

WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

John Westoby
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

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Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Update

Our permanent staff has been busy inspecting plant material being received by nurseries from Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) infested counties. Due to budget constraints, June 30, 2004, was the last day for our extra-help inspectors who were helping with the inspections. Senior biologist Priscilla Lane, GWSS project coordinator, reports the number of incoming shipments for the first five months of 2004 as follows: January-134, February-213, March-437, April-440 and May-356. The shipment numbers are close to the numbers inspected in 2003.

We have not found any viable life stages of GWSS in shipments this year. In 2003, no viable GWSS life stages were found in Sonoma County. There are currently 428 GWSS traps placed in urban areas. There are 88 GWSS traps placed in local nurseries that receive plant shipments from infested counties.



2003 Crop Report Released

John Westoby, Agricultural Commissioner (now retired), presented the 2003 Sonoma County Crop Report to our Board of Supervisors on May 25, 2004. This year's cover features an historical picture of a float taken at a Butter and Eggs Day parade in 1925. The center of the cover highlights some of the various poultry that is produced in Sonoma County: chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. The first page of the report focuses on the impact and importance of the poultry industry in the past and present day to Sonoma County agriculture.

Petaluma's history as the former "egg capital of the world" is well documented. The poultry industry is still a vibrant part of our agricultural economy, contributing \$54,082,600, from sales of poultry and poultry products. Poultry value includes the dollar value received by growers for sales of chicks, ducks, turkey poults, fryers, roasters, turkeys, and other types of poultry. Among the poultry products whose value is included in the crop report are: duck eggs, turkey-hatching eggs, chicken eggs for consumption, and egg bi-products.



2003 Crop Report Released Continued

The 2003 total value of Sonoma County agricultural production decreased by \$53 million, when compared to values received in 2002. The total value in 2003 was \$511,511,700. The biggest losses in value were seen in fruit and nut crops (down \$60.7 million), vegetable crops (down \$1.4 million), and nursery products (down \$1.2 million).

Our highest value commodity, wine grapes, decreased in value by \$63.3 million, as tonnage was reduced and average price decreased. There were 22,371 fewer tons harvested mainly due to inclement weather during bloom. The average price per ton decreased by \$108.

The price of market milk received by dairies increased by \$0.81/hundredweight. This contributed to an increase of \$7.6 million for livestock and poultry products. The value received for grapevine nursery stock value increased by \$1.5 million as county nurseries increased their production.

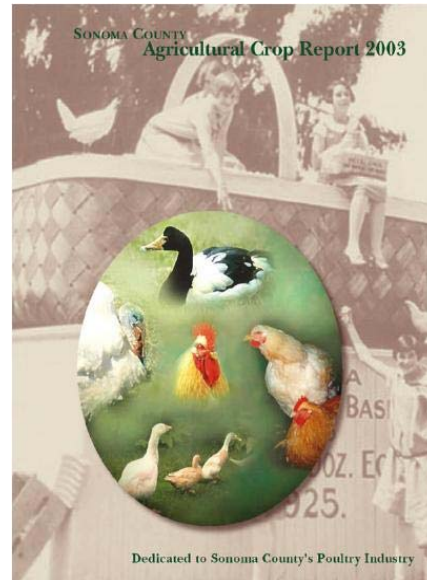
Total apple production was up 20,000 tons. Vegetable production continued to decrease (down \$1.4 million) as less acreage and value was reported.

Our office would like to thank our farmers and ranchers for much of the information contained in the report. The information contained in the crop report is gross production value and does not infer net farm income.

Cree Morgan should be congratulated for his efforts in producing the crop report, as is Laura Knudsen for her valuable assistance. Nancy Fiddler and Charity McGuire provided invaluable support with conducting the crop acreage interviews.

The 2003 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.



Farewell to John Westoby

John retired as Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measure on July 2, 2004. A retirement party was held in John's honor on this day at the Wedgwood Buffet at Foxtail Golf Course in Rohnert Park. Over 160 people were in attendance. Among those in attendance were John's family and friends, supervisor Paul Kelley, industry members, other county commissioners, representatives from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR), county department heads, current and retired staff.

John was presented with a plaque from A.G. Kawamura of CDFA, Secretary, commending John on his many years of public service to the people of California and Sonoma County.

Farewell to John Westoby Continued

John started his career with Sonoma County in 1975 as an Agricultural Inspector, and had been the Agricultural Commissioner since 1998. Previous to this he worked for San Francisco County/City and Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner offices. In total, John served for 31 dictated years.

Thanks John for being a great boss, teacher, mentor, and for just taking the time to talk to all of us. Thanks for being positive and always ready with a smile, even though it may have not come easy in the last couple of years. We will miss you, and your unique way of always seeing the world in such a lovely, poetic fashion.

