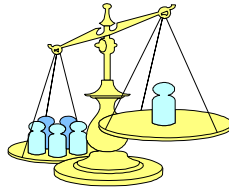


# SPOTLIGHT ON WEIGHTS & MEASURES

## SONOMA COUNTY SEALER OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES



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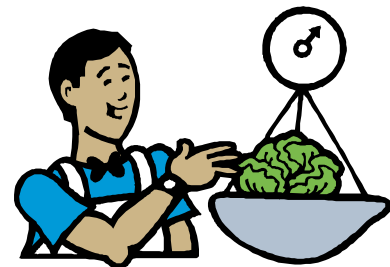
### DEVICES

This past month, emphasis was on the inspection of scales used during the apple and grape harvest season. Twenty-three dormant scales and seven portable platform scales were tested. These devices are large scales that are designed for heavy loads. They are used for weighing bins of grapes, etc. Four of these scales were placed out of order. The inspectors also tested 60 crane scales in July. A crane scale is designed to weigh loads while they are suspended freely from an overhead crane. Each year we organize a couple of days for wineries to bring their crane scales to one of the county road yards for their annual inspection. This saves the inspectors time and mileage, and saves the owners from having to break their routine during a busy time.

There were 37 vehicle scales tested in July. Ten of these vehicle scales were placed out of order for failing compliance requirements.

Besides the wineries calling to get their scales tested and sealed before harvest, there are many farm market scales, apple scales at roadside stands and apple processing plants, and livestock scales that require inspection this time of year.

The inspectors also went to the Sonoma County Fair to inspect the livestock scales, candy scales, and jockey scales.



We had a training session with Marin County and Napa County to learn about the new medium duty truck, and existing heavy capacity truck, that are now shared between the three counties. The medium duty truck is helpful in allowing the inspectors to get into locations our larger truck has trouble getting to.

There were 9 complaints received pertaining to gas stations. One complaint regarding an overcharge on a gasoline dispenser was that the complainant had to stop the pump at 14.9 gallons because their car has a 10-gallon tank, which had approximately a quarter of a tank when they entered the station. The investigation disclosed that this particular station was remodeled and had been open one to two weeks prior to the complaint. The Weights and Measures Division had not received notification of the dispensers being placed into service by a service agent (which is required by law).

The inspectors proceeded to inspect all the dispensers.

The investigation is still ongoing as the inspectors try to locate what service agent did the calibration and if there was a software problem when the dispensers were installed. The station manager has contacted those who complained to reimburse them for their overcharges.

Another complaint came into the office regarding an electric meter bill being extremely high. The meter was tested and found accurate. The inspector found the reading was lower than the reading noted by the park, indicating the meter was not running backwards. The meter had been misread.

### QUANTITY CONTROL

A complaint was received regarding a new restaurant that had recently opened in Sonoma County that was selling take out food over a scale. The complainant said that the scale was a non-typed approved scale, not legal for trade and was not sealed. The inspector looked at the scale, saw it had a label in small letters on the scale, which read "Not legal for Trade". The scale was removed from use. The manager called Weights and Measures the next week and had purchased a legal scale that was then tested and sealed for use.

Our Quantity Control Inspector was out at a market doing a prepackaged meat audit and found some sausages short weight. The market had the distributor pick up the off sale packages and return them to the packer. The company manager called the inspector and said they traced the lots back to the scale it had been packed on. They checked other packages coming from that scale and found them short weight. This led to the testing of the scale and it was found to have a problem that caused periodic errors in the weights. The scale was discarded and a new scale was purchased.

### CONSUMER TIPS

When you purchase a packaged food product it must have a quantity statement on it. Many times products are sold in Deli's or meat counters by the "each". In other words, it is sold at a standard price. This is OK, however, a quantity statement must also be on the label.



### CONSUMER CORNER

Did you know that the Weights and Measures Division will test laundry mat washer and dryers to see that the timers are accurate. Lets say you put in your 50 cents for 30 minutes of drying time. You notice you only get 25 minutes of time. If it is not delivering the posted time the dryer will be red tagged and the owner will have to correct the timer. The same goes for car wash timers. Weights and Measures will go out and test the timers to make sure you are getting the full posted time advertised for your money when washing your car.

