

Climate Smart Agriculture in the Southwest: A Discussion with State and Federal Policy Leaders

March 16, 2022



Kate Greenberg, Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture

Kate Greenberg was appointed to serve as Colorado's Commissioner of Agriculture by Governor Jared Polis in December 2018. As Commissioner, Greenberg provides leadership and direction to the Colorado Department of Agriculture and its 300 employees. Commissioner Greenberg has worked in agriculture for more than 12 twelve years, from boots-on-the-ground experience to advocating for family farmers through two federal Farm Bills.

Prior to her appointment, Greenberg was the Western Program Director for the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC), where she established and grew the organization's presence and membership across the West. In her role as Western Director, she organized farmers and ranchers to advocate for state and federal policies that best serve them. Her work focused on farmland affordability, ag education, protecting water for agriculture and expanding access to capital and credit for young and beginning producers.

Leading up to her tenure at NYFC, Greenberg farmed on various operations across the West, managed Western policy field programs through her alma mater, Whitman College, and worked in natural resource education and restoration from eastern Washington to Mexico's Colorado River Delta. Greenberg was also involved in the development of the Colorado Water Plan and Colorado River Basin water policy, advocating for policies that keep water in agriculture.

Greenberg is the recipient of the Emerging Conservation Leader Award from Western Resource Advocates and an awardee of the 2019 Who's Who In Agriculture recognition from Colorado Farm Bureau and the Denver Business Journal. She graduated from Water Education Colorado's Water Leaders flagship course in 2018 and sits on the board of the Quivira Coalition, which brings ranchers, scientists, and conservationists together to practice land stewardship at the radical center.

As Commissioner, Greenberg serves on numerous boards and commissions, including the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and the Colorado State Fair Board. While she currently spends much of her time on Colorado's Front Range and traveling the state, she still calls Durango, Colorado home. Whitman College 2009 degree in environmental studies/humanities



Karen Ross, Secretary California Department of Food and Agriculture

Karen Ross was appointed Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture on January 9, 2019 by Governor Gavin Newsom. In re-appointing Secretary Ross, Governor Newsom cited her unmatched leadership experience in agricultural issues nationally, internationally, and here in California, in areas including environmental stewardship, climate change adaptation, and trade.

Karen Ross is secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture. She has extensive leadership experience in agricultural issues at the state, national, and international level. During her tenure as secretary, she has strengthened partnerships across government, academia, and the nonprofit sector. She has also initiated programs that provide greater opportunities for farmers and ranchers to engage in environmental stewardship through water conservation, energy efficiency, nutrient management, and ecosystem services. Before she was appointed secretary in 2011, she was chief of staff for US Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack for two years. Before that, she served as president of the California Association of Winegrape Growers (1996–2009) and vice president of the Agricultural Council of California (1989–1996). Earlier in her career, she served as director of government relations for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association and as a field representative for US senator Edward Zorinsky. She has served on boards and committees of many agricultural, wine industry, and academic institutions. She holds a BA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and is a graduate of the Nebraska Ag Leadership Program



Gloria Montaño Greene, Deputy Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, USDA

Montaño Greene is a former State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Arizona from 2014-2017, a position she was appointed to by President Obama. With FSA in Arizona, Montaño Greene led implementation of the 2013 Farm Bill programs across the state. Currently, she serves as Deputy Director for Chispa Arizona, a program of the League of Conservation Voters focused on the empowerment of Latino voices in Arizona on issues including energy, public lands, and democracy access. She served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff to Congressman Raúl M. Grijalva of Arizona. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona.