

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

Secretary Perdue Announces FSA, Rural Development State Directors

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Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue Friday announced a slate of Farm Service Agency and Rural Development State Directors. All directors will serve as appointees of President Donald Trump. Perdue says of the state directors that they will "help ensure USDA is offering the best customer service" to agriculture. FSA State Directors help implement Department of Agriculture policies in planning, organizing, and administering FSA programs in their respective states. They are also responsible for running the day-to-day activities of the state FSA office. Similarly, Rural Development state directors work to help improve the economy and quality of life in rural America.

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California: Aubrey Bettencourt

Aubrey Bettencourt is a third-generation California farmer, who not only brings to the USDA her farming experience but has also served as the Executive Director of the California Water Alliance while helping farmers meet for a clean, reliable water supply.

Rural Development State Directors:

California: Kim Dolbow Vann

Kim Vann has been working and serving in California's Rural Communities for nearly 20 years and her career gives her an excellent understanding of California's Rural Communities needs and the experience to solve problems.

Livestock Industry Seeks Petition to Waive ELD Requirement for Haulers - Comment Now!

On October 31, 2017, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published a petition submitted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the National Pork Producers Council and other livestock organizations requesting a waiver to exempt livestock haulers from having to comply with regulations set to take affect December 17, 2017, requiring commercial drivers to comply with the federal hours of service rules using an electronic logging device (ELD).

NCBA and CCA are actively pursuing changes to the federal hours of service regulations to recognize the need to deliver cattle to their final destination in the quickest possible fashion, all the while ensuring proper roadway safety. A waiver granted by FMCSA will provide the additional time necessary to make these changes. NCBA and CCA was also successful in including language in the 2018 House Appropriations bill to delay the ELD compliance date for livestock haulers by an additional year. Efforts are underway to urge the Senate to maintain the one year delay in final bill during conference. Supporting both the petition and our efforts in Congress will help yield the best possible results.

It's crucial you lend your voice to this effort and comment immediately in support of the petition by urging FMCSA to grant the waiver. The comment period will remain open until November 30, 2017. Comments can be submitted by clicking [here](#).

It may be helpful to include the following points made in the petition in your comments as to why the waiver is needed:

- (1) Livestock haulers are not, and will not be prepared to meet the December 18, 2017 compliance date;
- (2) The current ELD retail marketplace does not clearly support the needs of livestock haulers and questions remain as to whether current ELD devices can accommodate HOS exemptions currently utilized by the livestock industry;
- (3) There is a significant lack of education and awareness by livestock haulers and the livestock producers they service regarding the ELD mandate, current exemptions, and the use and operation of ELDs, requiring time for adequate outreach and training to take place; and
- (4) Concern over the ELD mandate has exposed incompatibilities between the HOS rules and the livestock industry, and is causing disruption for livestock haulers, increasing already severe driver shortages, and endangering the health and welfare of the millions of animals transported by livestock carriers daily.

CDFW Confirms Wolf Depredation in Lassen County

California has experienced its first confirmed livestock depredation by wolves.

On October 20, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issued a livestock loss determination report which confirmed that on October 13, the Lassen Pack killed a 600-pound yearling heifer on private property in western Lassen County.

The breeding female of the Lassen Pack (designated LAS01F by CDFW) was collared with a GPS-tracking device on June 30, the data from which confirms that the wolf was present at the carcass site for at least 6 hours the night the animal was killed. According to the CDFW report, LAS01F could also be seen about 620 meters from the site while CDFW staff investigated.

According to the report, "wolf tracks were observed within the area," including "kick marks and disturbed ground consistent with a struggle." It was evident that wolves had killed the heifer because "the hide contained numerous pre-mortem bite marks on the right front shoulder and both rear flanks and legs." When CDFW investigators arrived, "one of its front legs was missing, the neck had been largely consumed, and the ribcage was exposed and seven ribs had been consumed."

While this is the first confirmed kill, it is not the first suspected depredation by the Lassen Pack. On four other occasions between Sept. 19 and Sept. 30, the same rancher identified four other potential livestock depredations by the Lassen Pack and alerted CDFW. While CDFW did not confirm any of those four incidents-three were given a cause-of-death of "other" while one was listed as a "possible/unknown" wolf depredation-GPS data and eye-witness reports did place the Lassen Pack near the cattle and at least one dead calf had been fed upon extensively by the Lassen Pack.

Frustratingly, current California law provides ranchers and CDFW exceedingly few tools for managing wolves, including those which repeatedly come into conflict with livestock. CCA is currently suing the California Fish and Game Commission to overturn the gray wolf's endangered species status in California, which would open the door for greater management.

Modoc Ranchers Sue US Forest Service Over Wild Horse Mismanagement

On October 19, a group of Modoc County ranchers comprising the Devil's Garden Preservation Group sued the U.S. Forest Service to force the agency to remove excess wild horses at the Devil's Garden Wild Horse Territory in the Modoc National Forest. The Forest Service is legally required to manage the wild horse population within the Wild Horse Territory at the Appropriate Management Level (AML), which was established with an upper limit of 402 horses. Instead, the population of wild horses on the Devil's Garden Plateau is estimated at over 2,800 horses.

Wild horse overpopulation has been devastating to ranchers, as grazing permits on the Modoc National Forest have routinely seen reductions in permitted grazing due to overutilization of forage by the unmanaged wild horse herds. Two permittees have been informed that they will not be able to turn cattle out on their allotments at all in

2018 because all forage on those allotments is utilized by the horses.

The horses have also devastated the environment, degrading riparian habitats and promoting the establishment of invasive plant species. The horses have even proven detrimental to themselves; their over-competition for forage leaves many of the animals emaciated, and some horses died because of scarce water supplies during the drought.

The ranchers are requesting that the court compel the U.S. Forest Service to remove excess wild horses from the Devil's Garden in accordance with the prescribed AML and that the court set aside decisions to eliminate livestock grazing from two allotments.

The lawsuit, *Devil's Garden Preservation Group v. U.S. Forest Service*, is pending in Sacramento before the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California in Sacramento.

Point Reyes Ranchers Seek Support

On October 16, the Point Reyes National Seashore initiated a 30-day comment period "on a conceptual range of management alternatives" for the Point Reyes National Seashore. Of particular concern is the National Park Service's permitting of historical ranching operations at the Seashore and management of Tule elk at the Seashore, whose mismanagement has long plagued Point Reyes ranchers.

In 2014, the Park Service initiated a Ranch Comprehensive Management Plan (RCMP) aimed at exploring long-term leases for ranchers at the Seashore. However, in 2016 the Park Service was sued by three environmental groups seeking a broader amendment to the Seashore's General Management Plan. Under the terms of a settlement reached in July, the Park Service will undertake a General Management Plan revision which must consider a no ranching alternative, a no dairy ranching alternative and a reduced ranching alternative.

CCA expects that the conversation over the future of the Point Reyes National Seashore could be dominated by radical environmental groups. During the 2014 RCMP process, radical environmental groups urged their members to flood the Park Service with comments opposed to ranching at the Seashore. Thousands of form comments were received by enemies of grazing from throughout the United States and other nations.

Thus, while CCA will submit thorough comments in defense of the historical grazing operations at Point Reyes prior to the November 15 deadline, CCA also urges ranchers throughout the state to get involved by commenting on the proposed management alternatives [here](#).

Specifically, CCA urges members to tell the Park Service to (1) provide 20-year renewable leases to all ranchers at the Point Reyes National Seashore, and (2) properly manage the Tule elk population, including removing all roaming Tule elk from ranches and placing them back in the Limantour wilderness.

Wildfire Disaster Assistance Programs Available to Ranchers

Various federal government programs exist to provide disaster assistance for those who have been impacted by wildfires. Although your attention is no doubt focused on the situation at hand, it's important to note that several of the disaster assistance programs have initial notification deadlines that must be met in order to be eligible for funding.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to reimburse producers up to 75% of the market value of animals lost due to adverse weather conditions. Adverse weather conditions under LIP include wildfires. All classes of cattle are eligible for reimbursement including cows, bulls and calves. For 2017, a claim for a bull is paid out at \$1,350.34, a cow at \$1,038.73 and non-adult cattle (calves) from \$471.22 per head to \$1,001.12 per head depending on weight.

In order to be eligible to receive payment under LIP, a producer must notify their local county Farm Service Administration (FSA) of their intent to seek a claim within 30 days of the loss. A final claim must be submitted within 90 days of informing the county FSA office of the loss and the final claim must also be made within the same calendar year as the loss. Documentation will be requested by the county FSA office to verify the claim including any photographs that can be made available documenting the loss or the impact of the fire, records to prove ownership, etc.

A fact sheet about the Livestock Indemnity Program can be found [here](#).

Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)

The NAP program is a federal disaster insurance program that enables ranchers who have applied for coverage to receive compensation for a loss of forage due to drought or other natural disasters like wildfire. In order to be eligible to receive payments under NAP, a rancher must have previously enrolled in the program with their county FSA office and paid the service fee.

If you are currently enrolled in NAP and you've experienced forage loss due to fire, you may be eligible for a claim. Producers must report a loss to their local county FSA office within 15 calendar days of the natural disaster occurring by completing a "Notice of Loss & Application for Payment" form. The form is available at your local FSA office.

A fact sheet about the Non Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program can be found [here](#).

Emergency Conservation Program

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) is a program administered through your local county FSA office that assists ranchers with fence construction and repairing

other rangeland infrastructure that may have been lost or damaged due to a natural disaster. Ranchers are eligible to receive up to 75% of the cost to implement the project. Funds are dispersed by USDA to county FSA offices as they are available and requested so please contact your county FSA office immediately to help demonstrate the need to request federal funds for local restoration projects.

A fact sheet about the Emergency Conservation Program can be found [here](#).

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

If projects to repair or replace rangeland infrastructure lost due to the fire are not eligible for assistance under other federal disaster assistance programs, ranchers can look to fund projects under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP is not a program built or intended to respond to natural disasters so it may not be preferred for addressing immediate needs. Applications for projects can be taken by your NRCS representative at your local County FSA office. Please be aware, approval for projects are subject to several pre-established deadlines throughout the year.

Legislation Proposes New Wilderness Area Along Central Coast

Legislation introduced in Congress by Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) and Representative Salud Carbajal (CA-24), proposes to designate 245,000 acres of federal land along California's Central Coast as protected wilderness. The legislation would expand nine existing wilderness areas in the Los Padres National Forest and would designate four new wilderness areas in and around the Carrizo Plain National Monument. The legislation also proposes to create a scenic trail between Los Angeles and Monterey County stretching over 400-miles.

CCA will be moving immediately to oppose the legislation. The bill is likely to be referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources chaired by Representative Rob Bishop (UT-1). Given the staunch opposition to the creation of new national monuments and the designation of new wilderness areas by the Republican majority on the committee, it is highly unlikely the bill will move through the U.S. House of Representatives. Nevertheless, CCA will be working to defeat this bill and other policies like it that promote poor land management and threaten our ability to graze public lands.

Water Board to Hold Public Outreach Meetings for NPS Permits on Federal Lands

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan Water Board) and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Valley Water Board) are pursuing development of Nonpoint Source (NPS) permits "to ensure regulatory

compliance and water quality protection" on US Forest Service and BLM managed lands within the Central Valley and Lahontan Water Board regions.

As a first step in this process, the two regional boards are holding public outreach meetings. The first of these was held Tuesday in Susanville; moving forward, the regional boards will hold the following public outreach meetings:

- Nov. 8 from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at the City of Bishop Council Chambers, 377 W. Line St. in Bishop
- Nov. 28 from 1:00-4:00 p at the Central Valley Water Board, 11020 Sun Ctr. Dr. in Rancho Cordova
- Nov. 30 from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Hall, 808 4th St. in Clovis
- Dec. 5 from 9:30 am-12:30 pm at the Mojave Water Agency, 13846 Conference Center Dr. in Apple Valley

CCA encourages members who would be impacted by the proposed NPS permits to attend the meetings to learn more information and air their concerns.

CCA has opposed similar efforts by the regional water boards in the past because they are duplicative of existing regulatory schemes and needlessly increase the regulatory burdens upon federal lands permittees. Likewise, CCA will continue to oppose the present effort.

For more information, visit [this website](#) or contact the CCA office.