



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

**November 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Hybrid Teleconference**

1031 South Mount Vernon Avenue, Bakersfield, CA 93307

MEMBERS PRESENT

John S. Gless
David Haas Jr.
Lisa Tate
Randy Stucky
A.J. Reid
Maribel Nenna
Gustavo Carranza

**REMOTE MEMBERS
PRESENT**

None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sonya Carrillo

INTERESTED PARTIES

Michelle San Soucie – Kern Co.
Amanda Zito – Fresno Co.
Tesfaye Jimma – Tulare Co.
Tyler Pereira – Tulare Co.
Rudy Valencia – Riverside Co.
Sam Botkin – CA Citrus Growers
Association
Casey Creamer – CA Citrus
Mutual (CCM)
Michael Bliss – CCM
Diego Cruz – CCM
Dennis Koong – National
Agriculture Statistics Service
(NASS)
Nina Zlatkov – Los Angeles Co.
Jordan Key – San Diego Co.
Milo Gorden – Gorden Farm
Management LLC.
Raul Garcia – Gless Ranch
Monica Winters – San Diego Co.
John C. Gless III – Bagdasarian
Farms
Mike Stark – Wonderful Citrus
Julie Henderson – Kings Co.

CDFA

Stacey Hughes
Marcee Yount
Karrie Batchelor
Kristi Garcia
Andrea Cano
Danny Lee
Andrea Todd

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Kristi Garcia.

ITEM 2: ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS

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

ITEM 3: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Garcia opened the floor to nominations for Chair.

MOTION: Maribel Nenna nominated Lisa Tate as Chair. A.J. Reid seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Garcia opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

MOTION: David Haas Jr. nominated Randy Stucky as Vice Chair. Lisa Tate seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ITEM 5: REVIEW OF MARCH 20, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Chair Tate requested a motion to approve the March 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes as submitted.

Stacey Hughes noted a revision to “Item 8: Orange Color “A” Discussion Continued,” stating the sentence “To address these issues, the committee plans further hands-on inspector training...” should be “To address these issues, the program plans further hands-on inspector training...”

MOTION: John S. Gless moved to approve the March 20, 2025 Meeting Minutes as amended. Maribel Nenna seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 6: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT

Garcia provided the Committee Vacancy and Terms Report. There were four vacancies: one Handler Member representing all citrus in the San Joaquin Valley, one Handler Member representing Lemons from Ventura County, one Producer Member representing Navels & Valencias from Tulare County, and one Producer Member representing Mandarins. Garcia noted that there are candidates already nominated for both vacant Producer Member positions and they are currently in the process of being reviewed.

Members whose terms will expire on September 30, 2026 and are eligible for reappointment include Lisa Tate and A.J. Reid. Members whose terms will end September 30th, 2026, and are not eligible for reappointment include John S. Gless.

ITEM 7: FUND CONDITION UPDATE

Karrie Batchelor presented the Fund Condition Update. As of June 30, 2025, the Beginning Fund Balance was \$1,959,656. Projected Revenue for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025/26 is \$1,011,415 for a total of \$2,971,071 in available resources. Projected Expenditures for FY 2025/26 are \$882,758, with a Cash Adjustment of \$18,742 and a Gas Tax credit of \$13,172, for a projected Ending Balance of \$2,082,743.

Discussion followed regarding the paused Clementine survey and how unspent funds remain in the account. The program plans to review budgets in December 2025 or January 2026 and consider assessment level adjustments if overfunding is evident and will present that information to the committee at the next meeting.

ITEM 8: NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS) UPDATE

The committee discussed the NASS update, focusing on the paused Clementine survey. Dennis Koong, of NASS, explained that the survey was halted earlier due to staffing shortages caused by federal workforce reductions. Staffing has since stabilized, and Koong expressed confidence that the survey could resume in 2026, though a firm commitment will be provided at the next committee meeting.

Publishing results remains a long-term goal, as NASS prefers five years of historical data for accuracy, meaning final publication may occur in 2029 or 2030. Previous NASS staff had suggested three years of data, but Koong clarified that current NASS staff strongly favor five years to maintain reliability. Interim data such as fruit size, diameter, and set per tree will be shared annually to help the industry monitor progress. The committee reaffirmed its commitment to continuing the surveys despite delays.

Additionally, the program ensured funds earmarked for the Mandarin survey remain allocated properly. Koong confirmed the citrus surveys for Navels, Valencias, and Cara Caras are on track, with permission letters for Valencia surveys already being mailed. Adding more granularity to Cara Cara data was also discussed, to which Koong noted would potentially increase costs and be dependent on what the industry wants to include in the survey. Koong followed by stating it would be best for the industry to provide NASS with updated specifications for the Cara Cara survey to make any changes to the report.

ITEM 9: COUNTY ORANGE MATURITY PROGRESS REPORT

County agricultural staff provided their Orange Maturity Progress Reports.

Kern County stated their season began on October 10th and reported the following: two non-compliances were issued for two loads failing to meet Color "A" standards early in the season; all seven packing houses in the county are running and receiving fruit; 195,730 cartons have been inspected, with 57 percent tested in the field and the remainder in sheds; 192 maturity tests have been conducted, with 98.43 percent scoring above 100 on the California Standard scale.

Tulare County received their first load on October 10th and reported the following: 22 packing houses were receiving fruit; 572 maturity tests were performed between October 10th and November 14th, with 88 percent scoring above 100 on the California Standard scale; two loads of navel oranges that failed the first official maturity test were sent to juice, due to unauthorized degreening while the lots were on hold waiting for a second official test, which is a violation of the regulations.

Fresno County received its first load on October 13th and reported the following: only one rejection for failing to meet the California Standard as of the meeting, with averages improving through November; 16 out of 18 packing houses were receiving navels; color compliance was high, and most loads were local.

Kings County reported just starting operations a week before the CCAC meeting and they had good results on initial tests.

Ventura County reported having two packing houses receiving navel oranges and they tested five loads that were above 100 on the California Standard scale.

Riverside County reported slow activity, and only received one load, on November 10th, which was certified and therefore not tested.

San Diego County reported one successful test and anticipated more shipments.

After county updates, the committee reviewed historical data regarding the timing of previous season's maturity declarations, which have traditionally occurred in early December. Last year's declaration was made on December 2, 2024, and members agreed current conditions were better than last season based on consistently high sugar levels in the fruit and no recent rejections.

MOTION: John S. Gless moved to end mandatory maturity testing on December 1, 2025, allowing counties discretion to test if needed and to allow Southern California counties to conduct one or two tests due to later harvest start times on their local navel oranges. Maribel Nenna seconded the motion. A vote by roll call was taken. The motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

ITEM 10: ORANGE COLOR "A" DISCUSSION CONTINUED

The committee continued their discussion Orange Color "A" standards and related enforcement challenges. Program staff provided a recap of efforts to improve consistency across counties. Recent changes included revamping county training to focus on color and maturity, conducting joint field exercises, and adding state staff to promote uniformity. Committee members expressed concerns about subjectivity continuing to be an issue, with complaints about inconsistent application of color standards and delays in harvest due to differing interpretations. Suggestions included exploring AI-based tools to reduce subjectivity, revisiting the role of color chips, and considering whether color standards are still necessary given high sugar levels and varietal differences.

Program staff outlined the process for changing standards, which would include industry submitting a petition with supporting data, followed by a regulatory review and public comment period, potentially taking nine months to a year. Options discussed included eliminating color standards, adjusting internal maturity requirements, modifying chip guidelines, or setting percentage thresholds for compliance. Members noted that mandarins and other citrus types have different color requirements, typically applied at packing rather than harvest, unlike navels. The committee agreed to further research, industry surveys, and broader discussions are needed before pursuing regulatory changes.

ITEM 11: PROGRAM UPDATES

Batchelor led the discussion on program updates, which included the successful modification of Container 60 into regulation after completing the experimental container

permit process. Permits currently issued include two grapefruit containers and one orange container, with petitions expected within a year. Batchelor explained the experimental container process is necessary prior to submitting a petition to modify existing standard container regulations.

ITEM 12: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 19, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and will be a hybrid online and in-person meeting held at the University of California Cooperative Extension in Kern County. Suggested agenda items include updates on the Mandarin survey status, filling vacant committee positions, and continuing discussion on Orange Color "A" standards.

ITEM 13: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m. by Chair Tate.

Respectfully submitted by:

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