



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)
CALIFORNIA CITRUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCAC)**

March 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Teleconference

4437 South Laspina Street, Tulare, CA 93274

MEMBERS PRESENT

John S. Gless
David Haas Jr.
George McEwen
Lisa Tate – Chair
Randy Stucky
Brad Bishel
A.J. Reid

**REMOTE MEMBERS
PRESENT**

Tom Mayhew
Sonya Carrillo – Vice Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT

Maribel Nenna
Gustavo Carranza

INTERESTED PARTIES

Michelle San Soucie – Kern Co.
Amanda Zito – Fresno Co.
Tesfaye Jimma – Tulare Co.
Tyler Pereira – Tulare Co.
Sofia Hernandez – Fresno Co.
Rudy Valencia – Riverside Co.
Ameer Atrash – Ventura Co.
Sam Botkin – CA Citrus Growers
Association
Casey Creamer – CA Citrus
Mutual (CCM)
Michael Bliss – CCM
Dennis Koong – National
Agriculture Statistics Service
(NASS)
Mario Gutierrez – King Co.
Nina Zlatkov – Los Angeles Co.
Jordan Key – San Diego Co.
Jasmine Lopez – San Diego Co.

CDFA

Stacey Hughes
Marcee Yount
Karrie Batchelor
Kristi Garcia
Julie Lee
Steve Patton
Anna Carrasquillo
Danny Lee
Spencer LaVelle

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Lisa Tate.

ITEM 2: INTRODUCTIONS/ROLL CALL

Roll was called by Kristi Garcia, a quorum was established, and self-introductions were made.

ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ITEM 4: REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 7, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Tate requested a motion to approve the November 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

MOTION: George McEwen moved to approve the November 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes as submitted. John S. Gless seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 5: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT

Garcia provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. There is currently one vacancy, and it is for a producer member representing mandarins. Terms will expire September 30, 2025, and members eligible for reappointment are Gustavo Carranza, Maribel Nenna, David Haas Jr., and Sonya Carrillo. Members who are not eligible for reappointment are George McEwen, Brad Bishel, and Tom Mayhew.

ITEM 6: COUNTY ACTIVITY AND EXPENSE SUMMARY FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024/25

Karrie Batchelor presented the County Activity and Expense Summary for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024/25 crop year. There were 2,334 lots and 2,336,987 containers inspected, with 2,208 maturity tests conducted by the five contracted counties: Fresno, Kern, Riverside, Tulare, and Ventura. Eighty-five percent of the County Agreements funding has been expended, with \$245,546 of \$289,000 invoiced through January 2025.

ITEM 7: BUDGET REVIEW

i. FY 2025/26 Proposed NASS Budget

Dennis Koong, from NASS, presented the FY 2025/26 NASS Budget. The proposed NASS Budget included \$48,433 for salary and benefits; \$30,525 for operating expenses; \$157,969 for the Navel Objective Measurement (OM) survey; \$106,000 for the Valencia OM survey; \$63,800 for the Citrus Acreage survey; \$82,031 for the Cara Cara OM survey; \$105,000 for the Mandarin OM survey; \$55,200 for the Clementine OM survey; with a gas tax credit of \$3,112 for \$645,846 total expenditures.

ii. FY 2025/26 Projected Revenue/Proposed Assessment Rates

Batchelor presented the FY 2025/26 Projected Revenue and Assessment Rates. Current assessment rates are: 3 mills for Valencias; 8 mills for Navel; 6 mills for mandarins; and 1 mill for lemons. The projected revenue for FY 2025/26 is \$889,568.

iii. FY 2025/26 Proposed Citrus Program Budget

Batchelor presented the FY 2025/26 Program Citrus Program Budget. The beginning fund balance is \$1,792,245. With the keeping of assessment rates at their current levels, proposed revenue by commodity is: \$566,575 for Navel and Valencias; \$46,419 for lemons; and \$276,573 for mandarins. When adding \$78,285 in Ag Fund interest and \$492 in late fees, the total proposed revenue is \$968,345, bringing the total available cash for FY 2025/26 to \$2,760,591.

Proposed expenditures are \$934,846 and include \$645,846 for NASS and CDFA Marketing Services and \$289,000 for County Agreements. With a projected gas tax credit of \$10,060 and a cash adjustment for statewide costs of \$18,742, the total ending balance is \$1,817,063.

MOTION: Brad Bishel moved to approve the FY 2025/26 Proposed Citrus Program Budget as presented. John S. Gless seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 8: ORANGE COLOR “A” DISCUSSION CONTINUED

Batchelor led the update on orange color standards and reported that program staff met with Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia and Dr. David Obenlund to see if the United States Department of Agriculture had any historical records related to how the current orange color chip was established. Dr. Arpaia and Dr. Obenlund stated they would look for any related research and reviewed several color samples with program staff. Dr. Arpaia and Dr. Obenlund agreed with the current color standards application and inspection process.

The discussion continued highlighting industry concern over the subjectivity and inconsistency of color evaluations across counties. To address these issues, program staff plans further hands-on inspector training and a Citrus Field Day for industry members, to be held at the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, with increased focus on color assessment. Additional discussion included courtesy color checks and the need for consistent enforcement protocols.

Some committee members voiced support for adopting the use of handheld digital color meters with committee members suggesting initiating formal research through the Citrus Research Board if the industry supports this direction. The conversation also explored solutions such as revising the standard itself and pursuing a federal marketing order. It was noted that any regulatory changes will need to come from the industry.

ITEM 9: PROGRAM UPDATES

Batchelor reported that a petition to standardize an experimental container was received last December and is moving through the regulatory process. Three new experimental container permits have been issued, including one grapefruit and two orange permits.

ITEM 10: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 20, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and will be a hybrid online and in-person meeting held in Kern County. A continued discussion on orange color “A” will be included in the agenda items.

ITEM 11: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m. by Chair Tate.

Respectfully submitted by:

Karrie Batchelor, Agriculture Program Supervisor I
Inspection and Compliance Branch
Inspection Services