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Pirates Throw Metric System Standards Overboard

John Beall

Deputy/Sealer-Weights & Measures

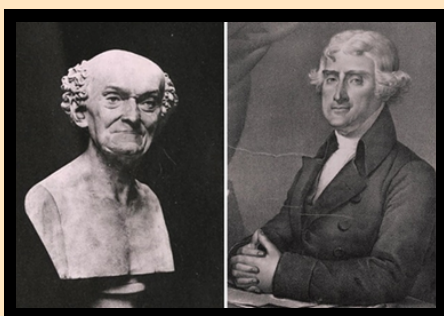


In Ventura County Weights and Measures staff work to bring Equity in the marketplace to businesses and consumers.

In 1793, the United States of America needed a standard measuring system because the states were using a hodgepodge of systems. States were using different weights and measures systems with New York using the Dutch systems, and New England using the English system. Also, each State had their own standards (including physical weights and measuring rods) purchased from Europe. Standards are the foundation for any system of weights and measures and are required for test weighing and measuring devices. Using different systems (English, Dutch, Spanish) and the lack of unified standards for the new country created chaos in the marketplace and impeded commercial development. The US Constitution's Article I, Section 8, Clause 5 gives Congress the power to "fix the standard of weights and measures". It was an early goal to decide which system to use and then have a set of national standards from which each state could trace their own standards. These accurate/calibrated state standards would then be used by state weights and measures inspectors to test and seal weighing and measuring devices that were used commercially. Pirates of the Caribbean Sea then tipped the scales toward use of the English system.

Thomas Jefferson knew about a newly developed Metric System from his long-time interaction with the French. He even began development of his own weighing and measuring system which would use decimal units and a pendulum to mark consistent lengths. Thomas Jefferson requested that the French send the metric standards including a kilogram and a meter and a metrologist (weights and measures scientist) Joseph Dombey. The kilogram standard was three inches tall and wide and protected in a small copper cylinder with a little handle on top. Dombey sailed off from France with the precious kilogram and meter rod to meet Jefferson. As it crossed the Atlantic, the ship ran into a giant storm that blew the ship far south into the Caribbean Sea which was full of pirates

The pirates were criminals the British government supported and were encouraged to harass enemy shipping. The pirates seized the ship, searched for loot and potential higher-class individuals to be ransomed. With the pirate boarding eminent Joseph Dombey changed into common sailor clothing but was exposed as a noble man. He became a prisoner on the island of Montserrat. The pirates hoped to obtain a ransom for him. They had no interest or knowledge of the importance of the kilogram and meter standards which were sold off with other contents of the ship. They were not able to get ransom money for Dombey the metric metrologist who died on the island. Without the arrival of Joseph Dombey with the kilogram and meter standards Jefferson was not able to move the United States to using the Metric system.



French scientist Joseph Dombey (shown in a bust at left) was dispatched to the U.S. in the mid-1790s to share the early metric system, at the request of Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson.
Keith Martin (Fed)/NIST Museum

Over the following decades, the English system became the more dominant system of the United States. John Quincy Adams sided with the English System (Report Upon Weights and Measures 1821) but left open the use of the Metric System which he also admired because of the decimal aspect of the system. Finally in 1836, the US government was able to fix the standards of weights and measures utilizing the English system.

The Office of Weights and Measures (OWM) within the Treasury Department produced weights and measures standards by establishing and delivering sets of standards to each state:

- Established the OWM

The OWM was created in the Coast and Geodetic Survey of the Treasury Department to define units of measure for standards and balances.

- Delivered standards to states

The Secretary of the Treasury was directed to deliver a complete set of weights and measures standards to the governor of each state.

The OWM today is part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which was previously known as the National Bureau of Standards (NBS). The OWM's mandate is to "fix the standard of weights and measures," which is explicitly stated in the US Constitution.



Ventura County Agriculture/Weights & Measures staff utilize standards including the one-gallon prover and weights (below) to inspect and seal commercial weighing and measuring devices. We are required to periodically send our standards to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Division of Measurement Standards (CA DMS) Metrology Lab to ensure their accuracy. Our Ventura County standards accuracy is ultimately traceable from the CA DMS standards to the United States standards. Despite the pirates throwing the Metric System overboard we utilize both English System and Metric System Standards to provide equity in the marketplace to consumers and businesses





Spread Joy – Not Pests

David Wirta

Deputy-Pest Exclusion

Happy Holidays! 'Tis the season for giving, but make sure you're not sending any unwelcomed visitors with your gifts. Invasive pests love holiday fruit, plants, and flowers just as much as you do! When sending fruit or plant material as a gift, it is important that this material is coming from a reputable shipper or licensed nursery. If you are receiving perishable gifts, take a moment to inspect for any pest defects and report any suspicious insects to our office.

Throughout the year we inspect incoming shipments of agricultural commodities transported through parcel facilities such as FedEx and UPS. These items include flower bouquets, house plants, trees, Christmas wreaths, fruit baskets and many other produce. Items that are not properly identified, infested with pests, or that violate California quarantines are rejected and either shipped back at the shipper's expense or destroyed. This may seem Grinch-like, but these interceptions help protect California's agriculture, environment, and neighborhood landscapes.

Residents can do their part to help maintain California's environment and keep invasive pests out! Avoid sending or receiving uncertified backyard fruit; this is a high-risk pathway for harmful bugs and plant diseases to move long distances. Remember to order fruits and plants from licensed and reputable sources. When roasting chestnuts, burn firewood near where you purchased it; firewood can harbor harmful tree damaging insects. These insects can have detrimental damage to forests or even your own backyard. And finally, notify the VCAWM of any suspicious insects or plant damage you observe on incoming plant material or in your neighborhood. Prevention and early detection are key to protect California's agriculture and environment from naughty pest invaders!

PROTECTING CITRUS FROM ACP AND HLB

A Call to Action for Homeowners, Growers, and Transporters

By: Deputy Agricultural Commissioner
Ameer Atrash

Ventura County's iconic citrus trees are facing an unprecedented threat from a tiny pest with devastating potential. The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and the deadly citrus tree disease it spreads, Huanglongbing (HLB), endanger the vibrant citrus industry and the trees that flourish in our agricultural fields and backyards across the county. With no current cure for HLB, the stakes are high, and collaboration between everyone involved is vital to protecting Ventura County's citrus legacy.

The Threat

The Asian citrus psyllid spreads HLB, caused by the bacterium *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* (CLas). The psyllid acquires the bacteria when feeding on an infected tree and carries it in its body. When the insect feeds on any variety of citrus trees, it transmits the bacteria into the tree's vascular system, spreading the disease. HLB is a deadly disease that makes fruit bitter and kills trees. With no cure, infected trees must be removed to stop the spread.

What You Can Do?

Protecting California's citrus from ACP and HLB is a community effort. Whether you're a homeowner, grower, or transporter, your actions are vital in preventing the spread of this devastating pest and disease. By following best practices and regulations, you can help safeguard the citrus industry and ensure its sustainability for future generations. Read on to learn about what you can do to make a difference.

For Homeowners

- Check citrus trees for ACP or signs of HLB. Report to HLB concerns to the pest hotline at 1-800-491-1899.
- Don't move citrus plants out of your area.
- Control ants to protect natural predators of ACP.
- Before giving fruit to someone, make sure to wash it thoroughly, remove any stems and leaves, and adhere to local quarantine regulations before it leaves your property.

For Growers

- Complete compliance agreements with the ACP/HLB Program. When required, submit ACP-Free Declaration forms 72 hours before harvest to origin and destination counties. For bulk citrus shipments involving Ventura County, email declaration forms to acpbulkcitrus@ventura.org Secure all loads to prevent pest escape. Deliver only to authorized packinghouses with valid compliance agreements.

For Transporters

- Ensure all citrus loads are completely covered or fully enclosed to prevent entrance of any outside pests.
- Carry all necessary and required documents for transporting bulk citrus.

Information for
Homeowners



Information for
Growers



Information for
Transporters



COUNTY of VENTURA
Agriculture/Weights & Measures

Questions...Call us!
Camarillo: 805-388-4222
Santa Paula: 805-933-2926



California Proposes new Regulations to Curb Cancer Risk of Widely Used Pesticide

Andy Calderwood-Deputy Pesticide Use Enforcement

The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), a state department within the California Environmental Protection Agency, proposes to adopt new regulations to restrict the use of the field fumigant 1,3-dichloropropene (1,3-D), a pesticide used locally as a pre-plant soil sterilant for strawberry production. The purpose of the regulation package is to reduce the lifetime cancer risk to workers who work on farms where the fumigant is applied, as well as to enforce caps on how much 1, 3-D can be applied per year in any given township (part of an old system that partitions land into six-mile-square sectors). The regulations were proposed 15 Nov 2024 and public comments will be accepted until 24 Jan 2025.

DPR will hold three in-person public hearings and one virtual public hearing to receive oral or written comments. A presentation on the new regulations will be given 15 minutes prior to the start of each hearing.

DATE: Wednesday, January 8, 2025

TIME: 6:00-8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Visalia Veteran's Memorial
609 W Center Ave.
Visalia, California 93291

DATE: Friday, January 10, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Zoom (Virtual)
Webinar ID: 845 7679 6884
Direct link to join the meeting from a web browser
or Zoom client <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84576796884>
One tap to join from a mobile phone:
+16699009128,,84576796884#
Or call from a landline: +1 669 900 9128 – and enter
the Webinar ID above

DATE: Thursday, January 16, 2025

TIME: 6:00-8:00 p.m.

PLACE: National Steinbeck Center
1 Main Street
Salinas, California 93901

DATE: Tuesday, January 21, 2025

TIME: 6:00-8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Chico Women's Club
592 East 3rd Street
Chico, California 95928

DPR PESTICIDE APPLICATION NOTIFICATION SYSTEM TO LAUNCH IN MARCH 2025

The Office of Administrative Law approved the statewide pesticide application notification system regulations on December 13, 2024. The regulations were proposed by the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) in November 2023. The final regulations will support the statewide implementation of SprayDays California, a first-of-its-kind system to provide advance information on the planned applications of restricted material pesticides used in agriculture.

The statewide notification regulations will be effective February 24, 2025, and DPR is on track to begin the implementation of the statewide system, SprayDays California, in March 2025.

DPR will be conducting outreach to growers, communities and the broader public in early 2025 in advance of the system launch to provide more information on the regulatory requirements and the information provided in the system, including information on the pesticide regulatory system in California.

La Oficina de Ley Administrativa aprobó los reglamentos del sistema estatal de aviso de aplicación de pesticidas el 13 de diciembre de 2024. Los reglamentos fueron propuestos por el Departamento de Regulación de Pesticidas (DPR) en noviembre de 2023. Estos reglamentos finales apoyarán la implementación de SprayDays California en todo el estado, un sistema primero en su clase para facilitar información anticipada sobre las aplicaciones previstas de pesticidas con materiales restringidos en la agricultura.

Los reglamentos de aviso estatal entrarán en vigencia el 24 de febrero de 2025 y el DPR está en camino para comenzar con la implementación del sistema SprayDays California en todo el estado en marzo de 2025.

El DPR llevará a cabo actividades de divulgación dirigidas a los productores, las comunidades y el público en general a principios de 2025 antes del lanzamiento del sistema para proporcionar más información sobre los requisitos reglamentarios y los datos proporcionados en el sistema, incluyendo la información sobre el sistema de reglamentación de pesticidas en California.

WHAT IS AN AGRICULTURAL PASS?



Our office continues to cooperate with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services to facilitate the County's Agricultural Pass Program. An agricultural pass allows livestock operators and crop producers the ability to access their property in the event of a fire, flood, landslide, or other disaster. Landowners and their employees who present an agricultural pass are permitted access to the property for specific intervention activities, such as opening gates for fire personnel, turning on irrigation, or removing livestock. Access to the property is only allowed when deemed safe enough by officials on-site.

It is unfortunate every time a disaster occurs, but during the recent Mountain Fire, we were grateful that the pass allowed our growers to take important intervention steps. During the fire event, out-of-county fire personnel were trained on our County's ag pass and growers were able to access their properties.

If you'd like to learn more about the program or apply for a pass, please visit <https://www.readyventuracounty.org/agriculture/>.

One requirement of the program is to have completed a S-190, "Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior" training. If you would like to take a free, online version of the training, one is available from the US Fire Administration at:

<https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/nfacourses/catalog/details/10623>. If you would prefer to attend an in-person training for yourself or employees' Spanish translation, you can sign up to be notified of such training opportunities at the following link or the QR code below:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BOzgvPHRWk-gUKS16RgWgz9kcA7FDiJM10i2cI8JzjtUNTQ3TTFCM09YQTBWMzFBSUhHskpDWTA3WC4u>.



LAND CONSERVATION ACT : WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

On September 10th of this year, the Board of Supervisors reassigned the County's Land Conservation Act (LCA, also known as the Williamson Act) Program to our office. The program allows agricultural operators to enter into a contract with the County to receive a reduction in property taxes on agricultural lands, so long as a minimum percentage of that land remains in agricultural production. Also new for next year is that these contracts are now allowed on open space - zoned properties.

The Contract application window will begin January 1, 2025, and will end the first Friday in June.

If you'd like to learn more about the program or sign up to be notified when our new website for the program goes live, please contact our the LCA Program Manager, Alec Thille, via email at alec.thille@ventura.org or by phone at (805) 933-2926.

KORINNE BELL

Agricultural Commissioner

JOHN BEALL

Deputy/Sealer - Weights & Measures

GREAT VARIEN

Chief Deputy

ANDY CALDERWOOD

Deputy - Pesticide Use Enforcement

DAVID WIRTA

Deputy - Pest Exclusion

AMEER ATRASH

Deputy - Agriculture & Consumer Protection

Office Closures

12/25/24–Christmas Day

01/01/25– New Years Day

01/20/25–Martin Luther King Day

02/17/25– Presidents Day

Upcoming Events

Spring Pesticide Disposal Event



Date To Be Determined

Pesticide Container Recycling Event

Date To Be Determined

Locations & Office Hours

Camarillo

Administration
555 Airport Way, Ste. E
Camarillo, Ca 93010

T: (805) 388-4222

F: (805) 388-4209

Weekdays: 7:00am - 4:00pm

Closed: 11:30am-12:30pm

Santa Paula

Mail to P.O. Box 889
815 E. Santa Barbara Street
Santa Paula, Ca 93061

T: (805) 933-2926

F: (805) 525-8922

Weekdays: 7:00am - 4:00pm

Closed: 11:30am-12:30pm

Saticoy

W&M Meter Lab
11201-B Riverbank Dr.
Ventura, Ca 93003

T: (805) 654-2444

Tue: 7:30am - 11:30 am

Thurs: 12:30am-4:30pm

Marlene Ridge

Editor

Miriam Mendez

Assistant Editor