

WINDOW ON AGRICULTURE

Office of the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner

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NURSERY INSPECTIONS

Each year biologists from the Agricultural Commissioner's Office perform inspections at Sonoma County's production nurseries. Biologists enforce laws, rules, and regulations relative to the prevention, introduction, or spread of harmful organisms within the state. Nursery stock is inspected for pests injurious to plants and standards of "commercial cleanliness" are enforced. Commercial cleanliness means the nursery has all pests under effective control. If there are pests present in the nursery, they must be of common occurrence (i.e. aphids) and exist only to a light degree. Commercial cleanliness standards also apply to noxious weeds. Nursery staff is advised of any pests found during an inspection and given a specific timeline to resolve issues.



The Agricultural Commissioner's Office works closely with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Pest Exclusion/Nursery Program staff. The CDFA Pest Exclusion/Nursery Program coordinates the inspection of nurseries to assure uniformity in inspections throughout the state. The CDFA also assists County Agricultural Commissioner's and nurserymen with pest control and eradication, licenses nurseries to sell stock, maintains a list and publishes a directory of nurseries and locations where nursery stock is sold, and registers and certifies certain plants that are inspected for viruses, diseases, and other pests.

For more information, a summary of Nursery Regulations, or to receive an application to sell nursery stock, visit our office or website at: <http://www.sonoma-county.org/agcomm/>.

SECRETARY KAWAMURA ANNOUNCES VACANCIES ON THE CALIFORNIA ORGANIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SACRAMENTO, June 1, 2006 - California Department of Food and Agriculture, Secretary A.G. Kawamura has announced six member and four alternate vacancies on the California Organic Products Advisory Committee. The 15-member committee advises the secretary on current issues related to organic food production.

Appointments will be for three producer, one environmental, and two technical representatives with alternate vacancies available for one consumer, one technical and two producer representatives. The environmental, technical, and consumer representatives must not have a financial interest in the direct sale or marketing of organic products.

Individuals interested in being considered for any of the above appointments should send a letter of consideration and a letter of recommendation from the industry. Nominations will be accepted until the positions are filled. Nominations can be mailed to CDFA's Organic Program, 1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PESTICIDE REGULATION PROPOSES NEW RESPIRATORY PROTECTION REGULATIONS

The proposed regulatory action pertains to respiratory protection worn by employees working with pesticide materials. In summary, the proposed action would revise the written respiratory protection program that employers must establish when employees are required by pesticide label or regulation to use respirators in the workplace.

The Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) requires that the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) adopt regulations that provide for safe working conditions for persons handling pesticides and working in and around pesticide-treated areas, including regulations on the subject of respirators and other protective devices.

Within the last few years, both the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and, subsequently, the California Department of Industrial Relations' (DIR's) Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) have revised their respiratory protection regulations. DPR's existing respiratory protection regulations were patterned after DOL's regulations.

Although considered protective, DPR needs to revise its respiratory protection regulations to maintain a respiratory program that is consistent with Cal/OSHA. DPR also recognizes that its compliance and protection would be increased from improved clarity.

DPR's proposed new California Code of Regulation (CCR) Section 6739 is very similar to the existing DIR regulations in CCR Section 5144, but it has been crafted with language designed to meet the needs of California employers who must establish respiratory protection programs for the safety and protection of their employees that work

with pesticides. This proposed section would require the employer to identify a physician or other professional licensed health care provider (PLHCP) to perform a medical evaluation prior to requiring an employee to use a respirator. The medical evaluation begins with the employee confidentially completing a medical questionnaire or providing employees with an initial medical examination that covers the same material. The PLHCP determines if a medical examination is necessary and if the employee is physically fit to wear respiratory protection. The employer is required to obtain a written recommendation from the PLHCP regarding an employee's ability to use a respirator.

DPR has determined that the proposed regulatory action will impact businesses with increased cost and does affect small businesses.

Any interested person may present comments in writing about the proposed action to the agency contact person named below. Written comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 26, 2006. Comments regarding this proposed action may also be transmitted via e-mail <dpr06002@cdpr.ca.gov> or by facsimile (FAX) transmission at (916) 324-1452.

For the actual language of the proposed regulation, more information on how to comment, and the analysis of the cost to businesses, see the Notice of Proposed Regulatory Action located on DPR's website at: www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/legbills/rulepkgs/06-002/notice.pdf

