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Calendar

For a listing of industry events and dates for the coming year, please visit:

<http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/commission/industry-calendar>

CDFA Healthy Soils Incentives Program Grant Application Workshop — San Diego

The Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Greater San Diego is hosting two workshops concerning how to apply for Healthy Soils Incentives Program grants from the California Department of Food and Agriculture. These grants (up to \$75,000) are provided to farmers who plan to implement on-farm conservation management practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases and improve soil health. The grant deadline is March 8, 2019. [More information available here.](#)

January 16 & 23

January 16

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Location: RCD of Greater San Diego County, 11769 Waterhill Road, San Diego, CA

January 23

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: San Diego Farm Bureau, 420 South Broadway, Ste 200, Escondido, CA

CDFA Healthy Soils Grants and State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program Workshop — Ventura County

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) offers Healthy Soils Incentives Program grants that provide farmers with up to \$75,000 to implement on-farm conservation management practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases and improve soil health. The State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP) reimburses agricultural operations for projects that reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and water use. The deadline for both programs is March 8, 2019. The first hour of the seminar concerns SWEEP grants; the second hour concerns HSP. [More information available here.](#)

January 18, 22, 24 & 28

January 18

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Active Adult and Community Center, 533 Santa Clara St., Fillmore, CA

January 22

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Help of Ojai, 111 W. Santa Ana St., Ojai, CA

January 24

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Ventura County RCD Office, 3380 Somis Rd., Somis, CA

January 28

Time: 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: Oxnard Public Library Meeting Room B, 251 South A St., Oxnard, CA

Herbicide Sprayer Calibration Workshop

The University of California Cooperative Extension — San Diego workshop includes a two-hour hands-on calibration training session with various types of spray equipment (spray guns and backpack sprayers), as well as two hours of classroom instruction about the basics of calibration, laws and regulations. Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

January 30

January 30

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: UCCE San Diego Office, 9335 Hazard Way, Suite 201, San Diego, CA

RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY - Produce Safety Alliance Training for Avocado Growers and Related Industry Members

To help avocado growers and related industry members comply with the mandatory Produce Safety Alliance training, CAC, in partnership with California avocado handlers, has scheduled two Produce Safety Alliance trainings exclusively for California avocado growers for a very modest fee of \$35 (fee includes refreshments, lunch, training materials, and the official training certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials). Registration required. [More information available here.](#)

February 5 & 7

February 5

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Pala Mesa Resort, 2001 Old Hwy. 395, Fallbrook, CA

February 7

Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Museum of Ventura County at 100 E. Main Street, Ventura, CA

Commission Secures Congressional Members' Support on China Market Access

In 2005 the California Avocado Commission initiated the process to gain market access to China. Since that time we have been working through the "system," which for the most part is the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), to move the request forward. Obviously the process has moved very slowly. Growers are probably aware of the trade issues between the U.S. and China that have been widely covered in the media. On the heels of high-level trade policy meetings, which occurred in early January in China, APHIS has told Commission staff they expect technical meetings will be scheduled soon to discuss phytosanitary matters including market access for California avocados.

In anticipation of these technical bilateral meetings the Commission decided to increase our pressure on USDA. A copy of a letter the Commission wrote on behalf of members of Congress and sent to USDA on January 9 is available [here](#). CAC is

very pleased the letter received support from all the Congressional representatives contacted (primarily those with California avocado production in their districts) and are hopeful it will help ensure USDA makes California avocado China market access a priority in the new trade access negotiations. In our experience, government agencies do not take lightly hearing from Congress members, so it is our hope USDA will genuinely make every effort to finalize the California HASS avocado agreement as soon as possible (barring the politics that remain). The Commission will keep growers updated as new information becomes available.

Commission Submits Comments on Central Coast Water Board's Proposed Ag Order 4.0

California Avocado Commission staff [have submitted comments](#) in response to the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's (Board) Ag Order 4.0 Conceptual Regulatory Requirement Options. The Board's Notice of Written Public Comment Period was opened in November 2018, and the deadline to provide written comments is 8:00 a.m., January 22, 2019.

As part of the Notice, the Board included [five tables](#) that outline options Water Board staff will present for consideration at the March 21 – 22 public hearing. These tables address the following water quality issues:

- Nitrate loading to groundwater
- Nutrient loading to surface water
- Pesticide discharges to surface and ground water
- Sediment discharges to surface water
- Protection of the riparian habitat

These new regulatory requirements would apply to all farms, including organic and Sustainability in Practice Certified farms, regardless of risk to surface or groundwater.

California avocado growers within the Central Coast Board's region are encouraged to provide written comments as well. Comments can be sent to AgNOI@waterboards.ca.gov with a subject line: "Comments to Ag Order 4.0 Options Tables."

CDFA Healthy Soils Grants and SWEEP Program Informational Seminars Available

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) offers [Healthy Soils Incentives Program](#) grants that provide farmers with up to \$75,000 to implement on-farm conservation management practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gases and improve soil health.

Following are a few [highlights](#) concerning eligible agricultural operations and the application process:

- A grant application can include multiple farms, but the same farm cannot be included in multiple applications
- Fallow land that was previously cropland, but has been inactive recently, is eligible; natural fallow lands being converted to cropland are not eligible
- Crop rotation is eligible during the course of a proposed project
- Project implementation cannot begin sooner than July 1, 2019 or later than December 31, 2019
- There is no minimum greenhouse gas reduction per project

The State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP) application period also is open. SWEEP reimburses agricultural operations for projects that reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and water use.

The grant deadline for [HSP](#) and [SWEEP](#) is March 8, 2019. Application and informative materials can be accessed online.

To assist growers interested in applying for the grants, a number of information workshops are being held in San Diego County, San Luis Obispo County and Ventura County. The seminars are as follows.

San Diego County

The Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Greater San Diego is hosting two [workshops](#) concerning how to apply for the HSP grant funds. Registration for the seminars is available [online](#).

The workshops will be held as follows:

<p>January 16, 1:00 p.m. RCD of Greater San Diego County 11769 Waterhill Road San Diego, CA 92040</p>	<p>January 23, 10:00 a.m. San Diego Farm Bureau 420 South Broadway, Ste 200 Escondido, CA 92025</p>
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San Luis Obispo County

The Coastal San Luis Conservation District and San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau are conducting two technical workshops for HSP and SWEEP. Growers can RSVP for the sessions at hrrichard@coastalrcd.org or 805.772.4391.

<p>February 6 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. HSP 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. SWEEP SLO County Farm Bureau 4875 Morabito Place San Luis Obispo, CA 93401</p>

Ventura County

The Ventura County Resource Conservation District is hosting free HSP and SWEEP workshops. Please RVSP for the SWEEP workshops at 805.764.5132 or jamiwhiteford.vcrd@gmail.com. Please RSVP for the HSP workshops at 805.764.5135 or lexi.vcrd@gmail.com.

The Ventura workshops will be held as follows:

<p>January 18 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. SWEEP 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. HSP Active Adult and Community Center 533 Santa Clara St. Fillmore, CA 93015</p>	<p>January 22 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. SWEEP 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. HSP Help of Ojai 111 W. Santa Ana St. Ojai, CA 93023</p>
<p>January 24 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. SWEEP 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. HSP Ventura County RCD Office 3380 Somis Rd. Somis, CA 93066</p>	<p>January 28 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. SWEEP 3:30 – 4:30 p.m. HSP Oxnard Public Library Meeting Room B 251 South A St. Oxnard, CA 93030</p>

Preparing for the Potential Frosts and Freezes of January

For California avocado growers, January is the month that groves tend to be susceptible to frost and freeze damage. As the threat of colder weather arrives, it's important for growers to understand the mechanics of frosts and freezes, and what they can do to protect their groves from unseasonably cold conditions.

Frost vs. Freeze

To begin with, it's important to differentiate between a frost and a freeze. A frost is caused when objects cool during the night and radiate their heat loss, chilling the surrounding air. Cold air tends to settle near the ground while warm air rises. In Southern California, the "ceiling" is often low, which means that warm air is closer to the ground. This phenomenon is called a temperature inversion and it tends to protect orchards from the cold.

That said, when forecasts indicate windy conditions this disrupts the inversion and thus the colder air is pressed to ground level. Knowing whether a temperature inversion is present or not is a key factor in determining whether to use wind machines as a preventative measure (this is discussed in further detail below).

A freeze occurs when a mass of cold air moves in and the temperature of the air decreases at both ground level and in the higher air levels. Protecting groves in these conditions is difficult and usually involves adding heat to the grove with orchard heaters.

Protecting Groves

To [prevent frost damage](#) in a mature grove, the two most-relied-upon methods are orchard heaters and wind machines.

Orchard heaters tend to distribute heat to all parts of the grove when well distributed, but can be expensive to run and can present a fire hazard.

Wind machines are economical and less labor intensive and, when used with orchard heaters, can increase the effectiveness of the heaters. Wind machines should only be used in frost conditions — not during freeze conditions in which temperatures fall 4 or more degrees below damage points. In addition, wind machines should not be used in conditions (usually windy) in which no temperature inversion is present. If wind machines are used in these conditions, they can cause more damage because they simply stir up the cold air at tree level.

In situations in which there is no temperature inversion, the best practice is to run microsprinklers during the day and then turn off the water prior to sunset. If temperatures drop below 32° during the night, the water should be started again and run until sunrise. According to [Dr. Ben Faber](#), even if the running water freezes this is the chosen method. If ice forms on the fruit and leaves, it will release heat as it melts with the sunrise and protect the plants.

Because it can be expensive to run water, growers can opt to choose those portions of their grove that tend to be the coldest in order to save money. When the temperature is below freezing, Dr. Faber recommends against running water in a block during the night and then turning it off to water another block as this will lower the temperature in both blocks and lead to damage.

It should be noted that these methods are less effective for protecting young trees. To protect young trees, insulative wrap or frames with a burlap cover may be needed.

Caring for Frost Damaged Trees

If trees lose leaves to frost/freeze, it's important to protect exposed branches from sunburn with whitewash. Damaged trees will require less water due to loss of leaves, so refrain from irrigation until the root zone soil begins to dry. This also helps protect the damaged tree from root rot.

Refrain from pruning until the extent of damage is clearly visible. This may take months. Remove dead wood once new shoots are 2 – 3' long and be certain to thin out suckers.

If a tree is severely frozen, it's best to contact a Farm Advisor to determine the best next steps.

New Wage, Overtime and Salary Rules for Agricultural Workers

As of January 1, 2019, the following new agricultural wage, overtime and salary rules are in effect in California.

Large Employers (26 or more employees)

- Minimum wage: \$12/hour; \$15/hour in 2022
- Overtime goes into effect after 9.5 hours/day or 55 hours/week; by 2022, overtime goes into effect after 8 hours/day or 40 hours/week

Small Employers (25 employees or less)

- Minimum wage: \$11/hour; \$15/hour in 2023
- Overtime goes into effect after 10 hours/day with no limit on the number of hours worked per week; by 2022, overtime goes into effect after 9.5 hours/day or 55 hours/week; by 2025 overtime goes into effect after 8 hours/day or 40 hours/week

Agricultural employers also must increase the minimum monthly salary for exempt managers and/or supervisors. Large employers are required to pay them a minimum of \$4,160/month; this will increase to \$5,200 in 2022. Small employers are required to pay them \$3,814/month, with an increase to \$5,200 in 2023.

The California Federal Farm Bureau Federation chart outlining these changes is available [online](#).

Herbicide Sprayer Calibration Workshop

The University of California Cooperative Extension — San Diego is hosting an Herbicide Spray Calibration Workshop on January 30. The workshop will consist of a two-hour hands-on calibration training session with various types of spray equipment (spray guns and backpack sprayers), as well as two hours of classroom instruction about the basics of calibration, laws and regulations. The hosts will supply equipment for the practice sessions, but attendees are welcome to bring their own equipment as long as it is triple rinsed and clean inside and out.

The fee for the workshop is \$40 and includes lunch. The workshop will take place from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the UCCE San Diego Office, 9335 Hazard Way, Suite 201, San Diego, CA.

[Online registration is open.](#)

Dispelling the Myths of Mulch

In light of California's recent bouts with drought and excessive heat, California avocado growers should give serious consideration to using organic mulch in their groves.

Research indicates that organic mulches that consist of coarse woody material are best — and can be created from the chipped leaves and branches of trees. The most effective mulches are coarse (1/2" or more in diameter), applied as soon as possible after chipping and applied at a depth of about 4".

Mulch provides a number of benefits:

- Moderates soil temperature
- Conserves water
- Reduces soil compaction
- Provides nutrients and reduces the need for pesticides and fertilizers
- Provides a habitat for beneficial insects
- Controls weeds, disease and non-beneficial pests

A recent [blog post](#) from the University of California farm advisors addresses myths that often deter growers from using mulch. Below are mulch myths relevant to California avocado growers.

- Mulch does not draw nitrogen from the soil unless it is incorporated into the soil.
- Wood chip mulches, even from diseased trees, will not transmit root pathogens such as Phytophthora and Armillaria root rot to healthy tree roots. When chips are stored in a pile for a few days, microbes attack pathogens and severely reduce their numbers. If diseased chips are incorporated into the soil, there is a rare chance they could infect the tree's roots.
- Wood chips do not change the pH of the soil.
- Wood chips do not lend themselves to tunneling and, in fact, tend to harbor beneficial insects and species that help control pests.

Upcoming CAS Seminar Addresses Mulch, Phytophthora and Gibberellic Acid Use

The California Avocado Society will host the first of its [2019 California Avocado Growers Seminar Series](#) with workshops focused on mulch and Phytophthora. Dr. Ben Faber, Dr. Tim Spann and Dr. Carol Lovatt will deliver presentations at the seminars.

Dr. Ben Faber, UC Cooperative Extension Soils/Water/Subtropical Crops Farm Advisor, will speak about the benefits of using mulch in avocado groves. Ben will discuss the various types of mulch that can be used, how and when to apply them and the benefits of using mulch in avocado groves.

Dr. Tim Spann, California Avocado Commission Research Program Director, will cover Phytophthora 101. Tim will discuss what phytophthora species affect avocados, how to recognize symptoms of phytophthora infection in avocados and best management practices for dealing with phytophthora.

Dr. Carol Lovatt, UC Riverside Emeritus Professor of Plant Physiology, will discuss the use of gibberellic acid (GA) plant growth regulator on avocados. A special local needs registration was obtained in early 2018 for use of GA on avocado in California. Carol will discuss the benefits of using GA, and when and how to apply it for those growers interested in trying this new tool.

The seminars will be held as follows:

Tuesday, February 5, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

SLO Farm Bureau, 4875 Morabito Place, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Wednesday, February 6, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

UC Cooperative Extension Office Auditorium, 669 County Square Drive, Ventura, CA 93003

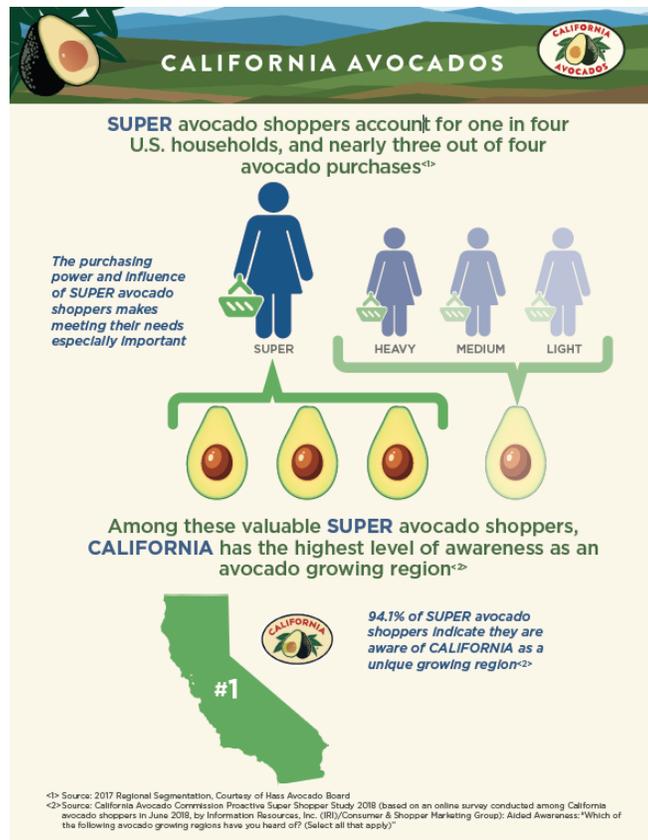
Study Indicates Super Shoppers Proactively Choose California Avocados

Just 25 percent of all avocado shoppers account for nearly three out of every four avocado purchases. Because these valuable avocado shoppers, designated as “Super Shoppers” by the California Avocado Commission (CAC), account for such a large proportion of all avocado purchases, the Commission conducted a study in Summer 2018 to investigate their shopping behavior and preferences.

In particular, the Commission was interested in ascertaining whether this segment of Super Shoppers proactively seeks and buys California avocados. According to the study, that is indeed the case. Among these shoppers, California has the highest awareness of any avocado growing region, at more than 94 percent. In addition, the study indicated that more than one in five Super Shoppers:

- Proactively looks for California avocados
- Proactively seeks locally grown signage
- Chooses to purchase California avocados over avocados from other growing regions when given a choice in the store

“Avocado Super Shoppers drive category volume,” noted Jan DeLyser, CAC vice president marketing. “This study helps the Commission understand their opinions and behaviors to hone our marketing tactics towards them.” In addition to understanding the shopping habits of this valued consumer segment, the study serves to establish a baseline for future comparison that will allow CAC to determine the value of marketing programs in stimulating brand engagement with this key shopper segment.



The vast majority of Super Shoppers indicated they are aware of California as a unique avocado growing region.

California Market Trends

To view all market trend graphs, including “Weekly Volume Summary,” “Weekly Avocado Prices” and “U.S. Avocado Supply,” please visit: <http://www.californiaavocadogrowers.com/industry/market-statistics>.

California Avocado Commission Weekly Volume Summary (Pounds)

	Week Ending 1/13/2019	Season-to-Date (since 11/01/2018)	2019 Year to Date
Hass	73,705	85,277	73,705
Lamb	0	0	0
Other (Greens)	19,603	197,585	19,603
California Total	93,308	282,862	93,308
Florida	0	4,867,115	0
Chile	1,110,331	24,422,293	2,075,531
Mexico	71,889,220	466,775,860	110,422,096
Peru	0	0	0
Other (Imports)	1,040,000	11,380,000	1,670,000
Import Total	74,039,551	502,578,153	114,167,627
USA Total	74,132,859	507,728,130	114,260,935

Sources:

California = CAC (AMRIC)

Florida = Florida Avocado Admin Committee

Chile = Comite de Paltas, Chile

Mexico = APEAM

Peru = ProHass

Other Imports = USDA AMS website

California Avocado Society Weekly Newslines* Avocado Prices – January 10, 2019

	Organic #1	Conventional #1	Conventional #1
California Hass	(Field Price Per Lb)	(Field Price Per Lb)	(Carton Price)
#32's			
36's			
40's			
48's	Insufficient Volume to Quote		
60's			
70's			
84's			

*To subscribe to the Weekly Newslines, please contact the California Avocado Society at (949) 940-8869 or www.CaliforniaAvocadoSociety.org.

Crop Statistics

To help California avocado growers make informed harvesting decisions, below is the California Crop Weekly Harvest Projection for the first eight weeks of 2019.

2019 California Crop Weekly Harvest Projection		
4-Year Historical vs. AMRIC Handler Forecast		
All Varieties		
Week Ending	4-Year Historical Forecast	AMRIC Handler Forecast
		Dec 2018 Update
6-Jan	71,000	65,200
13-Jan	428,500	391,500
20-Jan	732,500	667,100
27-Jan	1,528,800	1,382,300
3-Feb	1,548,700	1,565,100
10-Feb	1,427,000	1,442,400
17-Feb	1,476,300	1,492,300
24-Feb	1,831,800	1,851,600

Weather: 30-Day Outlook For California's Coastal & Valley Areas

Summary- Upper high pressure will be in the central and N Gulf of Alaska with the high pressure shifting more to the SE into most of California by the end of January. Drier than normal through the end of January. The high sets up again into the central and northern Gulf of Alaska later in the winter which will bring more forcing of troughs into California, albeit somewhat inconsistent.

Active troughing will be south of the block of upper high pressure, producing WNW flow from 180W 44N to subtropics at 125W 32N. This inconsistent pattern weakens during the end of January as other factors shift the high to the SE.

The warmest sea surface temperature anomalies (SSTAs) remain focused in the *El Niño* region (along the equator from 95W to 115W). This will tend to focus subtropical troughing into the far east portions of the subtropical Pacific.

Likewise, midlatitude troughing will tend to focus into the central and SE Rockies area. The *El Niño* is still weak but shows a gradual strengthening in the last couple of weeks which with continued strengthening could enhance storms into California later in the winter season.

The MJO has just shifted to an inactive phase for the eastern Pacific which will dry out and weaken storms that do move through the region. The inactive phases of the MJO is expected to last through the 1st week of February. The MJO will likely go active across the eastern Pacific starting around the 10th of February. This along with some warming of the SSTs will likely bring a wetter pattern into California from the middle through the end of February.

So, the bottom line near term: A much drier pattern sets up from the 18th through the 7th of February with a likely wetter pattern from the 10th through the 25th of February.

An increase in the strength and the circulation in *El Niño* is currently somewhat a long-shot in February but some strengthening is still expected. The increase in *El Niño* activity again in middle to late February through early March may enhance rainfall again in late winter in this possibly inconsistent *El Niño* contributor for rains later this season.

In the Near Term – Jan 18 – Feb 1...Salinas Valley-San Luis Obispo Co...The wet pattern ends on the 17th with a shift to a much drier pattern through all of California including the central California region. This is due to a strong and blocking ridge that will build near California and will remain near the state through the 10th of February. The ridge sets up initially just east across the western Great Basin with a dry and seasonal NNW flow over the state from the 19th through the 25th. A weak storm system on the 20th and 21st will bring only light rain. The ridge then shifts more to the west, centering itself over California and remaining nearly stationary from the 26th through the 10th of February.

Snow accumulation is not expected with melting of the snowpack, especially the last few days of January through the start of February as the ridge shifts west over the region. Also, little or no rainfall/snowfall is expected through this period.

...S Calif Avocado Area, San Luis Obispo Co to San Diego Co...The wet phase that has been over the region ends on the 17th as a ridge builds just east over the Great Basin with a dry NW flow over southern Calif. The ridge will continue just to the east through the 24th then shifts west and centers over all of California from the 25th through the start of February.

Warmer than normal temperatures with much drier conditions are expected through the start of February and could continue through the middle of the month.

Snowpack will decrease during this time due to warmer than normal temperatures and little or no chance of rain through the region.

Summary – Feb 2 – Feb 16... In the southern California avocado growing areas, from San Luis Obispo south, warmer than normal temperatures with dry conditions will continue through the region as a strong and nearly stationary high pressure ridge remains over the region. Little or no chance of rain is expected through the 13th with most areas staying dry through the 15th. The ridge weakens from the 10th through the 15th but weak storms should stay to the north of the region.

Starting into a wetter phase with some rain possible into the region starting around February 16th.

The snowpack will decrease during this time due to the warmer than normal temperatures and dry conditions.

Seasonal Outlook / El Niño Update... Feb 10 – April 5... *El Niño* still appears weak through the start of February but could make some late season strengthening from about the 10th of February through the middle of March. This at times should bring some increase in moisture through all of the state, including southern California as upper troughs with decent moisture along with occasional upper lows are expected. When other factors come in line, then decent rain and storm systems are expected. Wetter likely due to an active phase of the MJO and warmer SSTs (slightly stronger *El Niño*) from February 16th through the end of the month. The MJO will stay active through the California region from the 17th of February through the 25th then wanes and weakens going into an inactive phase from the 26th through the 10th of March.

Still some decent rain at times with active storm systems and rain likely at times from February 16th through March 5th. Seasonal conditions and not as wet from the 6th through the 10th. Another active phase of the MJO will bring enhanced moisture through most of the state from the 20th through the start of April. The effects of the *El Niño* and warmer than normal water temperatures weaken after the first week of April.

For southern California, dry but with increasing chances of rain from February 10th through the 15th. A wetter pattern sets up from the 16th of February and continues through the 25th as deeper troughs and some upper lows develop and reach into southern California at times. Some decent rain is expected at times from these systems. Some increase in snowpack at the higher elevations is expected during this wetter period. The storm track begins its late season march to the north with still some rain at times into southern California but not as wet later in March through the start of April.

...Zane A. Stephens...Fox Weather, LLC...