

Agriculture, Weights and Measures FY 2009-10 Performance Plan

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Agriculture, Weights and Measures Department is to serve the public's interest by ensuring equity in the market place, promoting and protecting agriculture, protecting environmental quality and the health and welfare of Marin County's residents.

II. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Department of Agricultural, Weights and Measures protects environmental quality and the health and welfare of residents by ensuring that pest control is performed safely and appropriately. The department also guards natural, agricultural, and urban community resources from destructive and invasive pests, and serves the public's interest by implementing weights and measures programs that protect consumers and ensure equity in the marketplace.

These functions are accomplished through education, commodity inspection and certification, promotion of sustainable food systems, and enforcement of County, State, and federal regulations. The department works cooperatively with the public, agricultural industry, and various County, State and Federal agencies with similar mandates to facilitate program goals.

The department also provides sustainable agriculture programs and pest identification and pest control guidance for residents and is an informational resource for the agricultural industry, pest control operators, and other government agencies.

The Agriculture, Weights and Measures Department includes the following programs:

- Agriculture
- Weights and Measures

The staff of the Agriculture Commission is responsible for the following services:

- Pesticide Use Enforcement ensures pesticides are used safely, appropriately and in compliance with State and Federal laws and regulations
- Pest Exclusion, Pest Detection, and Pest Eradication programs prevent the introduction, spread and establishment of injurious and destructive pests such as Light Brown Apple Moth
- Sustainable Agriculture programs include Organic Certification, Grass-fed Livestock Certification to promote Marin's agricultural industry and encourage sustainable agricultural practices; Livestock Protection assists ranchers with non-lethal methods of livestock protection
- Fruit, Vegetable and Egg Quality Control protect consumers and industry from substandard quality, insufficiently labeled, deceptively packed, and illegally marketed fruits, vegetables and eggs
- Nursery and Seed Inspection ensures agricultural commodities meet State standards and are free of pests
- Livestock and Crop Statistics gather statistics for annual livestock and agricultural crop report, crop loss due to environmental disaster
- Farmers Market/Direct Marketing program provides certification of local growers so they may sell directly to consumers at Farmers Markets, and provides regulation of Farmers Market and other direct market outlets

The Weights and Measures staff is responsible for the following services:

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- Weighing and Measuring Device Regulation program provides for inspection and testing of all commercial weighing and measuring devices within the county to ensure accuracy and fair transactions
- Quantity Control program assures that the sale of commodities, over a scale or prepackaged, accurately represent quantity and price extension
- Scanner Inspection program checks the accuracy of retail scanner-pricing and investigates consumer complaints
- Petroleum Inspection program ensures petroleum products meet minimum state standards and investigates complaints of gasoline quality and other petroleum products
- Weighmaster program assures commercial transactions by individuals or firms, in the absence of a third party, issue accurate certificates when weighing or measuring bulk commodities

III. FY 2008-09 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Worked with State and community to identify alternatives to aerial Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) treatment
- Redrafted of County Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Ordinance and associated IPM Policy
- Initiated and developed an in-house electric meter testing program

IV. GOALS AND KEY INITIATIVES FOR FY 2009-10

Goal 1: Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

State law mandates the control and eradication of invasive species, however there are many in the community who are opposed to any pest eradication activity on the basis of health concerns. Preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species eliminates the high costs associated with eradication programs, as well as the community concerns that often accompany eradication projects. This is consistent with the countywide goals of Sustainable Communities, and Environmental Stewardship and Preservation.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives
1. Identify high risk weed sites for CalTrans to insure inclusion in CalTrans Roadside Treatment Environmental Impact Report
2. Attend training to obtain encroachment allowing surveying, stopping and treating weeds along Marin's state highways
3. Work with Volunteer Coordinator to recruit an intern to assist with non-regulatory departmental functions, allowing more time by staff on pest exclusion activities
4. Increase Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM) outreach and inspection of nurseries to increase LBAM awareness and ensure all nurseries are free of all LBAM

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Goal 2: Ensure pesticides are used safely and appropriately

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

State mandates direct County Agriculture departments to regulate pesticides to ensure safe and appropriate use. Department pesticide use enforcement programs are critical in providing oversight to ensure pesticides are used lawfully thereby minimizing the potential for impacts on health or the environment. This aligns with the Countywide goal of Sustainable Communities, Environmental Stewardship and Preservation.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Identify and work with Marin wineries using sulfites for disinfection and bring them into compliance with new state pesticide regulations regarding sulfite use
2. Initiate system of tracking pesticide related complaints and non-compliances to ensure and timely response and if necessary appropriate enforcement action

Goal 3: Encourage sustainable agricultural practices

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

The Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program through the Agricultural Commissioner's Office offers affordable organic certification services to local agricultural producers. Organic certification and the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices, encourages resource preservation, ensures continued productivity of agricultural lands, while providing added value to local agricultural products. This is consistent with the countywide goal of Sustainable Communities, Environmental Stewardship and Preservation.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Meet with Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) pasture producers to review the new National Organic Program (NOP) pasture requirements
2. Review and develop a new policy for NOP document inventory to improve tracking efficiency and accuracy
3. Conduct Weed Management Area Group meeting and thistle control workshop in West Marin to increase agricultural producer participation and outreach

Goal 4: Maintain a fair and equitable marketplace

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

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Fair and equitable trade is the basis of commerce as it promotes stability within industry. Local enforcement of weights and measures regulations is important to ensure industry stability and consumer protection. Last year, Weights and Measures implemented a POS/Scanner inspection program. For consumers, transparent and confident purchase transactions promotes consumer confidence and allows consumers the ability to protect themselves from deception in the marketplace. This aligns with the Countywide Goal of Safe Communities and Sustainable Communities.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Train all staff to assist in scanner inspections to maintain two year inspection cycle
2. Set up tracking system for Weights and Measures serial numbers to ensure devices (scales, meters etc.) taken out of service by staff are not placed back in service by owners
3. Increase number of undercover test purchases, especially during the holidays to insure accurate price advertising by retail and grocery stores

Goal 5: Provide increased efficiencies through office automation

Please indicate how goal reflects one of the department's highest priorities and aligns with Countywide Goals and Priorities

As a regulatory agency, the department maintains records, performs and records inspections, and maintains up-to-date regulations of all applicable State laws, regulations and policies. A tremendous amount of time to print and distribute emailed regulations, and significant expense is incurred in the cost of printer toner. Investigating and implementing paperless technology in the department will save time and expenditures over the long run. This aligns with Countywide Goals of Effective Communication, Managing for Results and Financial Responsibility.

FY 2009-10 Key Initiatives

1. Conduct paperless field inspection through use of software and hardware
2. Reduce expenditures on toner and paper through electronic routing of information
3. Investigate funding to purchase electronic notebooks, software and associated hardware

V. KEY CHALLENGES AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- Finding staff time and resources to implement County's new Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy
- Clerical support staff challenged with the multiple program functions and complexities of the office
- Identifying resources for furnishings to accommodate changed office layout
- Reduction of an extra hire Glassy-Winged sharp Shorter Inspector to budget cuts will result in refocusing of services

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- Initiating National Organic Program (NOP) “two times every five years” onsite inspection, which will significantly increase Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program costs

VI. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AGRICULTURE

Objective: Reduce number of acres of distaff and purple star thistle on agricultural properties to restore the land to productivity

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of acres of distaff and purple star thistle	7,125	5,750	6,839	6,500
Efficiency Measures				
Cost per acre cleared	\$175	\$150	\$150	\$125
Effectiveness Measures				
Percent change in acres of distaff and purple star thistle	0%	-2%	2%	-0.5%

Department Comments: These measures provide valuable indicators that determine whether activities are cost effective and achieving goals.

Objective: Reduce the number of hours spent on organic renewals to maintain certifications

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of organic agricultural operations	38	49	50	50
Efficiency Measures				
Number of hours spent per certification renewal	6	6	5	5
Effectiveness Measures				

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Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Percentage of prior-year's certified organic agricultural operations recertified in the current year	50%	100%	100%	100%

Department Comments: Organic certification provides added value to local agriculture products and helps local producers remain financially viable. Program efficiency is key to continue local affordable certification services.

Objective: Improve industry compliance and ensure transaction clarity between consumer and industry

Measures	FY 06-07 Actual	FY 07-08 Actual	FY 08-09 Estimate	FY 09-10 Estimate
Workload Measures				
Number of inspections conducted	45	158	125	125
Efficiency Measures				
Number of hours spent to verify location compliance	3.75	2.0	3.5	3.5
Effectiveness Measures				
Percent of businesses complying with scanner regulations	50%	68%	70%	70%

Department Comments: These measures evaluate departmental field activity toward completion of program inspection responsibilities, as well as indicate the level of compliance by point-of-sale and scanner users.