

# WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

## Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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### AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S & WEIGHTS AND MEASURES OFFICES ARE MOVING NOVEMBER 3

The Agricultural Commissioner's and Weights and Measures Offices will be moving on November 3, 2003, to their new facility at 133 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 110, Santa Rosa, 95403 (Airport Area). All numbers will now be the same. Phone number is (707) 565-2371 and fax number is (707) 565-3850.

### UPDATE ON THE SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) HAZARD TREE ASSESSMENT, REMOVAL, AND SOD TREE RESTORATION PROGRAM (AB62 MIGDEN)

Funding for this program ends March 2004, unless the funds are used prior to that date. Any remaining funds as of March 2004 will be returned to the State.

Our office has been designated as the department responsible for managing the program in Sonoma County **except** for national forest lands and lands under the jurisdiction of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). Our office has funds available to perform hazard-tree assessments, and currently there is approximately \$14,975 remaining for site restoration and approximately \$40,000 remaining for removal of hazard trees. This money is only available to private landowners, public entities, etc. in Sonoma County. Our county originally received \$19,600 for

restoration and \$100,000 for removal of hazardous trees.

If you have a Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Black Oak (*Quercus kelloggii*), Tan Oak (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*), or other host of SOD that you believe has been killed or is dying from this disease **and** the tree presents a **direct** hazard to human life, please contact our office to learn more about the program. Qualified members from our staff must do a site assessment to determine if the tree has been affected by SOD and decide if the tree presents a direct threat to human life. Priority shall be given to SOD trees that pose the greatest threat to public safety.

#### **Prior to calling our office please review the following carefully:**

Because other organisms and injuries can cause symptoms similar to SOD, most homeowners will be unable to diagnose their trees with absolute certainty. However, there are some steps that can help you determine if your tree(s) have the disease.

If any oaks (listed above) grow on your property, look for the following symptoms:

- (a) **PRIMARY SYMPTOM:** Bleeding or seeping of a dark, viscous substance on lower trunk. The odds of your trees having SOD is much greater if you have SOD foliar hosts near by like California Bay Laurel.
- (b) Reddish or fine tan-white beetle boring dust caused by bark and wood boring beetles tunneling into the bark and/or wood.

## UPDATE ON THE SUDDEN OAK DEATH (SOD) HAZARD TREE ASSESSMENT, REMOVAL AND SOD TREE RESTORATION PROGRAM (AB62 MIGDEN) Continued

- (c) Appearance of dome-shaped fruiting bodies made by a fungus called *Hypoxylon*. They are green when new, and later turn charcoal black and are hard.
- (d) Determine if you are in a SOD infested area by checking maps available on the website (<http://www.suddenoakdeath.org>). If you are outside of an infested area, your tree could still have the disease.
- (e) Compare the symptoms described on this website with those on your tree(s). If your tree(s) is a susceptible species, is located in an infested area, and exhibits typical symptoms of SOD, your tree(s) may have the disease.

Remember, the **PRIMARY** symptom you should be looking for is bleeding or seeping of a dark, viscous substance on the tree trunk. If you **do not** have this symptom there is a very good chance your tree doesn't have SOD. The beetle boring dust and *Hypoxylon* fruiting bodies are secondary symptoms that often occur on trees without SOD.

Fortunately, there have been no confirmed SOD trees within any urban area within Sonoma County. SOD has only been found in native woodland and forest settings and at the edges of these areas.

## DECEMBER WORKSHOP

Our annual grower workshop will be held on Thursday, December 4, 2003, beginning at 9 a.m. The workshop will be held at the Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial building at 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa, and will count as two hours of continuing education.

## EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE (END) SURVEY UPDATE

Project Coordinator Nancy Fiddler reports that by September 26, 2003, the Exotic Newcastle Disease (END) survey team had surveyed 36 maps, given to them by the United States Department of Agriculture END project headquarters. The maps cover an area of three kilometers, and the first areas the END team surveyed were around commercial poultry flocks.

In addition to the 36 maps completed, a total of 19,834 properties had been visited. Actual contact was made with 7,248 homeowners. The total number of properties with birds was 1,606. At each location, where contact was made, residents were asked if they have any birds.

The END crew is surveying for any kind of domesticated birds including: chickens, ducks, pigeons, pheasants, turkeys, emus, ostriches, parrots, parakeets, etc. If the resident says they have birds, or if birds are observed, the information is documented. Fact sheets on the disease are handed out at each property visited.

In addition to residential contact, the END crew has done outreach at local restaurants, veterinarians, feed stores, pet shops, and community bulletin boards.

The END crew also had an informational booth at both the Petaluma Agricultural Day and the Sonoma County Harvest Fair. At the fairs the crew handed out informational materials, and educated both adults and children about END, and what birds can carry it.

California is free from END, and the quarantine has been lifted. Our local crew will be working until June 2004, and will survey 120 three-kilometer areas of the county.

## **PERMIT ISSUANCE**

We will start issuing pesticide use permits on December 8. A letter will be sent in November reminding those growers whose permits or identification numbers expire at the end of the year to renew. Growers may begin calling for appointments on November 12. Appointments will be held at all three offices: Santa Rosa, Sonoma, and Petaluma.

## **GLASSY-WINGED SHARPSHOOTER (GWSS) UPDATE**

Our staff has been inspecting plant material from Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) infested counties. Program coordinator Jim Raisner reports that our staff had inspected 2,237 incoming shipments by the end of August. The incoming shipments are down 10% compared to the same time frame last year.

In addition to the inspecting of incoming shipments, staff has done visual surveys of 54 nurseries. Currently, there are 354 urban traps placed around the county, which are serviced every two weeks. There have been no finds of viable GWSS in Sonoma County this year.

## **VINE MEALY BUG (VMB)**

Trapping to determine the extent of the infestation of this new pest to Sonoma County continues. Over 1,200 traps have been placed on 600 grape parcels throughout Sonoma County. The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), under the direction of Rhonda Smith and Dr. Lucia Varela, received funding from the Grape Growers to record who is trapping and to identify positive VMB finds. Growers were asked to place more traps throughout the county at three meetings at the end of August. Commissioner Westoby, Rhonda

Smith, and Dr. Varela discussed the importance of finding infested sites. The life history of the pest was discussed as well as treatments that should be made if an infestation is found.