

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

This spring, Mendocino County hosted two excellent events that celebrated our diverse agricultural heritage and brought producers and the community together. On April 25, the 2nd Annual Flock Together Festival at Ridgewood Ranch offered a full day of hands-on learning and celebration. Attendees enjoyed sheep shearing demonstrations, sheep dog trials, fiber arts activities, grain threshing and milling, live music, and a delicious ranch-to-table lunch. The event highlighted the joy of working landscapes and the strong connections between ranchers, fiber artists, and the public.

On May 4, the 2nd Mendo Cannabis Cup in Willits showcased the excellence of our local small-scale, sun-grown cannabis growers. The event featured blind judging of flowers from Mendocino producers, awards for best flowers and breeders, grower meet-and-greets, educational exhibits on the county's cannabis history, and honoring the roots of this important part of our agricultural legacy.

We are also looking forward to the 75th Anniversary celebration of the University of California's Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC) on May 16–17. As UC's principal field research facility for agriculture and natural resources in the North Coast region, HREC stewards more than 5,300 acres of diverse oak woodland, grassland, chaparral, and riparian environments. Since 1951, studies conducted at HREC have resulted in over 2,000 scientific publications advancing sustainable agriculture and ecosystem management. The Center's mission—to maintain and enhance ecosystem integrity through applied research, adaptive management, and education while supporting working landscapes—makes it an invaluable partner to Mendocino County agriculture. The public is warmly invited to the free Open House on Sunday, May 17, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

These events underscore the vitality of Mendocino's agricultural community and the Department's ongoing commitment to supporting producers, education, and collaboration across our county. As the spring 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), <https://mcfarm.org/>. This is primarily a seasonal program to visit all our seasonal (May-October) certified farmers' 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 enacted in 1976 to allow farmers to market their produce and products directly to consumers without going through a wholesaler. This supports local foodsheds and smaller farmers who would otherwise have trouble meeting the standard packaging and shipping container quantities for produce, and competing with larger, better-financed operations. We greatly value our small producer communities, both 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.

As we approach the 2026 wildfire season, the Mendocino County Ag Pass Program is ready to support our agricultural community during emergencies. Created through a partnership between the Department of Agriculture, Office of Emergency Services, Sheriff's Office, Cannabis Department, and Animal Care Services, the program allows qualifying commercial farmers, ranchers, vineyard operators, cannabis cultivators, and commercial kennel operators, along with up to four managerial employees, to access their properties when roads are restricted or evacuation orders are in place.

The Ag Pass provides pre-authorization and official identification documents that help emergency personnel quickly verify your need for entry. This enables essential activities such as feeding and watering livestock, tending crops and vineyards, and providing veterinary care, all critical steps to protect your livelihood and your animals when every hour counts.

Commercial agricultural operations (non-livestock, non-cannabis) can verify eligibility using documents such as an Operator Identification Number, a Restricted Materials Permit, a Certified Producer Certificate, an Organic Registration, or a USDA Farm Service Agency Farm Number. Livestock producers may provide Schedule F tax forms, brand registration, and proof of agricultural zoning or Williamson Act enrollment. Cannabis and kennel operators have their own specific qualifiers. All documentation must be current.

- Ag Passes must be renewed annually.
- Applications should be submitted before an emergency occurs; processing during a disaster may not be possible.
- Access is granted only for approved agricultural activities, during daylight hours, and remains subject to safety decisions by incident commanders and law enforcement.

With fire season approaching, I strongly encourage all eligible producers to submit or renew your Ag Pass application right away. Applications and full procedures are available through our office. For assistance obtaining or renewing an Ag Pass, contact Traci Haggett at the Mendocino County Department of Agriculture at (707) 234-6831 or [haggett@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:haggett@mendocinocounty.gov). Don't wait until smoke is in the air; prepare today to protect your operation this fire season.