



3/9 Newsletter

CAFB and Napa County Presidents Provide Testimony in CA State Senate on the Farm Bill

On Tuesday, the California State Senate’s Agriculture Committee held an informational hearing on the Farm Bill. Although this is legislation handled at the federal level, the Committee was interested in learning more about its impacts here in the state and of some of the priorities from key stakeholders. CAFB President Jamie Johansson delivered remarks as did Napa County Farm Bureau President Peter Nissen. Both highlighted some of the challenges growers in the state have faced in recent years, but also shared areas where Farm Bill-supported programs have been beneficial to farmers and ranchers, such as with disaster aid and crop insurance.

In addition to their testimony, US Rep. Jim Costa, Secretary Karen Ross of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and several other industry experts provided remarks as well. Many noted the importance of crop insurance and other risk management tools to agriculture in the state. It is expected that crop insurance will be a key area of focus for the Farm Bill. CAFB helped shape the American Farm Bureau Federation’s priorities to include expanding access to currently uncovered commodities. With less than a quarter of our 400 commodities covered by a direct program, Californians understand very well just how disastrous recovery can be when support tools are not put in place. Ad hoc programs such as the Emergency Relief Program have taken years to provide financial assistance to impacted farmers.

President Johansson shared some of these exact thoughts, as did others on the panel. While the California state legislature is not necessarily directly involved with the crafting of the Farm Bill, any support for our industry is certainly welcome if it can help encourage our federal Congressional delegation on these priorities.

USDA Issues Proposed Rule on “Made in USA” Labeling Claims

Earlier this week, the US Department of Agriculture announced a newly proposed rule on volunteer labeling for “Product of USA” and “Made in the USA” claims. The rule follows a national survey conducted by the USDA to see how consumers view this and other existing labeling requirements. In their announcement, they suggested that some usages of these labels are inaccurate and misleading. While the rule would still make the label voluntary, companies will now need to provide documented proof on their claims of US origins.

Under current law, companies may use such labels as long as the product is processed within the country. This means beef, for example, may be sourced from cattle abroad, but as long as part of the final processing includes work done here in the US, companies may utilize this label. The US Cattlemen’s Association was one of the groups advocating for this change; however, the reach will extend beyond just meat, as it will also be applicable to poultry and egg products as well. CAFB will be reviewing the rule

closely to see what potential broader impacts could result if the proposal were to move forward unchanged. For your feedback, please feel free to contact [Matthew Viohl](#) with your thoughts.

House Subcommittee on Forestry Holds Farm Bill Hearing

Wednesday morning, the House Subcommittee on Forestry held its first hearing on the topic of the Forestry Title within the Farm Bill. The subcommittee was newly formed this Congress after previously being paired with conservation (now a separate subcommittee). It is chaired by California Rep. Doug LaMalfa (CA-01), who is certainly no stranger to forestry issues. In his opening statement, he highlighted the ongoing wildfire and forest health crises being faced in the Western United States. Rep. LaMalfa emphasized that funding alone is not adequate to solve these issues—and instead suggested that ongoing regulatory burdens are inhibiting the US Forest Service and other public and private organizations from sufficiently addressing forest health. Witnesses included representatives from the state foresters, county government and private and industrial forestry.

[Recording & Information](#)

USDA Requests Nominations for Ag Air Quality Task Force

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is seeking nominees to its Task Force on Agricultural Air Quality Research. Nominations must be emailed or postmarked by Friday, May 5, 2023. Established in 1996, the Task Force examines the intersection of agricultural production and air quality, and advises the Secretary on scientifically sound, cost-effective, federally supported agricultural solutions that can help improve air quality. The Chief of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) chairs the Task Force. For more information, view the Task Force webpage as well as the Federal Register Notice.

[Task Force Webpage](#) [Federal Register Notice](#)

AFBF Market Intel Reveals Over \$21 Billion in Crop Losses in 2022

The American Farm Bureau Federation released a Market Intel last week highlighting crop losses due to weather related disasters in 2022. In 2022, 18 weather and climate disasters, each with damages exceeding \$1 billion struck the U.S. coast-to-coast. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that 2022 surpassed 2021 as the third-costliest disaster year event in history, with an estimated \$165 billion in total economic losses behind only 2017's \$346 billion and 2005's \$244 billion. Drought and wildfires alone accounted for over \$20.4 billion in total crop losses, with the remaining \$1.08 billion linked to hurricanes, hail, flooding and severe weather events.

[Link to Market Intel](#)