

# 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  
Fax (707) 565-3850  
[www.sonoma-county.org](http://www.sonoma-county.org)

May 2003

Marilyn Vernon and Suzanne Ostrom

### ORGANIC COST SHARE PROGRAM

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided funds to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to be distributed to operations that have been certified organic by a USDA accredited certifier. Any operation in California that has been certified between the dates of October 1, 2002 and September 30, 2003 may apply for 75 percent of their certification cost (maximum of \$500.00) to be reimbursed.

The USDA cost share program is on a first come first serve basis. When the funds have all been expended the cost share program will cease to exist under this agreement unless additional funds have been provided to CDFA.

The applicant must submit the application form along with a copy of certification and a copy of the associated expenses required by your certifier to maintain your certification.

Growers can obtain the application through their certifier or the Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

### 2002 CROP REPORT

Agricultural Commissioner John Westoby will present the 2002 Crop Report to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, June 3. Crop report information was gathered and compiled by Biologist Cree Morgan. Agricultural Program Assistant Nancy Fiddler and Clerk Typist III Charity Lyon compiled acreage information.

This year the crop report features organizations that are devoted to Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The four organizations that are featured are: School IPM, Department of Pesticide Regulation IPM Innovator Awards, The University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program, and Code of Sustainable Winegrowing Wine Institute. Included in the crop report are descriptions of each of these groups' activities, and how they promote Integrated Pest Management.

Copies of the crop report will be available after presentation to the Board.

Copies of the crop report can be obtained by calling our office at (707) 565-2371. The report will also be available on our website a few days after presented to the Board at <http://www.sonoma-county.org>, navigate to Agricultural Commissioner, Agriculture Division, and Crop Report.



### GLASSY-WINGED SHARPSHOOTER UPDATE

Our staff has been busy inspecting plant material from Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) infested counties. Due to budget constraints permanent office staff has been assigned to inspect incoming plant shipments. Jim Raisner, Agricultural Biologist Standards Specialist, leads the GWSS program, and reports that the number of incoming shipments

## **GLASSY-WINGED SHARPSHOOTER UPDATE CONTINUED**

inspected were higher in the month of March compared to March of the previous year. There were fewer inspections completed in April this year than April last year. Local nurseries did not receive as much plant material due to the rainy weather.

In the month of April, agricultural industry volunteered the time of six employees to help with plant inspections. Nick Frey, Executive Director of the Sonoma County Grape Growers Association, was responsible for coordinating this volunteer program. Our office would like to thank Mr. Frey and the following growers: Hoot Owl Creek/Alexander Valley Vineyards, Clos du Bois, Korbel, Bev Cameron, Jim Young, and Jim Murphy. The employee volunteers were a tremendous help, and were greatly appreciated by our GWSS staff. The volunteers allowed other staff to continue with their regular duties, especially Pesticide Use Enforcement.

On May 5, we were able to hire back two seasonal employees, Nancy Fiddler and Stacie Spaeth. They have returned and will be inspecting incoming shipments and conducting surveys for GWSS.

## **PROACTIVE NEIGHBOR RELATIONS**

Submitted by Joseph Gray

Sonoma County has the unique quality of urban and agricultural neighbors living side by side. It is not uncommon to have six or seven residences next to a vineyard or orchard. Some of these may be new residents who have moved to the country for peace and quiet or quality of life. However, these neighbors may not understand what living in an agricultural setting involves.

The Agricultural Commissioner's Office regularly receives calls from the public with concerns regarding pesticide use, noise, dust and odors. We find that informing and educating the public about the farming

practices in their neighborhood can address many of these concerns. When asked if they have ever talked to the farmer next door, the answer is generally no. This is where farmers can be proactive and at the same time get to know their neighbors.

Introduce yourself to the surrounding neighbors and let them know that you are willing to answer their questions about your farming operations. Discuss with them how you decide when and what pesticides you spray. Explain your cultivation practices and any noise or dust that might be associated with them.

If a neighbor calls to complain, be polite and attempt to address their concerns. This may be as simple as notifying them when you are going to spray or having your employees not play the car radio at sunrise. Farming can be a 24-hour operation; unfortunately your neighbors may be sleeping during part of that time.

The benefits of developing good relations with your neighbors can include notifying you of suspicious activity or broken irrigation lines.

