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Ag leaders facing unprecedented challenges see pay raises, some status quo during pandemic

Some leaders of trade organizations important to U.S. agriculture saw their paychecks rise as they struggled to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, but the full impact of CEO compensation won't be known for a while due to delays in reporting data, according to an annual *Agri-Pulse* analysis.

Dawn Sweeney, the former CEO of the National Restaurant Association, is the highest-paid executive in the 2021 *Agri-Pulse* CEO Report with a salary of \$5.9 million, [up from \\$5.7 million in the 2020 Agri-Pulse report](#). Mike Sommers, the new CEO of the American Petroleum Institute, was second with a compensation package of \$3.88 million, and the American Bankers Association's Robert Nichols is a close third with an income of \$3.15 million, up from \$2.8 million.



Other members of the \$1 million-plus club include David Yarnold, the recently departed CEO of National Audubon Society; Jim Mulhern with the National Milk Producers Federation; Andy LaVigne, CEO of the American Seed Trade Association; Tom Stenzel, with United Fresh Produce, which is merging with the Produce Marketing Association next year; and Thomas Kiernan, the CEO of American Wind Energy Association, which recently merged with the American Clean Energy Association.

The true impact of the pandemic on salaries might not be realized for another year. But some executives were rewarded with pay increases for their efforts to keep supply chains moving and meeting other performance goals. For example, Robb Mackie, president and CEO of the American Bakers Association, saw his base compensation increase from roughly \$355,000 in 2018 to almost \$395,000 in 2020. The President and CEO of the International

Dairy Foods Association, Michael Dykes, had an increase in base compensation from about \$818,000 in 2019 to about \$869,000 in 2020.

Bob Skelton, the chief administrative officer at the American Society of Association Executives, said that because CEO salaries are set by contracts, pay cuts resulting from the pandemic won't occur for another year or two — if at all. And with tax deadlines extended due to pandemic disruptions, there is inadequate information available to get a full picture of the impact on compensation.

 **CEO Compensation for 'Top Ten'**

Name	Organization	Total Compensation
Dawn M. Sweeney*	National Restaurant Assoc.	\$ 5,891,851
Michael J. Sommers	American Petroleum Institute	\$ 3,884,282
Robert S. Nichols	American Bankers Assoc.	\$ 3,145,960
Leslie G. Sarasin	Food Marketing Institute	\$ 2,838,789
Geoff Freeman	Consumer Brands Assoc.	\$ 2,386,703
Jim Matheson	National Rural Electric Cooperative Assn.	\$ 2,111,767
Tom Gallagher	Dairy Management Inc. / National Dairy Promotion and Research Board	\$ 1,512,930
Rebeca Romero	Independent Community Bankers of America	\$ 1,470,571
Thomas Nassif*	Western Growers Assoc.	\$ 1,226,554
John H. Downs Jr.	National Confectioners Assoc.	\$ 1,210,132

*: Denotes no longer CEO

Source: Agri-Pulse analysis of non-profit tax data for top food, ag and energy associations.

“The biggest challenge I have right now is lack of pandemic data,” he said.

Reporting varies by association, he said. "Some associations are just like gangbusters with the pandemic because it's a question of who their members were. ... So [some] did very well and I certainly would expect that on the compensation side of things it would be the same. But then a lot of other associations got hit pretty hard, because their members got hit pretty hard," he said.

Vishal Gupta, a professor in the University of Alabama’s Culverhouse College of Business, told *Agri-Pulse* that the effect may be limited, if at all.

“For nonprofits whose revenues are not affected by Covid, it is likely that CEO compensation will not be depressed for too long,” he said. “However, for nonprofits whose revenues go down due to Covid, CEO compensation may go down as long as the current conditions (high uncertainty) are present.”

Since the pandemic stifled many trade associations’ ability to host the revenue-generating conventions and other events the groups often rely upon, Skelton said the true financial impact will likely depend on an association's ability to respond to gathering restrictions.

“If face-to-face was their way of getting training and development out to their members,” Skelton said, “could they quickly switch to online or to other digital offerings and could they make money doing that? I think some did that very well and others not so well.”

While the total extent of the pandemic’s effect on CEO compensation remains murky, Skelton said that trade associations are currently busier than ever due to the new administration and its priorities.

“You have a ton of money flowing in, with the incentive programs Congress has passed and the infrastructure bill, everybody’s trying to get a piece of it and that is where trade associations shine,” he said. “So, I think they’re going to do very well and, accordingly, executives are going to do very well if they’re successful in their activities.”

Not all association executives earned more money than the prior year as a result of job changes or changes in bonuses and other benefit contributions. The most notable is Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who left the helm of the U.S. Dairy Export Council, where his compensation totaled slightly more than \$900,000 in 2019. As a cabinet member, Vilsack earns roughly \$221,000.

Environmental Defense Fund President Frederic Krupp saw his base salary increase by about \$30,000 from 2019 to 2020, but total compensation dropped by \$36,577, due to a sharp drop in his bonus potential. American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall's base pay stayed roughly the same, but contributions for retirement and other benefits declined by about \$4,500.

Editor's note: Based on reader's suggestions, we try to add new associations each year. But some have not recently filed their 990 forms or do not list compensation levels for their top staff members. That's despite *Agri-Pulse's* request for more information, which is required by the IRS to be provided upon request. For example, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences is new to our list this year, but the most recent filing is for 2017. The same is true for the National Black Farmers Association, which last filed in 2017 but lists no compensation for President and Chairman John W. Boyd, Jr. The organization lists \$596,823 in expenses.

For California Citrus Mutual, President Casey Creamer is their new president, but the group's 2019 filing does not detail his compensation. *Agri-Pulse* noted that "other" salaries and wages for the organization's staff is \$819,254. The previous president, Joel Nelsen, earned \$212,859.

You'll find most of this detail near the individual's name or in the footnotes, including which CEOs receive compensation from more than one organization or which salaries reflect only partial years. Names with an asterisk denote those who are no longer at the helm of each organization but are listed on their most recent 990 forms.

See chart starting on page 4 for the entire list of CEO salaries compiled by our team for 2021.

[View the complete CEO salary report from 2020 here.](#)

Name of Organization	President/CEO/ Executive Director or VP	Position	Base Compensation	Potential Bonus	Other Compensation	Retirement/ Deferred Payment	Tax-Free Benefits	Total Compensation	Filing Year
Agricultural Retailers Assoc.	Daren Coppock	President & CEO	\$362,041.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$16,500.00	\$21,243.00	\$399,784.00	2019
Almond Alliance of California	Elaine Trevino	President	\$143,651.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$143,651.00	2019
American Angus Association	Allen Moczygemba* (10/18-5/19)	CEO	\$257,851.00	\$65,102.00	\$45,905.00	\$18,356.00	\$16,062.00	\$403,276.00	2019
American Bakers Assoc.	Robb Mackie	President & CEO	\$394,957.00	\$115,000.00	\$19,001.00	\$41,400.00	\$24,777.00	\$595,135.00	2020
American Bankers Assoc.	Robert S. Nichols	President & CEO	\$1,739,099.00	\$1,050,000.00	\$42,683.00	\$282,300.00	\$31,878.00	\$3,145,960.00	2019
American Beverage Assoc.	Katherine Lugar	President & CEO	\$1,014,535.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$28,000.00	\$28,500.00	\$1,071,035.00	2019
American Coalition for Ethanol	Brian Jennings	CEO	\$131,083.00	\$0.00	\$5,218.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$136,301.00	2019
American Cotton Shippers	William Allen	President & CEO	\$298,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$45,000.00	\$343,500.00	2020
American Dairy Coalition	Laurie Fischer	Executive Director	\$59,982.00	\$0.00	\$8,093.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$68,075.00	2019
American Egg Board	Emily Metz (6/20- 12/20)	CEO	\$167,552.00	\$52,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$219,552.00	2020
American Farm Bureau Federation	Vincent (Zippy) Duvall	President	\$518,805.00	\$0.00	\$3,564.00	\$21,063.00	\$26,118.00	\$569,550.00	2019
American Farmland Trust	John Piotti	President & CEO	\$293,361.00	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$15,000.00	\$16,167.00	\$325,028.00	2019
American Feed Industry Association	Constance Cullman (7/19-4/20)	President & CEO	\$223,077.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,850.00	\$3,797.00	\$228,724.00	2020
American Frozen Food Institute	Alison Bodor	President & CEO	\$397,200.00	\$80,000.00	\$0.00	\$61,992.00	\$26,803.00	\$565,995.00	2019
American Hereford Association	Jack Ward	Executive Vice President	\$238,031.00	\$24,507.00	\$0.00	\$11,168.00	\$5,394.00	\$279,100.00	2020
American Jersey Cattle Association	Neal Smith	Executive Secretary & CEO	\$63,500.00	\$0.00	\$11,963.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$75,463.00	2019
American Lamb Board	Megan Wortman	Executive Director	\$133,900.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$133,900.00	2020
American Petroleum Institute	Michael J. Sommers	President & CEO	\$1,643,160.00	\$862,500.00	\$84,624.00	\$1,265,050.00	\$28,948.00	\$3,884,282.00	2019
American Seed Trade Assoc.	Andrew LaVigne	President, CEO, & Treasurer	\$740,620.00	\$125,840.00	\$0.00	\$117,075.00	\$34,033.00	\$1,017,568.00	2019
American Shorthorn Association	Montie Soules	Executive Secretary	\$123,269.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$123,269.00	2019
American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	Matthew Bershadker	President & CEO	\$562,186.00	\$200,000.00	\$810.00	\$41,400.00	\$39,143.00	\$843,539.00	2019
American Soybean Association	Ryan Findlay* (10/19- 6/20)	CEO	\$269,418.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,343.00	\$23,978.00	\$301,739.00	2020
American Sugar Alliance	Vickie Rideout Myers	Executive Director	\$190,190.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$30,495.00	\$0.00	\$232,685.00	2019
American Sugarbeet Growers Assoc.	Luther Markwart	Executive Vice President	\$464,744.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$42,750.00	\$62,008.00	\$569,502.00	2020
American Veterinary Medical Assoc.	Janet Donlin	Exec. VP & CEO	\$362,786.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$28,000.00	\$1,800.00	\$407,586.00	2019
American Clean Energy Assn. (formerly American Wind Energy Assn.)	Thomas C. Kiernan*	CEO	\$552,083.00	\$106,100.00	\$314,205.00	\$71,112.00	\$9,250.00	\$1,052,750.00	2019
American-International Charolais Association	J Neil Orth	Executive Vice President	\$133,600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$133,600.00	2018
Assoc. of Public and Land- Grant Universities	Peter McPherson	President	\$476,316.00	\$0.00	\$82,600.00	\$28,000.00	\$33,845.00	\$620,761.00	2019
CA Association of Wine Grape Growers	John Aguirre	President	\$212,738.00	\$0.00	\$11,628.00	\$10,637.00	\$26,249.00	\$261,252.00	2019
CA Citrus Mutual	Casey Creamer	President	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	2019
CA Fresh Fruit Association	Ian Lemay (6/19-2/20)	President	\$136,503.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,283.00	\$13,728.00	\$157,514.00	2020
Cattlemen's Beef Board	Greg Hanes	CEO	\$285,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$33,000.00	\$0.00	\$333,000.00	2020

Name of Organization	President/CEO/ Executive Director or VP	Position	Base Compensation	Potential Bonus	Other Compensation	Retirement/ Deferred Payment	Tax-Free Benefits	Total Compensation	Filing Year
Center for Food Safety	Andrew Kimbrell	Executive Director	\$190,573.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20,331.00	\$0.00	\$210,904.00	2019
Center for Rural Affairs	Brian Depew	Executive Director	\$99,526.00	\$0.00	\$12,835.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$112,361.00	2019
Center for Science in the Public Interest	Peter Lurie	President	\$241,641.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,294.00	\$1,143.00	\$250,078.00	2020
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	Robert Greenstein*	President	\$216,487.00	\$0.00	\$2,567.00	\$15,705.00	\$27,781.00	\$262,540.00	2019
Christmas Tree Promotion Board	Marsha Gray	Executive Director	\$205,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$205,000.00	2020
Consumer Federation of America	Jack Gillis	Executive Director	\$181,731.00	\$0.00	\$23,830.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$205,561.00	2020
Consumer Reports Inc	Marta L. Tellado	President & CEO	\$663,731.00	\$60,000.00	\$43,238.00	\$47,000.00	\$4,765.00	\$818,734.00	2020
Corn Refiners Assoc. Inc	John Bode	President & CEO	\$643,966.00	\$125,000.00	\$2,083.00	\$29,400.00	\$37,167.00	\$837,616.00	2019
Cotton Board	William Gillon	CEO	\$311,338.00	\$40,773.00	\$3,564.00	\$37,062.00	\$3,000.00	\$395,737.00	2020
Cotton Council International	Bruce Atherley	Executive Director	\$256,377.00	\$0.00	\$5,225.00	\$21,101.00	\$12,023.00	\$294,726.00	2019
CropLife America	Chris Novak	President & CEO	\$577,678.00	\$132,250.00	\$45,260.00	\$28,000.00	\$47,014.00	\$830,202.00	2019
Dairy Management Inc.	Thomas P. Gallagher ¹	CEO	\$625,000.00	\$0.00	\$212,969.00	\$27,107.00	\$22,854.00	\$887,930.00	2019
Defenders of Wildlife	Jamie Rappaport Clark	President & CEO	\$472,544.00	\$0.00	\$3,564.00	\$36,806.00	\$7,519.00	\$520,433.00	2020
Ducks Unlimited Inc	Adam Putnam	CEO	\$257,946.00	\$8,750.00	\$743.00	\$9,461.00	\$20,057.00	\$296,957.00	2020
Environmental Defense Fund Inc.	Frederic D. Krupp	President	\$631,539.00	\$95,758.00	\$0.00	\$72,000.00	\$25,805.00	\$825,102.00	2020
Environmental Law & Policy Center of Midwest	Howard A Learner	President & Executive Director	\$433,094.00	\$10,480.00	\$750.00	\$19,330.00	\$23,153.00	\$486,807.00	2020
Environmental Working Group	Ken Cook	President	\$295,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$21,167.00	\$316,167.00	2019
Farm Credit Council	Todd Van Hoose	President & CEO	\$534,310.00	\$240,336.00	\$0.00	\$69,718.00	\$2,504.00	\$846,868.00	2019
Farm Foundation	Shari Roggie-Fidler	President (9/19- 4/20)	\$69,808.00	\$0.00	\$30,762.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100,570.00	2020
Feeding America	Claire Babineaux- Fontenot	CEO	\$627,284.00	\$145,151.00	\$3,438.00	\$8,400.00	\$31,073.00	\$815,346.00	2020
Fertilizer Institute	Christopher Jahn*	President & CEO	\$505,918.00	\$110,484.00	\$0.00	\$40,462.00	\$21,161.00	\$678,025.00	2019
FFA Foundation	Molly Ball	President	\$223,093.00	\$0.00	\$240.00	\$18,722.00	\$37,111.00	\$279,166.00	2019
FFA Organization	Mark Poeschl*	CEO	\$246,357.00	\$0.00	\$1,584.00	\$20,885.00	\$41,496.00	\$310,322.00	2019
Florida Sugar Cane League	Ryan Weston	CEO	\$582,083.00	\$139,906.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$721,989.00	2018
Food and Water Watch	Wenonah Hauter	Executive Director	\$240,415.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$24,042.00	\$9,990.00	\$274,447.00	2019
Food Marketing Institute	Leslie G. Sarasin	President	\$1,517,856.00	\$891,250.00	\$53,272.00	\$351,150.00	\$25,261.00	\$2,838,789.00	2019
Food Research & Action Center	James Weill*	President	\$195,383.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,723.00	\$21,293.00	\$228,399.00	2019
Friends of the Earth	Erich Pica	President	\$190,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,700.00	\$6,099.00	\$201,799.00	2020
Consumer Brands Assn. (Formerly Grocery Manufacturers Assn.)	Geoff Freeman	President & CEO	\$1,242,014.00	\$292,468.00	\$21,240.00	\$808,332.00	\$22,649.00	\$2,386,703.00	2019
Growth Energy	Emily Skor	CEO	\$641,036.00	\$187,200.00	\$3,083.00	\$33,000.00	\$18,681.00	\$883,000.00	2019
Hass Avocado Board	Emiliano Escobedo	Executive Director	\$349,619.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$349,619.00	2020
Holstein Friesian Association of America	John M Meyer	CEO	\$287,602.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,962.00	\$318,564.00	2018

Name of Organization	President/CEO/ Executive Director or VP	Position	Base Compensation	Potential Bonus	Other Compensation	Retirement/ Deferred Payment	Tax-Free Benefits	Total Compensation	Filing Year
Humane Society of the U.S.	Kitty Block	President & CEO, CIO	\$369,473.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$21,243.00	\$20,294.00	\$411,010.00	2019
Independent Community Bankers of America	Rebeca Romero Rainey	President & CEO	\$1,106,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$21,314.00	\$16,800.00	\$26,457.00	\$1,470,571.00	2019
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy	Sophia Murphy (10/20- 12/10)	Executive Director	\$22,030.00	\$0.00	\$1,650.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$23,680.00	2020
International Dairy Foods Assoc.	Michael Dykes	President & CEO	\$869,200.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,250.00	\$23,113.00	\$907,563.00	2020
MANRRS	Ebony Webber	COO	\$70,250.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$70,250.00	2017
Mushroom Council	Bart Minor	President and CEO	\$261,717.00	\$10,000.00	\$8,400.00	\$11,200.00	\$7,200.00	\$298,517.00	2020
National 4-H Council	Jennifer Sirangelo	CEO	\$456,747.00	\$0.00	\$810.00	\$29,537.00	\$26,617.00	\$513,711.00	2020
National Assoc. of Conservation Districts	Jeremy Peters	CEO	\$182,229.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$9,557.00	\$7,999.00	\$199,785.00	2019
National Assoc. of Counties	Matthew Chase ⁴	Executive Director	\$616,614.00	\$88,009.00	\$203.00	\$66,210.00	\$32,103.00	\$803,139.00	2019
National Assoc. of State Departments of Agriculture	Barbara Glenn	CEO	\$295,001.00	\$15,000.00	\$0.00	\$11,000.00	\$7,903.00	\$328,904.00	2019
National Assoc. of Wheat Growers	Chandler Goule	CEO	\$254,890.00	\$10,717.00	\$110.00	\$10,829.00	\$8,942.00	\$285,488.00	2019
National Audubon Society Inc.	David Yarnold*	President & CEO	\$554,027.00	\$527,500.00	\$29,668.00	\$22,400.00	\$19,751.00	\$1,153,346.00	2020
National Biodiesel Board	Donnell Rehagen	CEO	\$315,755.00	\$42,000.00	\$0.00	\$16,669.00	\$24,842.00	\$399,266.00	2020
National Bison Association	Dave Carter	Executive Director	\$92,079.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$92,079.00	2019
National Cattleman's Beef Assoc.	Kendal Frazier*	CEO	\$480,689.00	\$75,000.00	\$6,990.00	\$22,000.00	\$16,880.00	\$601,559.00	2019
National Black Farmers Association	John W. Boyd, Jr.	President/Chairman	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	2017
National Chicken Council	Michael J. Brown	President	\$486,720.00	\$93,600.00	\$5,724.00	\$66,800.00	\$18,118.00	\$670,962.00	2019
National Confectioners Assoc.	John H Downs Jr	President & CEO	\$875,093.00	\$175,000.00	\$2,536.00	\$134,375.00	\$23,128.00	\$1,210,132.00	2020
National Corn Growers Assoc.	Jon Doggett	CEO	\$440,803.00	\$12,500.00	\$0.00	\$28,000.00	\$15,744.00	\$497,047.00	2020
National Cotton Council	Gary Adams	President	\$392,985.00	\$21,550.00	\$2,628.00	\$33,639.00	\$30,642.00	\$481,444.00	2019
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives	Charles Conner	President	\$566,500.00	\$220,000.00	\$0.00	\$9,250.00	\$8,286.00	\$804,036.00	2019
National Dairy Promotion and Research Board	Thomas Gallagher ¹	CEO	\$625,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$625,000.00	2020
National Farmers Union	Roger Johnson*	President	\$338,339.00	\$30,000.00	\$0.00	\$16,800.00	\$8,291.00	\$393,430.00	2019
National Fluid Milk Processor Promotion Board/Milk PEP	Yin Woon Rani	CEO	\$400,000.00	\$26,215.00	\$23,430.00	\$0.00	\$1,700.00	\$451,345.00	2020
National Grain and Feed Assoc.	Randall Gordon*	President	\$354,846.00	\$12,000.00	\$0.00	\$48,447.00	\$27,122.00	\$442,415.00	2020
National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry	Betsy Huber	National President	\$54,600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$54,600.00	2019
National Grocers Assoc.	Gregory Ferrara (9/19- 12/19)	President & CEO	\$312,893.00	\$80,667.00	\$26,324.00	\$37,000.00	\$24,487.00	\$481,371.00	2019
National Grocers Assoc.	Peter Larkin(1/19- 8/19)*	President & CEO	\$554,228.00	\$123,200.00	\$60,491.00	\$56,000.00	\$37,818.00	\$831,737.00	2019
National Honey Board	Margaret Lombard	CEO	\$226,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$226,800.00	2020
National Mango Board	Manuel Michel	Executive Director	\$170,000.00	\$17,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$187,000.00	2020
National Milk Producers Federation	Jim Mulhern	President & CEO	\$804,407.00	\$150,356.00	\$108,251.00	\$30,800.00	\$30,585.00	\$1,124,399.00	2019
National Oilseed Processors Association	Thomas Hammer	President	\$327,104.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$6,714.00	\$24,011.00	\$367,829.00	2020
National Peanut Board	Robert Parker	President & CEO	\$268,000.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$269,000.00	2020

Name of Organization	President/CEO/ Executive Director or VP	Position	Base Compensation	Potential Bonus	Other Compensation	Retirement/ Deferred Payment	Tax-Free Benefits	Total Compensation	Filing Year
National Pork Board	Bill Even	CEO	\$380,600.00	\$60,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$440,600.00	2020
National Pork Producers Council	Neil Dierks	CEO	\$375,000.00	\$35,894.00	\$0.00	\$23,357.00	\$16,498.00	\$450,749.00	2019
National Potato Council	William K. Quarles (6/19-6/20)	CEO	\$192,314.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$22,591.00	\$214,905.00	2020
National Potato Council	John Keeling* (through 6/19)	Former VP & CEO	\$206,447.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,435.00	\$213,882.00	2020
National Potato Promotion Board	Blair Richardson	President, CEO	\$607,000.00	\$133,000.00	\$48,560.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$788,560.00	2020
National Renderers Assoc.	Nancy Foster	President & CEO	\$257,152.00	\$0.00	\$38,258.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$295,410.00	2019
National Restaurant Assoc.	Dawn M. Sweeney*	President & CEO	\$1,904,375.00	\$1,979,027.00	\$19,356.00	\$1,959,473.00	\$29,620.00	\$5,891,851.00	2019
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association	Jim Matheson	CEO	\$1,190,458.00	\$450,950.00	\$57,452.00	\$374,906.00	\$38,001.00	\$2,111,767.00	2019
National Save the Family Farm Coalition	Niaz Dorry	Executive Director	\$38,194.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$38,194.00	2019
National Turkey Federation	Joel Brandenburger	President & CEO	\$374,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$36,400.00	\$410,400.00	2019
National Watermelon Board	Mark Arney	CEO	\$218,752.00	\$8,100.00	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$18,628.00	\$251,480.00	2020
National Wildlife Federation	Collin O'Mara	President & CEO	\$305,703.00	\$0.00	\$38,404.00	\$20,860.00	\$27,308.00	\$392,275.00	2020
Natural Resources Defense Council	Mitchell Bernard*	Interim President	\$330,085.00	\$7,500.00	\$0.00	\$40,200.00	\$22,742.00	\$400,527.00	2020
North American Blueberry Council	Mark Villata	Executive director	\$294,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$19,500.00	\$16,737.00	\$331,037.00	2019
North American Meat Institute	Julie Anna Potts	President & CEO	\$460,838.00	\$141,000.00	\$0.00	\$22,400.00	\$37,518.00	\$661,756.00	2019
North American Millers Assoc.	James A. McCarthy (9/19-7/20)*	President & CEO	\$262,794.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$36,775.00	\$0.00	\$299,569.00	2020
Organic Consumers Assoc.	Ronald Cummins	International director	\$112,900.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$112,900.00	2019
Organic Trade Assoc.	Laura Batcha	CEO & Executive Director	\$250,526.00	\$35,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$285,526.00	2019
Paper and Packaging Board	Mary Anne Hansan	President	\$286,340.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$286,340.00	2020
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals	Ingrid Newkirk	President	\$23,398.00	\$0.00	\$782.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$24,180.00	2020
Pheasants Forever Inc.	Howard K. Vincent	President & CEO	\$305,846.00	\$10,000.00	\$33,358.00	\$15,947.00	\$18,630.00	\$383,781.00	2020
Popcorn Board	Contract with Smith Bucklin	N/A	\$186,082.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$186,082.00	2020
Produce Marketing Assoc.	Catherine Burns ²	CEO	\$587,157.00	\$93,003.00	\$94,245.00	\$18,751.00	\$28,475.00	\$821,631.00	2019
Ranchers Cattlemen Action Legal Fund; United Stockgrowers of America	William Bullard Jr.	CEO	\$175,190.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$175,190.00	2019
Renewable Fuels Assoc.	Geoffrey C Cooper	President & CEO	\$319,708.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$47,956.00	\$27,023.00	\$394,687.00	2019
Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA	Edna Rodriguez	Executive Director	\$94,242.00	\$0.00	\$31,713.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$125,955.00	2019
SNAC International	Elizabeth Avery	President & CEO	\$330,343.00	\$40,000.00	\$0.00	\$11,257.00	\$6,917.00	\$388,517.00	2019
Softwood Lumber Board	Cees de Jager	CEO	\$350,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$122,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$622,500.00	2020
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council	James Sumner	President	\$315.00	\$125,099.00	\$0.00	\$31,564.00	\$14,340.00	\$171,318.00	2019
U.S. Beet Sugar Assoc.	Brian Baenig*	President	\$322,069.00	\$45,000.00	\$0.00	\$30,221.00	\$5,905.00	\$403,195.00	2019
U.S. Dairy Export Council	Thomas J. Vilsack*	President & CEO	\$824,000.00	\$0.00	\$49,340.00	\$28,000.00	\$1,555.00	\$902,895.00	2019
U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance	Erin Fitzgerald	CEO	\$291,442.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,697.00	\$10,262.00	\$309,401.00	2019
U.S. Grains Council	Tom Sleight (10/18- 6/19)*	Former President & CEO	\$412,292.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$47,084.00	\$7,351.00	\$466,727.00	2019

Name of Organization	President/CEO/ Executive Director or VP	Position	Base Compensation	Potential Bonus	Other Compensation	Retirement/ Deferred Payment	Tax-Free Benefits	Total Compensation	Filing Year
U.S. Grains Council	Ryan LeGrand (6/19- 9/19)	President & CEO	\$180,631.00	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$24,336.00	\$10,426.00	\$219,393.00	2019
U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council	Kasey Cronquist ³	President	\$255,637.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$255,637.00	2020
U.S. Meat Export Federation	Dan Halstrom	CEO	\$288,088.00	\$44,397.00	\$12,000.00	\$25,114.00	\$27,418.00	\$397,017.00	2019
U.S. Poultry and Egg Association	James Sumner	President	\$315,635.00	\$125,000.00	\$0.00	\$31,564.00	\$14,340	\$486,638	2019
U.S. Soybean Export Council	James Sutter	CEO	\$445,671.00	\$67,575.00	\$22,064.00	\$17,875.00	\$34,208.00	\$587,393.00	2019
U.S. Wheat Associates	Vince Peterson	President	\$313,377.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$31,713.00	\$32,312.00	\$377,402.00	2019
Union of Concerned Scientists	Kenneth Kimmell*	President	\$326,351.00	\$0.00	\$1,032.00	\$22,400.00	\$23,435.00	\$373,218.00	2020
United Fresh Produce Assoc.	Thomas Stenzel ²	President & CEO	\$510,080.00	\$215,843.00	\$225,363.00	\$165,873.00	\$8,832.00	\$1,125,991.00	2020
United Sorghum Checkoff/National Sorghum Producers Assn.	Tim Lust	CEO	\$220,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,000.00	\$6,400.00	\$237,400.00	2020
United Soybean Board	Polly Ruhland	CEO	\$500,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$34,200.00	\$11,000.00	\$595,200.00	2020
USA Rice Federation	Elizabeth C. Ward	President & CEO	\$381,385.00	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$41,250.00	\$18,539.00	\$491,174.00	2019
Waterkeeper Alliance	Marc Yaggi	Executive Director	\$228,197.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$36,823.00	\$265,020.00	2019
Waterways Council	Michael Toohy*	President & CEO	\$331,271.00	\$24,375.00	\$14,331.00	\$16,380.00	\$31,159.00	\$417,516.00	2019
Western Fairs Association Inc.	Sarah Cummings	Executive Director	\$118,980.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$118,980.00	2020
Western Growers Association	Thomas Nassif*	President and CEO	\$800,797.00	\$316,090.00	\$70,083.00	\$27,500.00	\$12,084.00	\$1,226,554.00	2019

*This executive is no longer at the helm of the organization.

1. Tom Gallagher is the CEO of both Dairy Management Inc. and the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board. His combined compensation from both roles is \$1,512,930.
2. Tim Lust is the CEO of both the National Sorghum Producers and the United Sorghum Checkoff. His combined compensation from both roles is \$237,400.
3. U. S. Highbush Blueberry Council contracts with Kasey Cronquist for managing the association. He also manages the North American Blueberry Council.
4. Matthew Chase's role includes leading the National Association of Counties, the National Association of Counties Research Foundation and Financial Services Corporation.

Democrats pulling together \$3.5T tax and spending package

House Democrats are forging ahead with writing a massive new tax and spending package with major implications for the next farm bill as well as producers' finances.

House committees started debating their portions of the budget reconciliation measure last week and will continue into next week. The House Agriculture Committee meets this Friday to divide up the \$89.1 billion that it was authorized to spend.

The House Education and Labor Committee, which has authority over child nutrition programs, meets Thursday to consider its part of the bill.

Last week, the House Natural Resources Committee started debating its portion of the package, which includes some funding for a new Civilian Climate Corps as well as provisions to protect endangered species.

The [committee's draft](#) includes \$900 million for CCC workers that would be employed by the Bureau of Land Management and \$400 million for CCC work at the Fish and Wildlife Service. The bill would provide \$150 million to carry out environmental studies required by the National

Environmental Policy Act. The committee meets Thursday to continue debating amendments to the draft.

The House Ways and Means Committee is responsible for the bill's tax provisions, including potential new taxation of capital gains on inherited assets, but the panel will first take up the bill's health care, family leave and child care provisions during a marathon session scheduled for Thursday and Friday.

Democrats have been negotiating exclusively with each other since no Republicans are expected to vote for the package, and details of the bill have been kept under wraps as well.

A member of the House Agriculture Committee, Rep. Cindy Axne, D-Iowa, said [during an online event](#) Sept. 1 in her home state that the bill is likely to include about \$20 billion for conservation and research spending. "We've been listening to farmers" in crafting the provisions, she said. But one source familiar with the negotiations said Tuesday that the number was likely to be significantly higher than \$20 billion.

A spokesman for the House Agriculture Committee didn't respond to questions about the spending plans.

The conservation spending is intended for promoting climate-smart agriculture practices and distributed through the next farm bill, which Congress is due to write in 2023. More than 60 groups, including conservation organizations and some farm groups, [recently appealed for \\$30 billion in new conservation funding](#).

House Ag's reconciliation also will have additional spending for forestry, farm debt relief and other Democratic priorities.

Democrats, meanwhile, have been grappling with internal resistance to some of President Joe Biden's ideas for paying for the spending package, including his proposal to start taxing capital gains at death. Under current law, inherited assets aren't taxed until they are sold and only at a stepped up basis, the gain since the heir acquired the assets.

Senate Finance Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore., has floated an alternative proposal that would still tax capital gains at death but provide a \$5 million per-person exemption and an additional exemption, possibly worth \$25 million, for family farms, the [Wall Street Journal reported](#). Under Biden's proposal, there would be a \$1 million personal exemption but no exemption for family farms; the tax on farms would be deferred until the operation is sold.

Republican members of the committee are appealing to Wyden to debate the tax provisions in committee.

"Failure to hold a full, open markup, as our House Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce Committee counterparts are doing, would amount to a massive and unfortunate concession to the House, as well as to congressional leadership," the Republicans wrote.

“It would also serve to further erode the American people’s trust in the Senate as an open and effective institution, substituting a secretive process behind closed doors for a productive public dialogue.”

Democrats have little room for error in the House, which they control 220-212, and none at all in the 50-50 Senate. Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., have both expressed reservations about spending \$3.5 trillion as called for in Democrats’ fiscal 2022 budget resolution that authorized the reconciliation bill.

Manchin privately told the White House that he wouldn’t support more than \$1 trillion in spending, Axios reported Tuesday evening.

But White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain insists that he’s optimistic about the bill’s chances. “We’re going to work together to find a way to put together a package that can pass the House, that can pass the Senate, that can be put on the president’s desk and signed into law,” [Klain said Sunday on CNN’s State of the Union](#).

Colombia trade investigation has US dairy exporters concerned

The growing trade relationship between the U.S. and Colombia is threatening to turn sour for U.S. dairy and industry representatives are asking the Biden administration to step in.

U.S. dairy exports to Colombia have been on the rise thanks to the free-trade agreement the two countries agreed to in 2012, but now the Colombian dairy industry is looking to throw a wrench into the works.

The Colombian government is investigating claims of domestic harm from U.S. exports of milk powder – a process that could lead to safeguard actions to limit imports – and the U.S. dairy sector isn’t happy about it.

Colombia, under the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement, has every right to investigate, U.S. Dairy Export Council Executive Vice President Jaime Castaneda tells *Agri-Pulse*, but he also stressed that there is rising concern the process will become tainted by domestic politics as elections loom in the South American country. Safeguard actions are temporary import restrictions such as quotas or tariffs.

U.S. dairy exports to Colombia have been climbing as tariffs go down, a sure sign that the agreement is working the way it is supposed to, but the situation is also angering Colombian dairy farmers.

Claiming that domestic producers are being harmed by the influx of U.S. milk powder, they petitioned the government to investigate. The endgame – what Colombian producers want, according to Castaneda – is for Colombia to erect safeguard measures.

U.S. dairy exports to Colombia were relatively small, said Castaneda, “but as the tariffs went down ... we began exporting more and more product.”

Colombia’s tariffs on milk powder are dropping 2.2% each year until they are zero in 2026.

Taking advantage of lower tariffs under the free trade agreement between the two countries, the U.S. shipped \$78 million worth of whole milk powder to Colombia in 2020, according to data maintained by USDEC and the National Milk Producers Federation. That's about two-thirds of the total \$124 million worth of all dairy products that the U.S. exported to Colombia last year.

The U.S. was only exporting about \$21 million worth of dairy goods to Colombia in 2012, the year the FTA was implemented. That nearly tripled to \$59 million by 2014 and by 2019, U.S. exports to the country totaled \$144 million, according to data from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

“Colombia is one of our top markets in the world – 11th largest – and we’re only part way into phasing in the U.S.-Colombia FTA’s benefits,” said Shawna Morris, vice president of trade policy for the U.S. Dairy Export Council and National Milk Producers Federation. “The FTA has been instrumental to growing our exports to that market.”

Still, Castaneda argued, U.S. exports are very small compared to Colombia's domestic production, so there is no way it could be harming the country's farmers and processors.

“They haven't been able to prove any harm,” said Castaneda, who testified last month in a hearing that the Colombian government held on the safeguards.

Colombia's equivalent of the U.S. International Trade Commission would have to show “a significant overall impairment in the position of a domestic industry,” when it comes to the investigation, and U.S. industry officials say that's not likely under a proper process.

If Colombia were to enact safeguard measures on U.S. milk powder, they could be applied for two years and then possibly extended for another two years, under the terms of the free trade agreement.

The primary concern is that as Colombia nears its next presidential election in May next year – President Iván Duque is running for another term – there's a possibility that that there will be political pressure to award the dairy farmers the safeguards they want.

“Sparked by a vocal domestic industry, the Colombian government's investigation appears to be a politically driven attempt to impose additional tariffs under a safeguard mechanism,” USDEC and NMPF said in a statement.

“It's a year of elections,” Castaneda said. “That's why we're very concerned that the Colombian government may do something that prevents due process.”

And that's why USDEC and NMPF asked U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai to bring up their concerns with Colombian Commerce Minister Ximena Lombana when the two met virtually last week.

Tai did raise the issue with Lombana, a U.S. government official confirmed for *Agri-Pulse*. Lombana assured Tai that Colombia is “committed to a transparent process” for the investigation.

Lombana also pledged that Colombia will remain in “continued close dialogue with U.S.” during the investigation, the official said.

EPA Science Advisory Board gets ready for action

The Environmental Protection Agency's Science Advisory Board, which has been dormant so far during the Biden administration, is likely to tackle climate change and environmental justice issues when it starts meeting again later this year, EPA and new members say.

An EPA spokesperson cited those subjects and also said "EPA expects SAB to work on diverse topics important to EPA's mission." The agency is in the final stages of hiring new board members, and the SAB's first meeting is likely to take place before the end of the year, the spokesperson said.

The board is made up of 47 outside scientists and is supposed to provide peer review of EPA studies and regulations, help guide research priorities and provide advice to the EPA administrator on request.

In announcing the new members, EPA Administrator Michael Regan said, "This highly qualified, diverse group of experts will ensure that EPA is receiving sound science-based advice to inform our work to protect people and the environment from pollution." The board includes 22 women and 25 men, including 16 people of color, "making it the most diverse SAB since the committee was established," EPA said.



EPA Administrator Michael Regan

An EPA spokesperson cited those subjects and also said "EPA expects SAB to work on diverse topics important to EPA's mission."

One newly appointed member, Purdue agronomy professor, Sylvie Brouder, said, "It's great to have a board with a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives. That is going to be especially important as we tackle difficult issues like climate change, an issue that will impact and does impact so many different communities." Brouder has previously served on the board.

Steven Hamburg, chief scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund and a returning member, echoed Brouder, saying, "We are at a critical point in our fight against climate change and have no time to waste. I welcome the Biden administration's commitment to following the science as we move forward in developing thoughtful, evidence-backed solutions."

Austin Omer, Illinois Farm Bureau associate director of natural resource policy, was reappointed to the board and will also serve on the Agricultural Science Committee. He said that "as a scientist working in a policy organization, my goal is to make sure our farmer leaders, members, and policy staff have a good understanding of what science is telling us about many different issues." But he had no insight into which specific issues the SAB might address.

The board's importance depends in large part on how the administration in office wants to use it. The Trump administration tried to limit the breadth of expertise on the SAB by excluding from its membership any scientists who were currently recipients of EPA grants.

In addition, the Trump administration rejected offers of help from the board in crafting the Navigable Waters Protection Rule to adhere to the Clean Water Act’s “objective of restoring and maintaining ‘the chemical, physical and biological integrity’” of the nation’s waters, [as the SAB said in a February 2020 commentary](#).

The board’s comments did not affect the trajectory of the rule, however, and it was finalized in April 2020. The Trump-era rule was [vacated recently by a federal judge](#).

The new iteration of the board is likely to have more influence, since the Biden administration's intent to rely on scientific advisers and has touted the expertise of its board, most of which is made up of new appointments. The members were chosen from 352 candidates.

The EPA board has six committees: Agricultural Science; Chemical Assessment Advisory; Climate Science; Drinking Water; Economic Analysis, and Environmental Justice Science Committee. There’s also a Radiation Advisory Subcommittee.

Following are biographical summaries of some of the SAB members, starting with members of the Agricultural Science Committee. Quotes are from the EPA bios.

[Florence Anoruo](#) is a plant physiologist/ecologist/environmental scientist who is an associate research and extension scientist in the Department of Biological and Physical Sciences at South Carolina State University, where she is also Director of Emerging Crops. "Her research and community outreach work are focused on an evidence-based community centered participatory approach to achieving just, equitable and sustainable solutions to food insecurity, climate/energy justice in underserved and marginalized frontline communities in South Carolina and beyond."

Purdue agronomist [Sylvie Brouder](#), mentioned above, “studies field-to-landscape scale nutrient cycling with an emphasis on crop ecology, water quality, greenhouse gas emissions and nutrient balances and losses in agro-ecosystems; she translates new knowledge to practice via development of diagnostics and recommendations for on-farm nutrient management.”

[Elena Irwin](#) is a distinguished professor of food, agricultural, and environmental sciences in economics and sustainability at Ohio State University. Irwin “studies land use and ecosystem services in urban, rural and regional contexts in the U.S., including the impacts of land use change on water quality and other ecosystem services. Her research includes integrated modeling of regional economic and ecological systems, climate change, and sustainability assessment of environmental policies at local, regional, and national scales.”



Elena Irwin

Illinois Farm Bureau [Austin Omer](#)’s research interests “include refining existing conservation practices to overcome barriers to adoption, investigating the interaction of conservation practices, and balancing the trade-offs of agriculture sustainability efforts across production systems.” He has studied the EPA’s Section 319 nonpoint grant program USDA’s National Water Quality Initiative.

[Godfrey Uzochukwu](#) is senior professor and founding director of the interdisciplinary Waste Management Institute at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. He “has

expertise in soil health, geology, soil mineralogy, soil genesis and land use, environmental science, waste management, environmental sustainability, environmental justice and environmental ethics.” Uzochukwu has doctorate from the University of Nebraska in agronomy and soil genesis, mineralogy and classification.”

Other SAB members with agriculture experience:

Economic Analysis Committee

[David A. Keiser](#), a professor of resource economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, was previously an assistant professor of economics at Iowa State University and served as the division director of resource and environmental economics at the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development. [Keiser co-chaired a review critical of the economic analysis that supported the Trump administration’s Navigable Waters Protection Rule](#). Among other things, the review concluded that the assumption states would step in to fill the regulatory gap left by the NWPR was unrealistic.

[Sheila Olmstead](#), who was an author with Keiser on the same review of the NWPR, is a professor with the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. She “is an environmental and resource economist with expertise in water quality regulation and valuation, water pricing, water markets, the environmental impacts of energy development, adaptation to water-related climate change impacts, and market-based approaches to pollution control.”

[Dominique van der Mensbrugghe](#) is a research professor and director of the Center for Global Trade Analysis at Purdue. “His more recent work has included looking at the damage' side of climate change, particularly on agriculture, and assessing the economic tradeoffs between carbon taxes and lower climate damage.”

Climate Science Committee

[Drew Shindell](#) is Nicholas professor of earth sciences at Duke University. “His research group is particularly focused on quantifying the impacts on human health, agricultural yields, climate and the economy of policies that might be put into place to mitigate climate change or improve air quality.”

Drinking Water Committee

[Amy Childress](#) is Gabilan distinguished professor of science and engineering and director of the environmental engineering program at the University of Southern California. “Childress' research and scholarly interests are in the area of desalination, wastewater reclamation, and the water-energy nexus.”

Environmental Justice Science Committee

[C. Marjorie Aelion](#), associate vice chancellor for research and engagement and professor of environmental health sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, “studies groundwater and surface water quality, remedial technologies for environmental contaminants, associations between environmental contaminants and health outcomes, and ethnic disparities of environmental exposures.”

[Sacoby Wilson](#) is an associate professor with the Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health and Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of Maryland's School of Public Health. As director of Community Engagement, Environmental Justice and Health, he "is engaging communities in the Washington, DC region on environmental health issues .. including industrial chicken farming on Maryland's Eastern Shore."

NRCS watershed programs could see \$918M from infrastructure bill

Key USDA watershed programs that fund agricultural waste management, water quality, and flood prevention projects would get \$918 million through the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package awaiting a final House vote.

The Senate-passed legislation would spread the watershed funding across three programs that serve different functions but are all oversubscribed, Department of Agriculture officials told *Agri-Pulse*. House leaders have [promised that the bill will get a vote in the House by Sept. 27.](#)

The bulk of the funding — \$500 million — would be devoted to the [Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations program](#) administered through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service; a USDA spokesperson tells *Agri-Pulse* the current WFPO backlog is \$719 million for 112 projects in 26 states.

The program works with local sponsors to bolster watershed protection and improvement projects that deal with flood prevention, water supply management, wildlife protection, and agricultural water management.

Dan Sebert, executive director of the National Watershed Coalition, said funding has increased over the last few years, but the infrastructure money would be an "additional shot in the arm." The program received annual appropriations of \$150 million in fiscal year 2019 and \$175 million in fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

The type of projects that get funding vary across the country.

Western states use the funds for projects "to make the irrigation systems that are in place more efficient and effective in terms of loss to evaporation and more efficient transfer of water to where it is needed," Sebert told *Agri-Pulse*.

States in the central United States generally use the money for upstream flood control projects like building small dams, he said. Some eastern states such as Virginia and West Virginia have several dams, too.

The small dams "catch floodwater and catch the rain where it falls and then release it slowly over time so that the main channel of that watershed is not overwhelmed for days and days," Sebert said.

The projects require local project sponsors. In many cases, local conservation districts fill that role and partner with USDA.

“America’s conservation districts are often leaders in their communities on watershed-scale projects, which can serve as a first line of defense in times of extreme weather events,” Michael Crowder, president of the National Association of Conservation Districts, told *Agri-Pulse*.

Projects intended for addressing extreme weather events include the construction of small dams to prevent localized flooding, developing irrigation projects to minimize drought, and protecting land from soil erosion.

[According to USDA, the agency is currently spending \\$150 million](#) for 51 projects across 48 states. Some 2,100 projects have been “active or completed” across every state in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the Pacific Basin, USDA noted on its website. Out of the 2,100, about 1,271 are dam-related projects.

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program is expected to receive \$300 million from the infrastructure bill. This program — currently facing a \$24 million backlog for 130 Damage Survey Reports across 12 states — helps local communities recover from natural disasters.

Another \$118 million in the infrastructure bill would go toward the Watershed Rehabilitation Program, which provides assistance to renovate dams nearing the end of their roughly 50-year lifespan. The program faces a backlog of more than \$500 million and a to-do list of 164 dams across 30 states.

“It renovates these dams, brings them up to current criteria based on hazard class, and continues a stream of benefits that the dam provides on into the future beyond the original design life,” Sebert said.



Michael Crowder, NACD

The program has helped with the [construction of 11,845 dams across the U.S. since the late 1940s, according to USDA](#), and has received annual appropriations of \$10 million for fiscal years 2019-2021.

“The rehabilitation funding supports planning, design and construction for high-hazard dams in 38 states that have reached their design life and are eligible,” a USDA spokesperson said. “Funding is being prioritized for those projects that have authorized plans and are able to complete construction.”

Both WRP and WFPO have received a combined \$50 million a year in farm bill funding, according to NACD.

As weather and rainfall patterns have shifted to new parts of the country in recent years, Sebert said he’s raising awareness of watershed funding opportunities in those areas that may not have known about it.

News Briefs:

Producer outlook brightens as drought-stricken producers see precipitation.

Farmers' worries about current conditions and their farms' financial performances started to ease in August, according to the monthly [Purdue University/CME Group Ag Economy Barometer](#). After seeing declines over the past three months, the barometer rose four points in August to a reading of 138, as producer sentiment indexes for farm financial performance and current conditions saw some of their highest readings since May. "Yield prospects stabilized or improved for many producers in August as some precipitation fell in areas that had been abnormally dry and drought-stricken," which help to explain the increases, James Mintert, the barometer's principal investigator and director of Purdue University's Center for Commercial Agriculture, said in a [release](#). Nearly four in 10 producers surveyed expressed concern that farm input prices will rise by 8% or more in the next 12 months. Additionally, one in five respondents believe that over the next 12 months, farm input prices will increase by more than 12%. Approximately half of corn and soybean growers participating in the survey expected farmland cash rental rates for the upcoming year will surpass 2021 levels. The Ag Economy Barometer is created using telephone survey responses from 400 U.S.

CHS plans \$60M Minnesota plant expansion to meet renewable diesel demand.

CHS is the latest soybean processor hoping to increase its presence in the renewable diesel sector, as the company announced a \$60 million expansion of its Mankato, Minn., soybean processing plant on Tuesday. When completed, the facility will produce 35% more soybean oil annually. With production of renewable diesel expected to reach [6 billion gallons by 2030](#), its key ingredient, soybean oil, has also seen an increase in demand. "Trends in global consumption of refined oils such as soy, canola, and palm remain strong, especially in the renewable diesel sector, with projected continued tightening of stocks," Tom Malecha, CHS vice president for global grain and processing operations, said in a [release](#). "We're seeing tremendous opportunities to maximize our farmer-owners' investments in high-performing assets and infrastructure." Other oilseed processors such as [Bunge and ADM](#) have created joint ventures with oil refiners to produce more soybean oil to be used for renewable diesel — a fuel chemically equivalent to diesel, but produced primarily with soybean oil rather than petroleum. In the release, CHS said it began working on strategic growth plans based around oil markets in October of 2019 when it increased soybean crush capacity by 30% at its Fairmont, Minn., plant. This project is expected to be completed late in the summer of 2023. "We're buying and crushing more local soybeans and transporting more crude oil to the Mankato plant for refining," Malecha said. "We're looking forward to being able to process even more of farmers' soybeans into value-added products, which are in high demand by global customers in several market segments."

New strategy for freezing produce could reduce food sector energy consumption.

A freezing strategy with origins in medical science could be the solution to successfully preserving fresh tomatoes and potatoes so they don't defrost into mush, with the bonus of [reducing energy consumption in the food products sector](#). Researchers at the Albany, Calif., office of USDA's Agricultural Research Service picked up on the isochoric chamber freezing method that an engineering team at UC Berkeley designed for transporting organs to transplant recipients. Cristina Bilbao-Sainz, an ARS agricultural engineer, says the process maintains the cellular integrity of food items because the pressure inside the chamber "doesn't let the ice continue expanding freely." Instead, the chamber suspends the vacuum-sealed fresh food in water or another solution and only about 10% of the volume of the chamber freezes, even as the whole chamber is placed in a standard freezer. After being brought back to room

temperature, the chamber is opened and food is removed — preserved, and undamaged by the process. Bilbao-Sainz says the first test products were foods that deteriorate with traditional freezing, such as tomatoes and potatoes. After one month in the chamber, she says “all the quality properties in terms of texture, color and nutritional content were very similar to the fresh tomato.” Without the need to lower large volumes to below the freezing point, the process consumes less energy than traditional freezing. As public research continues on the “optimal conditions” for various foods, Bilbao-Sainz says, “we are trying to find partners to work with” to bring the technology to industry.

Farm Hands on the Potomac...

The American Sugar Alliance has elevated **Robert Johansson** to the new role of director of economics and policy analysis. Johansson joined ASA in January 2021 as the associate director of economics and policy analysis. Before joining ASA, Johansson served as the chief economist at the Department of Agriculture.

Katharine Emerson has returned to the World Food Program USA as its new chief of staff. Emerson most recently served as the director of political affairs at Bayer. Before that, she was the director of public policy and political strategy at the National Corn Growers Association.

Jim Monroe has announced he will be joining Smithfield Foods on Sept. 20 as vice president of corporate affairs. Monroe currently serves as the assistant vice president of communications at the National Pork Producers Council. **Chloe Carson** will be NPPC’s primary media contact after Monroe departs on Sept. 17.



Robert Johansson

Ashlee Johnson has joined The Russell Group as vice president. Johnson previously worked at FMC Corporation as the director of global sustainability. Before that, she worked at Tyson Foods as the manager of community and state government relations. She also worked at USDA during the Obama Administration as the chief of staff for the deputy secretary.

The International Wood Products Association has selected **Bradley McKinney** as the new executive director of the organization, effective Sept. 13. McKinney most recently served as vice president of economic security and operations for the Export-Import Bank of the United States. Before that, he served as chief of staff for the International Trade Administration at the Department of Commerce. Earlier in his career, he worked for the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture handling issues related to international trade, agriculture and manufacturing.



Ashlee Johnson

Kent Swisher has been named the incoming president and CEO of the North American Renderers Association, following the retirement of current NARA President and CEO **Nancy Foster**, on Dec. 31 of this year. Swisher will also serve as president of the Fats and Proteins Research Foundation (FPRF), the rendering industry’s research

organization. Swisher has been with NARA for the past 18 years, most recently as the senior vice president for international programs.

The National Agricultural Law Center has added **Jana Caracciolo** and **Samantha Mikolajczyk** as the center's newest staff attorneys. A Florida native, Caracciolo grew up on a small honey tangerine farm which sparked her interests in food science. She graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science in Food and Resource Economics and later interned for the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic, as well as the Marketing, Regulatory, and Food Safety Programs Division of USDA's Office of the General Counsel. Caracciolo will focus her research on food labeling and food safety-related issues. Growing up on a strawberry farm in Texas, Mikolajczyk worked as a policy intern for Texas Gov. **Greg Abbott** and as a research fellow at Vermont Law School's Center for Agriculture and Food Systems. Mikolajczyk will focus her research on general agricultural, food, and environmental law issues.

Fayrouz Saad has accepted a new job at USAID as the director of public engagement. She previously was the executive director of the Office of Global Michigan and worked at the Department of Homeland Security during the Obama Administration. She also ran for Congress representing Michigan's 11th Congressional District, but lost the Democratic primary.



Dawn Breitreutz

Dawn Breitreutz has been tapped as the new president of the Soil Health Academy. Breitreutz succeeds Ohio farmer and co-founder of SHA **David Brandt**, who served as president of SHA since its inception in 2017. Breitreutz currently serves on the SHA board of directors as treasurer. Breitreutz and her husband own and operate Stoney Creek Farm in Redwood Falls, Minn.

CGB Enterprises has tapped **Ellie Murphy** to be its first appointed director of sustainability and food safety. Most recently, she worked for Marathon Petroleum Corporation, leading various sustainability efforts across logistics. She graduated from Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering and later earned a

Master's in Urban Sustainability and Resilience from Xavier University.

The Corn Board has tapped **Kelly Harsh** as its newest director, filling the seat vacated by Dennis McNinch. Harsh grows corn and soybeans on her family operation in Delaware, Ohio. Harsh is a Certified Public Accountant and crop insurance agent. She currently serves as the president of Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association and also serves on the NCGA Ethanol Action Team.

Manuel Otero has been reelected as director general of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), with his term ending in 2026. Otero first took office as director general of IICA for a four-year term in January 2018 and was reelected to the post by the ministers and secretaries of the 33 countries of the Americas that participated in the Conference of Ministers. Otero is a native of Argentina and a veterinarian who has a focus on sustainable development issues.

Kylie Bohman has accepted a new position in Sen. **Josh Hawley's**, R-Mo., office as a legislative correspondent working on the agriculture and energy portfolio. Bohman currently

works in the office of Rep. **Mary Miller**, R-Ill., as a scheduler. Her first day in Hawley's office will be Sept. 13.

Sources report that **Anne Alonzo** elected to leave her role at Corteva as the Senior VP, External Affairs and Chief Sustainability Officer, after a little more than a year and a half in that job. She previously served as President and CEO of the American Egg Board.

The **National Biodiesel Board** has rebranded. The association told its members yesterday that their new name and brand will be: Clean Fuels Alliance America.

Two firefighters responding to the California wildfire crisis have died. **Allen Johnson** and **Marcus Pacheco**, two employees of USDA's Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region, passed away on Sunday Sept. 5 due to illness, the agency said in a press release Sunday. Johnson dedicated over 40 years of his life working in Region 5. He worked for many years on the Stanislaus National Forest, spending most of his career on the Groveland Ranger District. Pacheco served for 30 years in various firefighting roles for multiple agencies. He was currently working with the Forest Service as an assistant fire engine operator on the Almanor Ranger District in the Lassen National Forest while also assuming the role of training officer for the Standish-Litchfield Fire Protection District.

Best Regards,

Sara Wyant
Editor

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