



JUNE 2026 CEO REPORT

Noteworthy Agriculture, Weights & Measures Issues

As we transition into summer, Mendocino County's agricultural community continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience and vitality. Building on the successful spring events highlighted in last month's report—including the *Flock Together Festival* and the *Mendo Cannabis Cup*—we remain focused on supporting our producers, protecting our working landscapes, and advancing collaborative solutions to the challenges facing North Coast agriculture.

This spring marked the release of the **Comprehensive Pest Prevention Program Analysis (C3PA)**, a major independent evaluation of California's Pest Prevention System (PPS). Commissioned in collaboration with CACASA, CDFA, USDA-APHIS, and other partners, the report provides the first holistic review of the state's pest prevention infrastructure since the mid-1990s.

Key findings confirm that while California's PPS delivers exceptional value in protecting a \$59 billion agricultural economy, the existing system operates under increasing strain. The report highlights:

- Core exclusion programs (Detector Dog Teams, High Risk Pest Exclusion, Border Protection Stations) have reached a point of diminishing invasive pest finds; while newer additional target funding in other priority programs is yielding stronger pest prevention results.
- The shared state-county model works effectively, allowing local tailoring while maintaining statewide integration, directly relevant to Mendocino County's role.
- Established invasive pests already cost producers and consumers \$563 million annually in lost economic surplus; additional new invasive pest infestations could add at least another \$500+ million per year without additional prevention measures.
- The 2023–2024 record fruit fly response (7 simultaneous projects, costing \$208 million) demonstrated both system resilience and staffing vulnerabilities.
- Immediate needs include over \$90 million in one-time funding and over \$25 million in additional recurring investment for annual infrastructure, staffing, data systems, and outreach.

For Mendocino County, the C3PA underscores the importance of our local contributions to statewide pest prevention, particularly in protecting our world class winegrape industry, and reinforces the need for sustained investment in programs that directly benefit our local producers and working landscapes. The report provides a valuable roadmap as we advocate for resources at the state and federal levels.

On June 2, we participated in the State Board of Food and Agriculture meeting, which provided timely updates on three priority areas with direct implications for Mendocino County:

1. **Agricultural Economy:** Discussions highlighted the continued strength and unique role of California agriculture in national and global food systems, while acknowledging pressures from input costs, labor, water, and market volatility. The C3PA's economic analysis—documenting both the \$59 billion value at risk and the high return on prevention investments—aligns closely with the Board's focus on protecting this critical sector.

2. **Pest Prevention:** The Board received updates on statewide pest prevention efforts, including responses to invasive threats. Our recent experience with the Burchell Nursery/ Costco grapevine trace-forward (detailed below) serves as a real-time example of our system in action. The C3PA's recommendations for increased investment in exclusion, detection, diagnostics, and staffing were particularly relevant to these discussions.
3. **California Water Plan:** Updates on the Water Plan emphasized the interconnected challenges of water security, ecosystem health, and agricultural sustainability. For Mendocino County's vineyards, rangelands, and diversified operations, reliable water access and climate-resilient management are foundational. The Board's dialogue reinforced the value of integrated approaches that support both productive agriculture and the working landscapes that define our region.

These state level conversations directly inform our local priorities and advocacy, particularly as we work to strengthen pest prevention capacity and support climate-adaptive water strategies for North Coast producers.

In late May, our department launched a significant proactive response following confirmed glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) detections in multiple neighboring counties and trace-forward information indicating that grapevine plants from Burchell Nursery in Fresno County, distributed through Costco Wholesale locations, these shipments had reached 23 non-counties across the state. While initial laboratory results from samples collected at the Ukiah Costco were negative for GWSS life stages, we are treating the situation with the highest level of vigilance due to the serious threat this invasive pest poses to our winegrape industry.

GWSS (Homalodisca vitripennis) feeds plant xylem and can transmit Xylella fastidiosa, the bacterium that causes Pierce's disease, a fatal and incurable grapevine disease. This pest is known to feed on more than 250 common plant species, but it represents an immediate threat especially to California's grape industry.

Actions Taken in Mendocino County:

- The Ukiah Costco Wholesale voluntarily removed and disposed of all remaining suspect plants from the infected shipment.
- Enhanced GWSS detection traps were deployed at the Ukiah Costco location and surrounding property.
- Trap density was significantly increased in the Anderson Valley, a key winegrape production area.
- The department worked directly with Costco to notify customers who purchased grapevine plants from the Ukiah store between April 24 and May 19, 2026.
- Close coordination with CDFA's Pierce's Disease Control Program and Agricultural Commissioners in other affected and at-risk counties.

Public and Industry Outreach:

On May 28, we issued a press release and conducted direct outreach to affected customers and industry partners. Anyone who purchased grapevine plants from the Ukiah Costco during the specified period has been asked to:

- Keep the plant isolated in its original container and do not plant it if it is not already planted.
- Contact the Mendocino County Agricultural Commissioner's Office immediately at (707) 234-6830 or agcomm@mendocinocounty.gov for inspection and guidance.
- If possible, place the plant in two secured trash bags (one inside the other) until an inspector can respond.
- Do not place potentially affected plants in household trash or compost bins.

We remain in close coordination with CDFA and neighboring counties as part of the broader 23- county GWSS trace-forward and response effort. Early detection and rapid response are essential to prevent establishment of this potentially catastrophic pest in the North Coast region. I want to thank Costco Wholesale for their cooperation and our staff for their swift, professional action. Additional updates will be provided as laboratory results are finalized and surveillance continues.

These recent activities; the release of the C3PA, engagement at the State Board, and our active response to the GWSS trace-forward, illustrate both the opportunities and the urgent needs facing pest prevention and agricultural resilience in Mendocino County. The C3PA provides a clear evidence base for investment; the State Board dialogue connects our local realities to statewide policy; and the GWSS response demonstrates the importance of vigilance, coordination, and public outreach.

As fire season intensifies, I continue to strongly encourage all eligible agricultural operators to apply for or renew their **Ag Pass**. Preauthorization can make a critical difference in protecting livestock, crops, and livelihoods during emergencies. Applications and assistance are available through our office, contact Traci Haggett at (707) 234-6811 or by email at haggett@mendocinocounty.gov.

Our department remains committed to supporting Mendocino County's producers, protecting our agricultural economy and natural resources, and collaborating effectively across local, state, and federal levels. The partnerships we are strengthening today will help ensure that our working landscapes thrive for generations to come.