

# WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

## Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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Suzanne Ostrom and Dan Curtin

### **ANNUAL GROWER MEETING REMINDER**

Our annual Grower Meeting will be held at the Santa Rosa Veteran's Building on December 1, 2005. Sign-in starts at 8:15 a.m. with the program starting promptly at 9:00 a.m. and will run until 11:10 a.m. There is **no need to register** ahead of time, just show up! If you have any questions you may call our office at (707) 565-2371.

### **CHECK YOUR MAILBOX**

Our annual letter to pesticide use permit and identification number holders went out this month. This letter will let you know whether you need to make an appointment to renew or not. An agenda for the annual Grower Meeting was also included in the mailing.

### **EGG INSPECTIONS**

As part of our standardization duties an Agricultural Biologist from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office will randomly visit commercial production and wholesale egg facilities each month to perform quality/standardization inspections. During these inspections the biologist will look for specific defects that could potentially introduce contamination into the eggs. The eggs are checked for "air gaps" that will indicate age, cleanliness and weight are also checked. A "candler" is used to check for shell defects and internal defects of eggs; a "candler" is a light source that indicates the internal conditions of the egg.

If upon an inspections a "lot" (regulations define a "lot" of eggs as any number of containers labeled with one size, grade, brand, code date, and in one location) of eggs does not meet minimum standards the biologist will reject the lot. A rejected lot could be required to be re-worked and brought into tolerance, or in some instances, the lot may be sent to "breakers" where the eggs are taken out of the human food consumption chain. To help ensure consumer protection the biologists inspect on average 55 samples per month or 66,000 eggs per year.

### **ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM**

A Message from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)

The CDFA Organic Program has received \$400,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture to extend the Organic Certification Cost Share Program in California. These funds are not sufficient to reimburse every eligible operation in California. A \$100,000 has been allocated for each quarter in order to provide those who renew their certification in the last quarter of the fiscal year cycle with the same opportunity as those who renew in the first quarter. On the bottom of the second page of the application you will find instructions and a chart indicating important time frames, including application submission dates. Applications will be processed on a first come, first serve basis.

## **ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE PROGRAM (CONT.)**

Any incomplete application will be returned, and you will lose your place in line. Therefore, it is very important all information be provided, and that the application is filled out accurately and signed. Also, be sure not to mail your application before the date indicated on the time frame chart under the heading "Date to Submit Cost-Share Application," as it will not be accepted and will be returned. For an application and information go to the CDFA website [www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/fveqc/organic.htm](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/fveqc/organic.htm)

If any further questions please contact David Carlson at the Organic Program Inspection and Compliance Branch Division of Inspection Services, at (916) 445-2180 extension 3465.

### **NEW FACE IN THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

Scott Wise started working as an Agricultural Biologist for the Agricultural Commissioner's Office in September. Scott obtained his degree from UC Berkeley in Environmental Science with a minor in Forestry. His previous experience includes working on field research projects with the East Bay Regional Park District and monitoring/sampling at hazardous material sites for an environmental consulting firm. Scott is assigned to the North District under the supervision of Bruce McArthur.

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING

