CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)

FEED INSPECTION ADVISORY BOARD (FIAB)
SPRINGHILL SUITES SACRAMENTO NATOMAS
2555 VENTURE OAKS WAY, SACRAMENTO, CA 95833 / HYBRID

AUGUST 20, 2026
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS	CDFA STAFF	INTERESTED PARTIES
Alejandro Hernandez	Alejandro Ramirez	Chris Zanobini
Dan Rice	Amanda Staudinger	David Isen*
Jed Asmus	Angelia Johnson*	Jessica Lawrence*
Jeremy Banducci	Ashley James	Jim Langston
Dr. Marit Arana, Chair	Brandi Alston	Kelly Gardner
Michael DeGroot*	Brittnie Williams	Mandy Heitz*
Michael Koewler	Dominic Santella	Matt Labriola*
Shay Rambur, Vice Chair	Erika Lewis	Rani Youngman
	Frankie Aguilar	Tad Bell
MEMBERS ABSENT	Jenna Leal	
Eric Benziger	KC Gutenberger	
	Lindsey Collier	
	Maria Tenorio Alfred	
	Rachelle Kennedy	
	Samantha Moran-Defty	
	Ted Bert	
	Valerie White	

*Attended remotely

INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Marit Arana, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM and self-introductions were made.

ROLL CALL – ESTABLISH QUORUM

Roll was taken and a quorum was established.

DEPARTMENT / DIVISION / BRANCH UPDATES

Jenna Leal, Branch Chief, provided Department level updates, announcing Christine Birdsong, former Deputy Secretary, left CDFA on August 7, 2026. Steve Lyle, former Deputy Director of Public Affairs, retired at the end of 2025. Devon Keeler is the newly appointed Deputy Secretary for Communications and External Affairs. Keeler comes from the Governor's Office and has a lot of experience working with crisis management communication strategies. Keeler is working with CDFA's Divisions to highlight the last

eight years of the administration's accomplishments as part of the upcoming executive transition. Carney King was appointed as Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, replacing Rachel O'Brien. King used to work under O'Brien and now has assumed her role.

Leal shared additional updates stating that CDFA is working on 19 different outbreaks, none of which are centered in California. Carla Sanchez, Inspection Services Division's Assistant Director, has returned to the Division Office and is working on executive office transition documents on behalf of the Division.

Leal informed FIAB that over a year ago during budget drills, the Branch gave away a position (formerly Chris Hansen's). The Branch was recently notified that the position has been returned to the Commercial Feed Regulatory Program (CFRP), along with other positions within the Division.

Leal stated that the Branch has three active fertilizer litigations, highlighting one case is in being heard through Merced County Superior Court. It is believed to be fertilizer synthetically derived being sold and marketed as organic. The Branch is working with a Deputy Attorney General to prepare for the first, of likely many hearings, that is scheduled for September 24, 2026.

The Fertilizer Research and Education Program is currently reviewing full proposals in collaboration with California Air Resources Board (CARB) and FIAB's Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC) to determine funds for various projects in the areas of NO_x, nitrogen efficiency, outreach and education, and activities pertaining to nitrates in groundwater.

APPROVE PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Chair Arana requested the FIAB review the meeting minutes from March 10, 2026 meeting.

MOTION: Michael Koewler moved to approve the minutes as presented; Dan Rice seconded. The motion passed unanimously by all members present with a vote of 7 to 0.

*Jed Asmus arrived at 9:15 AM (after the above motion).

PROGRAM UPDATES

Rachelle Kennedy, CFRP Manager, provided personnel updates. Kennedy announced there have been two new hires since the last FIAB meeting. Tabatha Shannon, Environmental Scientist (ES), for the Southern Central Valley region of California (previously Alejandro Ramirez's position), started on May 1, 2026, and Dominic Santella, ES, for Northern California (previously Lindsey Collier's position), started on July 1, 2026.

FUND CONDITIONS/TONNAGE TAX

Kennedy discussed the fund conditions for CFRP, Safe Animal Feed Education (SAFE) Program, and Livestock Drugs Program. As of July 1, 2025, CFRP had a beginning balance of $4,908,315 and SAFE had a beginning balance of $748,484, for a combined beginning balance of $5,656,799. CFRP had combined revenue of $4,261,034 and combined expenditures of $2,722,354 and combined encumbrances of $88,094. As of May 30, 2026, the ending adjusted balance for CFRP was $6,134,184 and the ending adjusted balance for SAFE was $973,200, for a combined ending balance of $7,107,384.

Livestock Drugs Program funds are presented to FIAB awareness only. The beginning balance as of July 1, 2025, was $696,941 and the ending balance as of May 30, 2026, was $934,721.

The Antimicrobial Use and Stewardship (AUS) Program had a beginning balance of $1,136,093 as of July 1, 2025, and an ending balance of $171,649. AUS will be fully expended for Fiscal Year (FY)2025/26.

Kennedy noted the reduced tonnage rate that was voted on at the last FIAB meeting is not reflected yet. The tonnage tax rate of $0.11 cents per ton will be effective July 1, 2026. Additionally, an encumbrance line item will be presented in the next fund condition for the University of California (UC), Davis, CLEAR Center grant in place. This grant was approved for $124,000 at the last FIAB meeting.

Kennedy presented the 2026 Quarter 1 (January through March) tonnage breakdown illustrating human food by-products (diversion) of 579,049 tons versus commercial feed tonnage of 5,359,595. The total tons of 5,938,644, which equates to $734,385.54, is still pending delinquent tonnage for Quarter 1. Tonnage revenue is approximately the same amount of tonnage as prior years with approximately $2,869,279 in revenue for FY 2025/26.

Valerie White, Senior Environmental Scientist (SES) (Specialist), reported feed sampling updates of 315 food safety samples and 172 label compliance, totaling 487 feed samples. White reported sample violations, giving an update to the total individual violations issued is 133; 65 assay, 18 almond hulls, 6 licensing, 7 mislabeling and adulteration, and labeling categories. A sampling increase is expected in 2026 versus prior year 2025 since the program is now fully staffed.

Alejandro Ramirez, SES (Specialist), reported a total of 70 sample violations as of June 30, 2026; 61 have been followed up on and 9 are outstanding. A total of 52 regulatory notes were issued. Ramirez gave an enforcement update, stating there were 9 inspector call reports, 9 Notices of Warnings, 9 quarantines, 2 compliance meetings and 7 corrective actions addendums issued.

Ramirez reported a compliance issue regarding selenium carryover was discovered during routine sampling. A mineral pre-mix contained double the amount of selenium stated on the label. The next product had selenium in it and was not supposed to. This was a reportable Food Registry incident and led to investigations with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and CDFA. CFRP quarantined the products, required corrective actions, issued a Notice of Warning, and held a compliance meeting with the firm. CDFA will continue enhanced sampling and conduct enhanced production record review. As of June 30, 2026, CFRP received 2 complaints; 1 feed safety complaint regarding animal death related to water quality and 1 human health complaint (California complaint, feed sold from Pennsylvania). The individual developed contact dermatitis on hands after handling raw peanuts sold as bird feed.

Ramirez gave an update on the Food Emergency Response Network for FY 2026/27. CFRP collected 50 whole corn samples, 3 dried distiller grains (DDG), and 9 canola samples. CFRP is testing aflatoxin, fumonisin, and deoxynevalenol (DON) in corn and DDG, and testing for aflatoxin and DON in canola. These testing costs are covered by FDA's Laboratory Flexible Funding Model (LFFM) agreement.

KC Gutenberger, SES (Specialist), provided SAFE Program updates. The Veterinary Feed Directive Order Companion (VFDOC) launched, the 2025 Crop Year Mycotoxin report was published along with a notice to industry regarding elevated fumonisin levels found in incoming corn from out-of-state. Blogs for information on New World Screwworm (NWS) and decreased tonnage tax are posted on the CDFA webpage. An article with tips on medicated feed labeling and common issues is also available in the CFRP blog.

Gutenberger highlighted a greater number of fumonisin in the last crop year, several over 5 parts per billion (ppb), which is the level for most sensitive species. Program inspectors confirmed no action was needed for those products. In comparison, in 2024 and 2025, there is a greater number of samples with detectable level of mycotoxins compared to 2022 and 2023.

Michael DeGroot asked if CFRP only regulates aflatoxin, or if fumonisin and vomitoxin are regulated as well. Samantha Moran-Defty, SES (Supervisory), responded stating aflatoxin has an action level for FDA and fumonisin and vomitoxin have advisory levels. However, CFRP will act if they deem levels found to be a food safety issue.

Kennedy announced a blog post for NWS, sharing that there are no approved medicated articles for use in medicated feed that are safe and effective in preventing or controlling NWS. All approved animal drugs for the control of NWS are listed on the FDA website. FDA has stated, "Because of antiparasitic resistance concerns, if animal drugs are needed, they should be used judiciously to preserve their effectiveness." Ivermectin for use in feed is only approved for swine for gut parasites. More information is on the Animal Health Program's NWS webpage.

CFRP has been working with CDFA's Fairs and Exposition Branch on outreach for fair exhibitors due to drug residue incidents. Various documents have been drafted including a letter to exhibitors, a letter to fair managers and Chief Executive Officers (CEO), drug residue avoidance guidelines, and a drug residue avoidance decision tree. These documents are routing through CDFA's Legal Office, Executive Office, and the Secretary for review and approval. The goal is to have the final documents released prior to tagging market animals for early 2027 fairs.

SAFE/SAFFER UPDATES

Gutenberger provided a Safe Animal Feed Formulation Education Registry (SAFFER) update. On May 6, 2026, a scoping session was held in conjunction with the California Animal Nutrition Conference. A total of 30 participants attended both online and in-person. SAFE presented an outline of SAFFER, the need for this program and what the program will look like. A Question & Answer (Q&A) session concluded the event, and no questions or comments were made. A total of 16 participants who attended the session completed a survey. SAFE and Nutritionist Subcommittee proposes a voluntary, free pilot program for registration for individual formulators of commercial feed distributed in California. SAFE plans to develop, then deliver, focused educational materials to foster a connection between this segment of the industry and the SAFE Program.

Gutenberger presented SAFFER scoping survey feedback and results received by the 16 participants (9 feed manufacturers, 5 nutritionist/formulators and 2 others). Majority of participants indicated a need to educate formulators and nutritionists, and most were concerned with the potential for low engagement. After the scoping session, the survey was published through the CFRP blog and published in the California Grain and Feed Association's (CGFA) newsletter.

Chair Arana suggested next steps be to present the same presentation at the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS) Continuing Education Conference at the end of October 2026.

Discussion ensued around collaboration with various groups.

Gutenberger provided an overview of the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) online training, developed in collaboration with UC Davis, Food Animal Residue Avoidance Databank in 2024. The portal is available for VFDs issued for cattle, and swine is under development.

Leal stated that the VFDOC portal has been in the works for a few years and has been funded by AUS through a contract that the program has had in place since the AUS Program's inception.

LEGISLATION/REGULATION UPDATES

Erika Lewis-Ortega, Research Data Specialist II, announced that the label modernization regulations public comment period will be September 4 - October 19, 2026. The Livestock Drugs Program's registration regulations are currently under program review and will be sent to CDFA's Legal Office for a pre-review soon. These proposed regulations clarify livestock drug label registration requirements, categorize livestock drugs and establish definitions, and repeal California Prescription Drug regulations that are no longer valid due to all products now being considered Federal prescription drugs.

Kennedy reported that the Pet Food Uniform Regulatory Reform (PURR) Act language has been added to the House AG Appropriations Bill which requires adoption of the American Association of Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) model bill and does not allow states to be more restrictive regarding labeling. The Innovative Feed Enhancement and Economic Development (iFEED) Act adds language of "zootechnical food substance" and creates a new pathway for approval of these types of products. Products meeting this definition will be considered a "feed additive" for FDA approval. Kennedy informed FIAB CFRP staff plan to attend the AAFCO Annual Meeting and will begin strategic planning regarding how the PURR Act implications will affect the CFRP. Leal stated the program will develop a continuity of business plan if the PURR Act passes to present to FIAB.

Kennedy highlighted the PURR Act allows for self-determination of Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS); however, FDA recently released a new rule that eliminates self-determination of GRAS. Based on the Board's recommendation, CFRP has regulations which states "that self-determination of GRAS for ingredients in California will not be accepted." A GRAS letter or endorsement by FDA is required in California.

White introduced UC Davis labs, mentioning that the Analytical Lab (An Lab) is the CFRP's sample preparation and proximate analysis lab that runs crude protein, crude fat, fiber, ash, and moisture. The California Animal Health and Food Safety Services (CAHFS) lab runs minerals, metals, medications, mycotoxins, heavy metals and vitamins. White presented potential method development, listing amprolium, decoquinate, bacitracin methylene disalicylate, diflubenzuron, bambermycin and other suggestions from FIAB.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS – LABORATORIES UPDATE

Jim Langston of UC Davis, CAHFS Lab, announced the lab ran a total of 676 analyses from July 2025 through June 2026. The majority of those were minerals, metals, monensin, and vitamins. Last year (year 6), 34 samples were run for the LFFM Program (mycotoxins; corn, DDGs, canola meal) and this year (year 7) the LFFM Program, CAHFS were approved to run mycotoxins. CAHFS International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17025 accreditation was renewed through May 31, 2028. New equipment was added to the 2024-26 budget period: High-Performance Liquid

Chromatography (HPLC) system with ultraviolet visible (UV) and fluorescence detection (FLD) (vitamins analysis; $99K), Retsch Mill (sample grinding; $26K), and Inductively Coupled Plasma–Optical Emission Spectroscopy (ICP-OES) (metals/minerals analyst; $126,000).

CAHFS' current contract for FY 2026/27 is $472,500, which includes 1,000 assays per year (retesting for confirmation included), 14 calendar day standard turnaround time (TAT) and allowance for urgent samples and 48-hour turnaround mycotoxin samples if requested, and one method development project per year. CAHFS proposed contract for FY 2027/28 requests $527,000 with the same number of assays, turnaround times, and method development as for FY 2026/27. Cost breakdowns for FY 2026/27 and for FY 2027/28 illustrate main costs as personnel, equipment replacement costs, service agreements, reagents/materials, and overhead costs.

Chair Arana asked when CFRP deviated from fee for service contract model. Leal responded, stating during contract negotiations with CAHFS and the An Lab two years ago it was difficult for CAHFS to hire employees to run sample analyses when there was no guarantee of funding. Therefore, CFRP agreed to move to a more fully burdened budget model for CAHFS to guarantee employee costs would be covered, plus maintenance of equipment utilized in the analysis of CDFA samples. The An Lab's budget has a low sustainable/maintenance fee built in to cover employee costs, plus a per assay cost.

Asmus inquired whether an increase in sample numbers impacts the cost. Kennedy stated a breakdown of costs will be presented that includes a cap on the number of assays that can be submitted to CAHFS, and if exceeded, CFRP will be required to pay more.

Langston continued the explanation of costs for CAHFS. CAHFS offers a comprehensive service, which includes providing duplicate testing and confirmation testing as requested by CDFA. CDFA samples are prioritized. The cost of the program is wholly charged to CFRP due to the need to maintain a certain level of staffing and equipment to be able to conduct the testing. This includes replacing equipment that was initially purchased for this testing which must be maintained and replaced to be able to perform ongoing testing. Drivers for increased costs are increases in salary and benefits and increases in equipment and equipment maintenance costs. Testing prices and methods shown on the external CAHFS website do not reflect actual prices for methods used for CFRP. CFRP methods often differ from diagnostic sample methods. Metals/mineral samples cannot be batch analyzed with diagnostic samples. Excess fee table prices also do not accurately reflect the total costs of assays.

Langston further presented the current contract pricing per sample type to FIAB and informed Asmus regarding his inquiry about costs that the excess fee table in the contract reflects a per-test amount. The amounts were initially based on projections when CAHFS first started, which did not include all costs, as the equipment costs were

captured separately. The first two years, CAHFS averaged about $500,000 and in subsequent years averaged about $200,000 per year for equipment costs.

White gave the current contract price per sample which has been updated for the new contract displaying the An Lab cost and CAHFS lab cost plus total estimated costs for each sample.

Kennedy presented CAHFS funding structure from past to present, which has been a fully burdened budget since July 2024. The first four years reflect a fee-for-service contract; Kennedy noted the max number of assays, testing budget, actual amount paid, and actual assays ran. In year two, three, and four, CAHFS costs were approximately $200 to $300 per assay. When it became a fully burdened budget model, the cost increased to between $400 and $500 per assay, with a max cap of 750 assays.

Asmus asked CFRP why the max cap was 750 assays. Kennedy stated that due to vacancies and new hires being trained, CFRP did not anticipate exceeding 750 assays. If CAHFS ran 750 assays it would be approximately $600 to $700 per sample. The assay limit was increased to 1,000 going forward, which is still costing about $400 to $500 per assay, at the fully burdened budget of $472,000. CAHFS is now requesting $527,000 for FY 2027/28, with a cap of 1,000 assays, which will lead to an increase in costs to approximately $500 to $550 per assay.

Mandy Heitz, UC Davis lab, stated the methodology for the contract changed. The current contract costs are not an apples-to-apples comparison because the actual cost in the prior years did not include the equipment or method development, as was paid separately. When CAHFS transitioned to the fully burdened model, the costs rolled into an overall contract price. Initial equipment allocations were paid for in addition to method development costs.

Leal responded to Heitz stating CFRP’s presentation is a reflection what was actuslly billed, which resulted in a major difference in cost due to the change of the contract structure of moving from a fee-for-service model to a fully burdened budget model. Heitz stated CFRP was billed separately for the equipment and method development, so the costs do not reflect in the actual total amount paid.

Kennedy presented to FIAB with three options for contract fee structure going forward with CAHFS:

Option 1: Keep contract structure the same at $527,000, using the fully burdened model.
Option 2: Move back to the fee-for-service model and add a sustainability fee, which would be a fee built into the contract to ensure the lab has sufficient personnel to meet CDFA turnaround times.
Option 3: Move back to fee-for-service pricing (would likely have higher rates to support lab needs, such as maintenance).

For informational purposes, if FIAB is looking at the estimated monthly costs under the fee-for-service model using the current year (year six (2025/2026)) prices, CFRP would pay $15,000 versus the full burden of $40,000 monthly.

Kennedy presented contract assay options to FIAB, noting that the An Lab has processed metals and mineral samples for CFRP, so there is an opportunity to potentially shift some of the work from CAHFS to the An Lab.

Option 1: Maintain all metals and minerals with CAHFS.
Option 2: Run some minerals/metals at the An Lab, particularly for samples not needing other CAHFS' assays.
Option 3: Move all minerals and metals to the An Lab.

Leal explained that CFRP moving from a fee-for service contract to a fully burdened contract was what the program needed to maintain their level of service to the industry. Both the An Lab and CAHFS lab provide CFRP with excellent service.

Rani Youngman, UC Davis An Lab, provided FIAB with an overview of the An Lab. Most samples received are being prepared, whether they are only grinded and transferred to CAHFS to ensure they have the time to perform their analyses. Some double samples are kept at the An Lab and some are transferred to CAHFS. Samples are processed immediately, above other samples.

Youngman explained how the sustainability model contract works for the An Lab. The An Lab became ISO accredited to meet CFRP's guidelines. Having a sustainability fee allowed the lab to average the cost for balance calibrations and other maintenance costs.

As of July 2026, CFRP's contract with CAHFS has been extended to June 30, 2027. Kennedy noted that to get the contact extension in place for July 1, 2027, the contract needs to be processed through CDFA's Contract Office by January 1, 2027.

Asmus requested CAHFS process 500 more samples for the same cost. Heitz stated CAHFS would need to review the proposed scope of work and analyze the costs.

Asmus requested Heitz/CAHFS provide a sensitivity model for FIAB that reflects what would increase, noting the cost breakdowns of personnel, equipment, reagents, and outsource quality control.

Dan Rice commented on the importance of setting a precedent for years to come with the funding method of the contract.

Rice asked for an analysis or deviation report of all duplicate testing to be presented to FIAB. Langston, CAHFS, stated duplicate testing ensures that samples are reproducible and that it is a quality requirement for CAHFS. Moran-Defty added that duplicate testing gives CFRP more defensibility when or if challenged.

Kennedy stated that FIAB must decide on the budget for FY 2027/28 for CAHFS and whether the contract will be a fully burdened budget or a similar model to the An Lab with a sustainability fee. Leal suggested CAHFS provide information on the services they can provide. Kennedy concluded the CAHFS ask of $527,000 funding will be in the budget and CFRP will work with CAHFS on assay numbers. CAHFS will present two different options of a fully burdened budget and a sustainability fee to review how it would look and FIAB can revisit the minerals and metals options discussion at the same time.

ALMOND ALLIANCE UPDATES

Tad Bell, Almond Alliance, reported harvest crops begun a couple weeks earlier. Bell stated that the Almond Alliance is anticipating what is to come from the legislature.

CALIFORNIA GRAIN AND FEED ASSOCIATION UPDATES

Chris Zanobini, CGFA, stated they are anticipating what will transpire out of the legislature. Senate Bill 54, pertaining to circular economy, may have a couple year reprieve. The Rendering side has been working on Assembly Bill 411 which relates to on-farm composting of animals. CGFA plans to release a webinar for NWS from an informational perspective to ensure industry is up to date on the concerning issue.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were made.

NEXT MEETING

The next FIAB meeting will be in the first half of November 2026 in Sacramento, California. Members will be sent a Doodle poll to select a date.

Agenda items to be included in the next meeting include:

1. CAHFS contract options

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Arana adjourns the meeting at 11:13 AM.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY RACHELLE KENNEDY 08/20/2026
Rachelle Kennedy, Environmental Program Manager I Date
Feed, Fertilizer, and Livestock Drugs Regulatory Services