

2024 IMPACT REPORT



FOOD GROWS WHERE WATER FLOWS

PROGRAMS
AND ACTIVITIES

EDUCATING
POLICY MAKERS

REINFORCING
PARTNERSHIPS

INTRODUCTION

IT IS THE MISSION of the California Farm Water Coalition to be the principle source of factual farm water information for consumers, the media, government, and the agricultural industry.



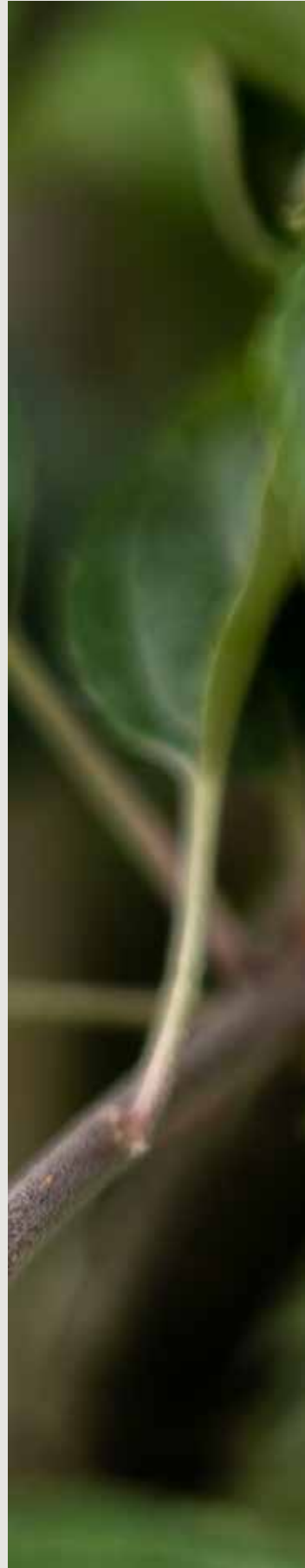
THE CALIFORNIA FARM WATER COALITION (CFWC) is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to increasing public awareness about the importance of adequate and dependable supplies of water for California's agricultural industry.

Founded in 1989 during a severe drought, CFWC's aim is to educate consumers, policymakers, and the media about the critical connection between farm water and food production. CFWC represents a diverse group of stakeholders, including farmers, water suppliers, and agricultural businesses from across California. Its mission focuses on serving as a voice for agricultural water users, representing irrigated agriculture in the media, and educating the public about the benefits of irrigated agriculture.

CFWC is the only statewide organization dedicated to helping

the public understand the direct connection between water and the availability of a safe, healthy, affordable, food supply.

CFWC's membership includes a diverse group of small and large farmers, agricultural business members, agricultural organizations, and public water agencies that deliver the water that grows our food. Our 20-member board of directors representing all corners of the state oversees the policies that guide and direct our programs and activities. ■



“ When you pick up a carrot, or a peach, or a tomato at the grocery store, you’re looking at so much more than just that produce. You’re looking at the farmer who planted it and tended it, the water that grew it, the laborers or the technology that harvested it, the people who packed it, the transportation that got it to you. ”

— Chelsea Foy, Winter 2024
@lovelyindeed

OUR GOALS

OUR LONG-TERM GOALS ARE TO ENSURE FARMERS HAVE THE WATER THEY NEED TO SUSTAIN AGRICULTURE WHILE FOSTERING URBAN UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT IN CALIFORNIA FOR THE CRITICAL LINK BETWEEN FOOD PRODUCTION AND AGRICULTURAL WATER SUPPLY.

We aim to educate younger generations about the water required for food and fiber, elevate farmers’ visibility and acceptance to equal that of urban and environmental water users, and achieve balance among these three groups. Additionally, we seek to build a positive “culture” of farm water through ethos-driven branding, ensuring regulatory agencies and the public recognize agriculture’s vital role. ■

03



CALIFORNIA RECEIVES
**64.6 TRILLION
GALLONS**
of water in PRECIPITATION
ANNUALLY



CALIFORNIA FARMS USE
**8.2 TRILLION
GALLONS**
to produce FOOD and FIBER
ANNUALLY



CALIFORNIA CONSUMES
**11.3 TRILLION
GALLONS**
of water in FOOD PRODUCTS
ANNUALLY

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES



MEDIA OUTREACH



A CONSISTENT FACT-FOCUSED MEDIA OUTREACH PROGRAM IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF CFWC ACTIVITIES.

It serves to set the record straight about farm water facts and ensure the public and media are accurately informed on farm water issues. Such a program is designed to counter misinformation, educate diverse audiences, and build trust through transparent, proactive communication. CFWC's media outreach program reaches consumers by simplifying complex water issues

and highlighting the connection between farm water and our food supply.

The program produces a variety of content types to address farm water facts and issues for the media:

- **Press Releases:** Announce key initiatives, partnerships, or responses to emerging water issues.
- **Fact Sheets and Infographics:** Present data on water efficiency, crop yields, and economic contributions in an accessible and understandable format.
- **Blog Posts and Articles:** Offer in-depth analysis of current events, water policies, water supply and management impacts, and agricultural water practices and conservation strategies.

In 2024, CFWC distributed a total of 27 op-eds, letters-to-the-editor,

articles, and interviews, which had a 61 percent publication rate.

Media responses were focused on correcting the record or providing fact-based information where news stories presented an inaccurate portrait of irrigated agriculture. CFWC focuses on science-based information, tackling thorny topics like California's salmon strategy, managing the Colorado River for beneficial outcomes for California water users, SGMA implementation, and advocating for sensible policies, such as Healthy Rivers and Landscapes within the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. ■

61%
PUBLICATION
RATE



LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*

LOCAL CONTROL OVER WATER

Dan Pogorzelski, a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago commissioner, makes a good point that the Great Lakes are off-limits to water users here in the West (“The West should put its straws away. Great Lakes water is not for sale,” Sept. 1). The compact that governs how Great Lakes states manage their water is like the century-old compacts governing the Colorado River.

What we have in common is the desire for local control of our own water supplies. The proposal for a one-size-fits-all national water policy is irresponsible, like the effort to mislead readers into believing that water from the Great Lakes is at risk of being taken by other states, as Jay Famiglietti does in his New York Times essay.

I suspect that water users in Chicago want control over their own resources just as Western farmers do as they grow much of the food we all depend on.

— *Mike Wade, Executive Director, California Farm Water Coalition*



SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS:

55.8 MILLION

05



SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS REACHED:

30.8 MILLION

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

THE CALIFORNIA FARM WATER COALITION OPERATES A ROBUST SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE CONSUMER-BRANDED PROGRAM, CULTIVATE CALIFORNIA, AIMED AT EDUCATING CONSUMERS ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THEIR FOOD AND PROMOTING THE SUPERIORITY OF CALIFORNIA-GROWN PRODUCTS OVER IMPORTED ALTERNATIVES.

Bridging the gap between the food they eat and the fields that produce it, the Coalition encourages consumers to think beyond the grocery store in their daily social feeds. Leveraging platforms such as X (@farmwater), Facebook (@foodgrowswherewaterflows), and Instagram (@farmwater and @cultivateca), CFWC employs a strategic mix of educational content, visual storytelling, and interactive campaigns to highlight the benefits of California agriculture. The program emphasizes four key advantages—the connection between farm water and our food supply, regional content, connections with food-

based influencers, and the value and sustainability of buying local California food. These four pillars build trust and encourage consumers to support the wise use of California’s water resources to produce the food and fiber we all depend on.

CFWC’s social media strategy brings the farm-to-table journey to life, helping consumers understand where their food comes from. The organization shares:

- **Farmer Profiles and Stories:** Posts and videos featuring California farmers discussing their practices, such as water-efficient irrigation and sustainable farming methods,

create a personal connection between producers and consumers.

- **Crop Highlights:** Content showcasing the diversity of crops grown in California, from almonds to tomatoes, informs audiences about the state’s agricultural contribution to supporting a healthy diet.
- **Relatable Recipes and Food Facts:** Practical content designed to encourage consumers to connect the food they eat every day with the water needed to produce it helps keep the connection between farm water and their food supply tangible. ■



PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES



FARM TOURS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS PLAY A KEY ROLE AS STORYTELLERS ABOUT THE CARE AND INNOVATION BEHIND FOOD PRODUCTION IN THE STATE, REINFORCING THE LINK BETWEEN CALIFORNIA'S FIELDS AND CONSUMERS' PLATES.

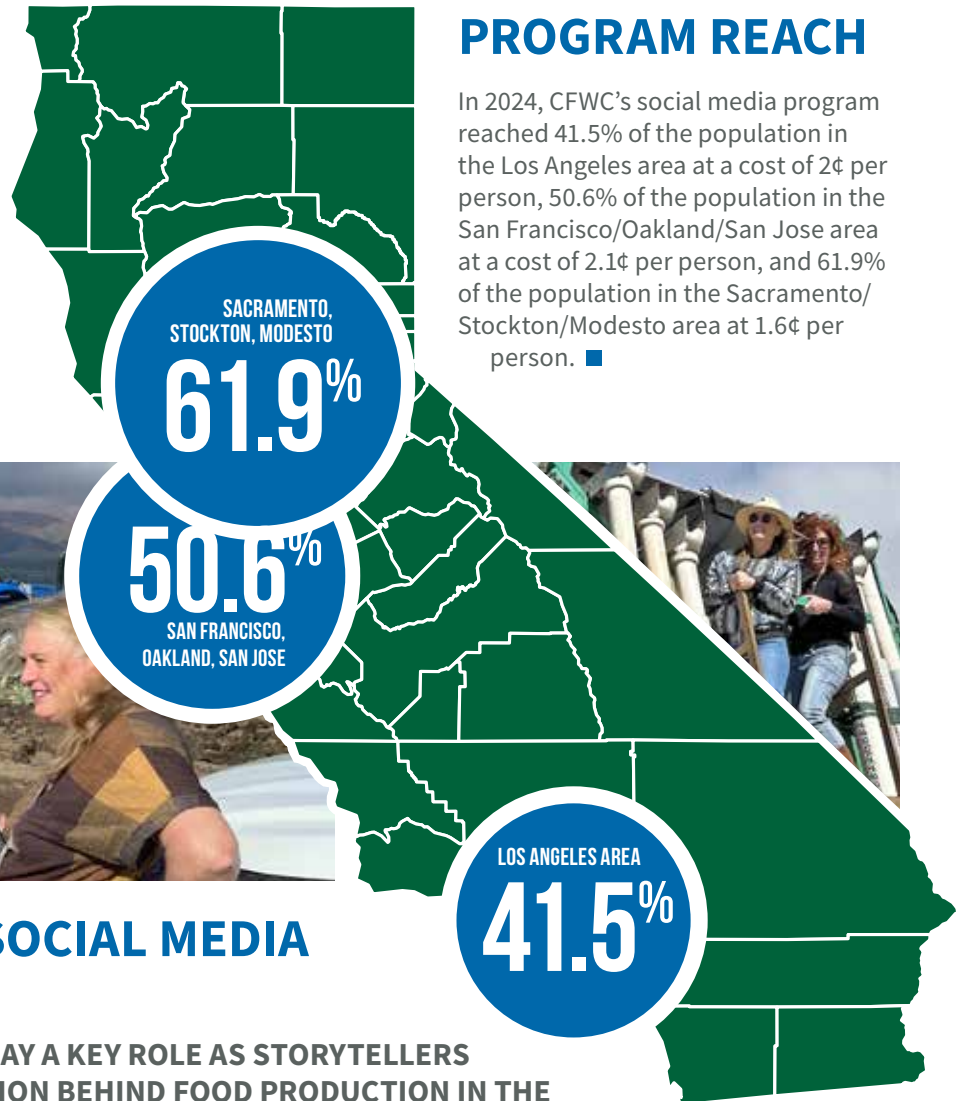
With vast audiences, influencers are a trusted source of information about where our food comes from and the technology, dedication, and care farmers use to bring it to our tables. This storytelling approach not only educates but also fosters appreciation for the farmers who ensure a reliable, high-quality food supply.

The program is tailored to each platform—Instagram for vibrant visuals, Twitter for quick updates—and refined through engagement analysis, ensuring content resonates with diverse audiences. By blending education, emotion, and evidence, CFWC's social media efforts successfully inform consumers about their food's origins and the need for reliable water supplies for farmers to deliver safer, more sustainable California food products over competing imports.

In 2024, CFWC's social media programs reached more than 2.5 million Facebook and Instagram users every month.

PROGRAM REACH

In 2024, CFWC's social media program reached 41.5% of the population in the Los Angeles area at a cost of 2¢ per person, 50.6% of the population in the San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose area at a cost of 2.1¢ per person, and 61.9% of the population in the Sacramento/Stockton/Modesto area at 1.6¢ per person. ■



Social ads were displayed approximately 55.9 million times and reached 30.8 million social media accounts over the course of the year.

CFWC hosted two, multi-day farm tours for a total of five social media influencers with a combined audience of over 144,000 people. The Winter tour took guests to the Coachella and Imperial valleys in March where they toured Aziz Farms to see date production in Thermal, followed by a stop at Peter Rabbit Farms for mechanized carrot harvest. Day 2 took the group to the Imperial Valley and a visit to Doc's Organics and citrus production and then Lakeside Organic Gardens to see freshly harvested produce packed and chilled for shipment across the country.

The final stop of the tour was at the Salton Sea for a discussion on restoration activities by the Imperial Irrigation District to reduce dust impacts on surrounding communities from the receding shoreline. ■

SOCIAL MEDIA

ENGAGEMENTS SEEKING MORE INFORMATION:



514,428



YOUTH AND FAMILY EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

CFWC CONTRIBUTES TO FARM WATER-BASED EDUCATION BY SPONSORING THREE INTERACTIVE FARM WATER EXHIBITS AT THE SMUD MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND CURIOSITY (MOSAC) IN THE STATE'S CAPITAL CITY, SACRAMENTO.

Students, families, public officials, and others are learning how much water it takes to produce the food needed for a healthy diet, how farmers use cutting-edge irrigation technology to be more efficient, and the critical role water storage plays for the farms that grow our food.

Launched as part of the Water Challenge Gallery when the museum opened in November 2021, these exhibits illustrate the vital link between farm water and food production. They engage visitors with hands-on displays that encourage visitors to step into the boots of farmers, while learning about the amount of water required to grow crops, the advanced technologies farmers employ to conserve water, and the importance of water storage and infrastructure in sustaining California agriculture.

CFWC's sponsorship highlights its dedication to STEM education and sustainable water practices. Since its opening, MOSAC has attracted over 450,000 visitors, offering a broad audience—including students and families—an opportunity to explore the critical role water plays in feeding the state and beyond.

CFWC's million-dollar commitment helps achieve this vital education goal through its title sponsor role at MOSAC. ■



SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWER GROWTH:

31%
YEAR OVER YEAR



SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT RATE:

150%
OF INDUSTRY AVERAGE

EDUCATING POLICY-MAKERS

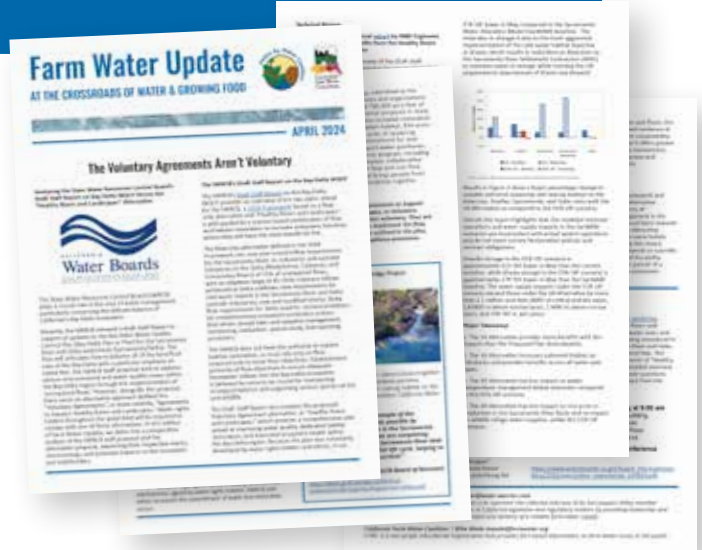
FARM WATER UPDATE

THE FARM WATER UPDATE NEWSLETTER, PRODUCED IN COOPERATION WITH THE VALLEY AG WATER COALITION, HAS BEEN AN INNOVATIVE TOOL IN CFWC'S MISSION TO EDUCATE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATORS, STATE AGENCY PERSONNEL, AND THE PUBLIC TO RESHAPE PERCEPTIONS OF FARMING IN THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY.

Designed to counter the “Corporate Ag” stereotype often used by critics, the newsletter reframes agriculture as an honorable, necessary, and beneficial endeavor. Through storytelling, it brings readers into

the lives of farmers, generating a personal connection that challenges common misconceptions. The newsletter spotlights the industry’s commitment to water use efficiency and safe food production and discusses

topics like food security, wet-year water capture and storage, water rights, and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. It also underscores farming’s essential role in rural communities, where tax revenues support critical services such as schools, police, and firefighters. Through fact-based education, Farm Water Update not only serves as an educational tool for the State’s policymakers, it also inspires greater appreciation and support for California’s agricultural heartland. ■



FACT SHEETS

IN 2024, CFWC RELEASED THREE COMPELLING FACT SHEETS— *SUSTAINABILITY & IMPORTS*, *SAMPLE DAILY MENU* AND *FARM WATER CAFE*— AS PART OF ITS ONGOING EFFORT TO EDUCATE CONSUMERS, THE MEDIA, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS ABOUT AGRICULTURE’S CRITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH WATER.

Sustainability & Imports highlights the environmental and economic benefits of California’s local food production compared to imported alternatives, reinforcing the value of the state’s sustainable farming practices. *Sample Daily Menu* offers a practical breakdown of the water used to produce everyday meals, highlighting the need for more sustainable water supplies in agriculture. And *Farm Water Cafe* takes an innovative approach, engaging audiences with an interactive experience that brings farm water challenges to life. Available on the CFWC website and distributed widely at conferences, workshops, and meetings, these fact sheets effectively inform consumers, the media, and policymakers, advancing CFWC’s mission to promote awareness of agriculture’s responsible water use and its vital role in our food supply. ■





REINFORCING PARTNERSHIPS

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES

IN 2024, CFWC BEGAN A NEW COLLABORATION WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES (ACWA) TO ADVANCE ITS CULTIVATE CALIFORNIA PROGRAM, AN INITIATIVE DESIGNED TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE CRITICAL ROLE OF FARM WATER IN CALIFORNIA’S FOOD PRODUCTION.

This partnership embraced innovative outreach by leveraging social media, featuring influencer-created recipes and dynamic Instagram reels that connected an audience of millions with California farmers. These efforts highlighted how farmers use water to grow the state’s diverse array of crops, bringing their stories to life for a wide audience. By connecting consumers with the faces behind their food, the program emphasizes the importance of sustainable water management in agriculture, fostering greater appreciation for the link between California’s water resources and the meals on our tables. ■

“ These public water agencies serve millions of Californians and vast agricultural regions... ”

IVH2O PARTNERSHIP OUTREACH PROGRAM

IN 2024, CFWC CONTINUED ITS SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH IMPERIAL VALLEY WATER (IVH2O) TO ADVANCE AN OUTREACH PROGRAM FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE OF THE COLORADO RIVER.

This initiative targets senior officials at the Bureau of Reclamation and the broader public, emphasizing the critical need for balanced Post-2026 Operational Guidelines for the river. As current agreements governing the river’s management near expiration, the program educates stakeholders on the importance of sustainable water policies that support both agricultural and urban needs. Through strategic engagement, CFWC and IVH2O are working to ensure that the voices of California’s water users are heard in shaping the river’s future, fostering informed decision-making for this essential resource. ■



SIGNIFICANCE FOR MEMBERS AND REGIONAL REACH

The outreach program holds particular significance for CFWC members who rely on the Colorado River, including the Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

These public water agencies serve millions of Californians and vast agricultural regions that produce up to 90 percent of the nation’s winter fruit and vegetables. Sustainable water supplies are essential for their operations and the communities they support. By extending its reach to all seven Colorado River Basin States—Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming—the program encourages a collaborative and cooperative approach to water management.

This basin-wide effort underscores the shared responsibility of protecting the river’s resources for future generations while balancing the diverse needs of its users, amplifying the impact of CFWC and IVH2O’s joint advocacy. ■



REINFORCING PARTNERSHIPS

“ In a world of global uncertainties and continuously rising prices, we need to prioritize domestic food production. ”

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INDUSTRY CORRESPONDENCE

CFWC COLLABORATES REGULARLY WITH OTHER AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS TO ADVOCATE FOR SENSIBLE POLICIES ON CRITICAL FARM WATER ISSUES BY JOINTLY SUBMITTING LETTERS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO INFLUENCE DECISION-MAKERS.

One key example is their support for the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) initiative, part of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan, where CFWC and its partners push for a balanced approach that integrates flow and non-flow measures to protect native fish species while ensuring reliable water supplies for agriculture and urban use.

Additionally, CFWC has worked with allies to submit letters urging the suspension of the Fall X2 regulation on

Delta smelt, citing scientific evidence that demonstrates its ineffectiveness in protecting the species, and advocating for more targeted conservation strategies that avoid unnecessary burdens on water users.

Another significant effort involves support for Sites Reservoir, 10 miles west of the town of Maxwell in the Sacramento Valley and the Sisk Dam Raise project west of Los Banos in the San Joaquin Valley. These projects, promoted through joint advocacy,

aim to build additional water storage capacity, enhancing California’s resilience against climate variability and drought.

Through these collaborative submissions, CFWC and its partners play a vital role in shaping practical, science-based water policies that support both agriculture and environmental stewardship in the state. ■



CONCLUSION AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

THE CALIFORNIA FARM WATER COALITION HAS DEMONSTRATED REMARKABLE IMPACT IN 2024 AND THROUGHOUT ITS 36-YEAR HISTORY, ADVANCING ITS MISSION TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC, POLICYMAKERS, AND THE MEDIA ABOUT THE CRITICAL ROLE OF FARM WATER IN SUSTAINING CALIFORNIA'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND FOOD SUPPLY.

Through innovative media outreach, including 27 published op-eds and articles, and dynamic social media campaigns that reached over 30 million accounts, CFWC has effectively countered misinformation and fostered a deeper understanding of agricultural water issues. Its educational initiatives, such as the interactive exhibits at the SMUD Museum of Science and Curiosity engaging over 450,000 visitors, alongside strategic partnerships

with allied organizations, have amplified its advocacy for abundant water policies and sensible policies. As California faces ongoing water challenges, the need for CFWC's positive education and outreach remains vital. With its proven ability to unite stakeholders and inspire future generations, CFWC is well-positioned to continue leading the conversation on farm water, ensuring a balanced and resilient water future for all Californians. ■

CFWC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Don Bransford
Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District

Jeff Sutton
Ridgetop Rice Dryer

Greg Johnson, CFWC President
Western Canal Water District

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MWD of Southern California

Johnny Amaral
Friant Water Authority

Diana Westmoreland
California Women for Agriculture

Wayne Western, CFWC Sec./Treas.
Hammonds Ranch



FOOD GROWS WHERE WATER FLOWS



CFWC represents a diverse group of stakeholders which includes farmers, water suppliers and agricultural businesses.

With members from Redding to the Imperial Valley, we address farm water issues at the local, regional and statewide levels.



CALIFORNIA FARM WATER COALITION

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