March 27, 2020

Subject: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) shortage in agricultural industry

Dear Customer,

The Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner is writing to inform you that we are receiving numerous calls about the availability of PPE due to the COVID19 emergency. Personal protective equipment, more commonly referred to as PPE, is required for many farm tasks including pesticide applications. Pesticide products require a specific set PPE for various handling activities (mix, load, apply etc.). Furthermore, additional PPE may be required by worker protection standards and pesticide regulations. Proper use of PPE is very important as it provides safe working conditions for pesticide handlers by reducing the risk of exposure.

We understand that there is a shortage of PPE throughout the state and it is hard to find certain PPE, specifically N95 respirators. California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is aware of this situation. Per DPR guidelines, there is no substitute for PPE required by pesticide labels or regulations. However, selecting alternative pesticide products that do not require the use of certain PPE is an option.

We are also aware that the agricultural industry is receiving requests from various government entities and healthcare facilities to purchase their PPE inventory. We have received calls from the agricultural industry asking us for guidance. DPR and our office considers compliance with the state’s pesticide program an essential activity in the supply of food and agricultural products. It will be your decision to determine what PPE you can spare that will not compromise your compliance with pesticide labels, state and federal regulations or agricultural commissioner permit conditions.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact our office at (209) 525-4730.

Sincerely,

Milton O’Haire
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer