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New Weapon in Pest Detection Program
Submitted by Chris Tyler and Lottie Martin

Santa Barbara County has a new weapon to add to its arsenal in the pest detection program. On July 13th, Chris Tyler joined canine handlers from four other California counties at the United States Department of Agriculture National Detector Dog Training Center (NDDTC) in Newnan, Georgia.

The dogs were trained to detect five odors: citrus, stone fruit, guava, apple, and mango. The canines were also trained to let their handler know when a box contains a target odor; this is known as an alert, which is to actively scratch at the parcel.

Each morning, Agricultural Biologists head out to the common carriers such as Fed Ex, UPS, and the Post Office, to seek out packages of agricultural material moving into the County. Plant material coming into the County can introduce new insects, weeds and diseases into our Agriculture rich area. The biologists look for packages containing plant material and then open the packages for inspection. They look for any signs of insects, weeds, or diseases. If something is found, they hold the package and collect samples for identification of the specific pest. The Ag Biologists in Santa Barbara County are the “boots on the ground,” or in this case, the “eyes” of the County. They inspect thousands of packages each year and stop infested plant material from possibly intro-

(See New Weapon, page 2)

Unmarked box of plant material found by Team Doomis at a Santa Barbara County FedEx location.
(New Weapon continued from page 1)

ducing a new threat to our local agriculture. At the parcel carriers, the detector dog works on the con-
veyor belt sniffing the packages as they travel past. The dogs are also trained to sniff out packages while
in the back of a delivery truck or being off loaded in cargo bins or transportation containers.

Santa Barbara County was paired with the canine Doomis. Page 1 shows a photo of a recently
discovered unmarked bag of unknown plant material that was shipped in a unmarked box found by
Team Doomis. The program is funded by the U.S. Farm Bill and will cover Santa Barbara, San Luis
Obispo, and Ventura Counties. For more about the CDFA Detection Dogs please visit: www.cdfa.ca.gov/
phpps/dogteams.

Submitted by Cathy Fisher

The Santa Barbara County Agriculture Commissioner’s Office provides annual funding to UCCE
programs via a cooperative agreement which includes programs such as, Master Gardener, 4-H Youth
Development, Master Food Preserver Program, Cal Fresh Nutrition Education, Viticulture, Small Farms
and Specialty Crops, Strawberry and Vegetables, Fire Ecology and Management and Soils, Water, Avoca-
dos and other Tropical crops. There are a total of seven UC Farm Advisors working on a variety of re-
search projects, and providing pest/disease identification and management in Santa Barbara County for
each of the different UCCE programs. The partnership between UCCE and the Agriculture Department
also includes participating in a variety of training workshops that are facilitated by the UC Farm Advis-
sors. Office space is also available for UC Farm Advisors in the Santa Maria office. UCCE is required to
submit quarterly reports that summarize each programs activity to the agricultural commissioner,
county executive officer, and to the Board of Supervisors. You can review UCCE quarterly reports and
other Agriculture Department information at http://cesantabarbara.ucanr.edu/.

Upcoming ACASA Conference
Submitted by Ruth Jensen

After hosting the successful 2015 Spring California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers As-

sociation (CACASA) conference, Santa Barbara County will host the 2015 conference for the Assistant
Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer Association (ACASA). This year’s theme is “Creating Connections-
Building Bridges,” and will take place at the Santa Ynez Marriott November 5th-6th. This conference is de-
signed for Assistant Commissioners, Deputies, and other supervisorial staff in the County Agricultural
Commissioner/Weights & Measures System.

Speakers for this conference include: Brian Leahy (Director DPR), Allison Wiedeman (Office of
Water, Chief of Rural Branch, U.S EPA) and Henry Gonzales (Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner).
Some issues to be discussed in this year’s conference include: wildlife conflicts in California, trends
and issues regarding pesticide regulation, agricultural urban interface conflicts, water quality issues,
and updates from CDFA, DPR, and DMS. Prior to the conference, EPA’s Ms. Wiedeman will be treated to
a Central Coast agricultural tour of farm operations, Twitchell Dam, and the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes
Wildlife Refuge.
American Agri-Women 'Drive Across America'
Submitted by Ruth Jensen

American Agri-Women (AAW), the nation’s largest coalition of farm, ranch, and agri-business women, is celebrating 40 years of advocating for agriculture. They are commemorating this event with their “Drive Across America,” a five-month educational and advocacy tour. AAW President Sue McCrum and other leaders of the organization drove the specially wrapped pick-up truck and participated in educational, network, and advocacy events hosted by AAW’s more than 50 affiliates across the nation.

The drive came through California’s Central Coast in August. The first of several stops was in Salinas, while the last ended in Palm Springs. Local activities included: an evening at the San Luis Obispo Farmer’s Market, tours at Talley Farms, the Luffa Farm, Avila Beach, Main Street Produce, the Far Western in Orcutt, Presquile Winery, City of Solvang, Ocean Breeze Flowers and a reception in Monteïcito. Local dignitaries and agriculture organizations were on hand to welcome the organization’s visit. AAW members have worked together to educate consumers, advocate for agriculture, and offer networking and professional development opportunities. Go to the AAW web site for more information www.americanagriwomen.org

Operation Take Back the Pumps
Submitted by Daniel Garcia

On August 13TH Santa Barbara County Weights & Measures officials Rudy Martel, Scott Perkins, and Daniel Garcia worked alongside Ventura County law enforcement to participate in “Operation Take Back the Pumps.” This was a collaborative effort to combat credit/debit card fraud facilitated through illegal use of credit card skimming devices. The operation utilized local, state, and federal agencies which inspected all 184 gas stations in Ventura County. In total, three credit card skimmers were found.

Investigators have found that losses from a single skimming device have averaged between $50,000-$100,000. Skimming devices are found on the inside of pumps. They are often attached to the wiring of card readers and capture payment data. The stored data can be retrieved later by removing the skimmer, or by Bluetooth transmission. Weights & Measures officials use their knowledge of retail fuel pumps to identify skimmers. Working with law enforcement, located skimmers can be removed, tagged for evidence, and used for fraud investigations.
Local W&M Issues Heard at National Conference
Submitted by Matt Maiten

This year’s National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) was held in July and celebrated its 100th anniversary in Philadelphia, PA. What better location to meet than in Philadelphia, which served as a meeting place for the Founding Fathers of the United States. Santa Barbara County Sealer Cathy Fisher and Deputy Sealer Matthew Maiten were joined with 25 other California State and County representatives. There were over 300 attendees at this gathering which included: state and local jurisdictions from forty states, industry members, and other associate members. Some of the voting items that will proceed on to become national standards and published in the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) handbooks include: electric vehicle charging stations, updated taximeter codes, chitterling test procedures, and peat moss testing.

In September, Fisher and Maiten also attended the Western Weights and Measures Association (WWMA) conference held in Boise, Idaho. Issues discussed at this meeting included: new testing procedures for bundled firewood, efficiencies in audit package inspections, method of sale for food and non-food commodities, and standards for compressed and liquefied natural gas (CNG & LNG). Next year, our Deputy Sealer will serve as Chair of the Professional Development Committee for the WWMA. The next NCWM Interim meeting will be held in San Diego, CA, January 10-13, 2016. For those who do not normally participate in this process, this is a rare opportunity to see firsthand how the NIST handbooks are created and amended. For more information, visit http://www.ncwm.net.

Avocado Commission Meets for PSHB
Submitted by Mary Ann Rajala

The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer (PSHB) is an invasive ambrosia beetle that can attack hundreds of tree species. This very small beetle bores into trees and excavates galleries in the water conducting tissues. It carries fungal pathogens which spread and grow in the tunnel galleries for young PSHB to feed on. These fungi interrupt the water and nutrient transport systems of the trees, causing decline and death of the tree.

On September 2, 2015 in Santa Paula, UC Riverside and UC Cooperative Extension researchers presented information and research on this invasive pest. They are making some progress on multiple fronts of research into the control of the beetle and the fungal pathogen. Some discussion topics of the meeting included, PSHB spread to within 1.5 miles south of Ventura County, Avocado Commission is spending $2.25M to research and detection, ongoing research for trap optimization, biocontrol and pesticide research. Best management practices include: inspect avocado branches for boring holes and sugary exudate, inspect sycamore trees in and around orchards, remove infected branches, hip and solarize piles, and report suspected PSHB finds to the Ag Commissioner’s office. More information can be found at http://eskalenlab.ucr.edu and UC Riverside Center for Invasive Species Research, http://cisr.ucr.edu.
New Tools for Detection
Submitted by Matt Maiten

“What is this Bug” is a newly developed website which will assist the public and industry members in the early detection of invasive pests. This new tool is designed to easily report a suspicious insect, plant, or animal to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Plant Pest Diagnostics Laboratory (PPDL) for identification.

Along with “What is this Bug,” CDFA developed their own app called “Report a Pest.” The app user can record and submit an image of the suspected pest to the PPDL. If the image of the pest appears to be exotic or invasive, then an official sample will be collected and the official determination is made. This adds another tool for the public and industry members to use for identification and controlling pests. The app can be downloaded for free at the new website. Visit www.whatisthisbug.org for the latest updates on invasive pests that may pose a risk to California Agriculture.

CDFA’s Pest Detection Program
Submitted by Stephanie Stark

The primary responsibility of the Pest Detection program is the early detection of serious agricultural pests from California. One of the ways this is accomplished is through a statewide detection trapping program. The primary objectives of the statewide pest detection system are to find insect pests before they infest one square mile and plant diseases before they exceed one-half of a square mile. Insects targeted for detection by the statewide network of traps include: exotic fruit flies (particularly species of Bactrocera, Dacus, Ceratitis, and Anastrepha), Japanese beetle, Asian citrus psyllid, light brown apple moth, polyphagous shot hole borer, and the gypsy moth.

In Santa Barbara County, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) conducts the majority of trapping. The Agriculture Commissioner’s Office is responsible for the Glassy Winged Sharpshooter trapping program. They also assist CDFA with light brown apple moth trapping in the rural areas, and collaborate with United States Department of Agriculture in Gold Spotted Oak Borer detection efforts.
CDFA Plant Pest Diagnostics Laboratory. The Plant Pest Diagnostics Laboratory serves as a scientific resource, providing timely and accurate plant pest diagnostics and professional expertise. CDFA scientists, technicians and support staff strive to provide leadership in science and excellence in service which includes: timely and accurate diagnosis of plant pests, weeds, and diseases, and evaluation of seed quality and viability, expert consultation for pest prevention programs and for external clientele, services for the improvement of plant quality and for export of agricultural products, cutting edge research on the identification and characterization of new pest and disease species, and on the methodologies to improve diagnostic procedures.

The CDFA laboratory is required to provide diagnostic results within 10 working days of receipt of a nematology, entomology or plant taxonomy sample/specimen. Plant pathology sample/specimen diagnostic results shall be provided within 35 working days. County agricultural commissioner offices shall be notified if the diagnostic results may take longer than the designated time period. Expedited diagnostic results can be requested depending on priority of the pest.

The CDFA laboratory is the largest and most comprehensive state plant diagnostic laboratory in the United States, with more than 70 scientists and support staff specializing in pests, diseases, weeds, nematodes and seed certification and is part of the Western Plant Diagnostic Network as well as the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN). The NPDN was established in 2002 to provide greater support for and integration of plant diagnostic laboratories in the United States and help thwart the establishment and dispersal of introduced insect and weed pests and pathogens.
Flood Prevention and Response  
Submitted by Matt Maiten

Santa Barbara County has suffered impacts from several floods throughout the years. These flood events can cause serious damage to public property, infrastructure, and private property. Residents and business owners should take some time while the sun is still out to evaluate the need for flood insurance, permanent drainage improvements on their property, and last-minute emergency actions such as sand bags and timber deflectors.

Fires in our watersheds increase the need to prepare early. A burned watershed creates a new dynamic that should heighten everyone’s awareness. Even if you never experienced a major flood, you must know what to do if flood waters threaten your community. With increasing El Nino predictions, any given year can produce flooding that can impact you and your family. Like the County Flood Control District, you should prepare every year for the potential of flooding. For more information on flood preparation, see the County of Santa Barbara’s website at  http://cosb.countyofsb.org/pwd.

Large Animal Emergency Response Plan  
Submitted by Matt Maiten

Santa Barbara County Animal Services has a large animal emergency response plan. Animal Service’s plan includes coordinating with other government agencies and various entities, such as American Red Cross, SB County Humane Society, Santa Maria Fair Park and Earl Warren Showgrounds, to house large animals in the event of a disaster. They have a hotline for people to call and get their contact information out to all media outlets and Facebook during an emergency. SB Animal Services and Red Cross both stress that individual owners need to plan and prepare how to respond in an emergency. For more information visit  http://sbhumanesociety.org/ and  www.facebook.com/santabarbaracountyanimalservices.
**ACP Update**  
Submitted by Debbie Trupe

Under the California Department of Food and Agriculture Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Program, a single Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) was detected in Goleta that triggered a residential treatment. A public meeting was held on September 9th, at the Goleta Public Library. CDFA personnel, the Department of Pesticide Regulation, OEHHA and the SBC Agricultural Commissioner’s Office staff were available to answer questions from the public regarding the treatment. A second ACP detection in Goleta did not trigger a residential treatment and has been treated with two biocontrol agents. As of September 24th, CDFA have completed the residential treatments. 82 properties out of 86 with hosts were treated with Tempo and Merit. There were only 4 refusals.

CDFA personnel also detected two ACP at two different locations outside of the Carpinteria city limits. Both finds meet the requirements for residential treatments; however, there will not be a public meeting, instead, CDFA personnel will provide the necessary information to residents that qualify for treatment. Treatments began Monday September 28th.

On September 11th, CDFA confirmed two ACP detections in Summerland. Both will require residential treatments and a public meeting was held on October 14th. Most of the growers have completed treating their groves in all three areas affected by the finds.

**Weed Management- Rincon Creek Project**  
*Submitted by Stephanie Stark*

The Weed Management Area program removed Arundo donax from a half mile stretch of Rincon Creek, a 34 mile long riparian area that borders Ventura County and Santa Barbara County. Arundo is an invasive, non-native noxious weed. It is also widely recognized for its detrimental impact on biodiversity, water quality, and quantity, as well as its ability to increase risk of flood and fire. This is a multi-year project funded by two grants and requires the coordination of multiple agencies and property owners who live adjacent to the creek. The Agricultural Commissioner’s Office is utilizing a contractor and the California Conservation Corps to cut the arundo stalks with chainsaws and treat the stumps with an herbicide. We are in our third field season and are hoping to remove all the arundo in the creek next year. Follow up maintenance will be required for a few years following initial removal. The project sites will be maintained for five years following the initial removal or until the declaration of successful eradication, whichever comes first.
College Student Internship Program  
Submitted by Cathy Fisher

During the 2015 summer, the department hired several college students from UCSB and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo as temporary part-time extra help. The students assisted with a variety of programs and gained valuable work experience that enabled some to become employed in other county agriculture departments and to be accepted into graduate school. Recently, the department met with Professor Alfredo Koch with Allan Hancock Community College’s Agricultural Sciences program to share information about the department’s college student paid internship program. The success of the program has led to several new students contacting the department for part-time temporary employment which has been approved by Hancock College to qualify for college credits.

Where are they Now?  
Submitted by Matt Maiten

Raven Lukehart, Master’s student from Cal Poly SLO, is now managing her family apple farm business with her husband.

Kyle Blauer, graduate of Cal Poly, continuing his agricultural education in an international foreign studies program in South America.

Joseph Lundeen, graduate of Cal Poly SLO, recently accepted a position as Agricultural Biologist with Lake County Department of Agriculture.

Julia Kosowitz, graduate of UC Santa Cruz, hired as Extra Help in summer 2014, promoted on permanently as Agricultural Biologist I for Santa Barbara County in Spring 2015. Working in Santa Barbara office.

Claudia Sancho, recent graduate of Cal Poly SLO, hired as Extra Help in summer 2014, promoted on permanently as Agricultural Biologist I for Santa Barbara County in Spring 2015. Working in Santa Maria office.
News & Announcements

Office Closures:
Veteran’s Day - Wednesday November 11th
Thanksgiving and Day After Thanksgiving - Thursday and Friday November 26th & 27th
Christmas Day – Friday December 25th
New Year’s Day - Friday January 1st

Permits, OINs and PAC Exams:
Please call and make an appointment with your local office for Permits and Operator ID numbers. Group private applicator exams are scheduled regularly in Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and Solvang. Individual exam times are available in Lompoc and Carpinteria.

All our events will be posted in our Calendar

www.agcommissioner.com
http://www.facebook.com/agcommissioner

AG/WM Staff Highlights

Daniel Delfin is a new Agricultural Biologist in the Santa Barbara office. He was born and raised on the Central Coast, growing up in Nipomo. Daniel graduated from University of California Santa Barbara with a Bachelor’s degree in Biological Sciences. Prior to starting his job with us, Daniel worked for Santa Barbara County’s Department of Social Service/Child Welfare Services for 4 years. There, he worked as an Eligibility Worker III/Lead Worker for Foster Care/Adoptions Assistance Program.

Adriana M Rosales is a new Agricultural Biologist in the Santa Maria office. She is a University of California Santa Barbara graduate. She has resided in Santa Barbara county since 1997. Adriana is excited to start her career as a biologist and to help protect human and environmental health in Santa Barbara County.