Stanislaus County

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
& WEIGHTS AND MEASURES**

*Milton O'Haire
Agricultural Commissioner/
Sealer of Weights and Measures*

*Daniel Bernaciak
Assistant Agricultural Commissioner/
Sealer of Weights and Measures*

Press Release

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Contact: Milton O'Haire
(209) 525-4730
miltono@stancounty.com

Unsolicited Seed Shipments from China Pose Threat to U.S.

Stanislaus County, CA - Recently, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has become aware of a number of reports from the public regarding shipments of "mysterious and unsolicited seeds from China". These seed packages are often labeled as jewelry and are being shipped to homeowners throughout the US, including Stanislaus County.

County agricultural commissioners routinely work with CDFA and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to intercept such packages. "Part of our surveillance system for invasive agricultural plants, pests and diseases, include agricultural commissioner staff conducting inspections at shipping terminals such as Federal Express, United Parcel Service, U.S. Postal Service and Amazon," said Milton O'Haire, Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner.

The Commissioner's office has already taken about a dozen calls from residents who have received these seeds. These packages may contain invasive plant seed species which pose a threat to the agriculture and livestock.   Invasive species can devastate the environment, displace or destroy native plants and insects, severely damage crops, and poison livestock. "Preventing the introduction of invasive species is the most effective method of reducing both the risk of invasive species infestations and the cost to control and mitigate those infestations," stated Milton O'Haire.

"The phone calls we have been receiving from the public is are a great example of the important role the community plays in keeping potentially dangerous plant species out of our County and the State", said Milton O'Haire. The Commissioner encourages recipients of these seeds to not open the package, do not plant or dispose of the seeds and to contact his office at (209) 525-4730 so arrangements can be made to collect the seeds for proper destruction.

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