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DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE
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Angela Godwin
Agricultural Commissioner
Sealer of Weights and Measures

The fall agricultural harvest season in Mendocino County is a vibrant time of celebration, education, and community engagement centered on agriculture and the area's natural bounty. Fall is the perfect time for planting cover crops, and workshops on soil health and erosion control are held to prepare for the winter months. Residents can also participate in apple picking and pumpkin patches, fostering a connection with local farms. In addition to these activities, the Agricultural Department emphasizes the importance of conservation and environmental stewardship.

Water Regulations:

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is developing new rules that address the impact vineyards may have on water quality in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. The final draft of these rules, the Draft Vineyard Order, will be released for public comment on October 31, 2024, and presented to the Regional Water Board on December 6, 2024, for adoption. This "final" draft will be available on the [Vineyards | California Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Board](http://Vineyards.CaliforniaNorthcoastRegionalWaterQualityControlBoard) website. This means these regulations could go into effect as early as spring 2025. The Draft Vineyard Order proposes a deadline for vineyard operators to enroll by July 2026. The Draft Vineyard Order requires farmers to address stormwater runoff from their vineyards to control excess sediment and high temperatures that impact essential fish habitats.

Pesticide Regulations:

The Mendocino County Department of Agriculture plans to hold our annual Winter CE classes sometime in December for PAC, QAC, QAL, and Pest Control Advisors (PCA) holders. Additionally, Sonoma County has opened its December 5th CE class to Mendocino County growers.

Certified Farmers' Market Inspections:

As the harvest season begins, local farmers showcase their bounty at farmers' markets, where residents can purchase fresh produce, artisanal goods, and seasonal specialties. The Department will continue inspecting Certified Farmers' Markets (CFMs). This is primarily a seasonal program to visit all our seasonal certified farmer's markets at least once per year and to get out to our year-round markets twice per calendar year. These inspections are essential to ensure that the produce and other agricultural products sold through these markets were grown/produced by the person selling them. The Direct Marketing regulations were developed and legislated in 1976 to allow farmers to market their produce and products directly to the consumer without going through a wholesaler. This supports local foodsheds and smaller farmers who would otherwise have trouble conforming to the standard pack and shipping container quantities of produce to compete with larger, more well-financed operations. We greatly value our small producer communities inland and, on the coast, and work to support them by issuing Certified Producer Certificates and Certificates for Farmer Market operations. Food security is a critical community need, and we value our opportunity and obligation to serve our stakeholders.

Weighing & Measures Registration

Our annual Weights & Measures Device Registration Invoice will be mailed out in December 2024. The due date is on or before 2/25/2025 to avoid a late fee. Please get in touch with us with any business or device count changes. Remember that any weighing device used to arrive at a sale for any commodity is defined as a commercial device and must be registered with the department and certified as accurate.

Pest Exclusion and Detection Program

The Agricultural Commissioner's Office has been inspecting incoming plants and other agricultural materials for pests that should not be here. California has one of the most robust and science-based quarantine systems worldwide, and this over-arching program protects our agricultural and natural resources from exotic invaders. We accomplish much of this work through our exclusion programs. We inspect plant material at shipping point terminals such as UPS and FedEx and perform plant shipment inspections of incoming nursery stock to local nurseries and garden centers.

Our Pest detection trapping program is winding down this fall, with all traps removed by mid-November. This program is the first line of defense against invasive pests such as fruit flies, Japanese beetles, and European grapevine moths. No detections were made of these pests in Mendocino County this year. This program aims to detect the presence of exotic pests before they can build a population or otherwise infest a single square mile within our county. California experienced a record-setting year for exotic fruit fly quarantines, such as Mediterranean, Oriental, Queensland, and Tao Fruit Flies. In Mendocino County, we protect against these invasive pests by placing and servicing inspect-specific traps baited with lures in agricultural and urban areas of the county in seasonally appropriate fruit tree host plants. We are also trapping pests within our local nurseries and conducting routine inspections for commercial cleanliness to aid in our pest exclusion efforts.