



## **EVENTS AND MEETINGS**

### **Agricultural Advisory Committee**

- March 13; Cancelled
- April 10; Branch Center Auditorium; 6:30 pm

### **Other (i.e. CASAP, CUG, etc.)**

- CDFA Registered Service Agent Advisory Committee meeting; December 13
- CASAP Conference; February 14 – 16; Redding
- CDFA 2024 Japanese Beetle initial ICS Planning meeting; February 15
- Ag Pass Training; February 29; 9:30 am; Branch Center Auditorium
- CDFA Certified Farmers Market Advisory Committee Meeting; March 4
- 2024 Southeast Asian Farmers Annual Meeting; Branch Center Auditorium; March 6
- Ag Day at the Capital; March 19; 10 am – 1:30 pm; State Capital
- DPR Ag Pest Control Advisory Committee Meeting; March 20
- Pesticide Container Recycling Day; April 17; 8 am – 12 pm; KLM Ranch

## **PERSONNEL UPDATES**

### **Department Team**

- **Bilal Bhatti** passed the Integrated Pest Management State Licensing Exam. Congratulations Bilal!
- **Natalie Cunha** passed the Integrated Pest Management and Weight Verification State Licensing Exams. Congratulations Natalie!
- **Tatum Getty** passed the Measurement Verification and Weight Verification State Licensing Exams. Congratulations Tatum!

### **County Team**

- **David Villanueva** has been appointed by the Board of Supervisors as the new County Executive.
- **Sylvester Fadal** has been appointed by the Board of Supervisors as the new Deputy Executive of the Administrative Services Agency.
- **Joseph Hsieh** has been appointed as the Interim Director of Personnel Services.

## **AG COMMISSIONER/SEALER UPDATE – Chris Flores**

**Agricultural Pass Training.** The Department, in coordination with the County’s Office of Emergency Services, Sacramento Metro Fire, Sacramento Dept of Water Resources, and the Sheriff’s office, has been conducting trainings for the Ag Pass. The last training of the year was held on Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, at the Ag Department on Branch Center Road. Information about the program and training opportunities can be found on the Department’s website. To date, 47 commercial agricultural operators have attended the training. The Department will conduct trainings annually to issue renewals and new passes and is looking at creating an on-line renewal platform.

**FY 2024/25 Budget Submitted.** I’d like to congratulate and thank our newest member of the team, Tonja Gillen, for her dedication and perseverance in getting our budget completed and submitted. This is not an easy task. If you think about all of the different programs we have, all of the different expenses that must be linked to specific programs, and all of the various revenue sources we track (thank you Account Technician Extraordinaire, Patty Kirtley), then you will understand that incorporating all of this detail into a budget that must be as accurate and fiscally responsible as possible, is quite an accomplishment. The budget season has just begun. The Board will hold public hearings on the County’s Recommended Budget between June 5 – 7, and will hold hearings and adopt the budget in September.

**March 1<sup>st</sup> – March 7<sup>th</sup> is National Weights and Measures Week!** On March 2, 1799, President John Adams signed the United States’ first weights and measures law. To commemorate this event, Weights and Measures departments across the country celebrate National Weights and Measures Week, every year between March 1 – 7.

In Sacramento County, we have six staff members who work behind the scenes to protect both buyers and sellers from malfunctioning devices and unfair marketing practices.

**Stolen Weights and Measures Truck Recovered.** On February 28, I received a call from Marcie Skelton, Glenn County’s Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures. I was informed that their truck had been taken from a secured parking lot at a State Department in Sacramento. Luckily, the truck had a gps unit on it and they had tracked it to a dirt lot in Sheldon. She asked if I could go verify that it was actually there. And so I did. When I pulled into the lot and saw the truck, I notified Ms. Skelton and shortly after a CHP officer arrived. I also reported the stolen truck to Elk Grove PD, who responded to the call and was going to follow up with an investigation. Inspector Gerry Zepeda assisted by driving the truck to our Heavy Fleet parking lot (although the ignition switch was damaged, we were able to start the truck). Glenn County was thankful for the recovery and picked up the truck a few days later.

**2024 Southeast Asian Farmers Annual Meeting.** The Department participated in the annual meeting held by UC Cooperative Extension. Deputy Dave Smith covered why it’s important to get an Operator ID or Restricted Materials Permit, the differences of the two, and what is a Restricted Entry Interval (REI). Some of

the information was relayed via Youtube videos created by the Department of Pesticide Regulation in Hmong. UCCE had Lu-Mienh and Hmong translators for the attendees. Department staff assisted the attendees with Certified Producer Certification, Operator IDs and Restricted Materials Permits, and the testing and sealing of commercial weighing devices. There were over 40 attendees. Other topics covered included applying for grants, loans, and other financial assistance; using pesticides or other methods and what is the best choice; ensuring food safety; and how to keep the rain from damaging soil.

**Ag Day at the Capital.** On March 19, from 10am to 1:30pm, the Capital grounds will come alive with fresh food, farm animals and entertainment. The event on the west steps of the State Capital provides an opportunity for farmers, ranchers and farmworkers to showcase the bounty that they produce and to speak directly with their legislators. Our own Pest Detector Dog Team of Inspector/Handler Michelle King and her pup, Kernul, will be giving a demonstration to the crowd around noon. The event is hosted by CDFA, California Women for Agriculture (CWA) and the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom.

**Pesticide Container Recycling Event.** The event will be held at KLM Ranch on Wednesday, April 17, from 8am to 12pm. Last year, over 16,700 pounds of plastic was recycled and kept out of the land fill. This is a free event to pesticide users, courtesy of the Department, KLM Ranch Inc., Sacramento's Waste Management and Recycling, and Sequoia Environmental Compliance Counsel.

**2023 Livestock and Crop Report Surveys.** The Livestock and Crop Report surveys have been distributed and are being collected by the Department. Also, new this year, the surveys can be filled out and submitted on-line, through the Department's website, on the Crop and Livestock Reports page. All survey entries are kept confidential per Gov. Code Section 6254. Any submitted information is greatly appreciated.

## **DEPUTY AG COMMISSIONER/AG PROGRAMS UPDATE – Kevin Martyn**

**Detection.** Oriental Fruit Fly (OFF) quarantine compliance agreements for all growers, farmers markets, nurseries and other affected operations are being pursued in preparation for possible finds in the Spring/early Summer. There have been no additional finds of OFF since the end of September. The 106 square mile quarantine is expected to remain in place through mid-June if there are no further finds. Have been working with the Lemon Hill growers, farm managers and the property owner to coordinate OFF quarantine compliance strategies and pre-harvest treatments.

**Exclusion.** Inspectors intercepted some *Spondias* that was in violation of Caribbean Fruit Fly quarantine.

**Weeds.** Japanese Dodder locations within Sacramento County have been abated with grant funding received from the State.

**Apiary.** Registrations are occurring on the BeeWhere site. At this time, there is no fee to register hives.

**Sudden Oak Death.** Results of the fall bi-annual sampling at Everde resulted in no positive finds for *Phytophthora ramorum*.

A trace forward was requested by CDFA. Samples were taken by Inspector Megan at the location specified by CDFA.

**Standardization.** Inspectors Megan and Natalie conducted inspections with Kevin Jenkins from CDFA's Standardization Program and visited several wholesale commodity distributors. One distributor was required to place some items on hold. CDFA may ask for assistance with follow-up.

## **DEPUTY AG COMMISSIONER/PUE UPDATE – David Smith**

**Hazmat.** EMD organized field training with our staff regarding the use of their Department's new electronic inspection database. This training, along with the classroom training held in late November was very helpful in preparing our department's transition to the new inspection database. EMD has updated the current Ag MOU facility list.

### **Pesticide Use Enforcement.**

During the month of November, a total of 25 PUE inspections were conducted. The following types of PUE inspections were conducted:

- 104 (Pesticide Use): 6
- 107 (Struct. Fume – App, tarp, or aeration): 4
- 108 (Structural Pesticide Use): 4
- 109 (Operator): 9
- 110 (Pest Control Business): 2

Some of the violations found during PUE inspections included:

- Inadequate training for employees
- Failure to conduct respirator program evaluations
- Failure to conduct respirator medical evaluations
- Inadequate PPE worn during application
- Inadequate records kept when selling a pesticide for ag use
- Unlicensed sale of a pesticide for ag use

Permit and registration renewal season began November 1<sup>st</sup>. The department continues to utilize electronic issuance of registrations and permits in addition to in-person appointments with clients.

As a reminder, we are offering multi-year permits to those entities that qualify.

## **DEPUTY SEALER/W&M UPDATE – Breanne Matsuura**

**Hearing Officer and Advocate Training.** On November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, Inspector Prab and I attended a Hearing Officer and Advocate Training in Alameda County. Robert Atkins, retired San Diego Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures, led the training. Mr. Atkins gave an overview of the hearing process and then attendees participated in mock hearings. We have two upcoming APOSS hearings in February, so the training came at a perfect time.

**Multi-Agency Collaboration on Complaint.** In December, we were contacted by the Nevada Department of Agriculture regarding a complaint. The complainant lives in Nevada but ordered a package, which was weighed by XPO Logistics in Sacramento. The package weighed 155 pounds, but XPO Logistics recorded the package as 2,080 pounds. The Nevada Department of Agriculture determined that the correct weight was 155 pounds, and therefore requested that we inspect XPO Logistics' scales. Inspector Gerry Zepeda followed up and determined that the scales were in tolerance. It's difficult to pinpoint how 2,080 pounds was incorrectly recorded, but XPO Logistics agreed to refund the complainant for the difference.

**2023 Stats.** Weights and Measures Inspectors inspected 23,096 commercial weighing and measuring devices in 2023 and followed up on 94 complaints! Wow!

**2024 Seals.** The 2024 sticker seals have been ordered. The color combination is green text on white background.

**Lead Awareness Training.** On January 4<sup>th</sup>, Deputy David Smith and I held a lead awareness training for Weights and Measures inspectors and Galt staff who handle lead and wire seals. The training informed staff about the hazards of lead and how to minimize exposure. We also discussed our new Standard Operating Procedure for handling and disposing of lead waste.

**Standards Certification.** Over the next couple of months, we will be bringing in our standards to DMS for certification. Most of our standards are on a four-year certification interval.

**Changes to California Redemption Value (CRV) Law.** Beginning January 1, 2024, the following products are considered a "beverage" and may now have a CRV charge applied:

- Any size container of 100% fruit juice
- Any size container of vegetable juice
- Wine and distilled spirits

There are also new changes regarding containers. For more information, see: [DMS Notice QC-23-03 Law Changes Related to CRV](#).

**Upcoming APOSS Hearings.** On February 22, 2024, Prab and I participated in two Automated Point of Sale System (pricing overcharge administrative civil penalty) Hearings. Prab served as the Witness and I served as the Advocate. The hearings took place at our office.

**Plastic Seals.** We will be replacing our lead and wire seals with plastic seals. The plastic seals have been ordered and are estimated to ship on February 29, 2024. The conversion of lead and wire seals to plastic seals will significantly reduce potential lead exposure. When handling meters with lead and wire seals, please remember to follow all cleaning and disposal procedures.

**Collaboration with DMS on Diesel Fuel Issue.** In January, I received a call from Chris Lenert, Division of Measurement Standards (DMS) Special Investigator, that he randomly sampled diesel fuel at a gas station in our county and the fuel did not meet specifications. The diesel pumps had to be shut down and all of the fuel in the underground storage tank had to be removed. Chris requested our assistance so that the pumps could re-open as soon as possible. Inspector Venkata took samples of the fuel and once the fuel came back clean, the pumps were able to be re-opened.

**PHOTOS:**

Deputy Dave Smith (on stage, far right) speaks to the attendees of the 2024 California Association of Standards and Agricultural Professionals Annual Conference in Redding, February 14 – 16.



Glenn County Weight Truck recovered by Sacramento County in Sheldon, California.