

Karen Ross Named CFDA Secretary

Ross returns to state From Washington D.C where she has been Chief of Staff with USDA.

Compiled by staff

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Karen Ross, 59, of Alexandria, Va., has been appointed Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture by Governor Jerry Brown. She has been Chief of Staff with the United States Department of Agriculture since 2010.

Previously, Ross served as President of the California Association of Winegrape Growers from 1996 to 2009. She was the Vice President of Government Relations for the Agricultural Council of California from 1989 to 1996. Ross served as a member of the California State Board of

Food and Agriculture from 2001 to 2009.

She has been a member of the Center for Cooperatives at UC Davis, serves on the USDA's Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee; the Dean's Advisory Committee for the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, UC-Davis; the Ag Advisory Committee to the California State Fair Board; the Program Advisory Committee for the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program; the board of trustees for the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance; and is an Associate on the Board of Fellows & Visitors for Viticulture and Enology, UC, Davis.

California agriculture is \$35 billion industry, covering a quarter of the state's land mass and providing nearly half of the country's fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables.

State Ag leaders have supported the appointment and applauded the announcement.

"Karen Ross is well-suited for the role of food and agriculture secretary. She has firsthand knowledge about the many challenges farmers and ranchers face each day, not just in California but throughout the nation," says Paul Wenger, California Farm Bureau Federation President. "Her experience working at USDA will provide her with important insights on how government can better assist our diverse agriculture in California, which not only provides so much of the fresh fruit and vegetables enjoyed throughout the United States but whose products also create positive trade activity worldwide."

"Governor Brown selected the best person for California Department of Food and Agriculture," said Rich Rominger, CDFA Secretary under then-Governor Brown from 1977 to 1982 and Deputy Secretary of USDA from 1993 to 2001. "Karen Ross is the leader we need to address the critical issues of agriculture, water, clean energy development and climate change."

"Karen Ross is the right person at the right time for the job," said Craig McNamara, owner of Sierra Orchards and member of the State Board of Food and Agriculture. "Karen knows California agriculture and can bring together diverse groups to work towards a sustainable future for California's farmers and ranchers."

"We are pleased to welcome Karen Ross back to California as Secretary of Department of Food and Agriculture," said Renata Brillinger, Executive Director of the California Climate and Agriculture Network. "California agriculture will face a number of challenges in the coming years, most significantly the impacts of climate change. We look forward to working with Ms. Ross to support California agriculture in addressing a changing climate."

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