



**COUNTY OF PLACER
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

JOSHUA P. HUNTSINGER
Agricultural Commissioner
Sealer of Weights & Measures

AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEMBERS

Tony Aguilar	Larry Jordan
Patricia Beard	William Morebeck
James Brenner	John Nitta
Dan Macon	Stewart Perry
Wayne Vineyard	

11477 E AVENUE
AUBURN, CALIFORNIA 95603
TELEPHONE: (530) 889-7372
FAX: (530) 823-1698
www.placer.ca.gov

MINUTES

PLACER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING

June 8, 2015

Members Present: Tony Aguilar, Patricia Beard, Larry Jordan, Dan Macon,
William Morebeck, John Nitta, Stewart Perry, Wayne Vineyard

Members Absent: James Brenner

- I. CALL TO ORDER – 7:04 pm by Wayne Vineyard**
- II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA FOR June 8, 2015 AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 13, 2015.** Motion to approve: Macon / Jordan /MPUV
- III. PUBLIC COMMENT - None**
- IV. AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLY UPDATE – Placer County Water Agency – Tony Firenzi**
 - 2 supply sources: Middle Fork American River and PG&E
 - Plan is to hold PG&E back in Storage as PG&E is more flexible regarding use and their storage is near full – about the same as last year. Meeting with PG&E this week to discuss usage. Expect at least 68%, reassessed this week. Carryover from storage was key to 68% allocation from PG&E last year.
 - American River change-over today: Pump tomorrow 14 CFS; May usage: 150 CFS; Auburn Ravine reduced to 7 CFS.
 - Canal customers – 10% reduction, same as last year – trying to avoid rotating outages. Customer cooperation is strategy and it's working. So far, 36% conservation on treated and 37% conservation on canal water.
 - State Water Board modifications to conservation – requiring 32% beginning June 1, 2015 from PCWA and its customers – up from 25% in May and months prior. PCWA opting to use goodwill rather than enforcement.
 - Due to Governor's Ordinance, PCWA agricultural water management plan is required now. This means collecting more data from present through early 2016 and may include all agricultural customers – not just commercial.

- Water Efficiency rebate program granted \$300,000 total (50/50 co-share). One project completed so far, looking for more. Planning more marketing to agricultural customers. Appreciate any good words offered by the commission. Prop 1 means more grants – hoping more on the way to PCWA. \$10,000 projects may qualify for reimbursement of up to 50%.
- 32% mandate is only for treated water customers. 2014 PCWA asked for 20% conservation. Treated water attained 18%, Ag customers attained 30% - PCWA is asking Ag to repeat that level of conservation.
- Mandate is monitored monthly, assessed annually.
 - Data collected the same/reviewed differently – if goals missed, things will change but there is no clear indication of what that means.
 - State can request more information (data) and PCWA will have 30 days to comply.
- Re-orificing is not the best solution. 32% reduction in size ≠ 32% reduction of use. Cooperative/Goodwill approach works best, but orifice reduction could be an option if needed.
- Even with Zone 5 prices up, prior 9700 AF offered is almost all sold.
- Voluntary giveback is about the same as last year.
- Curtailment to pre 1914 will not affect PCWA at this time.
 - The benchmark is set at beginning of month – can't have more than that at the end of the month.
 - Potential issue could be late fall rains that don't fall as snow pack. Last year, Water Board removed curtailments on a storm-by-storm basis – December 2014 heavy rains helped avoid bigger problems.

V. REPORTS

A. Agricultural Marketing Program – Josh Huntsinger

- Merlot Marketing – PlacerGrown.org up and running by end of June. Last revamp to website occurred 3 years ago. This upgrade will make the site mobile device friendly for phones and tablets.
 - Please check your farm's information and contact Josh Huntsinger for updating.
- Winery Ordinance – MACs are over, next meeting will be at Planning Commission before going before the Board of Supervisors. The Agriculture Commission's recommendations were well received.
 - Wine Organization ready to accept the ordinance based on what has come from the Ag Commission and the MACs, but waiting for draft.

- USDA Processing facility – Met with Producers, Economic Development and Placer County CEO to discuss the work involved and any interest in the project.
 - Also identified USDA funding to research and move forward.
 - Board of Supervisors, State Representatives and staff went to Washington D.C. about slaughterhouse. Want to take it to Sheridan MAC soon.

B. Economic Development Board – Lyndell Grey

- Sacramento has a new council with CEO's of large businesses. Perhaps Placer County should do the same.
- Mentioned slaughter facility to other Sheridan MAC members for feedback – in the past, changes have received a strong “no” from the community.
 - Spoke to Board Member Weygandt regarding introducing the subject at the next MAC.
 - Discussed possibility of placing in industrial area but no sewer system there at this time.
 - 5-10 acre parcel could support a 10K sq ft facility.
- Marijuana grow facilities are split for/against for the usual reasons. Pro faction outweighs the con. Yuba County outlawed growing so they're looking to Placer. When Placer BOS opted not to make determination regarding growing, more plantations were developed in Sheridan (and throughout the county.)

C. Livestock and Natural Resources Farm Advisor – Roger Ingram

- May 1, 2015 forage measured at 72% of normal, 67% peak crop. A total of 33% reduction of normal. Fall feed will be tight, plan accordingly. Call UC Extension for help assessing.
- Pasture Walk June 16, 2015, 6-8:00 p.m. at Bruin Ranch in Auburn.
- Grant exploration for Processing Plant found possible value added producer planning grant to be used as a feasibility study/business plan. USDA application is detailed and complex so it will take time to prepare it.
- Processing plant interest appears strong as shown as the April 30, 2015 meeting with 10-12 producers.

D. Horticulture and Small Farms Advisor – Cindy Fake

- Specialty Crops ends June 30th. Tastings are completed but will make a few more deliveries to local food banks. Volunteer appreciation next week.
 - 156 events held in 2 years 4 months
 - 29k consumers served face-to-face
 - 21,295 consumers reached via media

- 23,215 samples distributed
- \$19,460.00 in vouchers redeemed with \$17,758.00 product purchases for a total of \$37,218.00 going directly to local farms.
- Final numbers for grant due in August, will update again then.
- No good way to track whether vouchers led to purchases over the value of the vouchers handed out.
- Lesson learned: More Promotion = more people show up. When UC shows up at the farmers markets, more people show up. Events bring more people.
- Horticulture – health issues: with less drought resistant plants. Perennial crops may have issues with current weather. Current compounded stressors on plants leading to high level of mortality
- Cover Crops course held, discussed organic matter and how to manage evaporation.
- Farm Business workshop complete, with the final class focused on insurance.
- Direct Farm Marketing course is complete and won't be taught in the future.
- Beginning Mentoring program begins, event Wednesday night. 9 farmers and ranchers have mentors for one year.
- Finishing Direct Marketing Survey mentioned at last meeting. Good information and will show impact of agriculture on local economy.
- To reduce the impact of Red Scale, 1.5 million parasitic wasps were released. No pesticides.
- Food Safety Modernization Act – Enacted in December of 2014, final in October 2015. Placer may only need IRQ, but buyers may want something different. May not have major impact here for a while.

VI. AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

- Marijuana – On May 5, 2015, a highly attended Board of Supervisors informational meeting was held to gather information on how to proceed. 1-hour public testimony could have gone longer. No one strongly opposed. Good neighbor comments included location of plants. Growers want to be regulated/taxed.
 - Two bills at the state level in anticipation of legalization in 2016 elections.
 - One bill looks at the law enforcement aspect and the other is from a cultivation/agricultural viewpoint – Now rewritten to make the two into one. Most significant part for the Ag Commission would be the regulation of so many things, there would be a new division of CDFA to perform those duties.

- This is all in anticipation of a legalization of marijuana on a future ballot.
- Attended Pesticides in Schools workshop – inferences but no data. Ag commissioners had to pull data for State in relation to this, so far no good information
 - Schools exempt from zoning but looking to update – Farm Bureau hoping to create a process for this.
- AG Tour June 23, 2015 at 7:00 am. Focus on upper watershed, fire and forestry management.

IV. ADJOURNMENT – 8:17 p.m.

- Next meeting August 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.