

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

## **Farm Bill Passage This Week**

**Lawmakers will consider and are expected to pass the farm bill this week, or possibly next. Long-awaited by agriculture, the farm bill will continue to provide a much-needed safety net as the industry endures a depressed farm economy. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy lists the farm bill for a potential vote this week. The last votes in the House of Representatives are expected by Thursday afternoon, with no votes Friday, according to the Hagstrom Report. Ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee, Collin Peterson, has said he expects the House to consider the farm bill Wednesday, followed by a Senate vote on Thursday. Though, some say consideration of the bill could spill into next week, the final expected week of the current congressional session. Speaking to reporters last week, Peterson said "almost all" House Democrats are likely to vote for the bill.**

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## **Washington Post Calls Farm Bill a Bad Outcome**

**The Washington Post editorial board over the weekend called the 2018 farm bill a bad outcome that "could have been worse." The editorial board says the farm bill "simply maintains the existing set of subsidy programs, bloated and wasteful as they often are." Lawmakers are expected to consider the conference committee report of the farm bill this week, with votes possible Wednesday and Thursday. The bill largely continues much of the 2014 farm bill, which expired at the end of September. It does make few changes, most notably to dairy programs. The biggest complaint by the Washington Post focuses on a so-called loophole that allows extended relatives of a family farm to receive safety net benefits. That's a**

measure that Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa last week said may jeopardize his support for the bill.

**[USDA Begins a Program to Buy Fresh Milk and Donate it to Food Banks](#)**

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A new USDA milk donation program should help dairy producers reduce their surplus and help more low income families have the benefits of fresh milk. (Gary Crawford. Under Secretary Greg Ibach. Bruce Summers and Jody Tick)

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

[here](#))

- **[Tuesday, December 11-Wednesday, December 12, 9:30am State Water Resources Control Board meets to consider, among other things, adopting San Joaquin River unimpaired flow provisions previously heard August 21 & 22 and November 7 \(agenda available \[here\]\(#\)\)](#)**
- **[Wednesday, December 12-Friday, December 14, 9:00am California Coastal Commission meets in Newport Beach \(agenda available \[here\]\(#\)\)](#)**  
*[CA Senate and Assembly in recess](#)*

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From Headquarters

## **SWRCB Takes Up 'Unimpaired Flow' Regulations for San Joaquin River Tributaries—Again**

On November 7, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) convened to consider adoption of proposed regulations which would establish minimum flow provisions for the lower San Joaquin River and three tributaries, the Merced, Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers. The proposal would mandate unimpaired flows of 30-50% between February and June in these tributaries in an effort to safeguard certain fish and wildlife populations, vastly limiting the amount of water available for agricultural use. The hearing followed two days of passionate public comment on the proposed regulations which were previously held on August 21 and 22.

On the day before the SWRCB convened, however, Governor Jerry Brown and Governor-elect Gavin Newsom submitted a letter to SWRCB Chair Felicia Marcus requesting that the SWRCB delay any vote on the proposed regulations until its December meeting. The two emphasized that "For many months, state agencies, water districts and others have been working hard to achieve voluntary agreements that would meet the requirements of the amendment set for adoption," and that "Voluntary agreements are preferable to a lengthy administrative process and the inevitable ensuing lawsuits."

Wednesday, the SWRCB is set to finally vote on the proposed regulations. Despite Brown and Newsom's request, it isn't clear that sufficient progress has been made toward voluntary agreements, and SWRCB staff's proposal remains to adopt the proposed regulation that was before the Board last month.

The SWRCB's proposed regulations have caused great concern among water districts and agricultural users. If ultimately adopted, the proposal advanced by the SWRCB could reduce the quantity of water available for surface water diversion from the three tributaries by 180,000 to 490,000 acre-feet per year, and in drought years the flow provisions could reduce surface water availability by as much as 900,000 acre-feet.

CCA testified in opposition to the unimpaired flow provisions in March of 2017, and in August submitted a letter in opposition to the proposal along with a number of other agricultural stakeholders. CCA will keep you posted on future developments regarding voluntary agreements or any future regulatory action through this and other CCA publications.

### **Lassen Pack Perpetrates Sixth Confirmed Livestock Depredation**

Last Wednesday, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife published a depredation investigation report identifying the sixth confirmed livestock depredation by the Lassen Pack.

On the morning of November 27, a rancher on private land in western Lassen County discovered a dead calf that he suspected had been killed by wolves, and reported the incident to USDA Wildlife Services and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Because GPS-collar data showed that the breeding female of the Lassen Pack had been in the immediate vicinity two days earlier and because "the nature and location of the bite marks and associated hemorrhaging were consistent with how wolves typically attack cattle," CDFW confirmed that the 70-pound calf had been killed by wolves.

To date, CDFW has investigated 26 suspected depredations in Lassen and

Plumas counties. Of the 20 not confirmed as wolf kills, two have been deemed “probable” depredations by wolves, seven have been labeled “possible/unknown” wolf kills, and the remainder have been labeled as “other.”

Given that the gray wolf is currently listed as an endangered species under both state and federal law, CDFW has virtually no authority to manage gray wolves found to kill livestock, even those which may be chronic depredators. CCA has sued the California Fish and Game Commission in an effort to reverse the gray wolf’s state listing, with a trial court decision expected in late January.

### **CDFW Amends Wolf Depredation Investigation Classifications**

The classification categories used by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (and USDA Wildlife Services) in investigating suspected wolf depredations in California has changed as of December 3, with CDFW’s issuance of a document titled “Considerations for Classification of Reported Wolf Depredation Incidents.” Previously, CDFW classified suspected depredations in accordance with guidelines issued by Wildlife Services, which listed suspected depredations as “confirmed,” “probable,” “possible/unknown” or “other.”

While CDFW may still label certain kills “confirmed” or “probable” wolf depredations, it has now separated “possible” and “unknown” into two distinct categories, and has replaced the nebulous “other” category with a “non-wolf depredation” category for livestock kills attributable to other predators and a “non-depredation” category for cases where livestock mortality is not attributable to a predator.

CCA has some concerns about the new “Considerations for Classification”—for instance, evidence to be considered in classifying a depredation as “confirmed” appears to be narrower than under the prior Wildlife Services protocols. CCA staff and the Wolf Policy Subcommittee are currently reviewing the new guidelines, and will press CDFW for further improvements to its investigations protocols. To view the new Considerations for Classification document, click [here](#). For more information on CCA’s efforts relating to gray wolves, contact Kirk Wilbur in the CCA office.

### **2019-2020 Legislators Sworn in at Capitol**

After an eventful election last month, newly elected and reelected California State Senators and Assemblymembers were sworn in last week at the Capitol in Sacramento. As some districts elected representatives of differing party affiliation than previously held the seat, today may mark the start of a different type of legislature in some ways.

There are likely to be 60 Democrats and 20 Republicans in the Assembly and 29 Democrats and 11 Republicans in the Senate. Elections should be called later this week so a more formal and in depth election recap can be found in the December edition of Hot Irons.

### **California Cattlemen and Cattlewomen's Convention Makes Sparks Fly at the Nugget!**

It was a busy four days at the Nugget Casino Resort in Sparks, Nevada last month as California Cattlemen and Cattlewomen gathered for both policy and play at the 102nd CCA and CCW Annual Convention.

Both organizations would like to send a sincere thank you to all of the

sponsors, speakers, special guests and, of course, members and attendees that made it so successful.

Voted in as new CCA officers at the board meeting held during the convention were Mark Lacey as President, Tony Toso as 1st Vice President and Steve Arnold and Greg Kuck, both as 2nd Vice Presidents.

For a full recap of convention events and policy updates, stay tuned for an upcoming article in *California Cattleman Magazine*.

### **Livestock Owners Asked to Weigh in on Fire Damage**

Veterinarians and researchers with the UC Cooperative Extension are looking for livestock producer input on the impact of California's deadly wildfires.

Producers raising livestock and that have had a wildfire on their property in the last 10 years are asked to participate.

"Right now, we have no good estimate of the real cost of wildfire to livestock producers in California," said Rebecca Ozeran, UC Cooperative Extension livestock and natural resources advisor for Fresno and Madera counties.

"Existing UCCE forage loss worksheets cannot account for the many other ways that wildfire affects livestock farms and ranches. As such, we need producers' input to help us calculate the range of immediate and long-term costs of wildfire."

The survey should take approximately 15-30 minutes, and will help quantify the true impact that these devastating fires have had on livestock

production in California.

To begin the survey, click [here](#).

## Industry News

### **Opinion: Healthiest diets include meat and dairy, say health professionals** *Calgary Herald*

"We represent a growing number of Canadian physicians and health professionals, called the Canadian Clinicians for Therapeutic Nutrition, who use whole-food nutritional strategies, which often include meat, eggs and dairy, to prevent and often put into remission the burden of chronic non-communicable disease in our patients." To continue reading, click [here](#).

### **Hereford Breeders Donation \$40,000 to Wildfire**

**Victims** *Drovers* "Five Hereford breeders banded together to sell a heifer that helped generate \$40,800 in donation funds for wildfire relief efforts for northern California ranchers." To continue reading, click [here](#).

### **Researchers conclude livestock have no detectable effect on climate** *Beef Magazine*

"Cow burps are destroying the ozone layer — we've all heard that one, and frankly, it's time for the industry to ditch that myth once and for all." To continue reading, click [here](#).



## **CattleFax Update for December 7, 2018**

Fed Cattle – Trade has not occurred as of press time; however, the market undertone is steady to \$1 higher. Prices last week were mostly \$117 to \$118.50 live and \$183 to \$185 dressed.

Boxed Beef – Traded mostly steady to slightly softer this week as adequate supplies were met by mixed demand, which restricted the upside potential.

Feeder Cattle – Traded \$2 lower to \$3 higher compared to last week, with firmer prices mostly in the North.

Calves – Traded steady to \$3 lower on the week.

Market Cows – Traded \$2 lower to \$1 higher.

Corn – Ended the week 7 cents/bushel higher.

## **Upcoming Events**

**Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show, Jan. 30- Feb. 1, 2019**

New Orleans Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA

[Information and Registration](#)