

# COMPASS

ISSUE 2 | MARCH 2024



## President's Message

By: Debra Stroschein, State CWA President



The first month of my presidency has flown by! The CWA State Officers and I and the Executive Board which includes your Chapter Presidents, and Taskforce and Appointed Directors have been back in your communities since our 2024 Convention and January Statewide Meeting participating and serving at fundraising events, educational in classroom events, 4-H and FFA field days, chapter meetings and officer retreats, fundraisers, and

other events across the state.

The month of March is packed with events including our March Statewide Meeting and National Ag Week. The Central Coast District has a wonderful weekend planned for us including a panel of local women in ag leadership roles in Ventura County. The speaker's bios are included in this edition. The statewide meeting agenda will also include an important vote on the proposed updates to our bylaws. Once the bylaws are adopted the next phase is a review of the Operating Policies and Procedures (OPPs) which will give our organization a solid, modern, and compliant set of tools for the State Officers and our Chapters to conduct our business with.

In the past few weeks my President's Newsletters have featured some science-based topics such as artificial intelligence and regenerative agriculture. These topics in some cases are brand new to those of us involved in agriculture and in the case of regenerative ag it's a new spin on an age-old set of farming practices. We may not know it all or have every answer as we approach these new or new again topics, but we can certainly have a "PhD," aka "Passion to have a Discussion." By putting ourselves out there and having ourselves out there having discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, we are able to find opportunities that align with what they are telling us matters to them. This ultimately creates deeper relationships both in terms of money and time, and we all learn.



With spring right around the corner, I hope that you will keep your calendar ready for our Ag Advocacy Training and Legislative Visits event that will be held in place of the traditional May Statewide Meeting. We are stepping out of the box to provide a two-day event in Sacramento to focus on strengthening our collective voice as advocates. The details of the event

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### Debra's Message Continued

are still being planned but we are excited about the opportunity to bring you this professional development opportunity. I encourage you let me, or the members of the State Executive Team know if you would like one of us to attend, speak at or participate in your events. We look forward to supporting you and all the great work that the chapters are doing within their communities.

Respectfully,  
Debra Stroschein  
CWA State President

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## CWA Advocacy Events and Updates

### By: Lora K. Daniels, State CWA President-Elect

We have a several advocacy events planned for Spring 2024, these include our participation at CDFA's Ag Day at the Capitol, a member advocacy training event, and our Spring legislative events. More information is provided below regarding the dates and times. Thank you to our State and Federal Taskforce Directors for their contributions to this edition of the Compass. Our weekly President's Newsletter (PNL) includes both State and Federal legislative updates weekly to keep you informed.

- Ag Day at the Capitol - March 19th- Secretary Ross has selected the theme "Next-Gen Tools, Talent & Tech" for this year's event which is the largest event held annually on the west steps of the State Capitol. CWA will continue its tradition of having a booth to greet the legislators and their staff as well as the public that attend. We have been partners with CDFA since 1977 at this event which celebrates, National Ag Week.
- Advocacy Training and Spring Legislative Visits - April 21-22, 2024 Sacramento - The State Executive Board has decided to replace the traditional statewide meeting with an advocacy training event which will include speakers from state organizations and departments as well as our legislators will be held on the Sunday event and participants will then meet with members of the California Legislature at a luncheon on Monday prior to our traditional legislative visits.
- American Agri-Women (AAW) - Washington D.C. Fly-In Scholarships - Our weekly PNL has information about AAW's annual fly-in and congressional visit events. CWA also has opportunities for travel stipends for members. The AAW Fly-In event will be June 2-4, 2024.



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# The Role of Governmental Advocacy to Safeguard Pest Control Advisers



By: Taylor Roschen, Sacramento Valley Chapter

It's undeniable that in the dynamic landscape of California agriculture, pest control advisers are indispensable. As stewards of the state's agricultural health, you play a pivotal role in ensuring the well-being of commodities, farmers, and the environment.


However, as the challenges faced by the industry extend beyond the field, your role and function are not relatively well-known to the general public, or worse, grossly misconstrued in urban settings and state bureaucracy. In partnership with CAPCA leadership, we at Kahn, Soares, & Conway serve as your Sacramento advocates. Our goals are to break down misconceptions, educate the Legislature about your foundational roles to advance sustainable agriculture, and influence policies and politics to ensure your business and your community can thrive.

And we can't emphasize enough the critical importance of ensuring your voice is heard. The legislative landscape in 2023 reinforced that this is not your grandfather's Legislature. The redistricting efforts in 2022, followed by the first impacts of twelve-year term limits for long-serving legislators, led to the loss of institutional knowledge. This void will continue to be filled until 2026 with ambitious freshman legislators, who predominantly lack experience or interests in agriculture, led by influential Capitol staff, committee consultants, and irrational special interests.

This challenge is further compounded by an activist administration, a continuously complex regulatory landscape, and a growing public discontent with our food systems. The year 2024 will see new legislative leaders, Speaker of the Assembly Robert Rivas and Senate Pro Tem Mike McGuire, taking the reins to guide their colleagues. As with any leadership change, opportunities arise.

Therefore, as we step forward to address these trials, including the significant pest detections and emerging threats in late 2023, this year needs to be the year of education. It's about reintroducing and articulating the critical role of the PCA, not only to protect California agriculture's legacy and natural resources but also to highlight how you are essential to advancing the Legislature and the Administration's goals. These goals include agricultural sustainability, sustainable pest management, and public and environmental health.

This charge requires us to be introspective, actively listen to others' expectations, and be open to sharing more about the great work you do. You don't have to change who you are; you have to become more of who you already are—and that requires you to speak up. CAPCA and your advocates are here to help, but your active participation is key to ensuring your invaluable contributions are recognized and appreciated.



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for AGRICULTURE

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wear clothes  
you are involved in  
agriculture.*

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[www.cawomen4ag.com](http://www.cawomen4ag.com)

The Compass is the external communication for California Women for Agriculture. Recipients include CWA members, agriculture organizations, associations, elected and appointed officials and other selected recipients. Chapters are encouraged to submit news, photos, announcements, articles, and suggestions. Directors should submit issue updates and information in advance if action is required.

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## Federal Legislative Message

By: Tracey Chow, CWA Federal Legislative Director

Last month, USDA rolled out data from the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Over the five-year span, California continued to hold its dominance as the number one agricultural state, generating \$59 billion in farmgate value. Nine of the top ten producing counties in the United States are in California.

The survey also points to a challenging state of U.S. agriculture. Since 2017, there are fewer farms, bigger farms, higher operating expenses, and higher levels of net farm income that are now ultimately expected to begin falling.

California was no exception. From 2017 to 2022, the state lost 7,300 farms. The new figure – 63,134 – is a 20% drop over the past twenty years, when the 2002 census tallied 79,631 farms in the state. The total farming acres also declined slightly, with just over 330,000 acres taken out of the statewide 24 million acres. The average farm size ticked up, as the only farm size category that saw growth is farms of 1,000 or more acres. Operating expenses across all categories went up, with labor costs alone jumping 27% to reach \$9.5 billion for California’s farmers and ranchers.

While additional census data will continue to be released in the coming months, both sides of Congress

– as well as USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack – are pointing to the report’s findings as further justification for a new and improved Farm Bill this year. However, until the Farm Bill funding levels and sources are decided, the process cannot significantly move forward.

The four chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have released snippets of written priorities and proposals, thus more clearly defining their negotiation red lines. The Democrats will not accept reprogramming Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding or nutrition program cuts. Conversely, Republicans will not accept a Farm Bill without increases to the row crop Title I payment programs. At the same time, there are several areas with shared interest and bipartisan support, such as trade promotion, research funding, and improved crop insurance.

Even when, or if, the committees reach agreement on a bill, conventional wisdom says that accomplishing big legislation in an election year is unlikely. This is so far holding true, as we contend with both an extremely unproductive Congress and an increasingly contentious presidential election cycle. The unresolved budget and annual funding bills put pressure on the available Congressional working days to move the legislation through both chambers.

Keeping these political realities in mind, the agricultural community continues to push Congress for a timely Farm Bill this year that can effectively address the challenges U.S. farmers face and reserve the concerning trends before the next Ag Census.

## Back to our Roots Chapter Member Spotlight Marcia Kimura

Sacramento Valley Chapter, Submitted by Cheryl Lambert, Northern District Director

### THE EARLY YEARS

Marcia “Marci” Morley was born in 1947 and was raised in the foothills of Culver City California. She did not grow up on a farm, however she had a love of animals and nature. For college she studied Pre-Veterinary Medicine and Interior Design at Oregon State University. During that time, she met a farmer and they married. John Kimura was also serving in the military, and they moved to Germany where he was stationed for two years.



The Old Sugar Mill Wineries, Courtland, CA, (Marcia Morley Kimura on the right.)

John Kimura on a small sugar beet farm. His father sold sugar beets to Holly Sugar, which was owned by the Spreckels Sugar Co in the 1940s. Later, they grew tomatoes and corn for many years, and John became the Mayor of Woodland in 1976. Marci loved interior design and architecture and became an accomplished designer for several companies as well as owning a design business. During that time, the couple had two sons, Jay, and Dusty. Her children and six grandchildren, ages 7 to 21, also live in Woodland. These days, she spends time with family, friends and comes to CWA events when she can.

### **CALIFORNIA FARMWORKER VOTING RIGHTS AND UNIONIZATION**

Marci and John's tomato farm in Woodland was one of the first to offer field workers protection for the right to vote on their farm. In 1976, during CA Governor Gerry Brown's administration, Marci was a member of the Yolo Co. Farm Bureau, and she marched in a rally in Concord, CA to protest Prop 6, which was the unionization of farmworkers by the United Farm Workers Union. Also, the UAW picketed on farms, showing up with firearms to intimidate the voters, and prevented the workers from crossing the picket line. The situation became violent around the state, and many incidents occurred on farms, greenhouses, in the fields and at the Capitol. Eventually, unionization was allowed, and farmers had to allow their workers to join the UAW.

### **FORMATION OF CWA AND THE FIRST CHAPTERS**

During these turbulent times in agriculture's history, a small group of women who opposed the UAW in the Coachella Valley, formed American Agri-Women in 1975. Marci was among the farmers who accepted the Call to Power, with other women. She was sponsored by the Yolo County Farm Bureau in November 1975 to attend a meeting in Palm Springs to hear Sister Thomas More Bertels speak and meet with Cherri Ishimatsu, Corky Larson, and others, to form the CWA.

Marci was among those who voted to start California Women for Agriculture (CWA), which was incorporated as an agricultural advocacy organization in January 1976. The first Chapter was formed in Coachella, and soon after others were

chartered, including the Sacramento Valley Chapter in May 1976. Marci was a founding member of the Chapter, and it is first President.

### **AG EDUCATION, LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY, AND THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY CHAPTER**

She had many ideas about standing for ag and the mission of CWA, and has served in many capacities including, Chapter President, Vice President, Treasurer, the first Ag Education Chair and CWA Northern District Director. She had a love of teaching the public about where their food comes from.

The Chapter took part for many years in the Yolo County Fair Tomato Day at the Fairgrounds and Farm Days. They also had booths at Placer Co. and Sacramento Co. Fairs working with the CA Young Farmers and Ranchers, Girl Scouts, FFA, 4H and other youth groups. Marci served as the Agricultural Advisory Counsel for the CA State Fair at Cal Expo from 2004 until it ended in 2021.

Among other activities of the Sac Valley Chapter in the late 1970s was the first Ag Day at the CA Capital (Also known as Capital Ag Day). Marci once spoke to Gov. Gerry Brown and his advisor, Grey Davis, and gave the Governor a banana while discussing the importance of advocating for agriculture. She was always willing to be there during these events and participate in legislative advocacy and was very influential in the early CWA Adopt a Legislator visits which are held annually in Sacramento.

### **SACRAMENTO VALLEY CWA NOW**

A lot has happened over the almost 50 years of CWA, and Marci has been there to witness the history of the organization. She still comes to meetings, attends social activities, educates, and advocates for agriculture. She is a role model for the members of present-day Chapter members, and mentors those who are willing to listen to her stories and advise. The Chapter is looking forward to growing its membership, advocating for agriculture, educational events, and fun times for the next 50 years.

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## 2024-25 Fund Development Program



**By: Sharron Zoller, CWA  
Immediate Past President**

*We all know that the very lifeblood of our state's: agriculture bounty, California's dream, is under siege. The fertile fields, the verdant vineyards, the orchards heavy with*

*fruit - these are not just landscapes, they are the stories of generations, the backbone of our communities, and the source of food for millions.*

*We are inviting YOUR Company to join in supporting California Women for Agriculture (CWA). This remarkable organization, run by women in the forefront of our agricultural landscape, is a beacon of hope. They advocate for fair policies, educate consumers, and empower women to thrive.*

*We can't accomplish our mission alone. We are reaching out to invite you to partner with CWA as we launch of a brand-new fund development program: **"Blossom for the Future: Investing in California's Sustainable Agriculture."***

*This initiative will raise critical funds to fuel CWA's vital work, ensuring a future where California's bounty not only survives, but flourishes.*

Moving into my Fund Development Chair assignment I am in the process of forming a committee of past State CWA Presidents and a few other 'volunteers' to reimagine, create and launch a fund development program. The text above is a thought **DRAFT** of an opening contact salvo with for potential donors, business, individuals, and organizations. Lots of ideas and it's work in progress!

The committee first assignment it to define, the member's and roles, fund raising goals, develop donor categories and programs for donations, and communication and our processes for outreach and contribution follow-up and retention.

We will be sharing more as we move forward to formulate a solid program and plan. We need our members to help us to identify potential donors and pathways for fundraising to ensure our success and sustainability.

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## March 2024 Statewide Meeting Speakers

*The Central Coast District is our host for the March Statewide Meeting. They have gathered an amazing group of local ladies that will share their insights on agriculture and the role of women in agriculture in Ventura County.*

### Korinne Bell, Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner



Korinne Bell is a highly accomplished professional with a distinguished educational background and a diverse career spanning both education and agriculture. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Business from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. After graduating from college, she worked for her family's agricultural businesses, including farming (avocado's), cattle ranching, and animal feed/retail. Her dedication to the Ventura Department of Agriculture and its work earned her the opportunity to become Chief Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, which she was appointed to in 2016.

## Melinda Beardsley Meyring



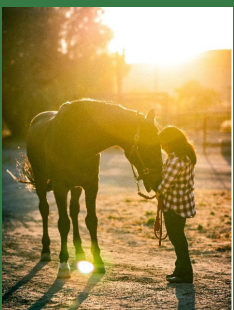
Melinda is the fourth generation in her family to work in Ventura County agriculture. She is a graduate of UC Santa Barbara with a bachelor's degree in Economics, minor in English. Melinda holds a qualified applicator license from the Department of Pesticide Regulation. She serves as Treasurer for the Ventura Co. Farm Bureau, President for Ventura Co. California Woman for Agriculture, and a board Director for SEEAG, a non-profit that has impacted the lives of over 100,000 students and community members, providing food & agricultural literacy programs and community education & outreach events 100% free of charge. Melinda is the owner of Beardsley & Son, LLC, a fertilizer, and tractor application company established in 1935 by her grandfather. She resides in Camarillo with her children and husband, Matthew Meyring.

## Rachael Kimball Laenen, Director of Farming and Operations Kimball Ranches – El Hogar



Rachael Kimball Laenen is the sixth generation of her family to farm in Ventura County and the fourth to grow avocados. Before her farming career, she worked in international motorsport, managing global sponsorships for some of the world's most valuable brands as well as delivering high-level events and hospitality. She spent six years working for the Mercedes AMG Petronas Formula One Team where she won three World Championships and rose to the rank of Head of Events and Hospitality. Rachael then returned to California to work for her father, growing avocados on 150 acres between Santa Paula and Fillmore. Their grove was devastated by the Thomas Fire in 2017 and she has been on a steep learning curve ever since as the ranch recovery operation continues. Rachael is responsible for food safety, workplace safety, employee relations and grant applications as well as being intimately involved in all farming decisions from crop nutrition programs to water management and harvest scheduling. Rachael is active in the avocado industry - she is currently the Vice Chair of the California Avocado Commission and has been a member of the Hass Avocado Committee, Marketing Committee, Sustainability Taskforce and Succession Taskforce. She is married to Andrew, a British photographer, and they have a young son Eugene.

## Louise Lampara, Executive Director, Ventura Co. Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business



Louise Lampara is the Executive Director of the Ventura County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture, and Business, a non-profit business advocacy organization. Having worked on both sides of the table - private sector business and as a government regulator - she brings that dual perspective to her role to fight for more reasonable local regulations and lessen the burden of government on local businesses and agriculture.





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U P C O M I N G C W A E V E N T S

**SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 19, 2024**



March 2024 SWM, Ventura, CA  
March 8-10, 2024

AAW Mid-Year, Kansas  
April 4-6, 2024

Advocacy Training Event &  
Legislative Visits,  
Sacramento, CA  
April 21-22, 2024

AAW Fly-in, Washington, D.C.  
June 2-4, 2024

September SWM, Ag Booster  
BBQ, Fresno, CA  
September 7-8, 2024

AAW 50th Anniversary  
Convention, Wisconsin  
November 14-17, 2024

November 2024 SWM, North  
Central District, TBD

January 2025 Convention &  
SWM - TBD

March 2025 SWM  
TBD

April 2025 Advocacy Training  
Event & Legislative Visits,  
Sacramento, CA

November 2025 - Convention  
& CWA 50th Anniversary  
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