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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Please join us in congratulating John Beall and Greta Varien on their new role as Sealer and Chief Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, respectively.

John joined our department in October of 2017. As a Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, John managed the Pierce's Disease Control Program (GWSS), Fruit & Vegetable Standardization, Certified Farmers' Markets, Organics, Citrus Maturity, Invasive Weeds, Invasive Shot Hole Borer, and Trapping. In January of 2022, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office merged with Weights & Measures and became the Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures. With this merger the department was realigned, and John was assigned the role of Deputy of the Consumer Protection Division. John has over 30 years of Weights & Measures experience, and as such, was appointed as the Ventura County Sealer of Weights & Measures on January 9, 2024.

Greta started her career with our department in November of 2013. As an Agricultural Inspector, Greta worked in various programs such as the Pierce's Disease Control (aka Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter GWSS), Invasive Weeds, Fruit & Vegetable Standardization, Certified Farmers' Markets, Organics, Nursery Inspection, Terminal Inspection, Seed Inspection and Phytosanitary Certification. In July of 2019, Greta was promoted to Supervising Agricultural Inspector, where she was responsible for supervising staff in Pest Exclusion. In June of 2021, Greta was promoted to Deputy Agricultural Commissioner. Greta was assigned to the Pest Management Division and was responsible for managing programs such as GWSS, Invasive Shot-Hole Borer, Trapping, Nursery & Seed, ACP, Abandoned Orchards, Green Waste Monitoring, Celery Mosaic and Apiary. Greta was promoted to Chief Deputy on December 10, 2023. In this role, Greta will serve as the Personnel/Human Resources Director, Public Information Officer, Department Safety Officer and will fill in for the Commissioner as needed.

KORINNE BELL
VENTURA COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL
COMMISSIONER





QUEENSLAND FRUIT FLY QUARANTINE

DAVID WIRTA
DEPUTY AG COMMISSIONER
PEST EXCLUSION



The discovery of a newly introduced agricultural pest has resulted in a quarantine of fruits and vegetables inside Thousand Oaks and the surrounding region. Multiple detections of Queensland Fruit Fly (*Bactrocera tryoni*) between the months of August and October resulted in a 90 square mile quarantine centered in Thousand Oaks and that covers parts of Moorpark, Somis and the Santa Rosa Valley. Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) originates from Australia and is a serious agricultural pest of approximately 177 host fruits and vegetables including many of Ventura County's top crops: Strawberries, Raspberries, Lemons, Oranges, Blueberries, Avocados, Tomatoes and Peppers. It is likely that this pest was introduced to our region by a traveler returning from vacation with infected fruit from the fly's origin. This is the first quarantine for QFF in the Western Hemisphere and could have widespread damage and crop loss in California's agriculture and backyard gardens if allowed to spread.

Since the localized population of QFF is still likely to be small, complete eradication of this threat is possible with cooperation from both the agricultural industry and residents inside the quarantine area. Currently, the California Department of Food and Agriculture is implementing a Male Attractant Technique (MAT) within the quarantine to eliminate this pest. The MAT works by setting up 1000s of traps throughout the quarantined area which use pheromones to attract male flies; the trapped flies then die before having the chance to mate and reproduce. This method has been highly successful in other previous fruit fly quarantines throughout the state. Residents are asked to cooperate with state officials by allowing them access to neighborhood trees for the placement of traps and to also not to disturb any traps

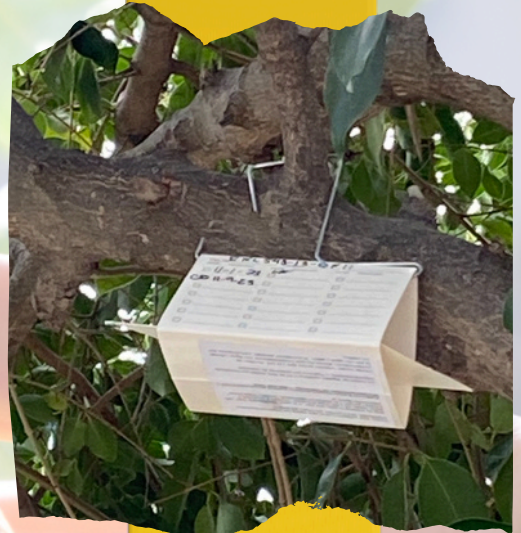


that have been placed. Additionally, CDFA is conducting small and controlled foliar treatments with an organic insecticide and bait called Spinosad, which is derived from a naturally occurring soil bacterium and is used to attract and kill any other flies near a trap find. This product is safe to use around households and CDFA officials will notify residents and review with them all necessary precautions near any treatments taking place.

To contain all flies to the quarantined area, all host fruits and vegetables grown in this area must remain on the property where they are grown. Even moving fruits and vegetables to other properties within the quarantine could result in the spread and expansion of the quarantine boundary. Residents in the quarantine must only eat, cook, or process fruits and vegetables on the site where they have been grown, and any discarded produce must be disposed of in a plastic bag and placed in the regular trash destined to the landfill. DO NOT green waste any quarantined fruits or vegetables and DO NOT send any quarantined produce to friends and family. Commercial growers within the quarantine must also enter into a compliance agreement with CDFA and follow a mitigation procedure before harvest to ensure there will be no spread of any flies to outside of the quarantine.

A voluntary pre-quarantine compliance agreement is being offered by VCAWM to growers near the boundary of the quarantine to start taking precautionary measures for harvest in case this quarantine expands.

For more information or questions regarding this pest and quarantine or any other agricultural pests of concern please contact our office at (805) 388-4222 or the CDFA Pest Hotline at 1-800 491-1899



3RD ANNUAL VENTURA COUNTY

WILDFLOWER & WEED SHOW

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024

11AM-3PM

AGRICULTURE MUSEUM

926 RAILROAD AVE. SANTA PAULA, CA 93060

INVITING CALIFORNIA TO DINNER: *BRINGING CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT FOODS INTO YOUR LIFE AND THE FUTURE
OF NATIVE PLANT AGRICULTURE* WITH ANTONIO SANCHEZ
AT 12 NOON

WILDFLOWER & WEED SPECIMEN SHOW

- LOCAL WILDFLOWER, WEED, AND POLLINATOR INFORMATION
- INATURALIST DEMONSTRATION

SPRING PLANT SALE!

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY, CHANNEL ISLANDS CHAPTER

- 1 GALLON & 4" PLANTS FOR SALE
- EXPERTS ON HAND TO ADVISE YOU

KIDS ACTIVITIES!

GARDEN TOURS BY THE UC MASTER GARDENERS



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources
UC Master Gardener Program



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Cooperative Extension

HLB

GRETA VARIEN
CHIEF DEPUTY AG
COMMISSIONER
PEST MANAGEMENT

QUARANTINE

On October 3, 2023, The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) declared a quarantine in Ventura County following the detection of the citrus disease Huanglongbing (HLB), or citrus greening, in two citrus trees on one residential property in the city of Santa Paula. These detections are the first HLB-positive trees in Ventura County.

The disease was first detected in plant material taken from one orange and one lime tree. These detections follow the confirmation of a Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus (CLas)-positive Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) sample taken from the find site. To date, 1,236 trees have been surveyed for HLB. Of those trees tested, 70 trees have been confirmed positive.

CDFA crews have been working diligently to remove and dispose of the infected trees and are conducting a mandatory survey of every property within 250 meters of each positive detection site. After the survey is complete, all host plants in the 250-meter area around the detection site will be treated to suppress the disease vector, the ACP. By taking these steps, a critical reservoir of the disease and its vectors will be removed, which is essential to protect the surrounding citrus from this deadly disease.

The positive detections establish a mandatory five-mile citrus HLB quarantine area around the find site. The quarantine area is bordered on the north by Ojai Road; on the south by E Los Angeles Avenue; on the west by Wells Road; and on the east by Balcom Canyon Road. The quarantine

prohibits the sale of all host nursery stock and the movement of all host plants or plant parts within a five-mile radius of the finds. The quarantine applies to residents and commercial operations alike.

Nurseries outside of the quarantine zone may enter into compliance agreements with the CDFA to establish certified citrus nursery stock grown inside approved greenhouses. Growers in the quarantine must follow the mitigation set in place on November 22, 2023.

An HLB quarantine area currently exists in parts of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties, where more than 6,300 residential trees have tested positive for the disease and have been removed.



CONSUMER PROTECTION

**JOHN BEALL
DEPUTY AG COMMISSIONER
CONSUMER PROTECTION**

“Weights and Measures may be ranked among the necessities of life, to every individual of human society. They enter into the economical arrangements and daily concerns of every family. They are necessary to every occupation of human industry; to the distribution and security of every species of property; to every transaction of trade and commerce;”

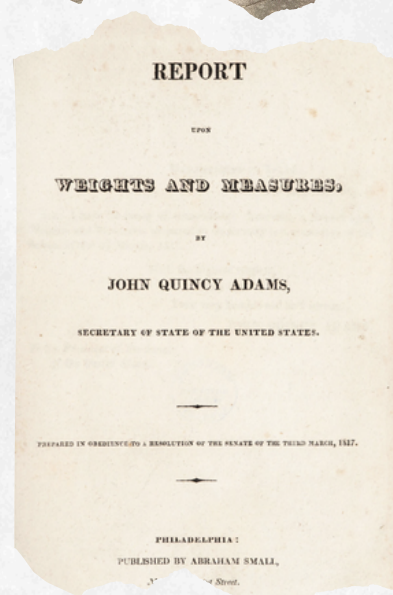
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

In 1821, John Quincy Adams published the 271 page Report upon Weights and Measures which included a detailed review of national and state regulations and requirements for weights and measures device testing. His goal was to standardize Weights and Measures procedures and to provide equity in the marketplace for businesses and consumers which would then enhance commerce in the United States.

<https://archive.org/details/reportuponweight1821unit/page/n7/mode/2up>

Today in Ventura County, device registration and fees are required for all commercial weighing and measuring devices and scanners. Registration fees offset the cost of inspection and testing commercial weighing and measuring devices which ensure these devices are accurate in compliance with state and local laws. Fees for scanning device registration support price verification inspections to ensure consumers get the lowest advertised price and businesses compete fairly with each other.

The 2024 Device Registration and Location fees are due January 1st each year. California Assembly Bill 1304 (which became effective January 1, 2024) increased the maximum fees for certain types of weighing and measuring devices as outlined in California Business and Professions Code Section 12240. The annual registration and location fees for these devices conform with the



limits set by the Ventura County Ordinance Code (Section 6296-6). The increases in device registration and location fees are reflected in the 2024 device registration bill. These device registration fees support our work to ensure equity in the marketplace for both businesses and consumers.

You can also find more information about Weights and Measures on our website including Device Registration fees which can now be paid online (Thanks for your support IT Services!). The number of businesses using credit card payments quadrupled from last year-the first year of use. All paper seals for 2024 you see on commercial devices we test and find accurate include a QR code which will take you to our website.



STATE ADOPTS NEW RULE TO PROTECT POLLINATORS

ANDY CALDERWOOD
DEPUTY AG COMMISSIONER
PESTICIDE USE ENFORCEMENT

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has adopted a new package of regulations to protect insect pollinators that visit crops treated with pesticides. The rules, which took effect January 1st, restrict the use of four pesticides widely used in the state: imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, dinotefuran and clothianidin. The four belong to a group of insecticides known as neonicotinoids, a class of chemicals derived from nicotine that have been found to pose a threat to pollinators of treated plants.

First used in California in 1994 when DPR registered imidacloprid for use in the state, neonicotinoids are systemic pesticides which, once absorbed by plants, travel to all tissues via the sap, poisoning sap-sucking insects such as aphids, psyllids and scale insects that feed there. However, recent studies have shown that nectar, too, becomes toxic in plants treated with neonicotinoids. This can damage populations of bees and other beneficial insects that visit flowers.

The new regulations use three tools to mitigate the impact on pollinators: rate restrictions, seasonal caps, and timing restrictions. The timing is restricted with respect to bloom. Applications are prohibited on blooming crops. Crops are sorted based on how attractive they are to bees. The strongest restrictions apply to crops deemed “highly attractive” to bees, such as citrus. Crops labeled “moderately attractive” to bees, such as strawberries, are governed by another set of rules, and those that are “not attractive” to bees, such as lettuce, cabbage, and others harvested before bloom, are not affected by the new rules.

The regulations only apply to the production of an agricultural commodity. In addition, applications made to control quarantine pests are exempt. This means that the current regime of citrus treatments to combat the Asian Citrus Psyllid will not be disrupted by the new rules.

DPR estimates that total use of neonicotinoids and total acreage treated by them will each fall by about 40% in the state as a result of the regulations. Ventura County crops will be affected. In 2023, Lemons had the most acres treated with neonicotinoids locally, with over six thousand reported. Celery was next at 4750 acres and then strawberries at 3900 acres. Additional commodities with substantial acreage treated locally were chiles, lettuce, brussels sprouts, oranges, blackberry, and raspberry. Lemon and orange treatments will be exempt from the new regulations due to the Asian Citrus Psyllid quarantine, but some commodities will see a change in pest control practices. The biggest impact will be in the berries, since they are flowering most of the time and so cannot be treated with neonicotinoids. This is where the greatest reduction in use is expected. Crops such as celery and brussels sprouts should be less affected, since they are exempt as long as the crops are harvested prior to bloom.

Find out more about the new regulations here:

<https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/legbills/rulepkgs/22-001/22-001.htm>

Or call our office and ask for the Pesticide Use Enforcement program.



Honey Bee, *Apis mellifera*, visiting a strawberry blossom.



KORINNE BELL

Agricultural Commissioner

JOHN BEALL

Sealer / Deputy - Consumer Protection

GRETA VARIEN

Chief Deputy / Pest Management

ANDY CALDERWOOD

Deputy - Pesticide Use Enforcement

DAVID WIRTA

Deputy - Pest Exclusion

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