



CALIFORNIA
Blueberry
COMMISSION

Wishing you a Happy New Year!

Newsletter

Issue No. 33

November/December 2020

CONGRESS PASSES COVID-19 RELIEF BILL

On December 21, 2020, Congress approved \$900 billion in Coronavirus relief, including \$26 billion specified for agriculture and nutrition. The legislation makes two important amendments to the second Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 2). First, it allows producers to amend their CFAP 2 applications to include crop insurance payments in their total sales data. Second, it gives CFAP 2 recipients the choice of reporting sales data from 2018 instead of 2019. This was included to assist growers who experienced severe losses in 2019. However, the option is open to all CFAP 2 recipients. If reporting 2018 data yields a larger payment than 2019, you may resubmit. We will provide additional information on this resubmittal process once it becomes available. Please note that the legislation does not create a CFAP 3 program nor does it change the current rule that sales data must be based on "raw" - not packed or finished - commodities.

SECTION 201 INVESTIGATION HEARING

In late September of 2020, the CBC voted to actively support the Section 201 global safeguard investigation for blueberries being conducted by the International Trade Commission (ITC). Upcoming public hearings which will offer interested parties and consumers an opportunity to present evidence or otherwise be heard will be happening on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 9:30 am. For more information on how to attend the virtual hearing, please visit usitc.gov or contact the CBC office.

2019-2020 CBC ANNUAL REPORT

In the near future, please be on the lookout for the 2019-2020 California Blueberry Commission Annual Report. The Annual Report will include information on current and future research, education projects, market reports, and other pertinent industry information. If you would

like a copy, please contact the Commission office or email intern@calblueberry.org. The Annual Report will also be available on the CBC website, calblueberry.org.

ESSENTIAL AGRICULTURAL WORKERS NEXT IN LINE FOR COVID-19 VACCINES

Agricultural workers are among those recommended to receive the next round of scarce COVID-19 vaccines in California. The next round of doses are expected early next year. An estimated 3.4 million vaccines have been allocated to food and agriculture workers, from farm to table including those working in food and drinking establishments as well as farmworkers, grocers, bakers, and butchers. Plant nurseries, florists, and sawmills all fall into that category, as do community food services and pharmacies.

2021 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Minimum Wage Increases: Effective January 1, 2021, the state minimum wage will increase to \$13 per hour for employers with 25 or fewer employees, and \$14 per hour for employers with 26 or more employees. As for exempt personnel, effective January 1, 2021, the minimum salary for exempt employees will increase to \$54,084 per year (or \$4,507 per month) for employers with 25 or fewer employees, and \$58,248 per year (or \$4,854 per month) for employers with 26 or more employees.

Wage Order 14 Overtime Thresholds Decrease:

Effective January 1, 2021, the new overtime threshold for employers with 26 or more employees will be 8 ½ hours per day or 45 hours per week. For employers with 25 or fewer employees, the overtime threshold will remain at 10 hours per day.

COVID-19 Exposure Notice: AB 685 creates a notice requirement at the workplace if an employee is exposed to COVID-19. The employer must notify exposed employees within one business day of the exposure as

well as the employees' rights to sick leave and other COVID-19 related policies. AB 685 will require an employer, if the employer or representative of the employer is notified of the number of cases that meet the definition of a COVID-19 outbreak, within 48 hours, to report prescribed information to the local public health agency in the jurisdiction of the worksite. AB 685 will require an employer that has an outbreak to continue to give notice to the local health department of any subsequent laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 at the worksite.

SB 1383: The California Family Rights Act (CFRA) makes it an unlawful employment practice for an employer with 50 or more employees to refuse to grant a request by an employee to take up to 12 workweeks of unpaid protected leave during any 12-month period to bond with a new child of the employee or to care for themselves, a child, a parent, or spouse. SB 1383 amended the CFRA to make it unlawful for any employer with five or more employees to refuse to grant a request by an employee to take up to 12 workweeks of

unpaid protected leave during any 12-month period to bond with a new child of the employee or to care for themselves or a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner. This expansion creates an inconsistency with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which also provides employees of employers with 50 or more employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year. This means employees of employers with 50 or more employees could take up to 24 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year.

Happy Holidays from the CAC!



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Did you know you can receive an e-newsletter instead of the snail mail version? If you would like to sign up, please email intern@calblueberry.org.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **OFFICE CLOSED- MLK Day**
 - January 18, 2021
- **OFFICE CLOSED- Presidents' Day**
 - February 15, 2021

All events are being held virtually. Please contact the CBC office for more information.



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