

WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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EXCLUSION PROGRAM (TERMINAL INSPECTIONS)



The inspector shivered in the early morning chill of the dimly lit warehouse. As he carefully opened a travel worn box, he ran the various quarantines through his mind, shutting out the din of a blaring radio station, shouted conversation, and the discordant thumps and clattering of packages and equipment. Flashlight in hand, he peered into the interior of the box, searching the foliage. Would he find a pest, “not known to occur or of limited distribution in California”, in this box? In the next box?...

This scenario plays itself out each day in Sonoma County as biologists from the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office perform inspections of incoming plant material at local parcel carriers. Five facilities are visited on a daily basis, with another three inspected on an “as need” basis. In 2005, inspectors handled approximately 11,000 packages.

This program, officially known as the Exclusion Program, enforces federal, state and county ordinances designed to protect

California and Sonoma County agriculture, and the environment, from potentially devastating pests.

While these pests can originate from any part of the country or globe, many are from tropical or subtropical climates. Some of these include the Mediterranean Fruit Fly, Mexican Fruit Fly and Glassy-winged Sharpshooter.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture rates pests as “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, or “Q” depending upon how much is known about the damage they cause and their occurrence in the state. Shipments found by county inspectors to contain such pests are rejected, and either returned to the shipper or destroyed.

The majority of rejected shipments are rejected, because the shipper, from an area under quarantine, failed to include proper certification from their local agricultural official. These certificates document that the shipment is free from live pests of quarantine concern. Once the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office receives the proper documentation such shipments are released



INSPECTING NURSERIES FOR SYMPTOMS OF SUDDEN OAK DEATH

Each spring Biologists from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office conduct annual inspections at local wholesale nurseries for symptoms of Sudden Oak Death (SOD). These inspections are in addition to monthly inspections of outgoing shipments of host material. SOD is caused by an organism called *Phytophthora ramorum*. The most likely time



for plants to show symptoms of the disease is in the spring when cool, moist conditions predominate. The intent of the inspections is to determine if symptoms exist in the nursery and to regulate accordingly.

There are currently 14 counties in California, and one in Southern Oregon, that have been declared infested with SOD. There is also widespread SOD in other parts of the world, such as Europe. Different regulations apply to shipments depending on whether a nursery ships plants to another infested county, a non-infested county in our state, or ships out of state. Our office works with the California Department of Food and Agriculture to enforce the state quarantine, and the United States Department of Agriculture for the federal quarantine (between states and other countries). The intent of the regulations is to prevent the artificial spread of the disease to non-infested regions.

PESTICIDES THAT ARE EXEMPT FROM REGISTRATION

We are seeing an increasing number of pesticides that are exempt from registration being used in the county. Active ingredients that are exempt from registration can be found in Title 3 of the California Code of Regulations (3CCR) Section 6147. The active ingredients listed in 3CCR 6147 include: cinnamon, citric acid, clove oil, corn gluten meal, peppermint oil, and others. For a pesticide to be exempt from registration it would have to contain only active ingredients listed in 3CCR 6147. Since a registration number is required to report a pesticide, pesticides that qualify as exempt would not be required to be reported, however employers are still required to keep records of what pesticides were used that employees may be exposed to.

It is important to remember that while these pesticides are exempt from registration, they are not exempt from all regulations. **The personal protective equipment requirements and the training requirements of the worker safety regulations would still apply to exempt materials.** If the label for an exempt material contains the signal word "Danger" and comes in a container larger than one gallon, a closed mixing system would be required for an employee to mix it.

If you have any questions please call our office at 565-2371.

