



Rural Crime School



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By Ann Juette
Special Projects
Manager

Classes on a working cattle ranch?

Emerging diseases and agroterrorism? Since our department is working on agricultural emergency preparedness plans, I thought this class would give me an opportunity to get a working knowledge of agricultural crime and to network with law enforcement personnel from all over the nation. So I packed my bags and headed for the Alameda County Sheriff's Office Regional Training Center in Dublin, California.

Did you know that thieves climb to the top of wind machine towers on the Altamont Pass to get copper wire? These thieves destroy irrigation pumps, telephone lines, new housing developments and almost anything to get copper wire. They

even have stripping "parties" to strip the covering off of the stolen wire. The copper wire is then sold to scrap metal recyclers for cash. The presentation from PG&E Corporate Security was most enlightening. Then there was the video of a gasoline thief who, in a flash of "brilliance", used an acetylene torch to cut the lock off of a 300-400 gallon gasoline tank located in a farmer's yard. He is lucky he didn't blow himself and the



yard to high heavens! Needless to say, I am now more aware of the hazards associated with copper wire and gasoline theft.

Attendees at this training were mostly law enforcement personnel involved in investigating agricultural crime, who came from all over the state, and some from as far away as Florida and Nevada. The course is designed for law enforcement personnel and related professionals wanting



Above :
Attendees listen to a lesson on cattle rustling

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We hope you enjoy our quarterly newsletter.

Our goal is to provide useful and informative news to our customers.

We welcome your feedback on this issue.

Contact us:
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Rural Crime School

Continued from Page 1

to upgrade, refine or develop an expertise in the area of rural crime. It provided instruction on eco-terrorism, aggro-terrorism, basic livestock theft investigation, livestock and horse breed and brand recognition, heavy equipment theft, identification numbers (PIN and OAN) on equipment, agricultural fraud, metal theft, commodity theft, and a host of other agricultural crimes. Also included were courses on bathtub cheese making and harmful bacteria, game bird fighting, and dog fighting. There were field exercises and role-playing to reinforce lessons from the lectures. This course is well worth the time. If you are in law enforcement or are a related professional, I encourage you to attend.

The Owner Applied Number (OAN) program was discussed at length. I would encourage all ranchers and farmers to participate in this program. To obtain an OAN, go to www.agcrime.net Click on "Sign up for OAN". It only takes about a minute to receive your number once you register. Then start applying that number to all of your equipment and tools. The number can be etched into glass, stamped into steel, welded onto equipment, branded into wood, leather, plastic, rubber, etc., inked

onto tools/equipment, and hand stamped. No matter what method you choose to apply the number, just do it! You just might get your tools/equipment back if they are stolen.



Above :
A newly branded calf.

My personal favorite part of the class was the trip to the working cattle ranch where we watched roping and branding, learned about reading and recognizing brands, horse breeds and tack, and role-played cattle thefts. Of course, the ranch style BBQ didn't hurt in making this part of the class almost everyone's favorite! The Koopman family and their friends were great hosts.

You can find information on the California Rural Crime Prevention Task Force at <http://www.crcptf.com/> For information on ACTION (Agricultural Crime Technology Information and Operations Network), check out <http://www.agcrime.net/index.htm>



Right :
Owner Applied Number (OAN) stamped on to the front of the John Deere Gator



What is Rural Crime?

Any property crime against a farmer, rancher, agricultural-related business or other designated industry which takes place in the unincorporated rural areas of the state and impacts the victims' commercial production, distribution or economic livelihood derived from agricultural products, livestock, petroleum, chemicals, farm implements and equipment.

AB 374 (2002)
Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program

RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS

Be on the lookout!



Kamal Bagri
Deputy Ag
Commissioner

Ant samples collected were confirmed to be RIFA by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) entomologist on October 16, 2006.

There have been six infestations in Stanislaus County dating back to 1998. One infestation was in the Newman area and five near Hickman. All previous infestations have



southeastern states. In California, RIFA has been detected in the central valley and Southern California.

RIFA can be a dangerous insect as the ants are very aggressive. They attack and sting anything that disturbs them including humans and domestic animals. Red Imported Fire Ant biting and stinging behavior is generally a defensive reaction for pro-

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In October, Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner inspectors responded to a complaint from a person who was stung by ants while handling a bale of hay. Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA), was discovered on the property in a pasture and adjacent almond orchards, one-half mile south of Turlock.

*Below:
Electrical box short due to RIFA*



been found in almond orchards. It is suspected that RIFA arrived aboard bee shipments during the spring almond blossom. Four of the infestations have been declared eradicated, while two infestations near Hickman have been treated and are undergoing monitoring.

RIFA is not native to California or the United States. It was accidentally introduced into Mobile, Alabama, from South America in the late 1930's. The ants are an established pest in 11

*Right:
Stings
from Red
Imported
Fire Ant*



USDA

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS BUG?

DIAPREPES DIAPREPES DIAPREPES DIAPREPES DIAPREPES



DIAPREPES DIAPREPES DIAPREPES DIAPREPES DIAPREPES

The diaprepes root weevil, *Diaprepes abbreviatus*, feeds on about 270 different plants including citrus, hibiscus, avocado, loquat and oak. This pest is a significant threat to both urban and agricultural trees and plants. Adult weevils feed on the leaves of plants and their larvae move underground to feed on plant roots. The larvae can encircle or "girdle" the root systems of trees, cutting off the supply of water and nutrients, eventually killing the host plant. If you have seen this weevil or collected a sample, please report it to 1-800-491-1899.



CALL 1-800-491-1899

Ho Ho Ho — A Shopping We Will Go....



Dan Bernaciak
Deputy Sealer of
Weights & Measures

It's once again that time of year when everyone gets the urge to go shopping — well, for some of us, maybe it's more like we *have* to go shopping. Because we will all most likely be part of the holiday consumer rush, let's discuss how to be a savvy, price conscious consumer.

if the price advertised on the shelf is lower than the price on your list. Remember to add to your list the price of any items that you spontaneously pick up.

Once you have made your selections, you have to pay attention to the price charged for your items. This is easier said than done because there are a number of distractions waiting to trip us up. How often do you spend time talking on a cell phone while the items you are purchasing are being rung up on the cash register? How about when you run into someone you know and spend the entire time catching up on things? There's magazine and tabloid covers

“...observing the price being charged for an item is not just going to happen, it is going to require an effort.”

What should you do if you discover a pricing mistake? First, if you are still in the process of checking out, bring it to the attention of the cashier. If you have already paid for your items, ask to see a manager or service representative. Most businesses are very willing to correct any inaccuracies; they want you back as a customer.

Second, you should contact your local Weights and Measures department and inform them of the issue. While the store may have corrected the issue with you, if the problem was not followed up on by correcting the price in the computer or removing an old sale sign, the pricing inaccuracy will still exist for other, not so observant, consumers. Weights and Measures will follow up on your information to ensure that the necessary corrections were made to eliminate the pricing inaccuracy.

It takes a little effort but we can all become savvy consumers when it comes to pricing accuracy by paying attention to the transaction as it is taking place. Happy Shopping!

Stores will be very busy during the holiday season and many will bring on part-time help to assist with the workload. Add to this the constant changing of prices, due to sales coming and going, and a situation has been created where pricing mistakes can occur.

Being a smart consumer when it comes to pricing accuracy requires that:

- ◆ You know what the price of the item you are purchasing should be, and;
- ◆ Ensuring that this is the price you are charged for the item.



In short, it requires paying attention and staying focused.

While shopping, work off of a list where you have noted the advertised price of the items you are going to purchase or take a copy of the advertisement with you. Make adjustments

begging to be read and what better time than when the cashier is ringing up our purchase? Checking your list to make sure you don't forget anyone while crossing off those names for whom you have already made a purchase, might be a tempting task during check out. And of course there are always the children who may be with you, demanding attention. The list could go on, but the point is that observing the price being charged for an item is not just going to happen, it is going to require effort.

It Pays to Watch the Cash Register!

Stanislaus County Price Verification Program Statistics:

July to October 2006:

Of 3,660 transactions:
199 were overcharged
114 were undercharged

Pesticide Permit News



Heidi Wong
Deputy Agricultural
Commissioner

Every year, farmers in Stanislaus County visit the Ag Commissioner's Office to renew their pesticide or restricted materials permits. Currently, the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office has

been evaluating the Restricted Material Permit Program to ensure completeness and maintain our functional equivalency with the CEQA*. Permit conditions for various restricted materials have been updated or developed and will be issued with restricted material permits. Permittees will also receive notification of changes to any laws and regulations that may affect them. In order to more effectively maintain our functional equivalency; we will be requesting more *detailed information on permit site maps* and requiring maps with distances to sensitive sites to be submitted, for all fumigation applications along with the Notice of Intent (NOI) to apply restricted materials.

Also, starting January 1st, 2007 we will be requiring *all NOIs for use of restricted pesticides to be turned in 48 hours in advance*. This will help ensure better assessment of potential impacts/hazards and needed mitigation measures or alternatives.

Restricted Material Permit and Operator Identification Number renewals will start on December 4th, 2006. In order to meet your permit needs in a timely manner, growers will need to schedule an appointment. Please call (209) 525-4730 for an appointment.

Web Access

We are now offering web access for submitting Notice of Intents (NOI) and Pesticide Use Reports (PUR). If you are interested in submitting NOIs and PURs via the web, please let us know during your Restricted Material Permit or Operator Identification Number renewal appointment.

Enforcement Response Policy

There is a new "Enforcement Response Policy" (ERP) created by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation and the County Agricultural Commissioners, which is being put into the regulations. This sets guidelines for uniformity and consistency among counties when enforcing pesticide laws and regulations. Further information regarding the ERP may be found at: www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/legbills/rulepkgs.htm



Dormant Spray Regulations

Pesticide applications to orchard crops during winter, when the trees are dormant, kill over-wintering pests and diseases. Many pesticides (insecticides) used as dormant sprays cause problems when drift occurs or when rain washes residues into rivers and streams. Continuing problems have prompted regulations for dormant insecticide contamination prevention. The regulations are found in the California Code of Regulations, Title 3, Division 6, Section 6960, and Section 6000 for definitions. (Effective August 2006) Further information regarding dormant spray regulations may be found at: www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/ds/index.htm

*The California Environmental Quality Act and the Restricted Material Permit Program

In 1970 the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was passed. The purpose of the act is to ensure when public decisions are made, long-term protection of the environment is a major consideration. This meant that an environmental impact report (EIR) would have to be prepared before registering a pesticide or issuing a permit to use a restricted pesticide. In 1976, the California Attorney General issued an opinion that the State's pesticide regulatory program had to comply with CEQA. It was determined that preparation of an EIR before registering a pesticide or issuing a permit to use a restricted pesticide was not feasible. In 1979, the Restricted Materials Permit Program was developed as an alternative program to provide for an abbreviated environmental

review procedure that serves as the "functional equivalent" to a full-scale EIR normally required by CEQA. (This is allowed by Public Resource Code, section 21050, Amended in Chapter 308, Statutes of 1978 by Assembly Bill 3765.) The Restricted Materials Permit Program was designed to meet these requirements, by requiring County Agricultural Commissioner's to issue time and site specific permits for the agricultural use of restricted pesticides and document any mitigation measures and alternatives to mitigate environmental impacts. Therefore, the County Agricultural Commissioner's must assure that our Restricted Materials Permit Program protects people and the environment while allowing for effective pest control.

Stanislaus County
Department of Agriculture and
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Our Mission:

Support and protect the well-being of
Agriculture, Business and the Community.



The staff of the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures are always ready and willing to assist you. Featured below are the Front Office Administrative Staff (L-R): Ramona Cunningham, Dalila Barron and Marietta Davis



RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS



(Continued from page 3)

protecting food and water resources or their nesting sites. When a mound is disturbed, large numbers of worker ants come to the mound surface to defend the colony. An unsuspecting victim can be rapidly covered with ants.

The ants anchor themselves with their mouthparts and then sting repeatedly injecting venom into the skin. The sting causes an intense burning sensation at the sting site and results in a white pustule on the skin within 24 hours, which last for several days. Although stings are not usually life threatening, a small percentage of the population is hypersensitive to the venom, and may experience complications.

RIFA infest residential yards and gardens, agricultural fields and pastures. The ants also infest electrical equipment and chew on the insulation and have caused short circuits in air conditioners and traffic signals. They are also a hazard to

native and endangered species of plants, birds, and reptiles. Agricultural field workers can be injured and damage to crops can be extensive. It is estimated that in Texas alone, the RIFA causes more than \$300 million annually in damage to crops, animals and people.

The Red Imported Fire Ant has a reddish-brown colored head and thorax with a shiny opaque black abdomen. Worker ants vary in size ranging from 1/8 to 1/4 inch. The ant colony may contain 500,000 workers, several winged ants, and queens. Mounds are similar to gopher mounds, except soil deposited is of finer texture. Mounds vary in size, from golf ball to basketball size. The queens can live seven years or more while the workers live about five weeks.

If you believe you have encountered Red Imported Fire Ant, please call the Red Imported Fire Ant Hotline: 1-888-4FIREANT or the Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner at (209) 525-4730. Additional information can be obtained by visiting the CDFA website at: www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/pdep/rifa/