

WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

John Westoby
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

133 Aviation Blvd., Ste. 110, Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone (707) 565-2371
www.sonoma-county.org

January 2004

Marilyn Vernon and Suzanne Ostrom

HOLIDAY EXCLUSION- SOUTHERN TERMINAL REPORT

(Information compiled by Ron Inman)

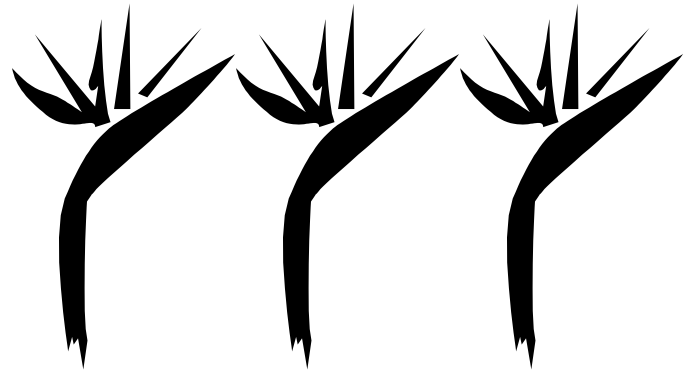
The busy holiday season at the main post office and express terminals is over for another year. Biologist Ron Inman reports that 5,350 packages were held and inspected at the post office and express terminals during the months of October, November, and December. Packages inspected from June to September at the same locations were 2,982.

During the last quarter of 2003, Mr. Inman wrote 21 Notices of Rejection on shipped fruit and plant material, which violated California's quarantine laws. Shipments were rejected for violations of the following specific quarantines: Japanese beetle, Citrus pests, and the Plum curculio and Apple maggot. In addition, shipments were rejected for live quarantine pests, and for lack of required markings on shipment containers.

The volume of cut flower and orchid shipments from Hawaii remained strong through the holiday period at all terminals. Christmas wreath and fruit shipments were down compared to 2001 and 2002.

Rated insect pests that were intercepted in shipments was down in 2003, from the levels found in 2002. There were two interceptions of A-rated pests in 2003, compared to five in 2002. An A-rated pest is an organism of known economic importance not known to be established in the state. The number of Q-rated insects found in 2003 was eight, and in 2002 eleven were found. A Q-rated pest is

an organism suspected of being detrimental to agriculture and is not known to occur in the state and found in a quarantine shipment.



VINE MEALYBUG WORKING GROUP

On January 14, Biologists Jim Raisner and Marilyn Vernon attended a meeting of the Ramal Rd. Vine Mealybug (VMB) working group in Sonoma. The group was formed to facilitate communication between the growers about all aspects of the VMB infestation in the area of the Carneros appellation.

This was the second meeting for the growers group. Group liaison Katey Taylor of Domaine Chandon invited the two biologists to share information to the VMB program. Mr. Raisner covered many aspects of the VMB program in Sonoma County. The following are a few of the topics that were covered: female infestations, male finds, VMB surveys in nurseries and vineyards, heat treatment of budwood, and the biology of VMB. Mr. Raisner answered growers' questions during the course of his discussion of the program.

Biologist Vernon gave the members of the group packets on how to make applications to

Vine Mealybug Working Group Continued

the Department of Pesticide Regulation for pesticide registration under Section 18 Emergency Exemptions, and 24-C, Special Local Need (SLN). The group was interested in finding out the process to get insecticides registered that might be useful in controlling ants in the area. The group was also given a handout that showed what pesticides had already been registered under SLN.

There was discussion about what roles our department and the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) would play in 2004. Both departments are limited on resources this year. There are VMB traps available for growers this year, and are available at both departments. Farm Advisor Lucia Varela has volunteered to give the group's field workers training on how to recognize VMB in the vineyard. She will also train group representatives how to recognize male VMB in traps.

The Ramal Rd. group should be congratulated on their efforts on sharing information and resources in the fight against VMB. Our department wishes them success in the coming year.

We recommend that other area groups like the Ramal Rd. group be formed to combat VMB. All growers receiving nursery stock since 1998 should trap their vineyards to ensure they do not have this pest. Please call our office to receive traps.

PESTICIDE PERMIT MAPS

The Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is continuing to work to improve grower site maps on our pesticide permit files. For the last several years we have been working toward creating a computerized mapping system that would

allow us quick and accurate information regarding permitted sites. This system will allow us to efficiently review Notices of Intent for restricted materials, quickly get information regarding questions and concerns from the public and better serve our agricultural growers. We have been working

with the County of Sonoma Information Systems Department and Sonoma County's Automated Mapping Program to improve the maps.

This year's improvement to the mapping system integrates aerial photos. We are now able to select and highlight assessor's parcel lines that are overlaid on aerial photos, this gives us an actual view of the site and surrounding land uses, school sites, roads and other sites of interest near the permit site. We have also been able to create a link between the mapping program and our permitting program, which decreases the time it takes to gather information on the permit.

