

Sacramento Valley Basinwide Air Pollution Control Council

# Agricultural Biomass Conference

The Opportunities & Challenges of Agricultural Biomass Utilization

OCTOBER 5-6, 2023 - Winters, CA

## SPEAKERS & PANELISTS



**Shannon Douglass** is the first vice president of the California Farm Bureau Federation, the director of the Glenn County Farm Bureau, and former chair of the CFBF Young Farmers and Ranchers State Committee. She and her husband are the owners of Douglass Ranch in Orland, CA where they raise beef cattle, forage crops, sunflowers, pumpkins and specialty seeds. She also founded CalAgJobs, an online listing of employment opportunities in California agriculture. Douglass serves on the Glenn County Fair Board of Directors and was a former director of the Glenn County Resource Conservation District.



**Ali Adams** is the Manager of the Central Valley Air Quality Planning Section at the California Air Resources Board, responsible for air quality planning for California's Central Valley, including the San Joaquin Valley, and certain other areas of the State, as well as for broader, statewide particulate matter (PM) planning and analysis efforts. Her team is lead in the review and preparation of State Implementation Plans (SIPs) for PM and ozone for select areas of the State, the California Regional Haze Plan, and the analysis of PM-related technical and policy issues. Additionally, her work focuses on data analysis related to air quality planning, including assessing the interrelation of PM air quality data, meteorology, and emissions in support of regulatory and policy directives designed to meet State and National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The team also reviews particulate matter data associated with exceedances of air quality standards resulting from natural events for exclusion of those data from regulatory determinations.



**Dr. Glenda Humiston** became vice president of UC Agriculture and Natural Resources in 2015. Glenda was raised on a cattle ranch, an active member of 4-H and brings over 30 years of experience working on public policy development and program implementation supporting sustainability. She served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tunisia, as executive director of a nonprofit organization advocating farmland preservation and value-added agriculture development, and several years as a consultant on environmental and agricultural issues throughout the West. She served President Clinton as deputy undersecretary for natural resources and environment at USDA from 1998 to 2001 and managed the Sustainable Development Institute at the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development in South Africa and the 2006 World Water Forum in Mexico City. In 2009, Humiston was appointed by President Obama to serve as the California State Director at the USDA Rural Development. She produced a widely acclaimed guidebook on "Access to Capital" and has led efforts to bring rural issues to the forefront of the state's Economic Summit and policymakers throughout California. Humiston earned her Ph.D. from UC Berkeley in Environmental Science, Policy and Management, a master's degree in international agricultural development from UC Davis and a bachelor's degree in animal science from Colorado State University.



**David Shabazian** was appointed by the Governor as the Director of the Department of Conservation in October 2019. From working the soil with his hands to leading policies for working lands, David is a lifelong champion for natural resource stewardship. His career is built on bringing diverse stakeholders together with innovative methods to protect both the ecological and economic value of our natural and working lands. David grew up on a family farm in California's Central Valley that grew hay and grain for local dairies. David received a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from UC Davis and a master's degree in Transportation Technology and Policy from UC Davis. He worked for the Sacramento Area Council of Governments for close to two decades, leading programs that were nationally recognized. David is a member of the Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services board of directors and has served on numerous other boards and committees centered around healthy foods, agriculture, and working lands.



**Cara Morgan** is the Deputy Director leading the Materials Management and Local Assistance division at CalRecycle. Cara has worked extensively on implementing the new organics recycling laws in an effort to fast track the fight against climate change. Cara has many years of experience successfully implementing and building the Circular Economy in California.



**George Peridas** has been working on carbon capture, removal and storage for almost two decades. He is a mechanical engineer and holds a Masters in Engineering and a PhD from the University of Oxford, as well as a Masters in Environmental Science and Policy from Imperial College. He began his career in academia in materials research, and then switched to energy markets consulting for the international firm Pöyry. George came to the U.S. in 2006 to join the environmental NGO movement and spent twelve years at NRDC working on climate change advocacy and specifically carbon capture and storage science, regulation and policy. He joined Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2019, where he authored and co-authored reports on the regulation and economics of carbon capture, removal and storage, as well as in-depth analyses of how California and other jurisdictions can achieve carbon neutrality. Starting in October, 2023, George joined ZuCO2, a company founded by community members and landowners in the California Delta to pursue responsible carbon storage projects for the benefit of the climate and the greater Delta region.



**Karen Warner** is the founder and CEO of BEAM Circular, a new hub for the circular bioeconomy in California's North San Joaquin Valley that is transforming waste into environmental solutions and economic opportunity for disinvested communities. Born and raised in the Central Valley of California, Karen began her career in global health and has served in a variety of nonprofit, governmental, and private sector roles focused on cross-sector partnerships and scaling social innovation. In 2018 she moved back to the Central Valley and served as District Chief of Staff for Congressman Josh Harder, before transitioning to a focus on regional projects at the intersections of inclusive economic development, agriculture, and climate. Karen has a BA in Human Biology and MBA from Stanford University, and a MPA from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. She is currently an Emerson Collective Fellow and a member of the Stanislaus County Commission for Women Board of Directors. She lives in Modesto with her husband and two young children.





**Virginia Jameson** was appointed Deputy Secretary for Climate and Working Lands at the California Department of Food and Agriculture in November 2021. She previously served as Climate and Conservation Program Manager at the California Department of Conservation. Prior to that, she was Deputy State Director for the American Farmland Trust, Management Specialist for the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, a Board Aide for Monterey County Office of District 4 Supervisor Jane Parker, and Associate Director of the Ag Land Trust. Jameson holds dual Master of Arts degrees in International Affairs and Natural Resources and Sustainable Development from American University and a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz.



**Dr. Amrith Gunasekara** recently joined the California Bountiful Foundation as its new Director of Science and Research. He will conduct and support scientific studies on critical matters affecting California agricultural communities. Dr. Gunasekara previously served as the Science Advisor to California Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross, and as Environmental Program Manager for the Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation at CDFA, which specialized in environmental incentive programs and climate change issues. At 16-years-old, Gunasekara came to the United States from Sri Lanka where food security was an issue. He says that gives him an appreciation for what California's farmers and ranchers do for their communities on a daily basis that we often take for granted.



**Sheraz Gill** is the Deputy Air Pollution Control Office at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD). Sheraz has over 22 years of air quality experience working with a wide variety of stakeholders both within the San Joaquin Valley and around the state. He has worked directly on a variety of high-profile air pollution issues including developing State Implementation Plans, transportation growth challenges, the inclusion of agricultural into air quality permitting and wildland fire mitigation efforts. Within SJVAPCD, he currently oversees the planning efforts required by the federal and state governments, rule development, technology advancement, air quality analysis, air quality modeling, air monitoring, incentives and grants programs. He has been at the forefront of providing the public with the most up to date air quality information and in developing the most stringent regulations. He graduated with a BS in mechanical engineering at California State University Fresno.



**Julee Malinowski-Ball** is a Partner and lobbyist at Public Policy Advocates, LLC with over 20 years of hands-on lobbying and consulting experience in Sacramento at the Legislature and regulatory agencies, including the Natural Resources Agency (CAL FIRE), California Environmental Protection Agency, California Energy Commission, California Air Resources Board and California Public Utilities Commission. Over this period, she has represented clients on many resources-based issues such as air quality, climate change, tree mortality, power plant siting procedures, renewable energy, distributed generation, alternative transportation fuels, water quality, supply and distribution, and transportation and other infrastructure issues. Julee has represented the California Biomass Energy Alliance for over a decade and more recently also serves as its Executive Director. Julee holds a BA in Political Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and an MA in Government Studies from California State University, Sacramento.





**Michael Boccadoro** has worked extensively for more than forty years in public affairs and government relations. As Executive Director of the Agricultural Energy Consumers Association, Mr. Boccadoro is responsible for overseeing the association's regulatory and legislative affairs before the Public Utilities Commission, California Energy Commission, California Air Resources Board, and the California state Legislature. Mr. Boccadoro has been deeply engaged in California's climate, energy, and environmental policy debates on behalf of the state's agriculture industries. He has also been instrumental in the development of California's distributed-renewable energy programs related to bioenergy. Mr. Boccadoro received his B.A. in economics and political science from the University of California, Davis.



**Mitch Sears** is the Executive Officer of Valley Clean Energy (VCE) and was instrumental in launching VCE. He has contributed his depth of experience to VCE gained through nearly 28 years with the City of Davis serving in various staff and management roles. Most recently he served as the City's Sustainability Manager for over a decade, leading comprehensive efforts to address climate change, including implementation of community energy projects. Prior to that, he oversaw Davis's Agricultural Land Conservation Program, helping permanently preserve over a thousand acres of Yolo County farmland.



**Dr. Matthew Summers** leads the technical development and research operations of West Biofuels. Dr. Summers has managed the planning, engineering, and construction of the Woodland Biomass Research Center. He supervises numerous staff and contractors and all aspects of technology development of the West Biofuels advanced reforming system. Dr. Summers has many years of experience as a technical consultant on the engineering, economic and environmental performance of biomass-to-energy technologies. Dr. Summers earned a Ph.D. in Biological Systems Engineering from University of California, Davis and holds a M.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University. He is a recognized expert in energy conversion, holds several patents, and has authored numerous reports on the subject of biomass-to-energy development, biomass and synthesis gas conversion technologies, emissions controls, and engineering design.



**Wayne McFarland** has spent the last 15 years in the field of renewable energy focused on finding solutions for converting biomass and other problematic global waste streams into carbon negative clean energy. His current focus is on how to deliver immediate solutions to some of the world's most troubling energy, environmental, economic, social and political problems. Wayne founded SynTech BioEnergy, LLC, with a mission to be a leader in meeting the challenge of climate change through delivering renewable, carbon negative clean energy and end-of-waste solutions on a global scale. Wayne's expertise in environmental law & policy, global manufacturing, renewable energy and retail energy markets, coupled with his inner drive to better the environment, has been fundamental to his leadership of SynTech. He now serves as Chairman and CEO of SynTech PCo, LLC, parent of all related SynTech entities. Prior to SynTech, he served as Managing Member, CEO and Chairman of Admiral Energy, LLC, and as Chairman, CEO and Managing Member of Native American Tribal Energy Company, LLC. Wayne holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Lewis University and a J.D. degree with honors from the IIT/Chicago Kent College of Law.





**Vice Mayor Eric Guerra** represents the southeastern part of the City of Sacramento, including the areas of Campus Commons, Tahoe Park and Little Saigon. Vice Mayor Guerra grew up a farm worker in rural yolo county the went on to become a proud Sacramento State Hornet, he graduated in 2003 with a BS in Electrical and Electronic Engineering and a MA in Public Policy and Administration in 2008. Prior to his election to the City Council in 2015, Councilman Guerra served as the Governor appointee to the California State University Board of Trustees, President of the Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association, Chairman of the Sacramento County Planning Commission, and has over fifteen years of experience in the California State Legislature in numerous roles. While serving as Councilmember, he has served as Chairman for the Sacramento Metro Air Quality Management District and for Regional County Sanitation District. In January 2023, he was appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom to represent the Sacramento Region Air Districts on the California Air Resources Board.



**Dr. Somayeh Nassiri** is a faculty member at the University of California Pavement Research Center (UCPRC). She is interested in pavement materials and structural design techniques to improve pavement sustainability. These strategies include using more sustainable materials and construction practices for long-lasting and durable pavements. Others are to improve pavement structural design for new and rehabilitation projects and to optimize repair jobs in terms of materials, timing, and construction to extend the life cycle of pavements, among others. Dr. Nassiri teaches courses on the materials, design, repair, rehabilitation, and management of asphalt and concrete pavements.



**Evan W.R. Edgar** has thirty-three years of experience in all aspects of solid waste management as a registered civil engineer. He is the Principal of Edgar & Associates, Inc., a lobbying firm and environmental engineering firm based in Sacramento and established in 1997. Mr. Edgar also cofounded the California Compost Quality Council and the California Compost Coalition, a statewide compost market development project and Lobbying Coalition, respectively. Mr. Edgar has advocated for green energy incentives, compost market development, greenhouse gas reductions policies, and practical regulations in front of legislative committees, regulatory agencies, and local commissions involving the collection, hauling, processing, and composting of urban green and yard wastes. Mr. Edgar has advised private industry companies, state and local government, and non-governmental organizations on recycling and organic waste project development issues including technical feasibility, collection options, land use compatibility, site design, operations, grant and loan funding, business development, and market development issues.



**Greg Giguere** is no stranger to the Dunnigan Hills, he is the son of Karl and Vicki Giguere and spent the first 10 years of his career grape farming here for R.H. Phillips and JK Vineyards. Greg then spent 8 years working in the vineyards of Oregon and Washington state. In 2017, Greg came home and re-joined the family business, bringing back all the secrets of the vineyards from the Pacific Northwest. Greg is a UC Davis Viticulture and Enology graduate and passionate about growing exceptional wine grapes. He is especially interested in conservation and is active on local conservation boards. When he is not out in the vineyards, Greg enjoys spending time with his family and four children, Declan, Aisling, Caitlin and Roslynn, in the great outdoors – camping, hiking, skiing and exploring the Mount Shasta region.





**Dan Pronsolino** is the General Manager at Cortina Hulling and Shelling, which owns and operates both Cortina Hulling and Shelling and Dunnigan Hills Hulling and Shelling.



**Raymond Baltar** is the Biochar Projects Manager and Director of the Sonoma Biochar Initiative at the Sonoma Ecology Center. He is a sustainability consultant, local businessman, and professional photographer is focused on integrating business principles with energy conservation and environmental sustainability. Mr. Baltar served on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club, Redwood Chapter and on the Steering Committee for Solar Sonoma County. He completed a “Green MBA” graduate degree in Sustainable Enterprise from Dominican University in 2011.



**Stuart Gilchrist** is a Marysville City Council Member and Board Chair for the Feather River Air Quality Management District. Mr. Gilchrist is a 4th generation northern Californian, born and raised in Marysville in a family of working farmers. He is an artist, designer and small business owner and is engaged with his community by participating in many organizations and projects such as the South Yuba County Rotary, Yuba Water Agency’s Education Center Development Steering Committee, City of Marysville Downtown Turnaround Pilot Program through SACOG, a Founding Member of Neighborhood Association of Chinatown. He also partnered with the City of Marysville’s chosen Environmental Planner as designer of various parks and is a designer of two local interactive memorials through Yuba Sutter Regional Arts Council (The Arboga Assembly Center Japanese Internment Camp and Cotton Rosser Monument in Plaza Park).

