



Pesticide Program News

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Commissioner Caseri

and feel free to ask questions of staff as we are more than willing to help you meet the ever changing requirements.

In the past I have mentioned a new program called The Partnership for Agriculture and the Environment, a program by a group of regional stakeholders designed, in part, to embrace efforts at reducing pesticide impacts to our air, water, food-stuffs and our environment in general. Stakeholders include the full

The year 2009 is behind us now and hopefully everyone had a joyous holiday and a happy New Year. We here at the Agricultural Commissioner's Office are continuing, among other things, with our pesticide permitting season. Our pesticide program guru, Bertha, tells me that we have appointments through the middle of January so now is the time to make that appointment by calling 525-4730. Try not to wait until the last minute and all of a sudden need to "spray those oats" because you might be delayed.

Also, for those restricted material permit holders with names A-H, be sure to have your 6 hours of continuing education with at least 2 hours of laws and regulations, otherwise you will need to take the "private applicator exam" and spend considerable more time at our office. Remember, the beginning of a new year is a good time to take inventory on your overall pesticide program making sure to be in compliance, now and in the future,

spectrum of interests, including those with points of view perhaps contrary to many of us. However, the partnership steering committee felt it important that while some may have differing points of view, all could agree that practices geared towards responsible stewardship could provide benefits such as fewer regulations and enforcement actions and certainly send a message that Agriculture is taking the lead in addressing issues. The Partnership's goal of promoting clean air, clean water and a safe and abundant food supply are in everyone's best interest! A kick-off meeting of stakeholders is tentatively scheduled for the first part of March and will include Spray Safe—a farmer to farmer commitment to ensure that all safety precautions are in place to prevent pesticide drift and protect workers and your neighbors.

As always, you are more than welcome to come visit me at the office to chat about issues and concerns.

Happy New Year!
Gary



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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Protecting Our Agriculture



Kamal Bagri
Deputy Ag
Commissioner

Did you know that inter-state and international travel causes an increased risk of introduction of pests into our state? The cost of battling these invasive pests is in the millions of dollars. Preventing

the introduction and establishment of these invasive species is always the best and least costly method of control. Insects like the Light Brown Apple Moth, Asian Citrus Psyllid and European Grapevine Moth are some of the recently introduced pests. As citizens of this state, it is our responsibility to safeguard and protect California's farming industry which provides us with inexpensive and safe food.

So, when sending or receiving a shipment of fresh fruit or plants, the most important thing to keep in mind is that

the shipment should be free of any pests or diseases. The shipment should be certified by an appropriate official with the Agriculture Department. It is not a good idea to ship backyard fruits or plants.

The Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's office is busy inspecting shipments containing agricultural products at the post offices, Fed-Ex terminals and UPS terminals. Some shipments are rejected or held due to lack of certification and/or pest infestation.

To learn more about exotic pests of concern, please visit:

www.hungrypests.com



The Light Brown Apple Moth (left) and damage inflicted on agricultural products (right).



Above: The European Grapevine Moth, a serious pest of grapes, was recently found in Napa County.

Did You Know?

The Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) eats more than 2,000 species of plants and trees and 250 agricultural crops. LBAM is native to Australia. It was first detected in California in 2006 by a retired university scientist.

The Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) can withstand freezing temperatures and hurricane force winds and is a threat to California's \$1.2 billion citrus industry. The female ACP lays 300-800 eggs during a lifetime.

The European Grapevine Moth was first confirmed in California in September 2009 near Oakville in Napa County. This pest causes more damage to thinner-skinned wine grape varieties such as chardonnay, zinfandel and pinot noir.

Facts and Photos courtesy of USDA, Hungry Pests program, www.hungrypests.com



Pesticide Program Highlights

- Notification and Application Specific Regulations were amended and went into effect on September 2009.
- Carbofuran residue tolerances were revoked by the U.S. EPA for food and feed crops. Starting 2010, Carbofuran products cannot be applied to food or feed crops.
- Eco2 fume and Magnesium Phosphide became California restricted use pesticides.
- A pilot project for Maintenance Gardeners licensing and certification was launched by San Luis Obispo County.
- New licensing and worker safety respiratory requirements for Sulfur Dioxide use in wineries became effective.
- Effective October 23, 2009, the Structural Pest Control Board transferred from the Department of Consumer Affairs to the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

(Left) "Bloom N Spray" Photo by Courtney Vereker, Agricultural Inspector I

Ag Tech Summit



Denny Hoeh
Special Projects
Manager

Last year we had a great Ag Technology Summit and wanted to build on the success of the event. Do you know that most people think about the space program or computer development,

when asked about technology? But in today's world of agriculture, we need to think about and apply new technology as much as any other industry. There are new and innovative processes and opportunities open to the agricultural community more than ever before. The use of computers on ranches and farms now is the norm and not the exception.

We are constantly reminded that many agencies and organizations maintain a multitude of websites to help the agricultural community. State and federal agencies such as the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, and the US Department Agriculture have extensive websites, just to mention a few. If you haven't taken the opportunity to visit our website lately, please check it out by visiting us at www.stanag.org.

This year's Ag Tech Summit will take place in Harvest Hall at the Stanislaus County Ag Center and will give members of the ag community an opportunity to see some of the new and available technology from experts in the field. We also plan to have continuing education credits available for those who attend. Please sign up early, because seating is limited and registration is required. Call our office at 525-4730 if you any questions.

The Summit is presented through a partnership of Stanislaus County, U.C. Cooperative Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Stanislaus Farm Bureau. Select from course offerings listed below:



Ag Tech Summit January 20, 2010 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Call 209-522-7278 to Register

Getting Dirty with the Web Soil Survey

Have you ever wanted detailed soil maps, data tables, photographs, or other information about soil? This training session will focus on how to access the Web Soil Survey for farm planning, land use classification, and the generation of site specific maps and interpretive information for agricultural, urban and forestry uses.

Agricultural Pesticide Volatile Organic Compound Calculator

Take control of your air quality. Come learn how to use the new web-based Agricultural Pesticide Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Calculator which can help producers estimate VOC emissions and make sound decisions about their pesticide selection and application.

Saving Water with Technology

Save water and improve your irrigation efficiency with irrigation water management practices and technology. Learn how to use ET, soil data, and crop information to improve water budgeting with on-line tools.

Precision Farming and GPS Technology Update

Come learn about the latest improvements in GPS technology and precision farming opportunities from industry representatives.

Introduction to E-mail

Learn how to communicate via the Internet. This course will cover the basics of sending and receiving e-mails including how to add and open attachments, create an address book and deal with spam. No computer experience required!

Smart Phones and You

Do you have a smart phone, but only use it to make calls? Learn how to use other features such as accessing e-mail and scheduling appointments to get the full potential out of your phone and become more efficient.

Tracking Food Safety



Tim Pelican
Deputy Ag
Commissioner

The one constant in agriculture these days is change. Today’s farmer not only needs to know how to produce a crop, but they must keep an eye on what to expect from Washington D.C. and Sacramento. They need to be aware of what issues are going to have a positive or negative impact on their ability to not only produce a crop, but also to market their commodities. One of the issues currently causing big changes is food safety.

Today’s demands for safe traceable produce are having a huge effect on both the production and packing cost of our commodities. The fact that the USDA has no standardized way to inspect or to track the trail of any given commodity is leaving the doorway open for entrepreneurs to lead the way.

In general, the way these tracking systems currently work is that a software developer comes up with a tracking program. These programs are presented “free of charge” to produce buyers of some of the larger chains. The costs of the programs are then funneled down to the packers/growers who are selling the commodity to these buyers. There are several large retailers currently using these systems.

The ultimate goal of these programs is to be able to track any single product from the store shelves to the exact point of production, the day it was picked and what crew picked it. While the ability to track this information is important, (and currently being used by some commodity groups) there is currently no pressure by consumer groups to make the individual retailers responsible for maintaining the identity of the product once it has been placed in the store aisles. Failing to require that the retailers be responsible for assuring that lots do not become adulterated invalidates the tracking work already completed and diminishes the effect of money spent on tracking.

Not having a standardized inspection and tracking program for the industry is causing high overhead costs by having to

support multiple systems. Multiple agencies wanting to perform inspections at different times add additional cost to an already punitive system. While these systems can help to improve industry’s ability to protect themselves and the public from e-coli and other pathogens, the problem arises by not having a single agreed upon system, which squeezes an already economically stressed industry.



Recently the House of Representatives passed HR 2479 and the Senate passed Bill S425. Both bills mandate that the Secretary of Agriculture develops standards for the “growing, harvesting, processing, packing, sorting, transporting, and holding of raw agricultural products”. Since there are certain commodity groups which are already using proven tracking systems, perhaps the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Agriculture Standardization Program should strive to produce a template for a food safety system that works, is affordable, and does not re-invent the wheel.

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Upcoming Legislation



Food Safety reform is expected to be addressed by Congress with the consideration of bill S.2758, the Growing Safe Food Act of 2009, which would authorize funding for a competitive grant program to provide food safety training for farmers, giving priority to applications that serve small and medium sized operations.

Programs included would provide training in such activities as handling and manufacturing practices, produce safety standards, risk analysis and preventative control mechanisms, sanitation standards, and safe packaging.



The California Gold Rush—Part 2



Dan Bernaciak
Deputy Sealer of
Weights & Measures

You may not have noticed but there is a second gold rush currently taking

place. Unlike the 1849 original, this one involves people offering to buy your unwanted gold for cash. Given the tough economic times we are in and the fact that gold is trading at over \$1,100 per troy ounce, this can be seen as a way of getting some extra cash. But as with all transactions where money exchanges hands, you want to be cautious and make sure you are getting full value for your gold.



Weights and Measures “weighs in” on this issue if a scale is being used to determine the amount of money that will be paid for the gold. If this is the case, the scale must meet certain requirements and it must be tested and sealed by a Weights and Measures Official.



These requirements include that the scale being used for this commercial transaction is “type approved”. This means the scale has undergone evaluation and testing by a certified laboratory to substantiate accuracy under the conditions in which it will be used. For scales, evaluation often involves weight being placed on and removed from the scale over 100,000 times. In California, type approval can either be through the California State Metrology Laboratory’s California Type Evaluation Program (CTEP) or through the National Type Evaluation Program (NTEP).

Once it is determined that the scale is legal for trade, it must be tested and sealed by Weights and Measures. If the scale has been inspected by Weights and Measures, it should have a current year’s seal displayed where the customer can see it.

During the transaction, the gold should be weighed in front of the seller and the seller must be able to see the scale display indicating the amount of weight.

If someone is offering to buy your gold across a scale that does not display a Weights and Measures seal of



inspection, your best course of action is to walk away and find a purchaser who is following the law.

During the course of the past year, we became aware of a number of vendors who were using untested scales. By bringing these scales

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into compliance, the number of jewelry scales registered in Stanislaus County has risen from 5 in the beginning of 2009 to 27 registered currently.

If you come across an unsealed scale being used to purchase gold, please contact our office at (209) 525-4730.

**Stanislaus County
Department of Agriculture and
Weights and Measures**

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WWW.STANAG.ORG

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



Stanislaus County State Ranking

COMMODITY	RANK	PERCENTAGE OF STATE TOTAL
DRY BEANS	#1	26%
OTHER PASTURE AND RANGE	#1	8%
.....		
ALMONDS	#2	18%
APRICOTS	#2	22%
CHICKENS	#2	41%
IRRIGATED PASTURE	#2	7%
WALNUTS	#2	15%

Source for Ag Statistics: Summary of California County Agricultural Commissioners' Reports 2007-2008, USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service



"Field of Contrast" by Joe Duchala, Agricultural Inspector III
(Photo of a newly planted almond field on the Westside of Stanislaus County after a storm.)

**County Rank
Overall Production in State**

Fresno County	#1
Tulare County	#2
Kern County	#3
Monterey County	#4
Merced County	#5
Stanislaus County	#6
San Joaquin County	#7
Kings County	#8

California is the top agricultural state and its Central Valley is the most productive region in the nation. If it were a state, the valley would rank as the largest agricultural producer in the nation.