



**AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE AND
SEALER OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES**

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**Stanislaus County
Agricultural Advisory Board**

MINUTES

March 6, 2017

Stanislaus County Agricultural Center
Conference Room H/I
9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present:

Roger Duncan	Tom Orvis
Gordon Heinrich	Ed Perry
Arby Hoobyar	Pamela Sweeten
Jim Mortensen	Wayne Zipser

Board Members Absent:

Sherman Boone
Carlos Estacio III
Stan Sinclear

Ex-Officio Board Members:

Jami Aggers, Environmental Resources – Present	Supervisor Jim DeMartini – Present
Milton O’Haire, Agricultural Commissioner – Present	Diana Waller, USDA-NRCS– Present

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no public comment.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 6, 2017 MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were presented by the Chairman. The members were asked to consider the minutes for approval, and the action was taken as follows:

Motion:	Pamela Sweeten
Second:	Jim Mortensen
Abstained:	Roger Duncan

Vote: Unanimous

V. TUOLUMNE WATERSHED CONDITIONS

Herb Smart, Turlock Irrigation District's Communication Division Manager, provided information on the February 2017 increased flows. He discussed the conditions in the Tuolumne River watershed and showed charts comparing 2016-2017 levels to the averages. There was a lot of precipitation in the watershed in the form of rain and snow. From September – February, the watershed received 51.4 inches of precipitation, or 204% for the date. Snow sensors show 191 percent average for the date. Slides showed the water elevation of the Don Pedro Reservoir. From approximately January 4 through January 24, levels rose 30 feet, from 785 elevation to 815. For this time of year, it should be under the 801.9 flood control line per the flood control contract with the United States Army Corp of Engineers. Levels did lower over the next couple of weeks, but then several storms caused levels to rise approximately 20 feet over a 3-day period. TID began working with Hydrocomp, a company that does hydrological modeling, running data and models to see inflow to the reservoir verses outflow and what that does to the elevation. A multi-agency coordination which included MID, Tuolumne, Merced and Stanislaus Office of Emergency Services began to prepare for the spill. An Executive Order was issued on February 20th and the center spillway gate was opened at 3:00 PM, with a target combined river release of 18,000 cfs. A request was made to continue to release 16,000 cfs for approximately 10 more days in order to get the reservoir down to 815. The USACE denied the request, citing levee impact concerns further downstream. The spillway gate closed on February 27th at 4:57 AM and at that time the reservoir elevation was 828.67'. Going forward, TID will continue maintaining river elevations at 55.0' at 9th Street, try to vacate flood control space given all the snow pack, continue to monitor hydrology, continue to communicate with other agencies and stand ready to react.

A copy of the presentation materials can be found as an attachment to the March 6, 2017 Ag Advisory Board meeting at the following link:

<http://www.stanag.org/ag-advisory-board.shtm>

Additionally, it was noted that the due date for comments on the State Water Board's SED are due March 17th. More information can be found on the worthyourfight.org website.

VI. WINTER ORCHARD FLOODING PROJECT UPDATE

Roger Duncan from the University of California Cooperative Extension gave a presentation on the winter orchard flooding project. This is a preliminary pilot study to determine if almond orchards can be used for groundwater recharge. The project is being funded by the Almond Board of California and will take a couple of years of study before any recommendations can be made. An image was shown of the Soil Agricultural Groundwater banking index (SAGBI) depicting areas ranging from very poor to excellent for groundwater banking. Saturated conditions are generally bad and questions being addressed are whether it's okay to do this in an almond orchard in December and January when the roots are not very active, what happens to root and tree health over the long run, what about leaching of nitrogen, salts, pesticides, etc., and what happens to the water. In order for winter recharge flooding to be a sustainable strategy in almonds, the trees must survive. Roger's focus is on the tree aspect of the project by monitoring bloom, root and tree health, tree water stress, and taking yields. There are two orchard sites, one in Modesto which is listed as moderately good on the SAGBI

and one in Delhi that is listed as excellent on the SAGBI. In 2015, they took pre-treatment yields and installed monitoring equipment; in January 2016 a total of 24" of water was applied over a 4-week period; in 2016 and 2017 the tree health and yield were monitored. An example of a 5 day soil moisture pattern during a recharge event at the Delhi site showed a large increase in soil moisture and rapid drop (drainage) within 12 hours. The Modesto site had a small increase in soil moisture and about 2 days were required to see soil drain from saturated conditions. Mini-rhizotrons were used to observe root growth and health. Root health was checked by testing for tree water stress using a pressure chamber method for measuring the level of water suction in the plant. The Modesto site showed no evidence of water stress resulting from impairment of root water uptake. The Delhi site showed some evidence of an improved tree water condition with winter recharge irrigations. Yields thus far show no indication of any positive or negative treatment effect. In summary: using orchards to sustainably manage groundwater will involve consideration of many issues; initial measurements do not indicate an obvious problem from the tree perspective; multiple treatment years (3-4) will be required to evaluate the potential long term yield effects in almonds; need to expand and replicate field trials before recommending practice; and leaching of nitrogen or pesticides could be an issue and may require changes in farming practices.

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VII. MILK AND DAIRY ORDINANCE CHANGES

Ryan Barney with the Department of Environmental Resources provided members with document highlighting proposed updates to the Milk and Dairy Ordinance for their review. The last update occurred prior to 1982. The ordinance is necessary to address fees, to apply updated standards, and to address sales of milk on the farm. Verbiage has been added that addresses the fees and the authority to adjust the fees as necessary. The authority to which these changes will take place is also changed. Some of the laws have changed in areas of the Food & Agriculture code, code of regulations. Additionally, Grade A Pasteurized Milk Ordinance changes cover areas relating to temperature requirements, bacteriological standards, and the permitting process.

No action is required from the Ag Advisory Board regarding this matter and was shared for informational purposes. It was noted that groups from industry were present at the meeting and showed their strong support of the ordinance changes. The groups present were Meyenberg Goat Milk and California Dairies, Inc.

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<http://www.stanag.org/ag-advisory-board.shtm>

VIII. ROUNDTABLE

Members provided general comments, program updates, and upcoming events and activities in their respective organizations.

IX. NEXT MEETING

A. Meeting Date/Time:

The next meeting is set for April 3, 2017, at 8:00 a.m. at the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Modesto, Conference Room H/I.

B. Agenda Items:

None

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Orvis adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

Minutes Respectfully
Submitted,

Susan Azevedo
Ag Commissioner's Office
Stanislaus County