

# WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

## Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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Marilyn Vernon and Suzanne Ostrom

### EXOTIC PEST EXCLUSION UPDATE

Holiday season is here, and with it comes the heaviest time of the year for our exotic pest exclusion activities. Many nurseries are receiving large shipments of balled and burlap trees. Most of these trees come from Oregon and Washington, and must be inspected for pests, including weed pests. One large nursery received 10 full semi-truck size loads!

We have had a large increase in the volume of packages coming through FedEx, UPS, and the post office. Many of the packages that we see coming through these shippers contain decorative wreaths and swags from Maine, Oregon, and Washington. The last few years we have written many Notices of Rejection for Balsam Fir Gall Midge. This midge is a pest of Balsam Fir, and was found mainly in shipments of wreaths from Maine and other northeastern states. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has downgraded Balsam Fir Gall Midge. In the past it carried the rating of "B" or "of limited distribution" it now carries a rating of "C" or "of general distribution". CDFA decided to downgrade this pest after conducting a survey to identify where in the state the Balsam Fir Gall Midge occurs. Notices of Rejection are generally not written for "C" rated pests. We are now seeing an increase in the volume of shipments of wreaths and other Balsam Fir products. One large shipper of wreaths was not shipping into our county last year for fear of having their shipments rejected.

We are also seeing a large amount of citrus being shipped into the county. Most of these shipments are originating from Florida or Texas

and are from commercial growers and have the required state and federal certification as to their pest cleanliness. We have written Notices of Rejection for shipments of backyard (homeowner grown) citrus, which do not have the required certification.

### PROMOTIONS

With the retirement of Pierre Gadd in March 2002, our Chief Deputy Agricultural position was vacant. In July 2002 Lisa Correia was promoted to fill that position.

Ms. Correia has been with Sonoma County for over ten years. Ms. Correia worked in our east (Sonoma Valley) district for several years, and was promoted to the Deputy Commissioner for the west district in 1996. Prior to coming to Sonoma County, Ms. Correia worked for Monterey and Contra Costa Counties. Ms. Correia has extensive experience in Pesticide Use Enforcement. She is a graduate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and grew up in the Sacramento Delta region.

In August 2002, Joseph Gray was promoted to Deputy Commissioner of the west district. Mr. Gray had previously been the Senior Agricultural Biologist in the north district. Mr. Gray has been the lead worker for our grape inspection and electronic use reporting programs, and also a member of the pesticide use enforcement sampling team, along with

## PROMOTIONS CONTINUED

his other district responsibilities. Mr. Gray has been with Sonoma County for over six years, and gained experience in Fresno and Yolo Counties prior to working for Sonoma County.

Mr. Gray is a University of California at Davis graduate, and was raised in Winters, California.

Bruce McArthur was promoted to fill the Senior Agricultural Biologist for the north district. Mr. McArthur has 22 years of experience with Sonoma County. Previously, Mr. McArthur worked for the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

In addition to district assignments, Mr. McArthur is the lead person for the Weed Management Area, and Structural Pest Control Program. Mr. McArthur received his degree from University of California, San Diego, and hails originally from Modesto, California.

Congratulations to Lisa, Joseph, and Bruce!

## ACREAGE STATISTICS UPDATE

Agricultural Program Assistant Nancy Fiddler has begun calling large growers to set up appointments to review their acreage records. Mrs. Fiddler will also be reviewing acreage records when growers come into to renew their pesticide permits. Growers should be prepared to spend a few minutes to update these records with Mrs. Fiddler.

In 2002, Agricultural Biologist, Cree Morgan developed a database that allows us to update our own acreage data. Mrs. Fiddler can now update acreage information daily. The acreage data can be sorted according to appellation, year planted, and variety. Individual grower information is kept confidential.

Mrs. Fiddler will also be conducting a survey on the nursery source of grapevines that have been planted in Sonoma County since 1998. This information will help our department and the University of California Cooperative Extension

determine sites, in which to place Vine Mealybug traps in 2003. Vine Mealybug most likely travels into new areas on nursery stock. The data collected will help us place traps in high-risk areas.

Grower cooperation with both these surveys is greatly appreciated.

## PERMIT AND IDENTIFICATION NUMBER RENEWAL

You must have a valid/current restricted materials permit (permit) or operator identification number (ID#) to use or purchase pesticides. If you have an ID#, it will expire on December 31, 2002. You must renew your ID# before using or purchasing pesticides in 2003, *even if you have a valid private applicator certificate* (the tan paper card issued when you passed the exam at our office). You can determine if you have a permit rather than an ID# by checking the top left corner of the first page, which will have printed "RESTRICTED MATERIALS PERMIT" or "OPERATOR/SITE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER". If you have a permit it may or may not expire on December 31, 2002, because permits can be issued for more than one year. If your permit does not expire on December 31, 2002, you will not have to renew it unless there are changes you need to make. Please check the expiration date on your permit and private applicator certificate card to determine if you need an appointment before calling our office for an appointment. The expiration date on your permit is at the upper right-hand corner of the first page of the document. If your permit or ID# needs to be renewed, you **MUST** call our office at (707) 565-2371 to schedule an appointment. "Walk-ins" are not accepted. The first

## **PERMIT AND IDENTIFICATION NUMBER RENEWAL CONTINUED**

appointments will be scheduled for the week of December 16, 2002.

This year for the first time we will be able to issue multi-year identification numbers! When the legislation was adopted to set up the multi-year permits in 1996 the part that would allow multiple year ID#s was left out due to objections to other parts within that package. Sonoma County is unique in many ways, one of which is in the number of ID# holders we have. A large percentage of our growers use only unrestricted materials, giving us a large number of ID# holders. In the 1999-2000 year, Sonoma County had 582 ID# holders, second only to San Diego County which had 3,034 ID# holders.

The issuance of a multi-year ID# is at the discretion of our office. The decision to issue a multi-year ID# depends mainly on if you farm an annual or perennial crop, and your compliance history. If the circumstances warrant we will issue a single year ID#.

We will be phasing in the multi-year ID#s. We will be issuing them for different intervals depending on last name. Some people will get three year ID#s, some will get two year ID#s, and some will get single year ID#s with the idea that the next time you renew you will get a three year ID#.

*HAPPY HOLIDAYS*



*FROM ALL OF US AT THE  
AGRICULTURAL  
COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE*