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CALIFORNIA NEWS

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Friday, March 11, 2005

Governor appoints eight to state ag board

By ALI BAY California Staff Writer
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SACRAMENTO – Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed eight members to the California State Board of Food and Agriculture this week, offering the job to some new and returning members.

The 15 board members advise the governor and agriculture secretary on issues and consumer needs.

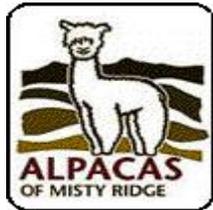
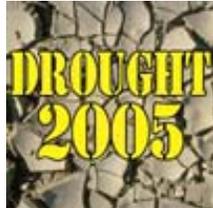
One of the goals of the new board is to become more active, said Karen Ross, president of the California Winegrape Growers Association. She has been appointed to her second four-year term on the board.

"I think the board has some opportunities that I'm hopeful we can take advantage of more than we have in the past perhaps," said Ross. "We can be more active in interacting with the secretary and the staff on ways to outreach and communicate with other agencies in particular."

Ross said it will be important for the board to continue to look at the role of agriculture in the rapidly urbanizing state and how the Department of Food and Agriculture can strengthen connections with other state agencies that create rules and regulations that impact agriculture.

"I can't think of a more critical time for agriculture to be working on how to deal with all the increasing regulations in a way that keeps them profitable," said Ashley Boren, executive director of Sustainable Conservation, and a new appointee to the board. San Francisco-based Sustainable Conservation promotes economically viable management practices for farmers that reduce environmental impacts.

State ag board members must be residents of California and are qualified to serve based on their experiences in agriculture, environmental protection or consumer affairs.



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One member of the bipartisan group represents the University of California agricultural department and one member also represents the state university system. In addition, two members must have knowledge of the environment and two others must have knowledge of consumer affairs to represent the public. The remaining members represent the agricultural industry.

The newly appointed members include Ross, who is also executive director of Winegrape Growers of America and a member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee for the California Exposition and State Fair.

Sustainable Conservation's Boren will represent environmental concerns on the board. This is Boren's first governmental appointment.

Alfred Montna, a rice farmer from Yuba City, was appointed president of the board. He owns and operates Montna Farms and is a former chairman of the Farmer's Rice Cooperative.

Schwarzenegger also appointed:

- Wayne Gomes of Oakland, a professor in the Department of Animal Science at the University of California-Davis.
- Luawanna Hallstrom of Rancho Santa Fe, the chief operating officer and general manager of Harry Singh and Sons, the largest single vine-ripe tomato producer in the United States.
- Marvin Meyers of Fresno, owner and operator of Meyers Farming I-IV, Oxford Farms, Inc., and Meyers Farm Family Trust.
- Adan Ortega Jr., of Fullerton, a senior communications management adviser with GCG Rose & Kindel and former vice president of external affairs at Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.
- Ann Silva of Tracy, the co-manager of Bacchetti and Silva Dairy, where she has worked since 1977.

The appointees' positions do not require Senate confirmation and they receive no salary.

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