

WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

John Westoby
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

2604 Ventura Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone (707) 565-2371

February 2003

Marilyn Vernon and Suzanne Ostrom

PERMIT SEASON

Permit issuance has slowed in the past week. We have been taking appointments for renewal since December 16, 2002. As of February 14, 2003 we have issued 580 permits or identification numbers. We have also registered 77 commercial applicators, which include maintenance gardeners, agricultural pest control operators, and pest control advisors.

Growers should check their permit or identification number, and expiration date in the upper right-hand corner to see if you need to renew. If you need to renew please call our office at 565-2371 to schedule an appointment. At this time we are not taking walk-ins for renewals, you must schedule an appointment.

Remember your permit or identification number must be current before you buy or use pesticides.

PEST CONTROL MANAGEMENT UPDATE CLASS

Ag 282 Pest Control Management Update will be offered at Santa Rosa Junior College on March 14 and 15. The instructor for this class is Lisa Correia, Chief Deputy Agricultural Commissioner for the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. Speakers will include: Nick Frey, Sonoma County Grape Growers Association who will speak on common courtesy and common sense approach to pest control; Stephanie Larson, University of California Cooperative Extension, who will address pasture management problems; Laura Mendes', Santa Rosa Junior College will speak on sustainable agriculture, and a representative from Park

Avenue Turf will speak on turf management. This is a 10-hour class and is generally approved by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation for 10 hours of continuing education for pesticide license or certificate holders (approval has been applied for and is pending). The class meets on Friday, March 14 from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 15 from 8:00 a.m. - 4: 00 p.m. You need to register with the Santa Rosa Junior College to attend this class, for information on registration call 527-4011. For information on class content call the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office at 565-2371.

PEST DETECTION

Due to a budget shortfall, our office will not be hiring any extra-help personnel to help with Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) plant inspections, and exotic insect trapping. Permanent staff will be inspecting all GWSS shipments and traps, and also monitoring all exotic insect traps.

The number of GWSS shipments from infested counties has increased dramatically, since the first week of February. In addition to the shipments from within the GWSS infested area, local nurseries have been receiving increased number of shipments from out-of-state growers. Our exotic insect

Pest Detection Continued

detection-trapping program is scheduled to start April 1. Inspect traps are put out county-wide for the detection of exotic insects, which include: Mediterranean Fruit Fly, Oriental Fruit Fly, Melon Fly, Gypsy Moth, and Japanese Beetle. Over 1,000 traps are set out each year for the early detection of these insects. These exotic pests could do major economic damage to our local agriculture and horticulture industries, if they became established.

DIRECT MARKETING



Our annual Farm Market Manager meeting was held on January 27. There were seven market managers in attendance. Staff members from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office and Weights and Measures also attended, and were able to answer questions.

Janice Price, head of the Direct Marketing Program with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, was the guest speaker at the meeting. Ms. Price went over new laws for the Direct Marketing program that went into effect in 2002. There was a lively discussion in regard to the new penalty matrix for growers and markets, amongst those present at the meeting. Local market managers were given information by our staff about how they could voice their ideas and opinions to the California Direct Marketing Advisory Board.

There are currently farm markets in Petaluma, Sebastopol, Sonoma, Oakmont, Santa Rosa,

Cotati, and Duncan Mills. Two new markets may be opening this year in Occidental and Valley Ford.

EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE (END)

Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) is a highly contagious often-fatal viral disease of birds. END may cause respiratory, digestive and nervous signs. Chickens are very susceptible to this disease, while other types of birds may not appear sick, but may carry and spread the disease to other birds.

The disease is currently being fought in Southern California. An army of workers representing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), California Department of Forestry (CDF), and others are waging the battle.

Please report birds showing respiratory difficulties, digestive problems or nervous disorders to our office at (707) 565-2371, or call the toll free number for the END Project at 1-800-491-1899.

END has not been found in Sonoma County.

To help exclude our county from quarantines placed on California Poultry products we may soon be involved in a survey to determine if the disease has made its way to Sonoma County.

