

# WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

## Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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Marilyn Vernon and Suzanne Ostrom

### 2002 CROP REPORT RELEASED

Agricultural Commissioner John Westoby presented the 2002 Sonoma County Crop Report to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, June 3. The theme for this year's crop report is Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Four organizations are featured on this year's cover: School IPM, California Department of Pesticide Regulation IPM Innovator Awards, The University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program, and Code of Sustainable Winegrowing, Wine Institute.

The total gross value of agricultural commodities produced in Sonoma County in 2002 was \$564,766,800. The total gross value was down over \$19 million, when compared to the value in 2001. All the following comparisons will be with 2001 values and tonnages. Wine grape prices were responsible for over \$376 million of the total value. The value of wine grapes was up over \$2 million. In 2002, there were 183,139 tons of wine grapes harvested, compared to the 173,583 tons harvested in 2001.

The biggest changes were seen in Chardonnay and Merlot grapes. Chardonnay grape tonnage harvested was up 7989 tons. The value of Chardonnay grapes fell \$178.31 per ton. The total value for Chardonnay grapes was up \$4,404,100, due to the increased tonnage. Tons of Merlot grapes harvested in 2002 was 29,037, with 27,879 tons being harvested in 2001. Price per ton fell \$171.39. The total value for Merlot grapes was 57,072,000, down \$2,501,800.

In other highlights, market milk prices were down \$2.46 per hundredweight, even though production was 108,588 cwt. The value for market milk was \$76,049,800, and in 2001 the value was \$90,847,700. The apple harvest value in 2002 was down \$1,319,700. The value of nursery products decreased overall by \$4,002,100, primarily due to the loss of grapevine nursery production. Some local

grapevine nurseries closed or moved to other California locations.

Biologist Cree Morgan designed and compiled the crop report. With assistance from Sr. Agricultural Biologist Marilyn Vernon, staff members Nancy Fiddler and Charity Lyon compiled acreage information, with assistance from staff.

The 2002 crop report is now available on line, and interested parties are encouraged to download a copy from our website. The county website address is <http://www.sonoma-county.org>, and then navigate to Agricultural Commissioner, Agricultural Division, and crop report.

### EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE PROGRAM UPDATE

Assistant Commissioner Mike Smith announced that our department now has a contract with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to survey in our county for the presence of Exotic Newcastle Disease (END). The contract was to be presented to the Board of Supervisors on June 10.

Earlier in the year, Agricultural Commissioner John Westoby had a meeting with our local commercial growers to update them on what was happening with the END program in Southern California. Our contract with USDA calls for a yearlong door-to-door survey to be conducted looking for the presence of poultry and other game birds. Eight extra-help personnel will be hired to run the program, and to work as teams to carry out the survey. Senior Agricultural Program Assistant Nancy Fiddler will be the program leader. Ms. Fiddler has worked for our department with the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter program, and on

## EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE PROGRAM UPDATE Continued

acreage survey for two years. Chief Deputy Lisa Correia will be the supervisor of the program. During the door-to-door survey, crews will be asking homeowners if they own poultry or game birds. Homeowner responses will be noted on the survey form. Survey crews will be taking bio-security measures as they travel from property to property. This measure is to prevent any artificial spread if disease is encountered.

Mike Smith, Assistant Agricultural Commissioner, reports that the END program in Southern California has quarantined 17,000 sites. Nineteen commercial properties were found to be infested. Three and a half million birds were destroyed, in order to prevent the spread of the disease.

For further information regarding the survey, call our office at 565-2371.

## MANZANO PEPPERS REJECTED

In the first week of May, our department received an advisory from the California

Department of Food and Agriculture, regarding finds of live fruit fly larvae being found in Manzano peppers. The Manzano peppers in question had come from Mexico through Texas. In response to the advisory, Deputy Commissioner Alexis Ramey and Biologists Paul Turano and Ron Inman checked local supermarkets and grocery stores for the Manzano peppers. Biologist Inman found approximately twenty pounds of the Manzano peppers at three Hispanic markets. The peppers were rejected and seized. Mr. Inman cut 30% of the fruit, and found no life stages of fruit flies in the fruit. The fruit was destroyed after Mr. Inman's inspection.



## VINE MEALYBUG (VMB) TRAPPING UPDATE



Traps for VMB that were given out at a meeting in February are starting to be returned to our office by local growers. The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) sponsored the meeting. At that meeting growers representing all areas of Sonoma County were given VMB traps by our office. Growers were instructed on how to service the traps. Once the male VMB were found at our known locations, growers were asked to place their traps. The traps were to be serviced twice in a month's time. The survey was to detect how widespread Vine Mealybug is within the county. One hundred and fifty traps were given out, and 80 locations were trapped.

Lead Biologist for the VMB program Jim Raisner has been looking for the presence of the tiny male VMB in the returned traps, with the aid of a dissecting microscope. When growers return their traps, they are asked to sign the traps back in. Viticulture Advisor Rhonda Smith is collecting trap location information. Some growers will be given additional traps so that more information can be gathered in the warmer months.

Once all the traps have been returned results of the survey will be available. The results of the survey will determine what steps our office will take next. Our office would like to thank all the growers who participated in the survey. Thanks also to advisors Lucia Varela and Rhonda Smith of UCCE for sponsoring the meeting, and for providing information on VMB biology.