

**Key Results – Agave Industry Survey  
California Agave Alliance**

*Link of the survey: <https://californiaagavealliance.com/california-agave-industry-survey>*

*By Dr. Samuel Sandoval Solis, email: [samsandoval@ucdavis.edu](mailto:samsandoval@ucdavis.edu)  
Professor and Cooperative Extension Specialist. University of California, Davis*

**AB2606 UPDATE**

**What is the current status of AB2606?**

AB2606 was signed into law by the Governor on September 27, 2024 ([Chapter 30, Part 2, Division 22, California Food and Agricultural Code](#)). However, the California Agave Commission does not become operative until it is approved by affected growers and processors through an implementation referendum process conducted in accordance with [Article 5 of AB2606](#). In other words, AB2606 is now law, but the procedures to establish the California Agave Commission have not yet been set in motion by the proponents (California Agave Council).

**What are the concepts that:**

- **cannot be changed?** The one aspect that cannot be changed is **mandatory membership**. All agave growers (with > 2 acres) and distillers (processing > 3 tons) must become prescribed members of the California Agave Commission. They will be required to pay fees and will be liable for reporting and penalties. Just to be clear, voluntary membership is not an option. All qualifying growers and distillers in California will be regulated and assessed fees by the commission.
- **can be changed?** **All 8 articles of AB2606 can be changed**, for instance: power and duties, implementation and voting procedures, assessments and records, actions and penalties, and more. To amend this chapter of the Food and Agricultural Code, a new bill will need to be introduced and passed through the legislative process. Any changes would require approval by both, the State Assembly and Senate, and the Governor’s signature, following the same process used to pass AB2606.

Note: these two questions have been verified with personnel of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

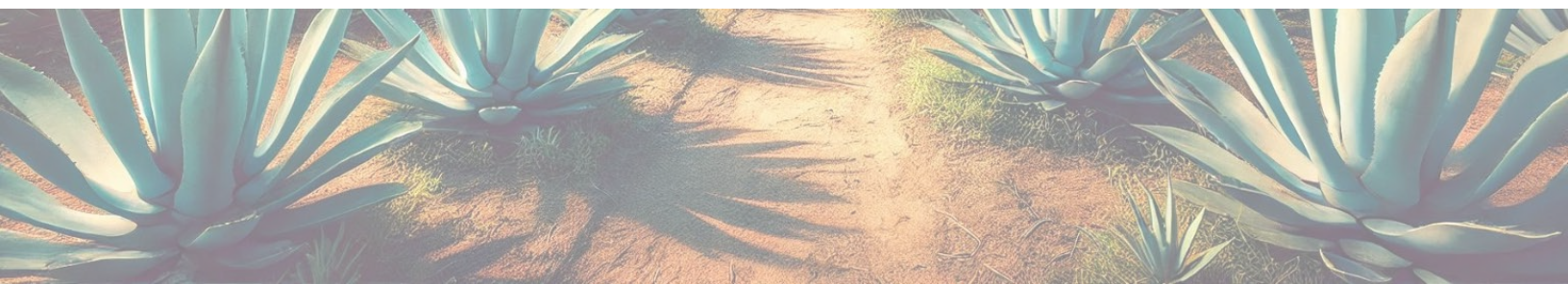
**SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

**Who responded to the survey?**

The survey was responded to by 25 individuals: 17 agave growers (68%), 5 potential future growers (20%), and 3 educators (12%).

**How representative is the survey?**

The survey is representative. In 2024, there were approximately 75 agave growers in California. By 2025, the numbers is expected to reach 100. Therefore, the growers who respond **the survey represent 17% to 23% of the total grower population**. Among those growers who responded to the survey, 89% are farming agaves on 10 acres or less and 11% are farming gave over 10 acres. This mirrors the distribution of growers by acreage. Also, 30% of responding growers also produce agaves in nurseries, so feedback from this sector of the industry is included.



## KEY SURVEY RESULTS

*Important note: All the questions in the survey are optional; respondents chose which questions to answer*

**What is your desire for a regulatory body on agave production in California?** (25 individuals (100%) responded)

- 88% prefer **no regulatory body at all** or a **voluntary commission**. Since AB2606 does not allow for voluntary membership, **this represents 88% opposition to AB2606**.
- 4% were unsure
- 8% support a mandatory commission and are therefore in favor of AB2606.

**Were you aware of the California Agave Council's efforts to move AB2606 through the legislature and were you informed of its implications?** (10 individuals responded)

- 60% were not aware of AB2606 and
- 40% were aware of it.

**Is the process for registering to vote clear?** (22 individuals responded)

- **64% said the process is not clear,**
- 36% said the process is clear.

**Are you willing to contact the California Agave Council to request that they not start the process of creating the commission?** (19 individuals responded)

- **79% said they are willing to contact the California Agave Council to request a halt to the process,**
- 21% said they are not willing to contact the California Agave Council.

## QUESTION TO CONSIDER

**Is a mandatory commission necessary for agave production in California?** Currently, much of the discussion centers around changes to fee structures. However, before discussing fee collection or amending AB2606, the primary question must be: **“Is a mandatory commission needed at this early stage?”** Do growers want to begin by paying fees to produce or distill agave? Or would they rather start with a voluntary grower association, and later consider pooling resources? This is the first question that has to be asked to growers and distillers that will be regulated.

**How can agave growers who are not affiliated with the California Agave Council provide input on AB2606 without paying membership fees?** This is a key concern. Currently, only paying members receive information about AB2606 discussions. Yet all growers and distillers regardless of membership will be regulated. There are not clear instruction for non-members to engage in the process and be informed.

**Is there a transparent process to amend AB2606?** While the California Agave Council appears to be considering changes to AB2606, there is no public and transparent process for how amendments will be proposed, discussed, or evaluated. Input from ALL stakeholders must be part of any amendment process.

