

Today is _____, _____ the _____. This is Ken Morgan's Northcoast Ag Report, our lead story is about _____ when we return

President Donald Trump may nominate a non-scientist to fill the Department of Agriculture's top science job.

Sam Clovis is a former economics professor and talk radio host in Iowa, and an adviser to the Trump campaign last year. He helped run USDA before Secretary Sonny Perdue took office.

But, Clovis is not a scientist. Yet the White House is considering nominating Clovis for USDA undersecretary of research, education and economics—a top-level science post that oversees USDA's scientific mission, and the '08 Farm Bill says should be filled by a "distinguished scientist."

The post also oversees the National Ag Statistics Service and the Economic Research Service, which would fit Clovis' background. But those filling the post have included a doctor, nutritionist, ecologist, and a plant physiologist.

Any move to appoint a veteran GOP activist for a science post could make for a rough Senate confirmation process. Senate Ag Democrats led by Debbie Stabenow, attacked the administration at a hearing last week for its moves the week before at EPA...tape

Cut #1 :13 OC:... "strong concerns."

And Iowa Republican Joni Ernst at the same hearing last week, questioning a USDA witness on pesticide registration reform...tape

Cut #2 :24 OC:... "reviewing pesticides."

Clovis, like EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, has challenged the Obama Administration's claims that human activity is the main cause of climate change...a claim that's also divided the ag community. Clovis, as undersecretary, would oversee climate change issues affecting agriculture and forestry.

WEEK ENDING: May 14, 2017

RELEASED: May 15, 2017

WEATHER

There was bit more variation in the weather pattern this week across the west coast with two separate storm systems developing and moving through the area. Each system brought a couple of rounds of light precipitation to various parts of the State.

Saturday was the only completely dry day across the State, with no reports of measurable precipitation. Every other day of the week saw very light and isolated showers at specific locations. On Tuesday, the interior deserts and southern tier received up to a quarter inch of rainfall. Thursday saw comparably widespread rain, as well, with showers falling on the northwestern mountains/coast, the northern mountain, and the northern and central Sierras. Friday and Sunday saw light showers in the central Sierras. Another late spring week led to additional snowmelt in the mountains, with snow cover limited to 7,500 feet and above in the southern Sierras. Up to 2-3 feet is likely above this elevation. The northern Sierras are also snow-free below about 5,500 feet, with six to eight feet above 5,500 feet.

Temperature highs were in the 50s to 70s in the mountains and along the coast, 70s to 80s in the valley, and 70s to 90s in the desert. The temperature lows were in the 20s to 40s in the mountains, 40s to 50s in the valley and along the coast, and 40s to 60s in the desert.

FIELD CROPS

Winter wheat was being green chopped for silage; some was being dried, with harvest nearing completion. **Alfalfa** fields were making excellent progress being cut, dried, and baled. **Corn** continued being planted, and earlier planted fields were growing well. **Cotton** was up and being irrigated. Soil preparation and planning for **rice** was ongoing.

FRUIT CROPS

Grapes and stone fruits were developing well with the favorable weather and water conditions. Thinning of immature stone fruit continued in some orchards. New fruit tree orchards and vineyards were irrigated.

Pomegranates were blooming. Mechanical and chemical weed control continued in orchards. **Cherries, apricots** and some early **peach** and **nectarines** were harvested. The Valencia **orange** harvest continued. New citrus orchards were planted. **Olive** bloom was drawing to a close.

NUT CROPS

Almond nut development was progressing well. **Pistachio, walnut** and almond orchards were irrigated and fertilized. Some orchard floors were sprayed with herbicides, and fungicides were applied as needed.

VEGETABLE CROPS

Early planted summer vegetable were progressing well. New fields were prepared for planting. **Cucumbers, zucchini, eggplant** and **melons** were planted in Tulare County. **Sweet corn, peppers** and melons were also planted. Processed **tomato** planting continued in Yolo County. Tomato planting was essentially complete in Fresno County and some early plantings were setting fruit. Some early summer vegetables were harvested. In the San Joaquin Valley, some vegetable fields were irrigated and fertilized. Herbicides and fertilizer were applied to **onions** for seed. In Imperial Valley, melons, sweet corn, and onions were harvested. **Strawberry** and **blueberry** harvest continued.

LIVESTOCK

Foothill rangeland and valley dryland pasture forage quality was in fair to excellent condition. Supplemental feeding of livestock continued to decline. Sheep grazed on retired pasture and dormant alfalfa. Bees were active in kiwi vineyards, melon, and vegetable fields.