



California Association of Wheat Growers

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## Newsletter

July 1, 2011

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Upcoming Events

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**Wednesday, August 31, California Association of Wheat Growers and California Wheat Commission Board of Directors Meetings.**

o **Location: California Farm Bureau Federation, 2300 River Plaza Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95833**

### Interested Parties - Water Board Schedules a Workshop on Agricultural Water Use

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The Water Board released the agenda for next month's workshop on agricultural water use efficiency. The workshop will be held Wednesday, July 20, in Sacramento and will focus on trends, challenges and opportunities to improve efficiency. The workshop will also be available on webcast. For more information, see the agenda link below:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_info/agendas/2011/jul/agenda_agwateruse.pdf

CA Wheat Commission to Conduct Grower Elections

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- News Release -

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### WHEAT COMMISSION TO CONDUCT GROWER ELECTIONS

Woodland, CA---In August 2011, the California Wheat Commission will conduct district elections for the positions of Commissioner and Alternate Commissioner for five California districts: District 2 - Butte, Colusa, Glenn, and Lake Counties, District 4 - Solano and that portion of Sacramento County lying southwest of River Road and Road J-11, District 6 - Merced & Madera Counties, District 9 - Kern County, and District 11 - San Bernardino, Riverside, San Diego, Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. The term of office for Commissioners and their Alternates is three years.

Involvement in the California Wheat Commission enables California producers to take a more active role in national wheat organizations and wheat policymaking bodies. A qualified producer member or alternate is defined as any person who is engaged within this state in the business of producing wheat for market during any of the preceding three marketing seasons, and who must reside or conduct farming operations in the district in which the election is to be held.

Interested individuals are encouraged to contact the California Wheat Commission to obtain a nomination petition. Petitions are also available via the Commission's website (see quick links below) in the News/Info section. To be included on the ballot, completed nomination petitions must be returned to the Commission no later than July 20, 2011.

*Wheat growers voted to establish the California Wheat Commission in 1983, expressly to develop and maintain domestic and international markets for California wheat and support research that improves California wheat quality and marketability. The Commission, operating under the California Food and Agriculture Code, is funded by wheat growers and is guided by a board which includes thirteen wheat producers, two handlers, two at-large members, and one public member -- each with alternates*

## Dubcovsky Wins fellowship to Help Feed the Planet



Wheat Geneticist Jorge Dubcovsky is one of two plant biologists at UC Davis among the first-ever class of HHMI-GBMF Investigators, funded jointly by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

Jorge Dubcovsky, professor in the Department of Plant Sciences, and Simon Chan, assistant professor in the Department of Plant Biology, are among 15 recipients nationwide of the new awards program, to be supported with \$75 million from the two organizations over the next five years.

Like the other recipients, Dubcovsky's award will cover his salary and benefits for five years plus provide funds for equipment, lab space and other research needs, freeing him from the time-consuming task of seeking grants.

"The effect of this award is huge," Dubcovsky said. "It gives me the opportunity to think broadly in what needs to be done in my field and go after it, rather than spend my time trying to write proposals that adjust to the specific goals of various grants with a small chance of success. The HHMI-GBMF long term support provides me the flexibility to address important questions in developing functional genomic tools for the wheat community."

The Dubcovsky lab has been at the forefront in developing genetic resources for improving the yield, disease-resistance and nutrition of wheat, one of the most widely grown cereal crops on the planet.

"We are now working to sequence our wheat [TILLING \(Targeting Induced Local Lesions IN Genomes\)](#) populations using high throughput sequencing so people can access mutations in all genes with a simple web search,"

Dubcovsky said. "This will empower everybody to do deeper into functional gene analyses in wheat. This support will also help me to pursue my interest in the developmental regulatory networks and their effect on major agronomic traits: heading date, spike development and its effect on yield and nutrient remobilization."

Dubcovsky's work, as with all the HHMI-GBMR award-winners, is designed to help avert a looming global food crisis.

"I congratulate professors Chan and Dubcovsky on this great honor, to be recognized by these leading foundations as two of the most innovative plant scientists in the country," said UC Davis Chancellor Linda P. B. Katehi. "It is also tremendous recognition for UC Davis as a whole, as one of the nation's - and the world's -- leading centers for research in plant biology, making advances that will bring benefits in food production, as well as in health, energy and the environment."

Dubcovsky said he was thrilled and surprised to learn of his selection for this unique grant.

"I know several colleagues that applied who I believe deserve it more than I do," Dubcovsky said. "I hope they do one more competition in plants to incorporate these brilliant plant researchers."

In announcing the new funding programming, the HHMI and Moore Foundation said, "Despite the central role plants play in maintaining human health and in health care, basic research in the plant sciences has been historically underfunded."

Dubcovsky agrees.

"This investment will have a huge impact in advancing plant sciences at a time when food prices are rising and demand is so great," Dubcovsky said. "I think we, as a society, have underinvested in agricultural research and are lagging behind in productivity. Increases in food prices have a very serious impact on those with limited resources. Investments in agricultural research can help us meet this demand faster."

## Governor Vetoes "Card Check for Ag" Bill

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Just one hour before the legislation would have become law, Governor Brown vetoed SB 104 (Steinberg), known as the "Card Check for Ag" bill. The legislation would have eliminated the secret ballot for union

elections, a pillar of the 1975 Ag Labor Relations Act (ALRA) signed by Jerry Brown and strongly supported by Cesar Chavez and the UFW during Brown's first term as Governor. In his veto message, Governor Brown stated that the bill went too far but promised to personally engage to address any concerns with the current ALRA.

Specifically Brown stated, "I am not yet convinced that the far reaching proposals of this bill - which alter in a significant way the guiding assumptions of the ALRA - are justified. Before restructuring California's carefully crafted agricultural labor law, it is only right that the Legislature consider legal provisions that more faithfully track its original framework." He continued by stating, "I am deeply committed to the success of the ALRA and stand ready to engage in whatever discussions - public and private - that will accomplish the appropriate changes."

The broad coalition of agriculture and business groups that opposed this legislation were successful in obtaining this veto but will continue to actively engage in discussion to appropriately review the ALRA and work on amendments if deemed necessary. Below is a link to the veto message in its entirety.

http://gov.ca.gov/docs/SB_104_Veto_Message.pdf

Democrats Pass, Governor Signs Budget

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The California Legislature passed a budget with all Democrat votes. The Governor signed the budget on June 30<sup>th</sup>, marking one of only a handful of times the budget was passed on time in the past 25 years. The budget relies on inflated revenue projects of an additional \$4 billion. Many agriculture and business entities will see both a reduction in services as well as increased fees for many services. Other major actions of the budget include:

- Reduces K-14 education funding an additional \$744 million.
- Eliminates local redevelopment agencies saving \$1.7 billion in General fund. (However, due to recent initiatives this cut is legally precarious).
- Additional \$488 million reduction to Healthy Families and Medicaid programs.
- Additional \$150 million cut to CSU and \$150 million cut to UC above and beyond the \$500 million each system already suffered in March.
- Cutting court funding by \$150 million and a one year deferral of court construction of \$310 million.
- Cuts the Department of Food and Agriculture an additional \$4 million, above and beyond the proposed cut of \$15 million. The specific cuts resulted in elimination of general fund for Pierces Disease program for \$3.06 million savings and elimination of \$900 thousand from med fly program.
- Increases fees for water discharge permits by an additional \$11.5 million - the result is water discharge fees will increase by a total of \$24 million for ag and industrial discharges.
- Adopted a fee for State Responsibility areas for Fire Protection to raise \$50 million.
- Increases Vehicle Licensing Fees by \$12 per car.

## **G20 Leaders Agree to New Wheat Initiative to Coordinate Research**

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As part of a broad agreement to work to improve global food security, G20 agriculture ministers meeting in Paris last week agreed to launch a new International Research Initiative for Wheat Improvement (IRIWI) to coordinate research efforts.

Primary objectives of the new Initiative would be to provide a forum to encourage collaborations among major wheat programs, public and private; to facilitate open communication and exchange of germplasm and data under existing agreements; to support data sharing through publicly-available databases and data standards; and to press the financial needs of the wheat research community to key funding sources.

The ministers' action plan from the summit noted that the new Initiative should avoid duplication of projects

already ongoing and add value to existing efforts.

Initially, the project will be coordinated by public research organizations in the United Kingdom and France and CIMMYT, an international research organization that focuses on wheat and maize.

The ag ministers' statement said the IRIWI would be a first step toward creating similar organizations to focus on other major food crops.

[Full Article](#)

Minnesota Grower Talks Biotech Wheat on BIO Convention Panel

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[From NAWG](#)

Biotechnology in wheat would reduce farmer input costs and help make the crop more competitive with corn and soybeans in areas where they can all be grown, said Scott Swenson, a wheat leader from Minnesota, at this week's BIO International Convention.

Swenson made his comments as part of a media breakfast panel sponsored by the Council on Biotechnology Information (CBI) and held Wednesday with other convention activities at the Washington, D.C. convention center.

The panel, which focused on regulatory policy and agricultural innovation, was moderated by former Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin and included Robert Beachy, former head of USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and former director of the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center; Jack Bobo, a senior adviser for biotechnology at the State Department; and Swenson, who provided the farmer voice on this important topic.

Swenson told attendees that in his area, acreage has shifted dramatically to corn and soybeans in recent decades because of the advantages producers can reap from the most advanced seeds, produced with biotechnology. On his farm, for example, he has gone from growing mostly wheat 30 years ago to less than 20 percent wheat now.

Swenson described in detail another dramatic change brought by biotech crops - the reduced fieldwork required to produce a crop. On his farm, he said, the use of biotechnology has dramatically reduced passes through a field - saving both fuel and existing organic matter in the soil - compared to conventional crops or organic crops he has grown in the past.

Drawing on comments made by Beachy about the complicated and sometimes dysfunctional biotech regulatory system, Swenson also told reporters and guests he is concerned that regulatory challenges will discourage young people from pursuing careers in plant breeding, exacerbating a shortage of plant scientists for decades to come.

As the current chairman of the NAWG and U.S. Wheat Associates Joint Biotechnology Committee, which works on biotechnology policy for both organizations, Swenson also described the wheat industry's work to demonstrate farmers' desire for the technology's use in wheat, which he said he hopes will happen during his career.

There is no commercialized biotech wheat anywhere in the world, but the wheat industry works on biotechnology issues because its leaders believe biotechnology's introduction into the wheat crop is necessary to increase productivity, attract acres back to the crop and feed a growing global population sustainably.

The wheat industry appreciated the invitation from BIO and CBI for Swenson to be a part of this important panel, which followed an appearance at last year's convention by then-chairman of the Joint Biotech Committee, Mark Darrington.

### **Corn Acres Higher than Expected, Surprise Trade**

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Corn area planted for all purposes this year is estimated to be about 92.3 million acres, up 5% from last year and the second highest acreage planted in the U.S. since 1944, USDA said this week. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) said the total acres translate to a crop of about 13.47 billion bushels, 5% more than a year ago. AFBF added the report "caught everyone by surprise" since acreage was expected to decline based on bad weather and delayed plantings. The department said growers expect to harvest 84.9 million acres, up 4% from last year. The total acreage planted exceeded private industry estimates of about 90.77 million acres, according to reports, with experts noting this week's estimate is higher than the March estimate, higher than the estimate included in the May World Agricultural Supply & Demand Estimates, and shows higher acreage in high-yield states. Soybean planted acreage is estimated at 75.2 million acres, down 3% from last year, USDA said. Area for harvest is pegged at 74.3 million acres, also down 3% from 2010. All wheat planted acreage is set at 56.4 million acres, up 5% from 2010, with winter wheat at 41.1 million acres, up 10% from last year. Of the total, 29.1 million acres are hard red winter wheat; 8.3 million are soft red winter, and 3.7 million are white winter wheat. Area planted to other spring wheat is estimated at 13.6 million acres, down 1% from 2010.

TAA, Timing Row Blocks Senate Finance Committee Action on Trade Deals

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Authority (TAA) is set to be included in the Korea implementation bill. Senate rules require at least one minority member to be present at a committee meeting and the boycott forced cancellation of the session, with ranking committee member Sen. Orrin Hatch (R, UT) angry the meeting, originally scheduled for the morning of June 30 and agreed to by both sides of the aisle, was switched to 3 p.m. Hatch denounced the time shift, saying he was "very offended" by the move, adding "the President jammed us and we're not going to put up with being jammed," particularly since 97 discussion "amendments" have been filed for consideration during the markup. He also said the GOP had asked for the markup to be rescheduled for Tuesday, July 5, but the request was rejected. U.S. Special Trade Representative Ron Kirk, referring to GOP calls for the President to formally send the three trade agreements to the Hill for a vote, said, "Today, the agreements were there - and Senate Finance Committee Republicans were not." Ag and business group supporters of quick approval for the three trade pacts were disappointed in the delay in what was seen as the first concrete signal a deal has been struck to move the agreements to ratification. TAA is a 50-year-old package of federal assistance to U.S. workers, whose jobs are affected by the trade deals, providing health insurance, wage and hour protections to U.S. workers. The law expired in February and has experienced a rocky road to reauthorization since opponents say the program is expensive and ineffective. Finance Committee Chair Sen. Max Baucus (D, MT), in setting the markup, said he has reached agreement with the White House and Rep. David Camp (R, MI), chair of the House Ways & Means Committee, on TAA extension. Camp scheduled similar meetings for last week, but cancelled them, saying they'd be rescheduled. Camp, however, has also said publicly he does not endorse the Democrat process plan and will defer to Senate GOP leadership on advancing the bills. As part of the deal announced by Baucus, TAA extension will be part of the Korea trade pact implementing bill, while the reauthorization of the Generalized System of Preferences and the Andean Trade Preferences Act will be extended until the end of 2013 as part of the Colombia implementing bill. The decision to add TAA to the Korea bill has some GOP members upset, with Hatch calling it "a highly partisan decision." Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R, KY) said he was disappointed in the move, and urged the White House to send all three treaties to the Hill at the earliest possible date and "without extraneous poison pills included." In related developments, South Korea and Canada announced this week they have come to an agreement on resuming Canadian beef sales to Korea. Korea will allow bone-in beef from animals less than 30 months old, officially ending Korea's eight-year ban on Canadian beef over BSE concerns.

## **Senate Cancels July 4 Recess to Focus on Debt Ceiling Talks; Potential Agreement will Rewrite Spending Process**

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Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D, NV) this week followed the advice of President Obama and cancelled the Senate's week-long July 4 recess in hopes a deal can be cut on extending the federal debt ceiling. And as President Obama points fingers at Congress and Vice President Biden continues to try and hold his bipartisan negotiating team together in hopes of coming up with an agreement by which Congress can raise the federal debt ceiling while cutting spending even further, the appropriations process is in limbo pending the hoped-for debt deal. The Senate has yet to come up with its own budget resolution, the gross amount of how much is available for spending, and while Senate Budget Committee Chair Kent Conrad (D, ND) says he's got the plan in draft form to cut about \$4 trillion over the next 10 years, he won't release it for "at least a couple of weeks" in hopes a debt ceiling agreement will be reached so he can rework his plan if he has to. Ag spending, including farm program payments, are on the table, even with the deep cuts included in the House-passed FY2012 appropriations bill, as House and Senate negotiators from both sides of the aisle acknowledge they've come up with over \$1.5-1.7 trillion in cuts over the next decade, but are at loggerheads over "revenue increases," be they restrictions in existing tax credits or increases in taxes across the board. The tax increase question brings into play the so-called Bush tax cuts extended at the end of the last Congress, as well as other actions to "reform" the federal tax code, and there is significant bipartisan opposition to raising taxes in any way going into the 2012 elections. If the debt agreement cuts as deeply as the GOP hopes - House Speaker John Boehner (R, OH) continues to demand that cuts will equal increases in the debt ceiling - then the work done so far in both chambers on appropriations goes out the window and it's back to square one. For the Senate this likely signals only a couple of individual appropriations bills may move independently - military construction and Veterans Administration are cited as "noncontroversial - meaning Congress is likely going to have to wrap the rest of spending into an omnibus bill or settle for another round of continuing resolutions until an agreement on spending and debt ceiling increases is finalized.

EPA Extends Comment Period on Draft U.S. Waters Guidance; Inhofe Says EPA Water Proposals Straining State and Local Budgets

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EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced this week they are extending by 30 days the comment period on their draft guidance on identifying waters protected under the Clean Water Act (CWA). The new deadline for comments is July 31. At the same time, Sen. James Inhofe (R, OK), ranking minority member of the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee, released a minority staff report showing several EPA CWA actions - both on the books and contemplated - are "significant unfunded mandates" that will cost state and local governments "tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars." The rules cited by Inhofe's report include new water quality criteria in Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and numeric nutrient criteria for geographic locations; new storm water rules, and the New Pesticide General Permit (PGP) rules. He said the rules are not the product of hearings or deliberation, but simply EPA's reaction to environmental activist lawsuits. Inhofe also said the cost of the rules is not outweighed by the benefits, adding "these rules will cause a lot of economic pain for state and local governments without any guarantee of water quality improvement. Meanwhile, the draft guidance is controversial as agriculture interests contend it is little more than an administrative gimmick to expand EPA authority over just about any body of water, including farm ponds and other non-navigable waters.