA Trade Undersecretary Ted McKinney is headed to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam this week on a trade mission with nearly 80 industry and government representatives. Their goal: expand agricultural exports to one of the fastest-growing regions of the world, including Thailand and Burma (Myanmar). “The size of this trade mission delegation speaks to the phenomenal potential that exists for U.S. exporters in Vietnam and surrounding countries,” McKinney said. “Since the United States normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995, our agricultural exports have grown exponentially, reaching a record \$4 billion last year. Sales of U.S. food and farm products to

Thailand and Burma also set records in 2018, topping \$2.1 billion and \$126 million, respectively.” With a population of over 97 million, Vietnam is the seventh-largest destination for U.S. agricultural products. Fresh fruits and prepared food have increased in popularity in Vietnam, with U.S. export values up by 42% and 15% respectively from 2017 to 2018. The United States is the third-largest exporter of tree nuts to Thailand, behind Vietnam and Indonesia. From 2017 to 2018, the United States expanded tree nut exports by 44.3% most of which were almonds and pistachios. Last year, U.S. tree nut exporters were able to send \$26.7 million of just these two items to Thailand. Joining McKinney are the heads of six state departments of agriculture and representatives of 45 companies from across the country, including 14 California and Arizona companies. A complete list of participants [can be seen here](#).

**GAP Report pegs necessary production increase at 1.73%.** Global agricultural productivity will need to see an average annual increase of 1.73% if the world is to sustainably produce enough food, feed, fiber, and bioenergy for 10 billion people in 2050, according to an annual report. That’s a slightly higher figure than the 1.63% that the 2019 Global Agricultural Productivity Report shows as current agricultural productivity growth, defined as increasing the output of crops and livestock with existing or fewer inputs. The GAP Report, released Wednesday at the World Food Prize symposium in Des Moines, Iowa, specifically says productivity growth is strong in China in South Asia but “alarmingly low” in low-income countries and slowing in “the agricultural powerhouses of North America, Europe, and Latin America.” “These productivity gaps, if they persist, will have serious ramifications for environmental sustainability, the economic vitality of the agriculture sector, and the prospects for reducing poverty, malnutrition, and obesity,” said Ann Steensland, author of the 2019 GAP Report and coordinator of the GAP Report Initiative at Virginia Tech. Absence of productivity gains, the report says more land and water will be needed to boost yields, “straining a natural resource base already threatened by climate change.” The GAP report suggests several strategies for accelerating productivity growth including an investment in public research and extension, improved infrastructure, expanded trade, and reducing post-harvest loss and food waste. The report also points to “widespread adoption of improved agricultural technologies and best farm management practices” increasing global output by 60% over the last 40 years; global cropland has increased by just 5% over the same time period.

**CHS tops list of Top 100 co-ops.** Agricultural giant CHS Inc. is the largest cooperative in the nation and had more than twice the revenue of any other co-op in 2018, the National Cooperative Bank reports. CHS pulled in \$32.7 billion in revenue last year, more than twice as much as No. 2 Land O'Lakes Inc. at \$14.9 billion. The report also details assets held by co-ops, a category led by CoBank at more than \$139 billion; Farm Credit lender AgriBank is the runner-up in that category at more than \$109 billion. The report, released annually every October in honor of National Co-op Month, lists the top 100 users of the member-owned, cooperative business model. Of those 100, a little more than half are specifically listed as agricultural coops, although some of the other sectors listed in the report - grocery, finance, and food service, for example- also have an impact on the bottom lines of producers across the country. Overall, co-ops had more than \$222 billion in 2018 revenue and hold more than \$680 billion in assets. According to the National Co-op Month [website](#), there are more than 40,000 cooperative businesses in the country with more than 350 million members.

## Farm Hands West:

Gov. **Gavin Newsom** has officially appointed **Val Dolcini** to serve as director at the Department of Pesticide Regulation, a position he has served in an acting capacity since June. Throughout his career, Dolcini has been deputy secretary for agriculture at the California Environmental Protection Agency since 2019. He was president and chief executive officer at Pollinator Partnership from 2017 to 2019. He was the administrator for the Farm Service Agency at the U.S. Department of Agriculture from 2014 to 2017, and state executive director for California for the Farm Service Agency from 2009 to 2014. Newsom also appointed **Jesse Cuevas** to serve as chief deputy director at the Department of Pesticide Regulation, where he has been assistant director in the Pesticide Programs Division since 2017. He was director of legislation and policy at the Department of Pesticide Regulation from 2015 to 2017 and legislative director in the Office of California State Assemblymember Henry Perea from 2010 to 2015.

**Newsom** has announced new leadership for the state's geologic resources agency. Newsom appointed **David Shabazian** as the new director of the California Department of Conservation, and **Uduak-Joe Ntuk** as supervisor of the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources at the California Department of Conservation. Shabazian has been program manager of rural-urban connections strategy for the Sacramento Area Council of Governments since 2007, where he has also served as project manager of water resources and flood plain program management since 2004. Ntuk has been petroleum administrator for the City of Los Angeles since 2016 and an adjunct faculty member at the California State University, Long Beach Chemical Engineering Department since 2015.

The Bureau of Land Management announced that **Karen Mouritsen** has been named the new California state director, effective January 2020. Mouritsen, a 27-year career public servant, comes to the California post after serving the past three years as the state director for the BLM Eastern States Office. She has also served as a regional facilitator for the Department of Interior reorganization effort.

**John Bailey**, director of the University of California's Hopland Research and Extension Center, has been appointed to the USDA Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers by Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Bailey holds an MBA in sustainable enterprise from New College of California and a B.A. in biology, as well as a Certificate in Ecological Horticulture from UC Santa Cruz. Before joining UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, Bailey was the Mendo-Lake Food Hub project manager for North Coast Opportunities. Before that, Bailey worked at McEvoy of Marin for 12 years. He started in horticultural operations in McEvoy's vegetable gardens and fruit and olive orchards and worked his way up to director of operations

Fresh Farms of Rio Rico Ariz., has hired **Scott Rossi** as director of sales and marketing. He started his career at Castle & Cooke Inc. in Minneapolis, and was with Pandol Bros. beginning in the mid-1980s and leaving in 2004 as director of marketing and sales. He was also vice president of sales for Four Star Sales Inc., Delano, Calif.

The U.S. Dairy Export Council has tapped Texas dairy farmer, **Larry Hancock**, to serve as the new chairman. Hancock replaces **Paul Rovey**, an Arizona farmer who is retiring after serving seven years as chairman and 11 years as vice chairman of the checkoff-funded USDEC. While running his own farm, Hancock has served as treasurer of Dairy Management Inc. and was a board member of the United Dairy Industry Association.

**Rick Russo** has joined Church Brothers Farms in Salinas, Calif., as the new vice president of strategic growth and planning. Russo previously worked for Tanimura & Antle in several roles, including director of food service sales and vice president of crop management. He also was with NewStar Fresh Foods for a little over five years. Russo joins Church Brothers after almost 10 years at Mann Packing, most recently as vice president of sales, marketing and product management.



John Furner

San Miguel Produce of Oxnard, Calif., has added **Jennifer Osborne** as director of sales. Before coming to San Miguel Produce, Osborne had sales positions with Classic Salads LLC, Fresh Innovations LLC, Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc., Fresh Express and Growers Express.

**John Furner** has been named president and CEO of Walmart U.S., effective Nov. 1. He will succeed **Greg Foran**, who held the role for five years. Foran plans to stay with Walmart through Jan. 31, 2020, to ensure a smooth transition. Furner most recently served as president and CEO of Walmart's Sam's Club business and earlier was chief merchandising officer for Sam's Club.

Growth Energy has elected **Dan Sanders** as the association's new chairman of the board of directors. Sanders currently serves as the vice president of Front Range Energy, located in Windsor, Colo., which joined Growth Energy in 2008. Sanders succeeds **Jeff Broin**, CEO of POET, LLC, who held the position since the association's inception in 2008.

**Jenny McGee** has been appointed by President **Donald Trump** to serve as an associate administrator for relief, response and resilience at the United States Agency for International Development. McGee has held positions with the National Security Council and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. She also has senior-level staff and deployed experience, with recent duties at Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe and Africa, United States Central Command Air and Space Operations Center, and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has promoted **Alexandra Adams** to senior director of federal affairs. Adams previously served as the legislative director for NRDC's Nature program and has worked as the group's chief legislative advocate for oceans during the Obama and Trump administrations.

National Sugar Marketing LLC has tapped **Chis Simons** to serve as the company's new president and chief executive officer, effective Oct. 14. Simons started his career with German grocery retailer Aldi, then worked for Cargill for nearly 20 years, including serving as the vice president of its sweeteners division. He succeeds **Bill Smith**, who has led National Sugar since its formation in 2011.

**Mitch Baker** has moved to the Department of Agriculture to serve as a confidential assistant in the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement. He was working as a legislative correspondent for Rep. **John Rose**, R-Tenn.

Sen. **Kamala Harris**, D-Calif., has hired **Kristine Lucius** to serve as her new chief of staff. Lucius previously served as the executive vice president and director of policy for the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

**Melvin Félix** has moved over to the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis as the new communications director for Rep. **Kathy Castor**, D-Fla. Félix previously served as Rep. **Matt Cartwright**'s, D-Pa., press secretary.

**Maddy Pike** is now the outreach and member services director for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee under Rep. **Peter DeFazio**, D-Ore. Pike previously served as the director of government affairs for Tai Ginsberg and Associates LLC.

**Garrett Turner** is now the press secretary for Rep. **Greg Gianforte**, R-Mont.

**Jesse Lee** is now a senior adviser for Speaker of the House **Nancy Pelosi**, D-Calif. He previously served as the vice president of communications for the Center for American Progress.

**Dick Hanson**, past editor of Successful Farming and AAEA president in 1965, has passed away at the age of 94. Hanson was a graduate of Iowa State University with a degree in Agriculture Journalism. He began his career in 1949 and finished his career in 1984 with Meredith Corporation where he served as executive director, editor, and agricultural editorial director of Successful Farming magazine.

**Best regards,**

**Sara Wyant**

**Editor**

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