



Department Update

Counties of Inyo and Mono Agricultural Commissioner's Office
September 2017

Agriculture

Staff continues to participate in cannabis discussion in both counties. We anticipate seeing some draft regulations and/or a draft EIR from CalCannabis sometime this month or next month. Either would clarify some of the responsibilities of the local Agricultural Commissioner's Offices in cannabis regulation.

Farm Bill talks continue, and California Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer's Association (CACASA) members were present to testify at a hearing session in Modesto on August 5th. Members emphasized the importance of the California agriculture industry to the entire nation. California produces over 400 agricultural commodities and leads the nation in agriculture production at \$47 billion, so it is imperative that federal programs that help protect this industry remain funded.

Our pesticide regulation staff has been using tablets in the field since spring to conduct inspections and investigations as counties throughout the state are being required to do. So far, it seems that the software and hardware are working fine and field staff have adjusted quickly to the changes.

Weights & Measures

The California Division of Measurement Standards (DMS) has alerted county sealers to be on the lookout for a new type of credit card skimmer at gas pumps. Previous skimmers have either utilized Bluetooth technology to relay information to nearby devices, or stored the information onboard, requiring thieves to return to the location and recover the device.

Recent skimmers found in California have included GSM technology, which basically means the skimmers can send info to a cell phone anywhere on earth.

Inyo/Mono Weights & Measures inspectors are trained to identify these skimmers. Each time a fuel meter is checked, inspectors open the cabinets and check for skimming devices. So far, none have been found in Inyo and Mono Counties.

Livestock scale inspections are progressing in the two counties and should be completed by the end of this month. Our new high capacity testing truck has been a huge improvement!

Weights & Measures Legislation of Interest

SB 547 (Hill)

This bill would allow weights & measures administrative fees collected by DMS to be used to maintain weights & measurement standards. No program has existed for this purpose since DMS was heavily defunded several years ago. Rather than the state sending personnel to individual counties to test our standards, counties have had to travel to state labs with standards to get them recertified as correct.

Mosquito Abatement Program

A human case of West Nile virus has been confirmed in Inyo County (Bishop) for the first time in history. As of the publication of this report, there have been seven West Nile virus (WNV) positive mosquito pool samples collected in

Inyo County. No positives have been found in Mammoth Lakes.

Water spreading conducted by LADWP to protect downstream infrastructure, particularly in the Owens Lake area, created huge areas of mosquito breeding habitat. Concerns over unprecedented WNV activity in our area and the inability of OVMAP crews to access and manage vast water spreading in the Owens Valley, a request was made to the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) for resources to conduct aerial larviciding operations.

LADWP made a commitment to provide these resources, and on August 31 and September 1 aerial applications were made in the Lone Pine, Independence, Big Pine, and Bishop areas. The larvicide used during these efforts should provide residual control for 30 to 60 days. This should dramatically reduce adult mosquito populations until cooler weather ends the active breeding season.

OVMAP will be compiling all of the data collected this year and creating a guidance document for future high runoff years. Very little organized data existed in archives from previous years to help direct management this year, and the data that did exist did not reflect current water management and infrastructure conditions.



OVMAP Staff with 32,000 lbs of larvicide, or about 10 normal year's worth. This was dropped by a helicopter over two days.

Eastern Sierra Weed Management

Receding waters along the Owens River have finally allowed staff to treat Pepperweed throughout most of the Middle Owens Project area. Much of the Lower Owens project area, however, remains submerged and inaccessible. Staff anticipates a huge increase in invasive plant populations next growing season due to water spreading throughout the Owens Valley this summer.

Staff worked last month with our partner agencies to map and control several weed locations, including a yellow starthistle infestation in the Caltrans right-of-way, Diffuse knapweed on Forest Service and BLM lands and Pepperweed at the Eastern Sierra Land Trust's Black Lake Preserve.

The weed crew spent two days spraying Scotch Thistle, Canada Thistle and Pepperweed along the Walker River in the Antelope Valley in August. Another two day trip is planned for September. Management in this area has been curtailed this season due to a lack of funding. Staff continues to explore options for funding work in the future.

Helicopter with application equipment hanging below. The application method was basically a huge lawn spreader with a lawnmower engine on a remote that can spread 600 lbs in 10-15 minutes.



Important Dates

September 4

Office Closed—Labor Day

September 5-6

California Department of Pesticide Regulation Liaison Visit

September 19

Cannabis Workshop
Mono County BOS

September 28-29

Southern Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer's Association Meeting
Santa Maria