THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: Board Priority Team - Strong Ag Econ./Heritage **BOARD AGENDA #** B-13

Urgent ☐ **Routine** ■ **AGENDA DATE** October 3, 2006

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES ■ **NO** ☐ **4/5 Vote Required YES** ☐ **NO** ■
(Information Attached)

SUBJECT:

Approval to Accept the First Annual Report on Strong Agricultural Economy/Heritage Goals and Performance Measures

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Accept the first annual report on Strong Agricultural Economy/Heritage goals and performance measures.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2006-795

On motion of Supervisor Grover **, Seconded by Supervisor** DeMartini
and approved by the following vote,
Ayes: Supervisors: O'Brien, Grover, DeMartini, and Vice-Chairman Mayfield
Noes: Supervisors: None
Excused or Absent: Supervisors: Chairman Simon
Abstaining: Supervisor: None

1) X **Approved as recommended**
2) _____ **Denied**
3) _____ **Approved as amended**
4) _____ **Other:**
MOTION:

Elizabeth A. King

ATTEST: ELIZABETH A. KING, Assistant Clerk **File No.**

BACKGROUND:

The Board of Supervisors adopted new priorities for Stanislaus County in April 2005. Department Heads were assigned to teams responsible for developing goals and performance measures to successfully support the priorities. The teams identified measures of success for one year, five years and ten years. The one-year measures included the implementation steps to initiate the work required by the goals. The Board of Supervisors adopted the goals and performance measures in October 2005 and directed the priority teams to present an annual report on their performance.

Overview

The Board of Supervisors adopted this priority to support and protect the County's agriculture economy and heritage. The members of the Strong Agriculture Economy/Heritage priority team include Agricultural Commissioner Dennis Gudgel, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner Milton O'Haire, Director of Planning and Community Development Ron Freitas and Director of Cooperative Extension Ed Perry.

The team recommended the following three goals: 1) Support and promote agricultural products, education, technology and innovation; 2) Protect agricultural resources; and 3) Manage threats to agriculture. Exhibit A outlines the outcomes that the Strong Agricultural Economy/Heritage priority team expected to achieve in the first year and the actual outcomes achieved. Exhibit A also provides a discussion of Lessons Learned over the past year for each measure.

To support and promote agricultural products, education, technology and innovation, the priority team emphasized economic improvement and environmental quality in applied research and education programs. The team also utilized electronic media to communicate information through newsletters and websites, and supported local informal agricultural education opportunities through educational events and interships. To protect agricultural resources, the priority team initiated an update of the agricultural element of the Stanislaus County General Plan. To mitigate threats to agriculture, the priority team chose to improve use of technology in agricultural inspections/monitoring programs involving pesticide use, implement and exercise agricultural response plans, and establish a staff training and certification program to improve mitigation of pests, diseases, and other threats to agriculture.

Conclusion

During the past year, the Strong Agricultural Economy/Heritage priority team accomplished several of their objectives. Applied research and education projects that economically impact the County's agricultural industry were conducted, and results are being published. Results of research projects focused on protecting the environment were shared with industry. Innovations in department websites and electronic newsletters improved customers access to information. A survey tool is utilized to evaluate the benefits of educational events. The first draft update of the Agricultural Element was completed incorporating suggestions from agricultural industry stakeholders. Two technology projects involving pesticide use and monitoring were

successfully implemented. A regional All Agricultural Hazards Emergency Response Plan is nearly complete. A department based response plan was completed and used during an actual incident.

While there have been many successes, the priority team has also identified several Lessons Learned and opportunities for improvement. Agricultural economic impacts for an entire industry is difficult to assess based on a single year's data. For most projects, several years are needed before sufficient data can be collected to show economic impacts of applied research projects. Future applied research projects need to include an economic analysis component. Although feedback on the newsletter has been very positive, a better system of providing the newsletter electronically will be pursued in the coming year. With increasing regulatory pressure on agriculture relating to air and water quality, best management practices have become critical in applied research and education programs. When designing future applied research projects, emphasis will be placed on environmental quality improvement components.

The major lesson learned for the Agricultural Element was an underestimation of the complex issues involved in updating the document. It originally appeared the "fixes" were minor in nature, however, when the Agricultural Advisory Board and the Agricultural Element sub-committee delved into the subject matter, the issues raised by the review were more complex than envisioned. Public comment meetings will continue, changes to the draft update will be based on the results of these meetings, and a revised Agricultural Element will presented for adoption. In addition there were three lessons learned for mitigating to threats to agriculture. The extreme detail necessary to complete response plans requires more coordination and resources than anticipated. A department based computer programmer will be essential to the success of current and future projects therefore, a Systems Engineer position will be converted to a Software Developer/Analyst position. A more structured training regimen will be needed over the next year.

POLICY ISSUE:

The report on the goals and performance measures for Strong Agricultural Economy/Heritage provides the Board of Supervisors with a progress report on the efforts to support the Board commitment to agriculture.

STAFFING IMPACT:

There are no staffing impacts associated with this item.

GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

BOARD PRIORITY

The Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors is committed to providing excellent community services and we charge the organization to effectively manage public resources, encourage innovation and continuously improve business efficiencies.

In collaboration with public and private partnerships we strive for:

A strong agricultural economy/heritage

PRIORITY TEAM

Agricultural Commissioner
Cooperative Extension

GOAL 1

Support and promote agricultural products, education, technology and innovation

MEASURE 1A

Emphasize economic improvement (i.e. increase production, lower costs of production) in applied research and education programs.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Identify a current industry problem and collect baseline information on economics related to the problem;	Industry problems that might be solved by applied research in each Advisor's program area identified. Economic information related to problems collected. Examples of researchable problems include: • water quality issues • pest and disease management issues • issues related to cultural practices
Identify strategies to address the problem and design applied research/education activities to address the problem; and	Applied research projects designed to address critical agriculture industry problems. Test plots established in cooperation with growers/cooperators. Data from test plots collected during the season and at harvest. Information from research extended to the industry at educational events. Examples of projects from which data was collected include: • dairy wastewater management • walnut sunburn prevention • alternatives to methyl bromide fumigation for orchard replants
Identify potential economic impacts of the programs.	Data on economic impacts collected by Advisors. Economic impacts related to: • reduced nitrogen fertilizer use • reduced walnut crop losses

LESSONS LEARNED: While economic impacts for a single grower might be shown from a single year's data, economic impacts for an entire industry are difficult to assess based on a single year's data; may require multiple years before economic impacts of research can be reliably determined.

MEASURE 1B

Utilize electronic media to communicate information to customers.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Post newsletters, meeting announcements on department web site.	Ag Comm: Completed three quarterly newsletters and posted to the website. Initiated website list server for electronic subscription for the newsletter. UCCE: All newsletters are now posted to departments' websites. Customers have the option of subscribing to newsletters via e-mail; customers receive notification of current newsletters and meeting announcements in e-mail message.

LESSONS LEARNED: We need to establish a better e-mail list for our customers. Not all customers have e-mail access. Feedback on the newsletter has been very positive. We need to implement a system to routinely post meeting announcements on our website. At least one clerical staff member must be trained to post newsletters, meeting announcements and other information to the website.

MEASURE 1C

Make environmental quality improvement (air, water, other natural resources) a major component of research and education programs.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Review all existing research and educational projects for integrated pest management (IPM) or other strategies that result in environmental improvement; and	Advisors included environmental improvement components in applied research projects. Current information on integrated pest management extended to the industry at educational events.
Identify best management practices (BMPs) for agriculture that can be immediately used to improve environmental quality.	Applied research projects focused on best management practices (BMPs) for agriculture. Publications prepared on best management practices recommended for various crops. Examples of publications/information developed on BMPs include: • dairy lagoon water management • guides to environmentally sound pest management practices in orchard crops

LESSONS LEARNED: With increasing regulatory pressure on agriculture relating to air and water quality, best management practices have become critical in applied research and education programs.

MEASURE 1D

Support local informal agriculture education opportunities.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Form partnerships with other County departments, agencies, educational institutions and private industry to sponsor educational events;	Formed partnerships with California Association of Pest Control Advisors, California Association of Standards and Agricultural Professionals, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, California Department of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Food and Agriculture, California Regional Water Quality Control

	Board, California Poultry Federation, Walter M. Brown Elementary School, Agricultural Crime Technology Information and Operations Network, and Eastside and Westside Water Coalitions.
Seek opportunities for placing interns from California Sate University Stanislaus and Modesto Junior College; and	Placed four interns from California State University, Stanislaus, Modesto Junior College, and the International Baccalaureate Program at Modesto High School.
Develop survey tools for measuring results of educational programs.	Ag Comm: Educational survey tools have been developed. UCCE: A survey tool was successfully developed and used to evaluate the impacts of educational events.

LESSONS LEARNED: We need to offer continuing education classes at more convenient time for our customers. We need to schedule meeting topics in advance. Topics need to be creative, informative, and solution oriented.

GOAL 2

Protect agricultural resources

MEASURE

Update Agricultural Element of the General Plan.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Identify agricultural industry stakeholders—Agricultural Advisory Committee and Sub-Committee;	Appointed sub-committee to revise original Agricultural Element of the Stanislaus County General Plan Identified agriculture industry – Agricultural Advisory Board: Growers, Producers, Agricultural business and financial, Farm Bureau, Natural Resource Conservation Service, UC Extension Service, Agricultural Commissioner, and Board Of Supervisors representatives Agricultural Element Sub-Committee: Farm Bureau , agricultural lending institution, ag producers, county planning and ag commissioner staff, UC Extension Service and a member of the Board Of Supervisors
Begin public input process for update;	Agricultural Advisory Board and goal team
Receive and review suggestions for update; and	Agricultural Element sub-committee met nine times to review document and make suggestions.
Begin rewrite of draft update of Agricultural Element.	Agricultural Element sub-committee and county staff reviewed the original Agricultural Element of the Stanislaus County General Plan and incorporated updates. The revisions were regularly reviewed by the Agricultural Advisory Board. We have initiated the public comment and review period.

LESSONS LEARNED: The biggest lesson learned was an under estimation of the complexity issues involved in the update of the document. It originally appeared the “fixes” were minor in nature, however, when the Ag Advisory Board and the Ag Element sub-committee delved into the subject matter, the issues raised by the review were more complex than envisioned.

GOAL 3

Manage threats to agriculture

MEASURE 3A

Improve use of technology in agricultural inspection/monitoring programs.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Evaluate existing equipment and software applications;	Conducted survey of department staff to identify existing software applications and hardware to determine baseline resources,
Identify and prioritize future projects; and	Eight future projects were identified 1. Electronic pesticide use reporting. 2. Electronic pesticide use field inspections. 3. Pesticide use inspection-tracking database. 4. GPS/GIS program integration 5. Investigation tracking database. 6. Export certification issuance & billing. 7. Certified producer application and certification. 8. Organic registration records audit.
Implement two projects.	• Implemented electronic pesticide use reporting via the web for Departmental customers. • Implemented pilot program for electronic pesticide use field inspections.

LESSONS LEARNED: We need an in-house computer software/programming specialist. The staff is in need of more software training on the programs used in our department. We need to research methods to more efficiently/effectively reach our customer base using electronic resources.

MEASURE 3B

Develop, implement, and exercise agricultural program response plans.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Identify programs that require a response plan; and	Animal diseases, exotic insect pest, plant diseases, natural disasters, Non-occupational pesticide use-related exposure episodes
Complete two response plans with stakeholder input.	• All Hazard Agricultural Response Plan (95% completed) • Apple Maggot Response Plan

LESSONS LEARNED: Need better coordination with other county departments and state and federal agencies. The extreme detail necessary to complete response plans requires more coordination and resources than we had anticipated. The major components of planning and responding to an emergency are transferable to any emergency situation.

MEASURE 3C

Establish staff training and certification program to improve understanding, identification and mitigation of pests, diseases, and other threats to agriculture.

ONE YEAR RESULTS	
Expected Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007	**Actual Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2006-2007**
Assess staff training and educational needs and	Evaluated individual staff member's training record and

quantify gaps;	compared to their job duties. Conducted staff survey to evaluate training deficiencies.
Establish partnerships to assist in training and certification of staff;	California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Emergency Services, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, United States Department of Agriculture, San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Rice Commission, San Luis Obispo Department of Agriculture,
Conduct one training every four months (total of three); and	Staff attended 28 distinct training classes over this period. Classes included: National Incident Management Systems, Investigative Techniques, Rural Crime School, Pest Prevention Workshop, Environmental Investigation, and Agricultural Land Use Planning.
Establish a formal system to track training, certification and effectiveness of training.	Developed Access program to track an individual's formal training participation. Developed survey tool for our staff to evaluate the value of training classes.

LESSONS LEARNED: A more structured training regimen needs to be explored for new employees. Resources to meet staff training needs are not always available.

STANISLAUS COUNTY

Ag Commissioner Quarterly Newsletters 2006

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

Dennis Gudgel

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

Stanislaus County
Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures

Spring 2006

Volume 1, Issue 1

Agriculture and Weights and Measures

Spring Storms 2006—Agricultural Land Flood Damage

Inside this issue:

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly newsletter!

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

We welcome your feedback on this premiere issue.

Contact us:

Agcom50@mail.co.stanislaus.ca.us

(209) 525-4730

From the vantage point of a helicopter, Ann Juette, Agricultural Assistant II, tours and documents the flood damage to ag land as a result of the recent storms. Ann is in charge of the Ag Commissioner's GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping and will be instrumental in reporting the extent of the flood damage to state and local agencies.

On April 10, 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in seven Northern Central California counties, including Stanislaus. On April 11, 2006, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed the existence of a local emergency.

(Cont'd—Page 3)

Above: A Stanislaus County helicopter flight enabled Ann Juette, Agricultural Assistant, and Deputy Sealer Dan Bernaciak to view the flood damage from the spring storms.

Ag Commissioner/Sealer Dennis Gudgel

"Stop by and join me for a cup of coffee!" This is one of Dennis Gudgel's favorite invitations to customers. If you haven't yet taken him up on his offer, stop by the office, located at the Stanislaus

County Agricultural Center, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Suite B, Modesto, or call him at (209) 525-4730 to speak with him or set up an appointment. If you have any issues, comments or concerns (compliments are welcome too!), he would be happy to hear from you.

Gasoline—Am I Getting What I am Paying For?

Dan Bernaciak
Deputy Sealer of
Weights & Measures

With the price of gasoline climbing to over $3.00 per gallon, every trip to fill up the tank hurts the pocketbook and the question often comes up, "Am I really getting the amount of fuel that I am paying for?"

It is the responsibility of Weights and Measures to check the accuracy of commercial devices such as gas pumps. Every year in Stanislaus County, Inspectors from the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures test over 4400 gas pumps for accurate delivery of product.

"Drivers should be aware that the stated capacity of a vehicle's fuel tank is only an approximate value."

The good news is that traditionally, gas pumps have been some of the most accurate devices checked by Weights and Measures. Over 97% of the pumps tested in 2005 and year to date in 2006 have been found to be "in tolerance".

"In tolerance" means that the gas pump is delivering fuel within a range that has been established as being acceptably accurate. For gas pumps, this range is one-half of one percent (0.5%). On a 20-gallon fill, the established tolerance for a gas pump would allow the pump to deliver 20 gallons, plus or minus 1 and 2/3 cup.

Data collected over the last 3 years shows that, when a gas pump is "out of tolerance", 48% of the time it is "giving fuel away". Only 8% of the time is the pump "shorting" the customer. The balance of the problems, (44%), fall into other types of categories.

Drivers should be aware that the stated capacity of a vehicle's fuel tank is only an approximate value. Manufacturers have estimated that fuel tank volume can vary by up to 3% based on variables such as the manufacturing process. How level the vehicle is during the fueling process can also affect the amount of fuel the tank can hold. Drivers who try to "top off" their tank by repeatedly activating the nozzle after the initial shut off, may actually be pumping fuel back into the stations storage tank through the pump's vapor recovery system.

Consumers should pay attention when fueling their vehicle. After activating the pump, wait 5 to 10 seconds before dispensing fuel through the nozzle. During this time watch the pump to see if the display which indicates the dollar amount and amount of fuel purchased move. If movement occurs, this indicates a problem with the system, which needs to be addressed. The station should be notified of the problem and notifying the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures will allow a follow-up to be made to ensure the problem was corrected.

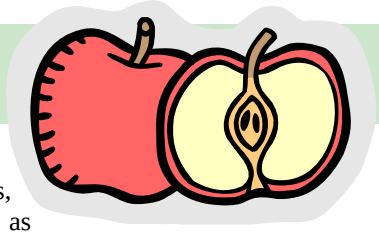
If consumers believe that there is a problem with a gas pump, they should notify Weights and Measures. They should be prepared to provide the following information:

1. The name and address of the station.
2. The pump number and the grade of fuel purchased (87, 89, or 91 octane gasoline or diesel)
3. The day and time of day the purchase was made.
4. Whether or not the opposite side of the fuel pump was in use during their purchase.
5. The amount of fuel purchased.

Weights and Measures in Stanislaus County may be contacted by calling (209) 525-4730, by fax at (209) 525-4790, or by email at:

agcom50@mail.co.stanislaus.ca.us.

Food For Thought



- The Apple represents the Earth.
- First, slice the apple into fourths, three of which you are to discard as they represent water areas.
- Take the remaining slice and divide it in half. Discard half, as it is uninhabited deserts, swamps and artic areas.
- Divide the remaining piece in fourths. Discard three of these pieces as they represent land that is too rocky, too wet, too hot or too poor for crop production.
- The section that is left is one-thirty-second of the original apple.
- Peel off the section. The peeling represents the thin layer of soil that is available for producing all of the world's food supply.
- That's how much soil there is on earth for growing food.

From the California Foundation for Ag in the Classroom

Fruit, Nut and Vegetable News

Kamal Bagri
Deputy Ag Commissioner

Melons

Melon season is coming and we are hoping to see increased acreage for Stanislaus County this year. The Cantaloupe Advisory Board is requiring counties to do cooler inspections this year along with our regular field inspections for sugar testing. All the cantaloupes stored over five days in the coolers are subject to re-inspection by Agricultural Commissioners staff.

The melons for sale at the grocery stores have to meet certain standards also. Under the Fruit & Vegetable Standardization program, we inspect different commodities to see if they are meeting the standards set by the State of California. A new law, which went into effect this year after AB Parra 520 was passed, will authorize Commissioners to fine up to $5,000 for violations of Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Standards. So next time you pick up a melon or any other fruit from the store and are not satisfied with the quality, give us a call.

Farmers Markets

Farmers Markets are a good source of fresh vegetables and fruits grown by our farmers. Certified Producers seen at the Farmers Market will be paying more for the services provided by our staff due to an increase in fees effective July 1, 2006.

Almonds/Phytosanitary Certificates

California produces 80% of the world's almonds and ships 70% of its total crop to more than 80 countries throughout the world. Stanislaus County accounted for 14.51% of the almond crop, producing 132,118,041 pounds for the 2005-2006 season.

The Export Certification program is one of the most important programs run by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. It is an industry-funded program and runs on the fees charged to the exporters. Last season (July 2005—March 2006), Stanislaus County issued 4,153 Federal Phytosanitary Certificates going to different parts of the world. The Board of Supervisors recently approved an increase in the Phytosanitary Certification fee, effective July 1, 2006.

Spring Storms 2006—Agricultural Land Flood Damage

(Continued from Page 1)

Ann Juette reported, "We arrived at the Modesto City-County Airport on a gray, overcast afternoon. After helicopter lift-off, we soared above the rivers. Along the Tuolumne River we saw high water in vineyards, young almond orchards, and alfalfa and grain crop fields. Along the lower Stanislaus River we viewed flooded pasture areas. On the westside of the San Joaquin River, long fingers of water that had seeped under the levees were visible. Tomato grounds in some areas were blanketed by water. Around the Grayson area, some fields of grain and alfalfa were completely submerged. The closer we got to Newman, the more flooding we saw. Water covered River Road in spots at the southern end of the river area. Many of the riparian areas on all three rivers were underwater, which may extract a toll on the local endangered and threatened animals species in those areas."

Above: A bird's eye view of flooded grain fields near the Tuolumne River, west of Paradise Road.

It is estimated that over 75% of the County's apricot crop has been lost as a result of the storms. Suffering over a 30% loss are cherries, as well as the early plantings of fresh and processing tomatoes. Hail damage was reported on the eastside of the County and farmers/ranchers are reporting an increase in livestock mortality due to the weather. Preliminary agricultural damage/loss estimates exceed $31 million.

Did you Know? Almond acreage in California has increased in recent years to the point that growers need two-thirds of the nation's bees to pollinate the trees' blossoms in early spring.

(CFBF Food and Farm News, Oct. 2005)

Ag Goes "Tech" at the Technology Fair

(L-R) Ann Juette, Wendy Hahn and Tina Graver brought their "tech" skills and knowledge to share at the Technology Fair.

"This technology allows growers who use restricted materials to report the pesticides they use over the web."

Our department recently exhibited the technology we use at the Connect 2006 Technology Fair held on April 25th at the Modesto Center Plaza. The event focused on how local business and technology help make us more efficient and productive, both at home and in the workplace. The Fair highlighted area business and technology uses, advances, and opportunities.

Tina Graver explains the benefits of E-Trace to Robert Beckler, GIS Coordinator, City of Modesto Information Services.

Showcased were four of the technologies that we use everyday. Tina Graver, Ag Assistant, spoke with attendees about E-Trace. This technology uses GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking through our cell phones to locate and dispatch employees in 'real time'. The technology is web-based and can be accessed through the web. Employees can be dispatched from one location to another using cell phone messaging and two-way alert functions. Our customers benefit from this technology as we can efficiently respond to requests for quarantine inspections of nursery stock (including Glassy-wing Sharpshooter inspections) and requests for phytosanitary certificate issuance and inspection.

Wendy Hahn, Agricultural Inspector, highlighted our web-based Restricted Material Management System for pesticide use reporting. This technology allows growers who use restricted materials to report the pesticides they use over the web. Using a user name and password, they can transmit this required data quickly. Before this technology was available, the growers would have to hand complete form and either fax them into our office or drop them off in a drop box. Now, a few mouse clicks and they're finished! (If you are interested in this program, contact our department at 525-4730.)

Ann Juette demonstrated our Geographic Information System (GIS) program which uses crop layers, water feature layers, and watershed drainage areas to track changes in the cropping patterns and water contamination issues. The crop layer is updated each year after the growers come in to get their restricted materials permit. Growers report the crops they will grow on their farms, and Ann enters those crops onto the grower's farm shown on the GIS crop layer. The GIS is also used to map areas in emergency situations, such as Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreaks in poultry. GIS is used to map other events, such as bee kills and water contamination.

The Fair also featured workshops taught by local experts on topics as varied as Microsoft Access Tips, Technology Security Strategies, and Internet Research Mining/GIS Applications. If you missed the Technology Fair this year, be sure to mark your calendar for this time next year and watch for the date in the Modesto Bee.

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, with total cash receipts of over $16.7 Billion. Eight counties—San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Madera and Tulare—produce more than half of the state's agriculture.

California Ag Statistics Service

Am I Using Pesticides Safely?

Kevin Gonzalves
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner

With an increasing visibility of pesticide mishaps occurring in California, Cal EPA's Department of Pesticide Regulation has stepped up its enforcement stance of "No Tolerance for Pesticide Related Illnesses".

Are you doing everything possible to protect your family farm from increased liability when you use pesticides on you farm, ranch or industrial processing plant? Are you still remaining competitive while keeping your employees, family and your property secure?

The Agricultural Commissioner's office may be able to help you find the answers to these questions. The pesticide use division of the Agricultural Commissioner's office can help you with training and educational resources.

We will all use pesticides from time to time around the house to control ants around our outdoor barbeque area, or on the job to prevent rodents from destroying our crops and commodities. But what are a few simple steps to assure that we keep our environment free from damaging pests and our families safe too? Just follow a few simple rules: Read the label before you use the pesticide. Dress appropriately; remember sandals, sunglasses and a tank top will not protect your skin and eyes from pesticide exposures. And if you're an employer, you have a responsibility to keep your employees safe.

The Agricultural Commissioner's office is here to serve the community. Protecting our local resources, our water supply, our work force and providing a comfortable living space for our family and community is important to us. We can help a private citizen better understand how to handle pesticides. We can also offer industry trainings to assure that your employees understand how to apply pesticides while giving guidelines on how to protect your business by reducing liability. That can be done in a few simple steps… Train your employees and document it! Make sure your employees have been tested and certified if possible.

We can provide training for the trainers, so that you can give the message clearly to your staff. Hand out personal protective equipment and make sure the employees follow proper use. Employer discipline programs don't have to be intimidating, but every employer should implement a program. Training programs need to be clearly written and acknowledged by both the employee and the employers.

Together we can be proud to say we do have the greatest County in California! We do care about our community, and that means we are sensitive to our environmental needs. Let's face it; nobody wants to harm the environment or the community. We live here and we will take care of our community.

Feel free to give us a call for your free assessment of your operation or if you just have a question about how to properly use a home use pesticide, we can help. There are a number of commercial resources and we can guide you in the right direction.

"The Agricultural Commissioner's Office is here to serve the community."

(Right) Deputy Ag Commissioner Kevin Gonzalves works with a local grower to ensure pesticide safety.

Stanislaus County
Department of Agriculture and
Weights and Measures

Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors
Bill O'Brien, District 1 — Jeff Grover, District 3
Tom Mayfield, District 2 — Ray Simon, District 4
Jim De Martini, District 5

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.STANAG.ORG

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. If you have any questions or comments, please contact our office at (209) 525-4730.

In Memoriam—A Tribute to One of Our Own

Dave Krediet, Ag/Weights & Measures Inspector III

As customers of Weights and Measures, you may have known or worked with the "larger than life" Dave Krediet.

Dave Krediet, Agricultural/Weights & Measures Inspector III, for Stanislaus County, passed away April 14, 2006, due to lymphoma.

Dave began working for Stanislaus County in June of 2000, after working for many years in the scale industry. Dave was responsible for setting up the County's metrology lab as well as assisting Kern County with their metrology lab. Dave received his Metrologist certification as a result of his training in Maryland. He built relationships with law enforcement (CHP, Caltrans and local police departments) for the wheel load weigher program. He identified problems on type approval with certain devices and worked closely with the state on this matter.

According to Ag Commissioner Sealer Dennis Gudgel, "Dave's life was Weights and Measures. He was one of the most knowledgeable Weights & Measures Inspectors for scales and devices in the State of California. He was very well respected throughout the Weights and Measures community and also with the industry. Since he came from a scale industry background, he understood what industry needed."

Dave will be sorely missed as both a professional and a co-worker and friend.

Summer 2006
Volume 1, Issue 2

Stanislaus County
Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures

Agriculture and Weights and Measures

The Stanislaus County Bird Disease Hotline: 1-877-411-BIRD

Inside this issue:

We hope you enjoy the second edition of our quarterly newsletter.

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

We welcome your feedback on this issue.

Contact us:

Agcom50@mail.co.stanislaus.ca.us

(209) 525-4730

If you need the latest information on bird disease as it relates to Avian Influenza, 1-877-411-BIRD is the toll-free number to call. Sponsored by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office and in partnership with the California Poultry Federation, this public information hotline provides tips about the warning signs of sick birds and informs backyard flock owners about what they should know to protect their birds from disease.

Callers will also be able to report sick or dead birds, which will aid local and state agencies in tracking disease outbreaks.

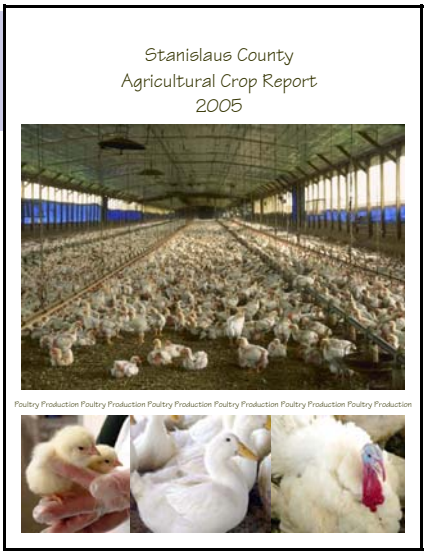
1-877-411-BIRD is recorded in both English and Spanish, and provides callers with several options to obtain information or leave messages. A marketing campaign is currently underway to inform the public of the new hotline.

For more information on bird disease, you may also contact the California Poultry Federation at (209) 576-6355 or visit their website at www.cpif.org.

2005 Crop Report Released

The Stanislaus County Agricultural Crop Report for 2005 has been released and was presented to the Board of Supervisors in June. The Crop Report highlights agriculture—Stanislaus County's number one industry. In 2005, the overall farm gate value was nearly $2 billion. The economic impact to our local economy is great, in that activities associated with processing agricultural commodities increase the economic value by a multiplier of approximately 4.5. Using this multiplier, agriculture's contribution to the local economy for the

Continued—Page 6



A History of Weights and Measures

Dan Bernaciak
Deputy Sealer of
Weights & Measures

Imagine buying rope and the amount you request is measured out by a salesperson using the length of their feet or arms. Imagine buying coffee and having the weight of your purchase determined by the amount of grain that leveled out the balance. If this were the case, you might only want to shop where people had big feet, long arms and dry grain! Stores on the other hand, might only want to hire sales associates who had small feet and short arms. Fortunately, we have a system that has standardized the units of weight and measure so the size of a person's feet does not determine their career path and we can have confidence that we are receiving the correct amount of product.

The use of some type of measuring or weighing goods is as old as man himself. At first, it was the length of an arm or foot that established a unit of measure or a kernel of grain that established a unit of weight. However, the obvious fact that not all feet were the same size, nor are all kernels of grain the same weight, led to the desire to standardize units of measuring and weighing and ultimately to the formation of Weights and Measures.

Although many people have never heard of Weights and Measures, we are not "new kids on the block". The founding fathers in the formation of the Constitution of the United States, gave Congress the power to "fix the Standard of Weights and Measures." President George Washington during his January 1790 message to Congress said, "Uniformity in currency, weights and measures of the United States, is an object of great importance, and will, I am persuaded, be duly attended to." In a report to the United States Congress in 1821, then Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams stated, "Weights and Measures may be ranked among the necessaries of life to every individual of human society. They enter into the economical arrangements and daily concerns of every family. They are necessary to every occupation of human industry…"

> "Although many people have not heard of Weights and Measures, we are not 'new kids on the block'. The founding fathers gave the Congress power to fix the Standards of Weights and Measures."

As important as the founding fathers of our country felt weights and measures to be, it was not until June 14, 1836, that the United States Congress adopted a uniform standard of weights and measures. This was the result of the work of Ferdinand Hassler who had shown that the existing standards of weight and measures varied to the extent that

Continued—Page 4

New Law Update — Automatic Checkout Requirement

Effective January 1, 2007, businesses must comply with a law passed in 2002 concerning customer display and indicator requirements for automatic checkout systems. The law states that anyone using an automatic checkout system, to sell goods or services to consumers shall ensure that the price of each good or service to be paid by the consumer is conspicuously displayed to the consumer at the time that the price is interpreted by the system. In addition, all price reductions, surcharges, taxes, and the total amount for each transaction also must be displayed for the consumer at least once before the consumer is required to pay for the goods or services. The law also requires that the checkout system customer indicator be positioned, and the prices and amounts displayed are of a size and form, easily viewable from a typical and reasonable customer position at each checkout location.

For the purposes of this law, an automatic checkout system is defined as:

A computer or any electronic system used to interpret the universal bar code or any other code that is on an item offered for sale to determine the price of the item being purchased regardless of whether the code entry is accomplished manually by a human or automatically by a machine.

The Business and Professions Code Section 13300 may be viewed at:
www.cdfa.ca.gov/dms/pdfs/BP2006.pdf

Export News

Kamal Bagri
Deputy Ag Commissioner

Wheat

The first commercial shipment of wheat to Mexico in 10 years left from Woodland in May 2006.

In 1996, Mexico placed a ban on all California wheat exports after Karnal Bunt fungus was found in limited areas of the desert southwest. Following a lengthy period of negotiation, the ban was lifted in 2005, through the efforts of the Mexican government and a public/private partnership consisting of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a team of California state legislators, members of the California Congressional Delegation, national wheat organizations, the California Wheat Commission, and the California Association of Wheat Growers. Mexico imports 3.6 million metric tons of wheat a year, 80 percent of which comes from the U.S. With the California ban lifted, the state will again have the opportunity to offer wheat to this large export market.

Stanislaus County produces over a million bushels of wheat every year and is required to participate in a National Survey for Karnal Bunt.

Stone Fruit Exports to Mexico and British Columbia

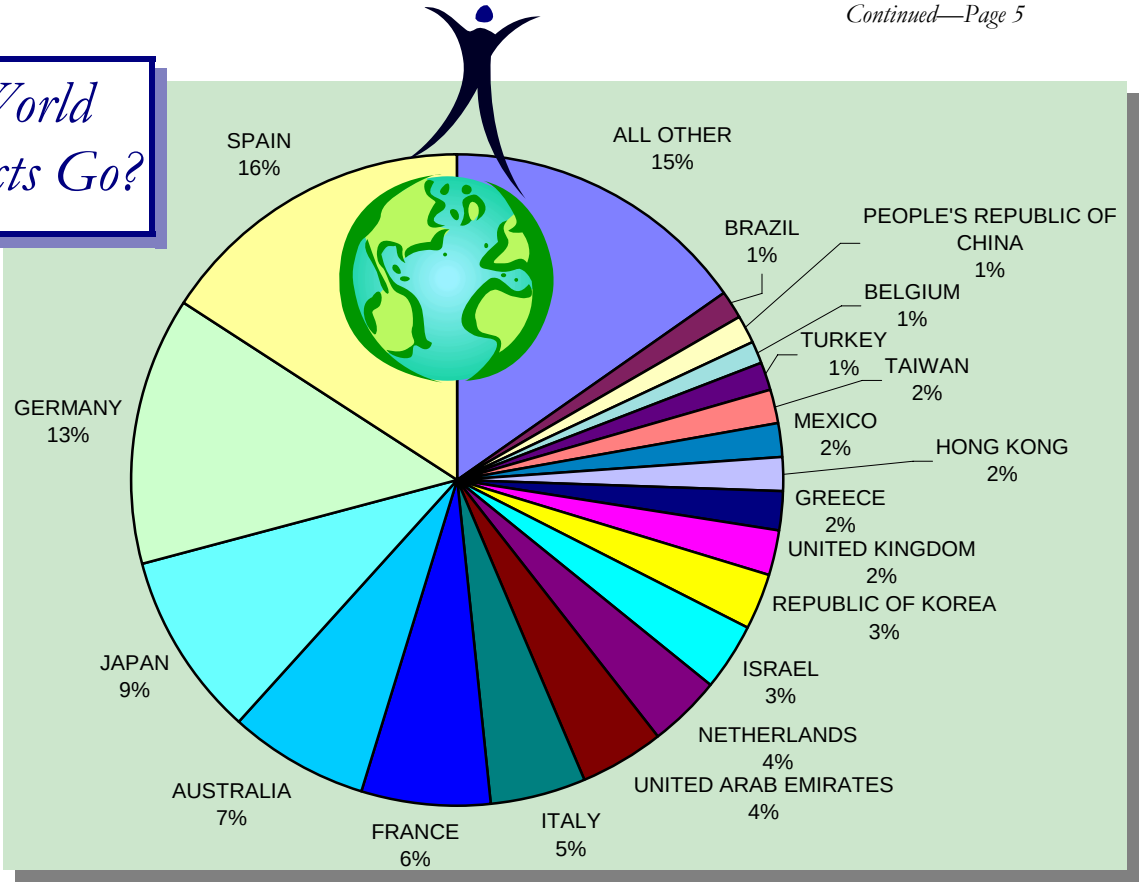
The Mexican borders opened to receive California stone fruit exports in May of this year. Stanislaus County is one of the five counties who export stone fruit to Mexico. Other counties include Fresno, Kings, Kern and Tulare. Farmers export plum, peaches, nectarines and apricots under this program.

In Stanislaus County, farmers ship apricots to Mexico and British Columbia. A total of 756 acres of apricots and nine growers are registered under the "Stone Fruit to Mexico" program for this year. Most of these shipments are packed in our county and inspected before shipping. The Stone Fruit Program to Mexico is a labor-intensive program. Apricot growers spend a lot of money to comply with the rules and regulation of Mexico and British Columbia. They make sure that all the orchards in this program are trapped for Oriental Fruit

Continued—Page 5

Where in the World Do Our Products Go?

What is the Number One Stanislaus County commodity exported internationally? Almonds—over 106 million pounds, accounting for a whopping 86% of our commodity exports—were shipped this past year to foreign destinations. Other top exports include seed, dried beans and lentils. The chart to the right includes countries of destination for all exported commodities from Stanislaus County.



Protecting Agriculture from the Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter

Battle of the Bug

The Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter (left); a menacing threat to agriculture.

Each year the Agricultural Commissioner's office has a team of agricultural assistants working hard to keep a menacing pest, the glassy-winged sharpshooter, from establishing itself in Stanislaus County. Incoming plant shipments from infested areas in California are inspected for the insect and the insect's egg masses. Also, glassy-winged sharpshooter traps are placed throughout our county and are routinely inspected by specially trained ag assistants.

The glassy-winged sharpshooter is a vector that spreads a bacterium called *Xylella fastidiosa,* which causes Pierce's disease in grapevines. This bacterium causes blockage of the water conducting system, which eventually leads to the death of the plant. There are no known treatments for this disease. This bacterium can also cause almond leaf scorch, alfalfa dwarf, citrus variegated chlorosis, oleander leaf scorch, and other plant diseases of concern.

This particular leafhopper is large, about a half inch long, and dark in color. On very close observation there is a stained glass appearance to its wings. It feeds on a wide variety of ornamental and crop plants.

There are ten people in the glassy-winged sharpshooter program, three serving as trappers and the remaining crew mainly work on plant inspections. Plant shipments coming into our county from an infested county must be inspected before being offered for sale or planted. Our trappers are trained on where to place traps for the highest risk factors and how to place the traps for maximum efficiency.

If you find an insect you suspect to be the glassy-winged sharpshooter please give us a call at (209) 525-4730.

Ag Assistants check incoming plants to be used in landscaping.

Weights and Measures History

(Continued from Page 1)

Louis McLane, Secretary of the Treasury stated these inconsistencies were "a serious evil". Ferdinand Hassler went on to oversee the construction of the Standards of weights and measures that were eventually distributed to every State.

Upon becoming a State, California recognized the necessity of having standardized units of weight and measure. As part of it's first session, on March 30, 1850, the California Legislature passed Chapter 53, which established Standards of Weights and Measures.

Today, the County Sealers of Weights and Measures are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of all commercial devices throughout California. This is accomplished by utilizing County Standards that have been verified by the State of California to be accurate. All 50 States' Standards are compared against (have traceability to) the National Standards maintained by the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Maryland. The United States National Standards have traceability to the International Standards maintained by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM - the Bureau International de Poids et Mesures) located in Sèvres France just outside Paris.

This system not only ensures standardized units of weight and measure throughout the United States, fulfilling the dream of our founding fathers, it also ensures standardized units of weight and measure throughout the world. In addition, this system helps maintain equity in the marketplace, the ultimate goal of Weights and Measures.

Today the standard of mass—the International Prototype Kilogram—is the only remaining physical artifact (see photo), and is kept in a vault in Sèvres, France. The standards for the other six base units: length, time, electrical current, temperature, amount of substance, and luminous intensity, are now defined by fundamental constants of physics.

The Top Ten Pesticide Blunders Provide Cautionary Tales

Kevin Gonzalves
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) recently announced its third annual "Top 10 Pesticide Blunders."

With the best interests of consumer and worker safety in mind, CDPR also recapped leading cases from the two previous years:

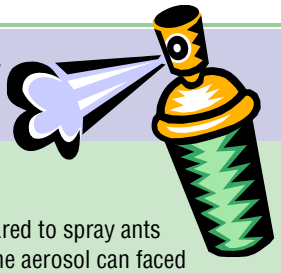
"As a 34-year-old Yolo County motorist moved her driver's seat backward, the motion caused an insect fogger stashed underneath the seat to discharge..."

"A 23-year-old San Joaquin County man spotted a fly on his beer can, sprayed an insecticide on the can, and later, as he drank from the can, his lips began to tingle..."

These and the new list of blunders graphically demonstrate what NOT to do as you undertake household and gardening chores or other work with pesticides this spring. DPR health and safety scientists say a few simple precautions can prevent most pesticide accidents:

- Look for the least-toxic solution to pest problems, indoors and out.
- Read all pesticide label directions closely and follow directions to the letter.
- Keep pesticides in their original containers and out of children's reach.

Many home pesticide accidents occur in kitchens and bathrooms, although they may go unreported. Almost half of households with children under age five have at least one pesticide stored within a child's reach, according to national health surveys. Children are especially vulnerable when adults put pesticides into drinking containers, such as soda or juice bottles. Consumer pesticide products with colorful packaging and attractive scents may also attract children.



1. As a San Diego County man prepared to spray ants with insecticide, he failed to notice the aerosol can faced the wrong way. He sprayed himself in the face, developed respiratory symptoms, and sought medical attention the next morning.

2. In Los Angeles County, a woman sprayed an aerosol insecticide under her kitchen sink to kill roaches. To get a better shot, she stuck her head inside the cabinet and then inhaled fumes. Her lungs began to burn and she sought medical attention.

3. An Orange County resident set off two "bug bombs" and left his house. He returned 90 minutes later, opened the windows, and remained inside. He developed heart symptoms and went to a hospital, where he suffered a stroke.

4. Another Los Angeles resident who sprayed her kitchen to kill flies drank from a glass of water that sat uncovered in the same room while she sprayed. A runny nose, headache, and chest tightness prompted her to seek medical aid.

5. In Orange County, a dog owner with asthma hugged her one-pound puppy shortly after it received a liquid flea control treatment from the woman's veterinarian. It was later determined that the puppy was treated with a dosage meant for larger dogs. The owner experienced shortness of breath, blurry vision, and other symptoms. The puppy also apparently suffered ill effects.

6. A San Diego receptionist sprayed an insecticide around doors in her office for spiders. She got the pesticide on her hands so she rubbed them together. She later rubbed her eyes. Her hands and eyes began to itch, so she sought medical attention.

7. A San Bernardino truck driver prepared to disinfect his tires with a hose-mounted sprayer. When he pulled on the hose, it knocked the attached disinfectant bottle off. The bottle hit the ground and disinfectant splashed into his face and eyes.

8. A Los Angeles County worker prepared to mop a kitchen floor when she noticed she was almost out of the usual cleaning product. She mixed bleach with the cleaning product, which created fumes. She developed respiratory symptoms and sought medical attention.

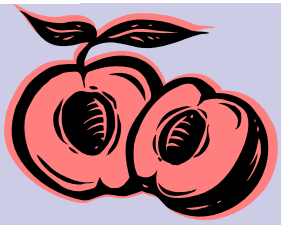
9. At a San Bernardino County fast-food outlet, a customer at the drive-through window bought iced tea and noticed a foul taste, followed by a burning throat and nasal passages. The cup apparently contained some sanitizer from an improperly rinsed tea machine. (Similar case reported in Los Angeles County.)

10. A Marin County lifeguard mistakenly added muriatic acid to a chlorine tank. He inhaled the resulting fumes and developed symptoms. His mother saw him coughing and took him for medical aid.

Source: California Department of Pesticide Regulation

www.cdpr.ca.gov

Export News
(Continued from Page 3)



Moth. These traps have to be inspected and monitored regularly. The orchards have to be sprayed several times and farmers have to keep a record of these activities. When the shipment is ready to be exported, staff of the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has to inspect and make sure that the fruit is free of any quarantine pests by cutting it. After that, shipment is sealed. The seal cannot be broken until the shipment reaches the border station of the foreign country.

This year, the program is a big challenge to the growers due to reduced crop and a Peach Fruit Fly find in Fresno County.

Stanislaus County
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Jim De Martini, District 5

The staff of the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures are always ready and willing to assist you. If you have any questions or comments, please contact our office at (209) 525-4730.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.STANAG.ORG

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

Did You Know?

- California is the only State in the United States where counties produce an annual Crop Report.
- The Crop Report is the only source of county data except the Census of Agriculture which is produced every five years.

- California produces as many as 350 separate crops.
- Stanislaus County's Value of Production exceeds that of 20 States in the United States.

2005 Crop Report Released

(Continued from Page 1)

year 2005 amounts to almost $9 billion. You can check out the Crop Report on our website at www.stanag.org .

Obtaining the Data

Each year the ranchers and growers are mailed a questionnaire from the Stanislaus County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures. The questionnaire requests information from the grower about the crop, acreage, harvest, and gross value of the crops they grow in Stanislaus County. Livestock producers, dairymen, poultry producers, and beekeepers are also asked for data. The responses are anonymous and are strictly confidential. The timely completion of the questionnaire is a crucial component in the production of an accurate and informative Crop Report for Stanislaus County. Our Department does obtain statistics from several sources for the Crop Report but data provided by our local growers is critical to local value determination.

Importance of the Crop Report Questionnaire Data

- The information on the Crop Report is critical in accurately determining the overall value of agriculture in Stanislaus County. For some commodities, the questionnaire data is the sole source of value determination.
- Lending institutions and government agencies use the information compiled in the Crop Report to make decisions about farm loans.
- In the case of a disaster or catastrophic event that affects Stanislaus County agriculture, the information in the Crop Report may be used to indemnify Stanislaus County and/or the agricultural community.
- The data provided by the growers determines where Stanislaus County ranks among the counties in California and the nation in agricultural production.

The Stanislaus County Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures receives numerous calls from the media inquiring about county agricultural production. The Crop Report provides the media with a reliable and complete source of agricultural statistical information.

Stanislaus County
Department of Agriculture and Weights and Measures

Fall 2006

Volume 1 Issue 3

Agriculture and Weights and Measures

Wildlife Services Specialist — Protecting Agriculture

Inside this issue:

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:

Agcom50@mail.co.stanislaus.ca.us

(209) 525-4730

Meet Steve Galentine — the Wildlife Services Specialist for Stanislaus County. The services Steve provides are made possible through cooperative funding from both the Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As an employee of USDA, Stanislaus County residents are able to contact Steve through the Ag Commissioner's Office in order to get assistance with wildlife related problems. Steve helps landowners, ranchers and farmers by giving them advice and technical assistance on ways to reduce problems caused by wildlife. If necessary, he will capture and remove the animals.

Coyotes are a common problem to agriculture in that they prey on cattle, sheep and goats. Coyotes also cause damage to micro-irrigation systems. Steve estimates that about 40% of his calls relate to coyote problems. Beavers are also a common complaint for agriculture, in that beavers can cause damage to canal and weir systems and destroy orchard trees. Beaver related calls account for about 25% of complaints. Steve reports that the rest of the calls are usually urban-related and involve issues with skunks, raccoons, urban coyotes, gray fox and opossums.

Steve holds a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Biology from UC Davis and has worked for USDA since 1998. He believes his job is important in that it protects agriculture in a county in which the local economy relies heavily on its production. Through his services, he minimizes wildlife damage to agriculture, so that it can remain profitable. By working with his customers, or "cooperators", Steve finds satisfying relationships. The cooperators are very appreciative of his work

Continued on Page 2

Above : Beaver damage to Almond tree

Wildlife Services

Continued from Page 1

and expertise and many of them treat him "like family".

Above : Coyote damage to irrigation piping

One of the more unusual calls Steve received was from a woman claiming there was an alligator in Dry Creek. A second person verified the story and so Steve responded to the location and set a trap. He never did catch anything. Rather than a hoax, Steve believes this was a case of mistaken identity. By the actual description of the animal and the way it swam, Steve deduced that it was probably a river otter, not an alligator after all.

Above : A Mountain Lion in western Stanislaus County

Another area that Steve works in is Disease Surveillance. Currently he is doing sampling for Avian Influenza in waterfowl and this project will continue throughout the year. The Avian Influenza project is in cooperation with USDA, the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey and the California Department of Fish and Game. Steve also performs plague testing on all wildlife animals that have to be euthanized. Since plague has been detected in neighboring Tuolumne County, this ongoing project helps to protect Stanislaus County animals and residents.

Steve says that a common misconception that the public may have is that Wildlife Specialists are attempting to capture as much wildlife as possible. Actually, Steve's goal is to find alternatives and methods to resolve wildlife concerns without trapping and removing the animal, which is a last resort. In fact, about 50% of urban wildlife issues can be resolved over the phone with Steve's assistance and education.

If you are a Stanislaus County resident and you are experiencing problems with animal wildlife, you may contact the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (209) 525-4730.

Types of Animal Wildlife Calls Received:

Coyote	Egret
Beaver	Heron
Skunk	Geese
Raccoon	Bat
Opossum	Hawk
Gray Fox	Owl
Red Fox	Rabbit
Bobcat	Muskrat
Snake	Pigeon
Alligator	Pig
Mountain Lion	
Ground Squirrel	
Blackbird	
Scrub Jay	

Left : Wildlife Services works to relocate waterfowl which were a nuisance.

Right: Feral (wild) pigs can cause damage to orchards and other agriculture.

Weed Alert: Japanese Dodder

Kamal Bagri
Deputy Ag Commissioner

Japanese Dodder is an exotic, potentially invasive parasitic vine recently introduced to California. Since June 2004, there have been a growing number of California detections of Japanese dodder (*Cuscuta japonica*). Two new counties have discovered Japanese dodder this year, bringing the total number of counties with detections to five; however, most infestations have been discovered within the last six months and more are expected. Currently, infestations have been found in Contra Costa County (El Cerrito, San Pablo and Richmond), Shasta County (Redding), Yuba County (Olivehurst and Marysville), Sacramento County (Sacramento), and L. A. County (Los Angeles). The California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) is requesting assistance from other agencies and the public in locating unknown infestations in order to assess the current distribution of Japanese dodder.

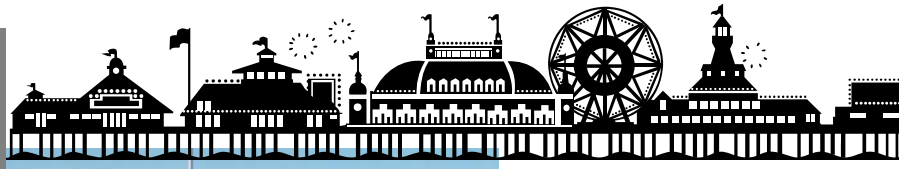
Native Dodder, typically orange colored, is a common weed in Stanislaus County and could be mistaken as Japanese Dodder. Japanese Dodder is vibrant yellow-green to gold leafless vine, has thick, robust stems. It has typically large infestations, entirely covering shrubs or trees. Native dodder infestations are likely to be smaller, infecting no woody plants or small shrubs. It is unlikely to find Japanese Dodder in hot, dry desert climates or at high altitudes and most of the recent infestations has been found in residential areas and ornamental plantings. For more information, or to report possible Japanese Dodder contact Deputy Ag Commissioner Kamal Bagri at (209) 525-4730.

Right: Japanese Dodder

Below Left: Japanese Dodder removal in Contra Costa County

Below: Not to be confused with Japanese Dodder, Native Dodder is thread-like with thinner stems.

Learning about Bird Flu at the County Fair



Nestled next to the cinnamon buns and across from the icy cold lemonade stand, the Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the California Poultry Federation, proudly boasted an informational booth at this year's County Fair. Something to crow about, this booth offered the latest info on Avian Influenza in birds, signs of bird disease and bio-security practices for backyard flock owners. There was plenty of information to go around and our friendly volunteers were trained to assist fair attendees.

Thank you to all who helped to make our booth a success!

Firewood — Don't Get Burned

Dan Bernaciak
Deputy Sealer of
Weights & Measures

Although it may be hard to remember after the record setting heat of this past summer, it will soon turn cool and many of us will once again enjoy sitting in front of a roaring fire in the fireplace. Unless you are fortunate enough to have your own wood supply, you will be purchasing the wood you burn. Here are a few items to keep in mind as you shop for firewood.

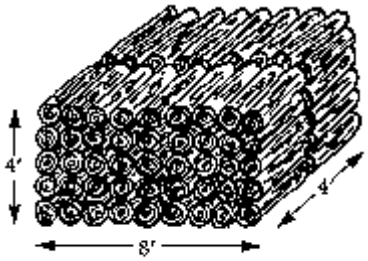
The *only legal method* of selling firewood in California is by the cord, fraction of a cord, or percentage of a cord unless the quantity is less than 1/8 of a cord in which case it must be sold by the cubic foot or fraction of a cubic foot. The term cord has a legal definition; it is a measurement that equals 128 cubic feet. It is not legal to sell firewood by the box or pickup load.

The law also requires that the seller provide the purchaser with an invoice. The invoice must contain the following information:

- ✓ Name and address of the seller
- ✓ Date purchased or delivered
- ✓ Quantity purchased
- ✓ Price of the quantity purchased

If you want to measure the amount of wood purchased, it must be stacked so that the wood is ranked and well stowed. This means stacking the wood neatly in a line with the individual pieces of wood touching and parallel to each other. The stack must have as few gaps as possible. The measurement will consist of the length times the width times the height of the stack.

If you believe you have not received the correct amount, contact the seller before you burn any wood. If you are unable to come to an agreement, contact our office at (209) 525-4730.



4'X4'X8'=128 Cubic Feet

Harvest Hall

Is your organization agriculture related? Are you hosting an agriculture related event? Are you a Stanislaus County department or a governmental agency? Let us provide you with the perfect setting for your next Event, Conference, or Banquet in Stanislaus County's *Harvest Hall*. We are located in the Stanislaus County Agricultural Center in a rural setting. The green and yellow hills of the Diablo Range offer a scenic backdrop for events held on the grounds.

Harvest Hall East (Rooms A/B/C) is the largest combined room in Harvest Hall. It seats 216 people theater-style or up to 150 people classroom style, complete with industrial kitchen facilities. This room breaks down into three smaller rooms, so you can use one, two, or all three rooms. Each room has a projection screen and a PA system.

Harvest Hall West (Rooms D/E) seats 160 people theater-style and up to 120 people classroom style and breaks into two smaller rooms. Each room has a projection screen and a PA system. We also have a Computer Room that seats 20 people with ten computers available.

Our landscaped grounds are available for your outdoor event. Our Coordinator will custom fit your needs for a great Harvest Hall experience. Visit our website at www.stanag.org/HarvestHall.htm or call 209-525-4730 and ask for the Harvest Hall coordinator. We look forward to discussing your event with you.

The Problem with Pyrethroids

Kevin Gonzalves
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner

A popular insecticide is flowing into urban streams and killing tiny aquatic creatures. The chemicals, pyrethroids, are man-made versions of natural compounds in chrysanthemum flowers. Their use has skyrocketed in the past few years as consumers and exterminators search for less-toxic alternatives for dangerous insecticides already banned. But last fall, a UC Berkeley scientist reported that pyrethroids are polluting streams in Northern California suburbs, wiping out crustaceans and insects vital to ecosystems.

The compounds, particularly one called permethrin, are prevalent in lawn products and household and pet sprays, as well as in insecticides sprayed by exterminators and farmers. Also, many cities and counties spray a pyrethroid for mosquito control to prevent the spread of West Nile virus.

Although they poison nerve cells of invertebrates, the compounds are among the least toxic insecticides for humans and other mammals as well as birds. That is why they have replaced the organophosphate insecticides diazinon and chlorpyrifos, which were phased out by the EPA because they are particularly hazardous for children.

Use of pyrethroids by California farmers and exterminators has nearly tripled, growing from about 420,000 pounds in 1999 to 1.1 million pounds in 2004. Consumers' retail sales are not included in those numbers but state officials say their usage probably doubles that volume.

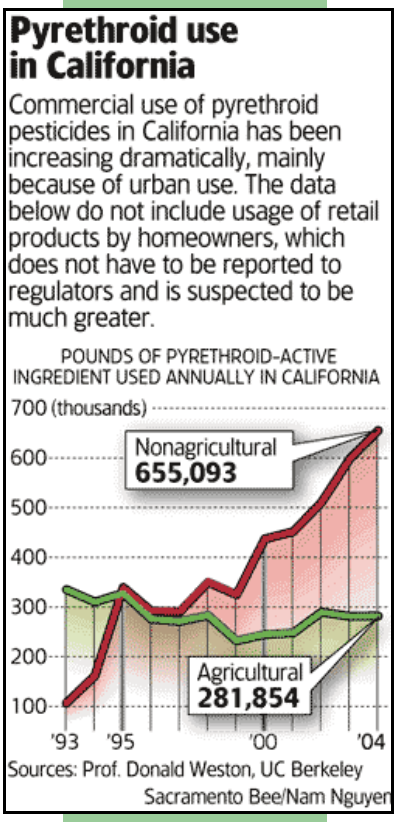
Donald Weston, an adjunct professor of integrative biology at UC Berkeley, said his studies have shown that pyrethroids are flowing into storm drains and building up to toxic levels in stream sediment. In lab tests, nearly all samples of the pesticide-tainted sediments from the creeks killed tiny crustacean creatures called hyalella. The creatures — shrimp-like amphipods that live in bottom sediment — are important prey for small fish, frogs, salamanders and aquatic insects. Their presence is often considered a sign of a healthy waterway. Weston said that the most toxic compound in the creeks is bifenthrin, which is sprayed around houses by exterminators and is found in some consumer products that are spread on lawns. He did not find pyrethroids from farms or mosquito control in the creeks. About 20% of the Central Valley's streams contain pyrethroid levels that are toxic to the crustaceans.

California's pesticide agency is conducting a review that is likely to lead to restrictions on many products used on lawns and gardens. Mary-Ann Warmerdam, director of the state Department of Pesticide Regulation, said that notices will be sent to manufacturers of about 600 pyrethroid products informing them that the state is reevaluating their use. That kicks off a process that will probably culminate in new regulations, and perhaps bans of some products in California. In restricting pyrethroids, however, the state agency hopes to keep some as options and ensure that people don't switch to products that wind up being worse.

Ms. Warmerdam states that this will be the biggest pesticide regulation effort in state history, involving 600 consumer products sold in hardware stores, garden centers and pet stores. "We know we have enough caution flags, and that requires a regulatory effort," said Warmerdam. "I would rather see pyrethroids stay on the market, because of their positive attributes. But that only happens if we all work together."

Pyrethroid insecticides are those with active ingredients that end in "thrin"—permethrin and cypermethrin mostly in household products, and the more potent bifenthrin and cyfluthrin used by pest-control professionals. At the retail level, the products are sold in sprays or in granules added to fertilizers spread on lawns. They are also used in some pet soaps and shampoos. Examples include Raid, Decathlon, Ambush, Easygone and Terro. Consumers won't see any immediate changes. But within a few months, retail stores may begin to offer more educational materials to help consumers cut back on pesticide use.

Manufacturers must respond within two months to the state's request for data; then they'll have a year to deliver that data. Those that don't respond or refuse to cooperate will have their products banned, said Warmerdam. "Pyrethroids are a real problem in the urban setting, and their use is going up," said Pete Price, a lobbyist with the League of Conservation Voters. "I think it's in everyone's interest that we get more serious in the state about managing urban pesticide use."



Sources:
LA Times, July 14, 2006,
Household Pesticides Scrutinized

Sacramento Bee, July 14, 2006,
State toughens rules on household pesticide

Stanislaus County
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The staff of the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures are always ready and willing to assist you. If you have any questions or comments, please contact our office at (209) 525-4730.

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

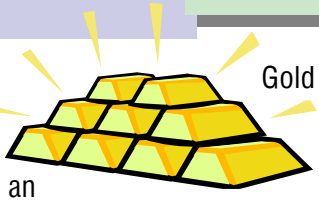
Did You Know?

Stanislaus County has produced an abundant crop of local agricultural leaders, who have risen to state and federal office:

- **Richard Lyng**
  Director, Calif Dept of Food and Ag: 1967-69
  Secretary, US Dept of Agriculture: 1986-89
- **Clare Berryhill**
  Director, Calif Dept of Food and Ag: 1983-87
- **Henry Voss**
  Secretary, Calif Dept of Food and Ag: 1989-95
- **Bill Lyons, Jr.**
  Secretary, Calif Dept of Food and Ag: 1999-2003
- **Ann Veneman**
  Dep. Secretary, Calif Dept of Food and Ag: 1991-93
  Secretary, Calif Dept of Food and Ag: 1995-1999
  Secretary, US Dept of Agriculture: 2001-2004

Weights & Measures Brainteaser:

Which Weighs More?
A Pound of Feathers or...
A Pound of Gold?



A pound of feathers weighs more than a pound of gold, but an ounce of gold weighs more than an ounce of feathers. Huh?

Weights & Measures officials will explain that this is true because:

Feathers are weighed by the Avoirdupois units of weight. One Avoirdupois pound weighs 16 oz. or 7,000 grains.

Gold is weighed by the Troy units of weight. One pound weighs 12 oz. or 5,760 grains.

Thus a pound of Feathers (7,000 grains), weighs more than a pound of Gold (5,760 grains).

Conversely, there are 480 grains to the Troy ounce and only 437.5 grains to the Avoirdupois ounce.

Therefore, an ounce of Gold (480 grains), weighs more than an ounce of Feathers (437.5 grains).