

## Trump maintaining rural base despite Biden push

President Donald Trump maintained his strength in rural areas of battleground states even as he struggled to win reelection against a Democratic surge in the suburbs and big cities for former Vice President Joe Biden.

The outcome of the race remained in doubt Wednesday morning because of the slow pace of counting votes in Georgia and North Carolina as well as the northern battlegrounds of Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

**Early Wednesday morning, Biden expressed confidence that he was on track to win. Later at the White House, Trump went further by claiming victory and vowing to fight what he claimed were Democratic attempts to “steal” the election.**



*Former Vice President Joe Biden (left) and President Donald Trump (right)*

Democrats made a concerted effort to cut into GOP rural margins without much evidence of success. In many major agricultural counties, Trump was on track to even exceed the margins by which he carried them in 2016, helping Republicans down ballot in Senate and House races.

In southwest Wisconsin, Trump was winning Grant County by 55% of the vote, beating his 51% share in 2016 and Mitt Romney’s 42% showing in 2012.

Trump also met or beat his 2016 performance in neighboring counties of Iowa, which he won relatively easily after Barack Obama had carried them in 2012.

In Darke County, Ohio, one of that state's largest agricultural counties, Trump was getting 81% of the vote, compared to 79% in 2016.

A lot of issues important to U.S. agriculture were in play, including immigration, tax, trade and regulatory policy.

Trump, who promised to keep his tariffs on China, repeatedly attacked Biden for being weak on the Asian nation; Biden pledged to end the tariffs and said he would try to work with allies in Europe and elsewhere to get China to make concessions on U.S. trade complaints.

According to the Fox News exit poll, voters appear to like Trump's position on trade and China, even if they supported Biden. Some 48% of those polled said Trump had not been tough enough on China and 37% said his approach was about right. Results were similar in farm states such as Iowa, Kansas and Minnesota where producers had been hit particularly hard by Trump's tariff war.

During the campaign, Trump also touted the 2017 tax cuts, which included a number of benefits for farmers, including cuts in rates for small businesses and an increase in the federal estate tax exemption.

Biden has promised to roll back some of the tax cuts and has called for ending the use of stepped-up basis, which would force heirs to pay capital gains taxes on increases in the value of property they inherit.

Biden also promised to make immigration reform an early priority of his administration, raising the possibility Congress could address long-sought changes in the H-2A visa program for foreign farmworkers.

**Rural voters were a key target for both parties. Democrats were dead set on avoiding a repeat of Hillary Clinton's performance in 2019, when she did much more poorly in rural areas than Obama had done in 2008 and 2012. The goal wasn't to win rural counties, probably an impossible goal, but rather to cut into GOP margins.**

Former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack helped the Biden campaign devise a climate plan that would avoid alienating rural voters by using an expanded Conservation Stewardship Program to pay farmers for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

With help from Vilsack and others, Democrats also repeatedly hammered the Trump administration over the trade war with China as well as waivers from the Renewable Fuel Standard that many small refineries obtained from EPA.

**"Trump left an opening in rural America many of us did not see," former Iowa Lt. Gov. Patty Judge told reporters on Tuesday.**

Former Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., led a group called the One Country Project that advised Democrats on ways to appeal to rural voters.

Trump relied heavily on his administration's record to maintain rural support. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue crisscrossed the country to promote rural broadband projects and the

administration's coronavirus assistance to farmers through the Farmers to Families Food Box program.

Trump "is an unabashed advocate for America's farmers and ranchers and his administration has delivered prosperity for rural America," Perdue said in an op-ed posted Monday by Fox Business.

**"Whether by cutting taxes for all Americans, fighting for better trade deals, expanding the use of ethanol, or connecting rural Americans to high-quality broadband Internet, the President has made sure that America is better off."**

Administration officials frequently reminded farmers and rural voters that the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers had replaced the Obama-era "waters of the U.S." rule that had brought additional wetlands and streams under the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act.

In recent days, the administration took a series of regulatory actions certain to appeal to many farmers. The action included the Labor Department's announcement of a rule that will cut H-2A wage rates; EPA's re-approval of formulations of the herbicide dicamba for five years; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's removal of the gray wolf from protection under the Endangered Species Act.

## **Ag Chairman Peterson loses House seat to GOP's Fischbach**

Western Minnesota voters in the farm-rich seventh district chose Republican candidate Michelle Fischbach in the Tuesday election, unseating House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson.

**Peterson had trailed in the early returns before The Associated Press called Fischbach as the winner just before 2 a.m. Wednesday morning. The outcome denies Peterson a 16th term in Congress and brings in a new era of farm policy with new leadership coming to the helm of the House Ag Committee.**

Groups like the Minnesota Farmers Union and the Minnesota Farm Bureau, along with a long list of national organizations, sought to keep Peterson in his seat and keep the power of the chair of the House Ag Committee with someone who has been a long-time champion of U.S. agriculture.

But the western Minnesota district that butts up against Canada is a now a GOP stronghold and Fischbach campaigned heavily with the support of the Trump administration.



*House Ag Committee Chair Collin Peterson*

Campaign spokesman David FitzSimmons said Fischbach did reach out to farmers in the state known for its dairy, sugar beets, potatoes, poultry, pork and soybeans, but the former Lieutenant Governor relied heavily on strong support from the Trump administration.

**Fischbach has “a very direct line with the White House and they’ve been very invested in this race — the president and the vice president. I think farmers are generally happy with (the Trump administration),” FitzSimmons told *Agri-Pulse*.**

But Peterson’s loss will be felt deeply by the state’s ag sector that enjoyed having a Minnesotan as one of the top farm policymakers in the country as well as national farm groups who valued his straight talk on farm policy.

**“To state our view simply: Collin Peterson is a powerful voice for Minnesota agriculture and losing his leadership in Washington would be a blow to farm families and our rural economy,” some of the top farm groups said in an open letter.**

“Whether Collin has served as chair of the Ag Committee or the ranking member, he has played a highly influential and central role in writing the last three farm bills enacted in the last 12 years. Minnesota has not had someone in Washington DC in such a powerful position to influence farm policy in decades.”



*Michelle Fischbach*

The letter was signed by the Minnesota Barley Growers Association, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Minnesota Chicken and Egg Association, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, Minnesota Farmers Union, Minnesota Milk Producers Association, Minnesota Pork Producers Association, Minnesota Turf Seed Council and the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers.

Peterson was counting on splitting the vote in his favor — peeling off Trump voters that were willing to vote for him because of his ag leadership — but ultimately wasn’t successful.

Through advertising, the Fischbach campaign attempted to tie Peterson to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minnesota Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar — two extremely unpopular politicians in the deep red seventh district — and the efforts appeared to be successful.

And it’s a letdown for Minnesota Farmers Union President Gary Wertish, who told *Agri-Pulse* that a Fischbach win “shows that agriculture’s voice isn’t needed.”

“In 2020, there’s just so many factors at play and we’re not used to it — the divisiveness,” said Amber Hanson Glaeser, director of public policy for the Minnesota Farm Bureau. **Peterson, she added, “has been a great voice for Minnesota farmers” and ag groups hoped he would return to Congress " to write the next farm bill. He knows the issues and he knows farmers.”**

## **Farm states may help GOP keep control of the Senate**

Farm country may ultimately help Republicans keep control of the Senate, as Rep. Roger Marshall defeated challenger Barbara Bollier in Kansas and Joni Ernst held on to her seat in Iowa against Theresa Greenfield. But some races are still undecided

In a year in which 23 of the 35 senators up for reelection were Republicans, Democrats had seen many opportunities to pick up the four seats they needed for 51 seats in the Senate.

**Ultimately, Republicans were able to keep their majority by prevailing in enough close races — not just in Kansas and Iowa, but in North Carolina, where Thom Tillis is expected to eek out a victory over Democrat Cal Cunningham. As of 6 am EST with 94% of the votes counted, Tillis led with 2,640,381 to 2,543,692 for Cunningham. However, mail ballots postmarked by election day will be accepted until Nov. 12.**

In **Kansas**, Bollier held a fundraising advantage of about \$15 million in her uphill battle with Marshall in the race for the Kansas Senate seat being vacated by retiring Senate Ag Committee Chair Pat Roberts. RealClearPolitics only listed one poll of the race from October, which showed Marshall up by 4 points.



*Rep. Roger Marshall, R-Kan., won his bid for a Senate seat.*

Marshall’s campaign website said he played “a key role in the 2018 Farm Bill” and advocated for “fully funded crop insurance, overturning the egregious EPA rules surrounding Waters of the U.S., and securing crucial infrastructure and internet access funding for rural Kansas.

Congressman Marshall also supported a food stamp work requirement that would require able-bodied adults without children to work or do work training for 20 hours per week in order to receive welfare benefits.”

Bollier also stressed the importance of rural broadband in her state, and had pledged to “retain Kansas farmers’ voice on the Senate Agriculture Committee, increase funding for agricultural research in Kansas, promote continuity of farm bill programs, support international trade deals that benefit Kansas producers, and support rural Kansans’ unique way of life.”

The Kansas Farm Bureau endorsed Marshall.

Preelection polls indicated the **Iowa** race was too close to call, with the RealClearPolitics (RCP) average showing Ernst up 1.4 points. In the money game, Greenfield had raised \$47 million to Ernst’s \$23.5 million.

In the crucial contest, Greenfield hit Ernst hard on EPA waivers from the Renewable Fuel Standard granted to oil companies, but Ernst still obtained the endorsements of the Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Corn Growers Association and the Iowa Cattlemen’s Association. Both candidates criticized the other for campaign donations — Ernst for taking oil company money and Greenfield for receiving environmental contributions.

In **North Carolina**, Cunningham — a lawyer and retired military officer who was endorsed by the League of Conservation Voters, Sierra Club, unions and the state’s two major newspapers — consistently led in the polls against incumbent Republican Tillis, a staunch supporter of President Trump.

Tillis received contributions to his campaign committee of about \$838,000 from the agribusiness sector, the largest amount of any single area, according to Open Secrets.org.

In **Georgia**, incumbent Republican David Perdue and Democrat Jon Ossoff were locked in a tight race, and The New York Times reported "it could take a couple of days" for mail-in ballots

to be counted, but that the secretary of state expected most winners to be announced Wednesday. With about 91% of the vote in, Perdue holds an almost 51-47 lead over Ossoff.

Polls had teetered back and forth in the days approaching the election and Perdue, cousin of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, had raised less money (and spent less money) than Ossoff, an investigative journalist.

In a separate special election, Republican incumbent Kelly Loeffler, who was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp, prevailed in a crowded field over fellow Republican Rep. Doug Collins for the right to face Democrat Raphael Warnock in a January runoff election. The race goes to a runoff in January because no candidate got more than 50% of the vote.

In **Michigan**: incumbent Democrat Gary Peters currently trails Republican John James by about 250,000 votes, with 78% reporting. The New York Times cited officials saying it could take until Nov. 6 to get unofficial results.

Peters had had been running about 5 points ahead of James in the polls, but RCP had labeled the race a tossup. James, who was designated a “friend of agriculture” by the Michigan Farm Bureau AgriPac Committee, promoted his business experience as part of his family’s company, James Group International. Peters touted his environmental record and his support for agriculture — including renegotiation of NAFTA — on his campaign website.

In **Minnesota**, incumbent Democrat Tina Smith — a former lieutenant governor of the state who holds a seat on the Senate Ag Committee — defeated Republican challenger Jason Lewis.

Smith was endorsed by Minnesota Farm Bureau, a fact she proudly noted on her campaign website. “Along with championing the farm bill, Sen. Smith has helped secure millions of dollars to expand telehealth and improve rural health care in the major coronavirus relief package, successfully pushed for improvements to the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), and supported expanding the use of farmer-grown renewable energy through a strong Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS),” her campaign said.

Lewis is a former radio talk show host and political commentator who served one term in Congress before being defeated by Democrat Angie Craig in 2018. He focused on mining, energy and logging in the state and called a state mask mandate “unconstitutional.”

Polls showed the race tightening considerably in recent weeks, with Lewis cutting Smith’s lead, which had ranged from 7 to 11 points in September and early October, down to the low single digits.

In **Colorado**, former Gov. John Hickenlooper, a Democrat, unseated incumbent Republican Cory Gardner, who conceded Tuesday night before all the vote was counted, saying Hickenlooper's "success is Colorado's success."

On his campaign website, Gardner said he was the third-most bipartisan senator and said he had "used his position on the Foreign Relations Committee to push for trade deals that benefit Colorado. His *Asia Reassurance Initiative Act* that was signed into law helps bolster our trade relationships with key allies in the region."

Hickenlooper raised \$39 million to Gardner's \$26 million through mid-October.

**In Montana, Gov. Steve Bullock lost a tight race with incumbent Steve Daines** Bullock outraised Daines in the race, \$42 million to \$27 million, according to OpenSecrets.org. But the agribusiness sector was the single-biggest contributor to Daines' campaign committee at about \$815,000.



*Sen. Steve Daines*

On his website, Bullock said he would "fight for fair trade deals that open access to markets, support expanding disaster aid to fill the gaps that crop insurance and Farm Bill funding don't address and take action on harmful consolidation in the agricultural industry. Steve will support programs to create more opportunity for farmers and ranchers just getting started, like low-interest loans and student loan assistance for Montanans going into agriculture." He also addressed the importance of rural health care and broadband access.

Daines' Senate site says he "worked hard to pass the 2018 Farm Bill for our farmers and ranchers," which includes state priorities such as "protecting crop insurance, expanding broadband access in rural Montana, securing funds for land-grant universities, and supporting important conservation programs such as EQIP and CSP."

**In South Carolina**, incumbent Republican and Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham retained his Senate seat and overcame a challenge from Democrat Jaime Harrison.

Harrison had raised more than \$100 million and had outspent Graham by \$40 million as of mid-October. On his campaign site, he said his "Rural Hope Agenda is focused on revitalizing rural infrastructure, fighting for better health care statewide, and creating good-paying jobs that spark economic growth." On his, Graham said he has been "a strong advocate for South Carolina's farming and agribusiness community through his support of numerous farm bills. He has been at the forefront of promoting our state's specialty crops, fighting back against unfair trade practices, and ensuring that there is an adequate supply of legal labor for our farms."

In Kentucky, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell cruised past challenger Amy McGrath, despite over \$90 million being spent in an attempt to defeat him. He won re-election with about a 58% to 37% margin. In Mississippi, incumbent Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith led former Sec. of Agriculture Mike Espy by 58.1% to 39.9%, with 66% of the votes counted.

## **Voters in ag districts elect slate of new House members**

Democrats maintained control of the House, but there will be several GOP newcomers in key ag districts. Voters elected new representatives in Minnesota, Kansas, Iowa, Texas and other states with Republican challengers defeating incumbent Democrats who flipped Trump districts in 2018 and knocking off House Ag Committee Chair Collin Peterson.

Also among the newcomers are Congressman-elect Randy Feenstra of Iowa's fourth Congressional District, who defeated Rep. Steve King in the state's Republican primary and August Pfluger, who replaces House Ag Committee Ranking Member Mike Conaway. At 6 am EST, several votes in key races were still being tallied.

**Minnesota 7** — (No. 6 in U.S. ag sales) House Agriculture Committee Chair Collin Peterson did not hold on to his congressional seat that represents most of the western part of Minnesota. He lost to former Lt. Governor Michelle Fischbach, who had the backing of President Donald Trump.

**Virginia 7** — (No. 190 in U.S. ag sales) **Abigail Spanberger, a former CIA officer who chairs the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry is behind Republican state legislator Nick Freitas by only 273 votes with 86% of the votes**



*Rep. Abigail Spanberger*

**counted.** While the 7th District includes a large rural area of central Virginia, much of its population lies in the suburbs of Richmond. Spanberger defeated Rep. David Brat by two percentage points in 2018. She framed herself as a moderate, prioritizing rural issues like access to high-speed internet and improving conservation. Freitas pushed for eliminating regulations and supporting a limited government.

**Minnesota 1** — (No. 10 in ag sales): First-term GOP Rep. Jim Hagedorn, a member of the House Agriculture Committee, is ahead of Democrat Dan Feehan by 12,250 votes. During the campaign, Feehan attempted to pin Hagedorn to Trump’s “failed” trade policies while Hagedorn blasted Feehan, saying he would support a radical climate agenda if elected. This race was a rematch from 2018, when Gov. Tim Walz left the southern Minnesota seat to run for his current office.

**Iowa 1** — (No. 12 in ag sales): Freshman Rep. Abby Finkenauer, a Democrat, is trailing her GOP challenger in her effort to retain her seat in northeast Iowa. Some outlets have gone as far as to declare Republican state legislator and former TV anchor Ashley Hinson the winner. The race included a debate about the size of another COVID stimulus package. Hinson suggested relief should be targeted and Finkenauer suggested hazard pay to essential workers and funding for state and local governments should be a priority. Finkenauer unseated Republican Rep. Rod Blum in 2018.

**Iowa 2** — (No. 18 in ag sales): In the southeast Iowa district, Democrat Rita Hart and Republican Mariannette Miller-Meeks are locked in a tight race to succeed the retiring Democratic Rep. Dave Loebsack. Hart wants to increase the use of conservation programs to help farmers expand the use of environmentally-friendly practices. But some farmers questioned Hart after she told the Iowa Farmers Union, she would consider a bill proposed by Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., that would impose a moratorium on large animal feeding operations and tighten regulations on meat processors. Miller-Meeks had the backing of 114 farm leaders, including Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig.

**Iowa 3** — (No. 33 in ag sales) In a rematch from 2018, first-term Democratic Rep. Cindy Axne defeated former GOP Rep. David Young in Iowa’s 3rd District, which includes metropolitan Des Moines as well as the southwest portion of the state. During the campaign, Axne and Young sparred on tax relief and health care. Biofuels was another issue; Young had to tread lightly around the Trump’s EPA’s handling of small refinery exemptions but argued the agency should be held accountable.



**Iowa 4** — (No. 2 in ag sales) Newcomer Randy Feenstra, who unseated incumbent Rep. Steve King in the Republican primary, defeated Democrat J.D. Scholten., a former minor league baseball player. The district sprawls across northwest and north central Iowa.

**California 21** — (No. 4 in ag sales) — Former Republican Rep. David Valadao, who was trying to reclaim the Central Valley seat he lost in 2018, is ahead of first-term Democratic Rep. T.J. Cox, who beat him in 2018. But not all votes have been counted. Valadao's involvement in his family's dairy farm has been a top subject of the campaign.

**California 22** — (No. 27 in ag sales) Democratic challenger Phil Arballo, a Fresno financial services businessman hoped to oust longtime incumbent Republican and former dairy farmer Devin Nunes, but lost by 53% to 46%. Nunes is well known for his role as ranking member on the House Intelligence Committee during the Russia investigations. The district covers the San Joaquin Valley including parts of Fresno and Tulare counties.

**Illinois 17** — (No. 34 in ag sales) Rep. Cheri Bustos, who chaired the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, is fighting to keep her seat and currently trails Republican lawyer Esther Joy King by 52% to 48% with 55% of the votes counted. The district includes the Mississippi River cities of Rock Island and Moline as well as parts of the cities of Peoria and Rockford.

**Illinois 15** — (No. 19 in ag sales) Republican Mary Miller, who comanages a farm with her husband, beat Democrat Erika Weaver and maintained a seat previously held by longtime Republican Rep. John Shimkus. Throughout her campaign, Miller praised Trump for renegotiating trade deals like the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement and others.



*Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Ill.*

**Illinois 13** — (No. 55 in ag sales): Incumbent Rodney Davis defeated Betsy Londrigan again this cycle. Davis beat Londrigan by only 2,000 votes in 2018. The district is heavily agricultural but also includes the university towns of Champaign and Urbana. Davis' campaign focused in large part on his work on farm policy, while Londrigan promised to expand health

care coverage if elected. Davis, first elected in 2012, served on the House Ag Committee during the 2014 and 2018 farm bills.

**Montana** — (No. 24 in ag sales) Republican state auditor and legislator Matt Rosendale won the race against Democrat state legislator Kathleen Williams in a bid to represent the state of Montana in the House. Incumbent Rep. Greg Gianforte didn't run for reelection and instead ran for governor. Rosendale had the backing of the Montana Stock Growers and Montana Farm Bureau. Williams, who served on Montana's nonpartisan Environmental Quality Council, had an ag platform centered on keeping farmers and ranchers on their land.

**New Mexico 2** — (No. 69 in ag sales): Republican challenger Yvette Herrell won her rematch against first-term incumbent Democrat Xochitl Torres Small. Torres Small defeated Herrell in 2018 by only 2%. The district, which has a significant dairy industry, covers the southern half of the state. Torres Small joined the House Agriculture Committee in February when Rep. Jeff Van Drew switched parties. During the campaign, Herrell pushed for protecting agricultural

producers from efforts to reintroduce the Mexican gray wolf, according to the Albuquerque Journal. Torres Small tried to distance herself from Joe Biden's energy policy.

**Kansas 1** — (No. 3 in ag sales) Tracey Mann, a former Kansas lieutenant governor who has a degree in agricultural economics, won the state's 1st District seat, which is being vacated by GOP Rep. Roger Marshall, who ran for the Senate. The "Big First" district, which covers western and much of central Kansas, ranks third nationally in agricultural production.

**Texas 13** — (No. 7 in ag sales) In Texas, Ronny Jackson, a former White House physician, easily won the sprawling 13th District, which stretches from the Texas Panhandle nearly to Fort Worth. He will replace the retiring Mac Thornberry, the top Republican on the Armed Services Committee. Jackson won a bitterly contested runoff for the GOP nomination against cattle industry lobbyist Josh Winegarner, who had been backed by the Texas Farm Bureau and other farm groups.

**Texas 11** — (No. 87 in ag sales) August Pfluger, a former Air Force pilot who comes from a long line of Texas ranchers, won the state's 11th District seat being vacated by the retiring Mike Conaway, the ranking Republican on the House Agriculture Committee. Conaway chaired the committee during work on the 2018 farm bill.

**Oregon 2** — (No. 39 in ag sales) Republican cattle rancher Cliff Bentz defeated Democrat Alex Spenser to replace retiring Republican Rep. Greg Walden, the top Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The district covers almost two-thirds of the state.

**Michigan 10** — (No. 81 in ag sales) (No. 81 in ag sales) Republican businesswoman Lisa McClain won her race to replace retiring GOP Rep. Paul Mitchell in the state's 10<sup>th</sup> District. Mitchell announced his retirement earlier this year. McClain ran against Democrat Kimberley Bizon, who centered her campaign on improving Michigan's shoreline and addressing climate change.

**Alabama 2** — (No. 72 in ag sales) Republican state legislator Barry Moore will be heading to Washington after defeating Democrat Phyllis Harvey-Hall to replace the retiring GOP Rep. Martha Roby, a House Ag Committee member.

**New York 27** — (No. 93 in ag sales) Incumbent Republican Christopher Jacobs beat Nate McMurry, a Democrat who also ran against him in a June special election to fill the seat vacated by GOP Rep. Chris Collins, who pleaded guilty to federal insider trading.

**Georgia 14** — (No. 99 in ag sales) GOP businesswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene was already heavily favored to win the seat after Democrat Kevin Van Ausdal dropped out of the race in September. She garnered about 75% of the vote. Incumbent Rep. Tom Graves did not seek reelection. Greene drew national media attention for expressing support for the QAnon movement, which espouses numerous conspiracy theories.

## **Agriculture ‘constantly under attack’: Farm Bureau president slams state policymakers**

Agriculture in the Golden State was on a path to recovery as 2020 began. According to California Farm Bureau Federation President Jamie Johansson, the industry then bounced from one crisis to the next—as markets shuttered overnight due to the pandemic, social justice activists “took full advantage” of the situation and the governor issued dozens of executive orders. With wildfires, Proposition 15 and budget battles to come, the Northern California farmer said he will be having “a lot of frank discussions coming up” with state policymakers.

Johansson delivered his review of 2020 and outlook for agriculture last Thursday at the fall meeting of the California chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers.

**“We were on a little roll,” said Johansson, in describing the first quarter of the year.**



With the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement approved and progress on the labor front with the Workforce Modernization Act, agriculture looked to recover from the Trump administration’s trade shutdown. The administration also replaced the “waters of the U.S.” rule with one that significantly reduced federal jurisdiction over streams and wetlands. In California, the Farm Bureau worked with the State Water Resources Control Board to step back on its “waters of the state” rule, according to Johansson.

Then confusion reigned among farmers as Gov. Gavin Newsom responded to the growing COVID-19 crisis with a stay-at-home order.

“We talked with [CDFA Secretary Karen] Ross and administration officials, reminding them we were an essential industry,” said Johansson, explaining how the administration relied on trade groups to interpret the meaning of “essential.”

Californians were suddenly noticing the vital role agriculture plays in the state and across the nation.

**“I remember a few members feeling a sense of pride that one of our duties wasn’t only to get food to the shelves, but it was to calm consumers down,” said Johansson.**

The industry applied lessons learned from protecting workers under the Food Safety Modernization Act to set up voluntary standards that the state would later follow and “claim to be mandatory,” including separating workers in the field and staggering start and break times. The California Farm Bureau sought to use city buses to transport workers to maintain social distancing, though those requests were denied.

Farm groups reached out to the Newsom administration to see if they could “piggyback” on the governor’s program for housing homeless populations. They proposed housing asymptomatic farmworkers who were exposed to the virus in the 40% of hotel rooms and apartments left

unused by the program. About five months into the pandemic, the administration launched its own housing program, inspired by the work of farm groups on the Central Coast.

Johansson claimed the safety practices farmers implemented were successful in preventing large outbreaks, with a few notable exceptions at processing centers.

“Yet we're continuing to be accused that we weren't doing enough,” he said.

With meatpacking plants in the Midwest closing due to outbreaks, the narrative took a different turn.

**“The activists on the on the social justice side—[United Farm Workers] and the labor groups—really saw an opportunity to take a shot at agriculture, and they took full advantage of it,” said Johansson.**

Farmers, he noticed, wondered if it was too much of a legal risk to continue running and if they could afford to close.



Gov. Newsom announces his "30 by 30" conservation order.

**“What we saw during this pandemic was really the precautionary principle,” he said, describing a regulatory approach defined by avoiding all uncertainty and shifting the burden of proof to the industry.**

Essential businesses feared gaps in liability protections would expose them to a wave of lawsuits. The California Farm Bureau pushed back on a bill that would have automatically considered all coronavirus exposures among employees to have taken place on the farm. The final measure signed into law by Newsom, Assembly Bill 685, allowed for employers to still rebut the claim. Many labor advocates called for essential industries to cover hazard pay, and Johansson said he will be watching for more legislation on that next year.

“Then [the pandemic] became much more political,” he said. “It really started with all the executive orders that were coming.”

Republican Assemblymember Kevin Kiley of Rocklin tallied up more than 400 laws that were changed by more than 50 executive orders from Newsom.

“But the biggest problem comes when it ends up in the bureaucracy of the regulatory bodies,” said Johansson.

A mandate on electric vehicles will have exorbitant costs for small to mid-sized farms, he argued. A vague order calling for the conservation of 30% of the state’s land and water by 2030 drew further frustration, as the governor, in a meeting with Johansson, said he would leave it up to agriculture to determine how that could be implemented. The Farm Bureau president protested, explaining that agriculture is already protecting open space through the Williamson

Act. He worried the principles of conservation were giving way to preservation — “a static concept.”

**“I told the governor, ‘In agriculture, conservation is what we do,’” said Johansson. “We utilize renewable resources to create wealth.”**

He argued that without managing those resources, they become a liability, suggesting neglected lands increase the fuel load for wildfires.

**In managing forests for fires, Johansson added, the state government has “chased off” the timber industry and now “can’t afford to manage their own property.” He also shared reports from some farmers that their insurance providers have been dropping fire coverage after major wildfires burned into some vineyards and farms this year.**

With the executive orders and the \$54 billion deficit in the state budget, Johansson expects Newsom and legislators are about to walk into “a lot of big discussions.” Following the Great Recession of 2008, the state faced a \$40 billion deficit, which led to many CDFR and regulatory programs becoming industry funded through fees and permits. This time, the state should slash its spending, argued Johansson, adding that the budget has doubled in just 15 years.

“The budget situation is going to be a crisis for the state of California,” he said. “It’s a crisis for all of us, because unfortunately, what the state turns to is more taxes and fees and regulations.”

He worried both the new property tax assessments proposed under Prop. 13 as well as the administration’s conservation goals would hurt farmers. The dairy industry has invested heavily in building digesters, which has led to a 26% reduction in methane emissions but could be taxed under the proposed ballot measure.

“They want to raise taxes across the board,” he said. “And they’re coming for the homes as well.”

The dramatic rise in regulatory costs over the last decade, along with skyrocketing water and labor expenses, has been driving industry consolidation and pushing businesses out of California, he argued. Food processors have led the way and commodities are following, with lettuce now being grown in Central Colorado, carrot operations moving to Georgia and Mexico increasingly competitive, he said.

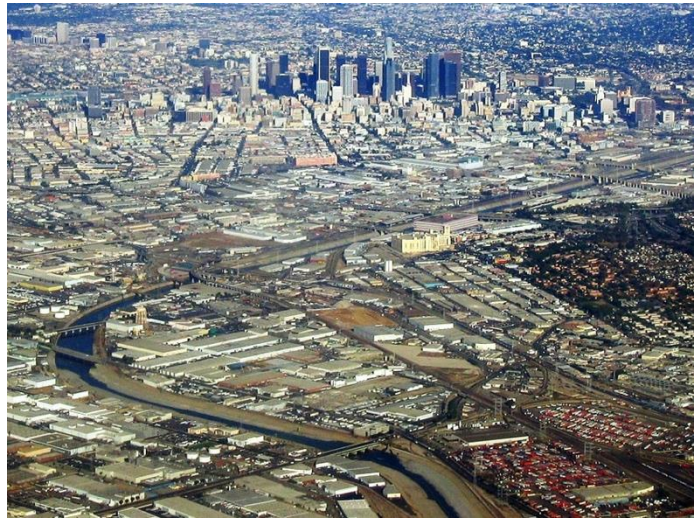
“It’s simply becoming too expensive to do business and too unpredictable,” he said.

## **Valley farmers could benefit from LA’s water savings**

San Joaquin Valley water districts are facing an enormous water deficit as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act curtails pumping over the coming years. This is driving creative approaches to balancing supplies, like partnering with urban cities in Southern California.

In a new report, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) finds these uncommon partnerships could bring more reliability to farmers, bail out cities during droughts and support the governor’s Water Resilience Portfolio. Standing in the way, however, are numerous political, legal and financial complexities.

“The basic idea is not new,” explains PPIC Research Fellow Alvar Escriva-Bou, lead author on the report, in a [blog post](#). “Water partnerships are already being used by California’s urban and agricultural communities to help manage droughts, growing water scarcity and the high cost of water infrastructure.”



The Central Valley cities of Bakersfield, Fresno and Tulare already have partnerships with local agricultural districts. Imperial County irrigation districts have been diversifying their water supply mix through large-scale transfers with urban districts like the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan regions. The report notes that urban communities in Southern California have been co-investing in underground storage in the San Joaquin Valley since the 1990s.

Since the early 2000s, these cities have been importing a rising share of water from the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta to set aside for new water storage investments—and have also achieved “significant drops in urban water demand,” according to the researchers.

In advancing long-term resilience goals, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti last year unveiled a plan to locally source 70% of the city’s water supply by 2035, and other cities have enacted similar policies. This creates more water reliability for the city during dry years and reduces the political and legal risks related to Delta deliveries. Yet the recent drought showed Southern California will need to plan ahead for more extreme dry periods.

The San Joaquin Valley, meanwhile, has been grappling with the threat of up to a million acres of farmland being fallowed under SGMA, with socioeconomic impacts reverberating throughout some of the state’s most disadvantaged communities. Climate change adds more uncertainty. Delta imports to the valley are expected to shrink by up to 10% by 2050, while runoff feeding into the Colorado River Basin—a vital resource for Southern California cities and farmers—will decline by as much as 30%.

**To counter the loss and expand supplies, the most promising option is groundwater recharge, PPIC researchers have found. Another is for state and federal agencies to adopt more flexible operations for managing surface and underground storage. Partnerships between the valley and Southern California cities would supplement those options, using existing resources.**

Kern County has the state’s largest water bank at hand, and several others are spread throughout the valley.

“Most of these banks have a ‘leave-behind’ rule—a proportion of the water put in storage that may serve to pay for operating the bank,” noted Escriva-Bou. “That also increases water availability in the local basin.”

The arrangement would generate local revenues that could be used to build water infrastructure and offset water shortages. In a meeting with farm appraisers last Thursday, California Farm Bureau Federation President Jamie Johansson pointed out that his Butte County water district has relied on revenues from water exports to support the local water infrastructure.

“We’re not a big enough district to afford the overhead that comes with relicensing and maintaining those dams,” he said. “We have to be able to move and sell that water.”



A pumping plant along the California Aqueduct. Courtesy Department of Water Resources

Johansson argued that the state could not move water through the Delta efficiently before the Trump administration approved new biological opinions for governing pumping operations. Escrivá-Bou and his team acknowledged that regulatory constraints like this can limit the ability to move water during dry years and curtail groundwater recharge efforts. This could put agricultural districts in the position of being unable to fulfill delivery obligations for Southern California.

**As far as infrastructure and regulations, storage sites would need to be connected to the California Aqueduct and the State Water Contractors would have to loosen their rules for transfers and exchanges out of basins. State and federal agencies would have to adjust their “place of use” restrictions for water coming from the State Water Project or Central Valley Project.**

A reliable water accounting system would address some of these issues. According to the researchers, this is already being implemented in response to SGMA and could offer legal accountability for water exchanges.

**Since agricultural districts often lack the capital to invest in the needed infrastructure for storage and transfers, the report notes, the state could step in and offer financial assistance through the California Infrastructure Economic Development Bank. In his January budget proposal, Newsom pitched the idea of offering low-interest loans for climate resilience water projects through the I-Bank, as it is known. The measure resurfaced briefly in the Legislature later and is likely to return once the state budget deficit is resolved.**

The cap-and-trade market adds another opportunity for cost reductions. California’s energy-intensive water system accounts for 10% of the state’s total greenhouse gas emissions, with the State Water Project being the largest single consumer of electricity. Reducing the amount of transfers to Southern California would reduce emissions and the cost of carbon offsets. The PPIC report finds, however, that significant emissions reductions can only be achieved when water conservation is a top priority in the partnerships. The Air Resources Board would also have to follow through on lowering the cap on emissions, which would raise the price for carbon offsets.

While partnerships between districts in the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California may not be a win for everyone, the approach presents a more accessible option for addressing water

shortages when Congress has delayed action on infrastructure funding and the state has shot down measures for financing canal repairs and maintenance.

## California growers protest decision to drop duties on Ecuadorian roses

The California Cut Flower Commission and Certified American Grown representing the American fresh cut flower industry and hundreds of workers, and farmers, are disappointed about the Trump Administration's decision to remove long-standing duties on imports of cut roses from Ecuador. As a result of the decision, they say a 6.8% duty that has helped protect the U.S. industry from large volumes of low-priced imports of Ecuadorian fresh cut roses has been eliminated.

"The U.S. industry lost scores of growers over the past 30 years due to trade policies that encouraged imports of low-priced roses from Colombia and then Ecuador, with our industry going from over a hundred to less than 20 large-scale rose producers in the U.S. today," said Dave Pruitt, CCFC's Chief Executive Officer and CAG's Administrator.

**"It's both surprising and disappointing that this Administration, which prides itself on protecting American agriculture and workers, would choose to put our industry at further risk. This is especially the case given the catastrophic impact the ongoing pandemic has had on American rose growers."**



Dave Pruitt

Starting in the 1990s, official U.S. trade policies intended to support South America's economic growth stimulated the growth of a massive export-oriented rose industry in Ecuador where none had existed. Ecuador has grown to become the second largest source of cut roses in the United States, using low prices to push American growers out of the market. The 6.8% tariff was the last remaining impediment to additional import growth.

In March 2020, several importers and the Government of Ecuador petitioned the Administration to add fresh cut roses to the Generalized System of Preferences, thus eliminating the standard 6.8% duty covering these imports. CCFC and CAG opposed these requests.

"Our commitment to growing roses right here in America – the official flower of our country – remains unwavering and unchanged," said Erik Van Wingerden, Chief Executive Officer of Myriad Flowers International. **"The decision to remove these duties is a setback to our industry, but for the sake of our businesses, our workers, and our customers, we will continue to innovate and find ways to compete."**



## Cars and disinfectant wipes could be the future for hemp

Despite its potential to eventually overshadow the cannabidiol (CBD) market, the U.S. hemp fiber market has been slow to develop. At this point, the CBD market in the United States dwarfs the fiber market. With an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 acres planted to hemp in 2020, somewhere between 30,000 and 60,000 acres were devoted to growing hemp for either grain or fiber. The rest went to CBD.

The rush to plant hemp for CBD production as well as the legalization of marijuana in many states has created a conflict for those wanting to grow hemp for grain or fiber. However, sources argue that when the price of CBD drops far enough, farmers will look to the grain and fiber markets for new sources of revenue. In addition, the march toward putting more electric vehicles on the road could hasten the transition, as hemp becomes more widely used in automotive production and if demand for ethanol falters.

Patrick Atagi, executive director of the National Industrial Hemp Council (NIHC), says, “It is a complicated issue when you delve into it. Plants for CBD are not really made for hemp fiber,” but the possibilities for end markets are impressive.

Jay Noller, director and lead researcher at Oregon State University's (OSU) Global Hemp Innovation Center, says while the hemp grown for the CBD and fiber markets is the same species, the genetics of the plant and the way they are cultivated differs.

**“The biggest deterrent to grow hemp for grain or fiber is that the plants have to have a significant flow of pollen,” Noller said. Fields of *Cannabis Indica* grown for marijuana, and *Cannabis Sativa* grown for CBD use only female plants to produce flowers, and any pollen contamination can reduce production.**

“There is already a discordance and conflict,” Noller said. Currently, there are an estimated \$300 million in lawsuits claiming that pollen from hemp used for fiber production has flowed over into marijuana or CBD hemp fields, he adds.

According to Noller’s research, tens of miles are needed as a buffer between farms growing hemp for grain or fiber and those growing hemp for CBD or marijuana. Entire counties in states where marijuana has been legalized have banned the growing of hemp entirely, he adds.

The Global Hemp Innovation Center is researching a promising tri-crop hemp plant that produces seeds for oil, a substitute for crude oil, used in biofuels and plastics; cannabidiols to be used in CBD products; and stalks for the fiber market.



Jay Noller, Global Hemp Innovation Center

**With CBD prices declining and CBD biomass piling up in warehouses, some hemp farmers have started to shift their acres into grain and fiber, which climbed from 10% of all**

**planted hemp acres last year to upward of 20% this year**, according to Ian Laird, chief financial officer and general counsel at [Hemp Benchmarks](#). Montana farmers actually planted 85% of their hemp acres to fiber and grain this year, sharply cutting back on CBD acres.

**Laird notes hemp fiber once had 35,000 end markets in the United States and “was traditionally used for textiles, nonwoven fibers and other materials like pulp and paper, but it lost its processing capacity when cannabis was declared illegal,” he says. Laird thinks it will take five to 10 years to rebuild that infrastructure.**

Today, the United States has only a few processing facilities that can even begin to meet the needs of large firms that want to use hemp-derived alternatives in construction or manufacturing, including hempcrete, a lightweight insulation product used in building construction; fabrics used in textiles; and composites used to make bioplastics, now being used in automobiles.

According to Beau Whitney, founder of [Whitney Economics](#) and chief economist for NIHC, 1 million General Motors (GM) cars with hemp fiber composites in their side panels are on the road today. He forecasts the number of GM cars alone with hemp components will grow to 7.7 million by 2030, requiring 1.4 million acres of hemp to support GM.

“Car manufacturers will increase the amount of composites derived from hemp in cars and will accelerate this because the clock is ticking on transitioning to electric vehicles,” Whitney says. “Using hemp composites reduces the weight of a car by 30% and the cost by 20%.”

Electric cars need to be light to optimize acceleration and energy use. “There is a massive opportunity for hemp just in the automotive industry alone,” Whitney notes. In addition, hemp composite is biodegradable, which is another draw as the auto industry tries to reduce landfill waste.

Currently, at least two U.S. hemp manufacturers are producing composite products. [FlexForm Technologies](#) in Elkhart, Ind., makes nonwoven natural fiber composite mats and panel products used by the aviation and auto industries. [Industrial Hemp Manufacturing](#) runs a decortication plant in Spring Hope, S.C., and a processing center in Medford, Ore., and makes a blended product of hemp and kenaf that manufacturers then process into bioplastics.



*Beau Whitney, Whitney Economics*

Europe has been using hemp in automobile manufacturing for about a decade because it is stronger than plastic and has a higher heat tolerance, according to [Kevin Latner](#), principal of Latner and Associates and senior vice president of trade for NIHC.

The world’s three major hemp markets are China, which produces mostly for the textile industry; Europe, which primarily makes hemp composites; and the United States, which is heavily focused on the CBD market. Latner estimates all three of these siloed markets were worth about \$1 billion in 2019, and all have begun to diversify.

While the textile industry is unlikely to return to the United States in any major way, other uses of fiber, including nonwoven products such as baby and disinfectant wipes that now use plastics could be produced in the United States on a large scale.

Bast Fibre Tech, a startup in Victoria, British Columbia, makes nonwoven specialty fabrics out of hemp and flax fibers. Traditionally these types of products have used synthetic or semi-synthetic sources that build up in landfills and contribute to microplastic contamination in oceans.

“Today if you are growing hemp to produce CBD you have a huge amount of waste,” Latner says. The flowers used for CBD branch off the plant’s stalks and have to be hand-picked. “When CBD prices decline, we will have to talk about how we are growing the crop,” he adds. In time, U.S. hemp fields could resemble wheat fields, with the flowers harvested for CBD and the stalks for fiber.

“CBD hemp is a specialty crop,” Laird says. “Industrial hemp is more of a row crop.” Currently, hemp grown for fiber contains about 10,000 plants per acre, compared to 1,400 plants for CBD hemp, and farmers have started to convert existing equipment to harvest hemp fiber.

Moving forward, hemp acres used for fiber could also displace some cotton acres, with Whitney Economics forecasting that hemp fiber used as a substitute for cotton could require 1.3 million acres of U.S. cropland by 2030. Panda Biotech, based in Dallas, is operating a large-scale hemp gin in Wichita Falls, Texas, producing textile-grade cottonized natural fiber and cellulose from hemp.

The success of the hemp fiber market will depend both on environmental regulations that favor hemp over plastics and successful promotion of hemp’s environmental benefits. It will be critical for companies to promote their products and brands that contain hemp so that hemp itself becomes part of the product’s identity, Latner says. This will entail promoting these products as being more sustainable than wood and wood pulp, less water intensive than cotton, a biodegradable alternative to plastics, and a locally produced product.

## **News Briefs:**

**Nutrien reports strong 3rd-quarter revenue, takes phosphate writedown.** Nutrien reported a third-quarter loss of \$1.03 per share primarily related to an \$823 million writedown of its phosphate assets, compared to earnings of \$141 million for the same quarter a year ago, but otherwise had a good quarter, the company said.

Without considering the writedown in the value of its phosphate assets, the Canada-based crop inputs company said third-quarter net earnings were \$0.23 per share on \$4.2 billion in sales. Both numbers beat consensus estimates, which were \$0.12 per share and \$3.83 billion.

The devaluing of the phosphate assets was "related to a less favorable long-term outlook for phosphate prices and expected global supply imbalance," the company said.

Nutrien CEO Chuck Magro said the company “delivered another quarter of solid operating results with strong fertilizer sales volumes and exceptional growth of orders through our digital agriculture platform, surpassing \$1 billion of sales. Market conditions are improving around the

world with higher crop and fertilizer prices, lower expected inventories and strong demand for crop inputs as we finish the year and enter 2021.”

Magro said the fall application season “is well underway across the U.S.,” with harvest ahead of normal and crop prices increasing “due to a combination of excellent local demand and lower than expected production, resulting in strong grower margins.” He also said, “fertilizer affordability is high, particularly for potash and nitrogen” and as a result, “we are optimistic that the fall application season will be good, and we are also positive on the outlook for 2021.”

Nutrien narrowed its 2020 adjusted net earnings guidance to \$1.60 to \$1.85 per share from \$1.50 to \$1.90 per share previously. The stock dropped on news of the earnings by about \$3/share from end of trading Monday to noon Tuesday, from \$41.59/share to \$38.42/share.

## Farm Hands West: York tapped as CEO of California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement

**Tim York** has been tapped as the new CEO of the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement, effective Dec. 1. York succeeds **Scott Horsfall**, who is retiring in early 2021. Horsfall has been the CEO since LGMA was established in 2007. York was formerly the president of Markon Cooperative, a produce procurement operation. York serves on the board of the Center for Produce Safety as well co-chair of the Produce Traceability Initiative.

**Brooke Becker** has been promoted to sales director at Mission Produce. Becker joined Mission’s sales department as a sales representative in 2011 and then promoted to key account manager in 2017.

Vertical farming company, Plenty, has selected **Ann Livermore** and **Bill Johnson** to sit on its board of directors. Livermore brings 29 years of experience of working for Hewlett-Packard. She retired in 2011 but continues as a Hewlett-Packard Enterprise Co. board member. Johnson brings 31 years of experience working in various roles at Heinz, most recently as president and CEO.



Tim York

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission has reorganized the agency and created four new operating divisions: Division of Data, Market Participants Division, Legal Division, and Division of Administration. The changes will take effect Nov. 8. **Tamara Roust** will serve as the Chief Data Officer and lead the Division of Data. **Dan Bucsa**, current chief of staff to Commissioner **Dawn DeBerry Stump**, who formerly led the Division of Market Oversight’s data and reporting branch, will join the Division of Data as deputy director. **Joshua Sterling**, current director of the Division of Swap Dealer and Intermediary Oversight, will lead the new Market Participants Division. **Daniel Davis**, CFTC’s current General Counsel, will lead the Legal Division. **Anthony Thompson**, the CFTC’s current executive director, will lead the Division of Administration.



Nina Krueger

Nestlé Purina PetCare Co. has tapped **Nina Krueger** to serve as the company’s new president and CEO, effective Jan. 1. Krueger previously was the president of Nestlé Purina PetCare U.S. She succeeds **Joseph Sivewright**, who will transition to his new role of chairman.

**DaNita Murray** has left the Senate Ag Committee and joined the Glover Park Group as managing director of the food and agriculture team. Murray previously served on the Senate Ag Committee as chief counsel and policy director of the committee. She worked on many issues including: nutrition, forestry, pesticides, horticulture, hemp, organics, biotechnology, regulatory reform, trade and

agricultural defense. Before joining the Senate Ag Committee, she served as counsel for the House Agriculture Committee and also held various roles at the Department of Agriculture.

**Clint Rivers**, president and CEO of Wayne Farms LLC, has been installed for a second term as 2020-2021 chairman of the National Chicken Council (NCC). **Mark Kaminsky**, COO of Koch Foods, was selected as vice chairman. **Kevin Garland**, CEO of Mountaire Farms, was elected to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. **Mike Brown** was elected to a 10th term as president of NCC.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown has appointed **Elin Miller** and **Josh Zielinski** to serve on the Oregon State Board of Agriculture, for four-year terms. The governor also re-appointed board members **Bryan Harper** and **Luisa Santamaria** each to a second four-year term. Miller and her husband own Umpqua Vineyards and farm hazelnuts. She currently serves as the co-chair of the Oregon Wine Council and is a member of the Fall Creek Farm and Nursery Board. Zielinski is a manager and owner of a mid-sized nursery and farming operation in the Willamette Valley. Zielinski serves on the Oregon Association of Nurseries' board and the Chemeketa Community College Horticultural Advisory Committee.



National FFA Officers (Photo: www.ffa.org)

The National FFA Organization has elected six new officers to serve for the 2020-21 year. Elected as the national president is **Doster Harper**. He is from the state of Georgia and currently attends the University of Georgia, majoring in agriscience and environmental systems. **Anna Mathis** is from the state of Arkansas and attends the University of Arkansas where she is studying agricultural communications. She was

elected as the national secretary. Elected central region vice president and from the state of Missouri is **Paxton Dahmer**, an agricultural education and leadership major at the University of Missouri-Columbia. **Miriam Hoffman**, an agribusiness economics major at Southern Illinois University, was elected eastern region vice president. **David Lopez**, an agricultural communications major at California Polytechnic State, was elected western region vice president. From the state of Florida, **Artha Jonassaint**, a government and global health major at Harvard, was elected southern region vice president.

The American Butter Association has selected **Marshall Reece**, Associated Milk Producers Inc. senior vice president of sales and marketing, as the new president of the American Butter Institute. Serving as vice president is **Catherine Fox** of Land O'Lakes and serving as first vice president is Mark Armon of Darigold.

A world-class plant breeder from Loveland, Colo., **Joe Allen Smith**, passed away on Oct. 21 due to a severe weather event that occurred while fishing in Idaho. He was 70. Smith is known for his contributions of releasing over 60 commercial wheat varieties for both the U.S. and western Canada. Throughout his 40-year career, Smith was dedicated to studying the wheat plant to find the right combination of traits: short stature, good disease resistance, and combination of high protein and high yield. His dedication and study produced the top two spring wheat varieties in North Dakota for the past five years.

**Best regards,**

**Sara Wyant**

**Editor**

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