

WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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DRIFT MINIMIZATION INITIATIVE ON DPR'S WEBSITE

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has added their Drift Minimization Initiative to their website. This web page describes DPR's role in enforcing drift regulations, and in supporting drift minimization. You can find this web page on DPR's website (www.cdpr.ca.gov) under Programs and Services, or you can reach it directly at www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/drftinit/drftmenu.htm.

Due to the increase in population in California and especially here in Sonoma County, people are living closer to agricultural fields, increasing the chance that a drift incidence would result in a human illness. DPR defines drift as the pesticide that moves through the air and is not deposited on the target area at the time of application. DPR does not include in its definition, the movement of pesticide and associated degradation compounds off the target area after the application, such as by translocation, volatilization, evaporation, or the movement of pesticide dusts or particles that are windblown after the application.

DPR has several links on their Drift Minimization Initiative web page including the Spray Drift Task Force, an industry initiative to reduce drift, the National Coalition on Drift Minimization, and DPR's Enforcement Initiative. In September 2001, DPR co-sponsored the Pesticide Spray Drift Educator's Conference, there is a link to the presentations given at that meeting on the web page. Also available on the web page is

information on the Drift Co-Agency Work Group, a work group comprised of DPR and County Agricultural Commissioner representatives. This group is working together to address the two recommendations specific to drift that DPR outlined in its' Enforcement Initiative: to improve clarity of control measures and to minimize incidents of drift and other misuses. Meeting summaries for the Drift Co-Agency Work Group are available on their web page.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has proposed changes to pesticide labels in regard to drift. These changes are to make drift prevention language clearer, more consistent, and more easily enforceable. U.S. EPA expects to have the new label drift statements in place by October 2003. DPR's Drift Minimization Initiative web page has a link to U.S. EPA's Pesticide Registration (PR) Notice 2001-X, a draft document which outlines their position, rationale, and implementation plan. Open comment period for this document continues until 3/31/02. You can also read DPR's letter in response to PR 2001-X on this web page.

BIOSECURITY AND EGG INSPECTION

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Division of Animal Health and Food Safety Services has issued biosecurity guidelines to the County Agricultural Commissioners for use at production poultry egg facilities. This is not due to terrorism, but to an outbreak of a low pathogenic strain of avian influenza in northern San Diego County. This increase in biosecurity has been enacted to prevent the

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BIOSECURITY AND EGG INSPECTION CONT.

spread of avian influenza to other areas throughout the state.

Avian influenza is caused by a virus, its' effects can range from a mild disease with little or no mortality (low pathogenic strain), to rapidly spreading high mortality disease (highly pathogenic strain). Waterfowl can be infected by the avian influenza, but are more resistant to it than domestic poultry. Virus strains that are not disease causing in waterfowl can be highly pathogenic in domestic poultry, causing waterfowl to be a reservoir for the virus.

County Agricultural Commissioner biologists enter egg-processing plants to inspect eggs. These inspections ensure that the eggs meet standards for size and grade. During these inspections eggs will be candled and weighed.

In order to prevent spread of avian influenza CDFA has asked county inspectors to take the following precautions:

- Only visit one poultry production facility or processing plant per day.
- Use disposable clean coveralls, shoe coverings, headgear, and gloves at each facility.
- Disinfect inspection equipment prior to entering facilities.
- Ensure that equipment is kept clean during transportation.
- Disinfect equipment before leaving facility, and discard protective wear at facility.

These extra precautions will help to prevent the spread of the avian influenza virus, but the process of putting on and removing the protective equipment and disinfecting equipment are expected to add to the time it will take biologists to do their inspections.

GLASSY-WINGED SHARPSHOOTER (GWSS) UPDATE

The Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is gearing up for the summer season. We will have seven seasonal Agricultural Program Assistants (APA) to help with incoming GWSS shipments and trapping for GWSS; four will be returning APA's from last year, and three will be new employees. We had two returning APA's begin work on February 28th due to the warm weather we experienced in February, and the resulting increase in nursery shipments. The rest of the crew started work on March 5.

Throughout the summer we will have one full-time urban trapper, the other six Ag. Program Assistants will perform shipment inspections, nursery surveys, nursery trapping, new urban plantings visual surveys, cropland visual surveys and cropland trapping. The urban visual surveys are focused on plantings that have been established in the last three years. The cropland surveys focus on vineyards within ¼ mile of any landscape established in the last three years.

In 2001, 50% of the GWSS team's time was used for inspecting incoming nursery shipments. The busiest months for nursery shipments in 2001 were March, April, and May. We expect to be busy again this year inspecting incoming shipments. Last year we inspected a total of 2,796 shipments of plants from GWSS infested areas, this is approximately 1,000 more shipments than in 2000.

Some of these shipments had hundreds of plants in them, which needed to be inspected. The months of March-June had over 300 shipments each month.

In 2001 Sonoma County inspectors found GWSS egg masses on plants of 11 incoming shipments. This comprised 0.04% of the incoming shipments, which also means that 99.6% of the incoming shipments were free from GWSS.