

Agriculture, Weights and Measures FY 2011-12 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 mandated laws and 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

III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 2010-11

- Expanded the weights and measures scanner program to ensure greater consumer protection
- Expanded the Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program allowing more Marin producers to be certified organic
- Collaborated with the State Coastal Conservancy and the Friends of Corte Madera Creek on the Spartina (cordgrass) eradication project
- Worked with the west county ranchers, Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), Resource Conservation District (RCD), Parks and Open Space and other partners on weed issues, including distaff, purple star thistle, and goat grass
- Held workshops for Marin County agricultural producers to help them comply with new National Organic Program (NOP) pasture requirements that became effective June 2011
- Streamlined weights and measures scanner billing database and developed standardized billing procedures
- Held a Landscape Professionals and Other Pesticide Applicators workshop that included outreach and education on integrated pest management strategies, the threat that exotic and invasive species pose to our communities, and common pesticide noncompliances

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IV. GOALS AND KEY INITIATIVES FOR FY 2011-12

Countywide Goals				
I. Healthy Communities	II. Safe Communities	III. Sustainable Communities	IV. Environmental Preservation	V. Community Participation
VI. Excellent Customer Service	VII. Employer of Choice	VIII. Effective Communication	IX. Managing for Results	X. Financial Responsibility

GOAL I

Prevent the introduction and spread of exotic and invasive species

FY 2011-12 Key Initiatives

Initiatives	Countywide Goals
1. Continue to work with Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), Resource Conservation District (RCD) to pursue grant funding to manage distaff thistle in Cheleno Valley	IV. Environmental Preservation
2. Recruit interns to assist with non-regulatory department functions, allowing licensed staff to focus on department programs and critical activities	IX. Managing for Results
3. Provide outreach and education to industry and the community on exotic and invasive species	VIII. Effective Communication

GOAL II

Ensure pesticides are used safely and appropriately

FY 2011-12 Key Initiatives

Initiatives	Countywide Goals
1. Work with state and County partners to develop and install uniform software standard for pesticide use reporting and permit issuance	IX. Managing for Results
2. Provide education and outreach to industry and the community on how to safely and effectively use	VIII. Effective Communication

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FY 2011-12 Key Initiatives	
pesticides	
3. Provide pest identification and integrated pest management assistance for the public and licensed pest control businesses	VI. Excellent Customer Service

GOAL III
Encourage sustainable agricultural practices

FY 2011-12 Key Initiatives	
Initiatives	Countywide Goals
1. Ensure Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) growers are complying with new National Organic Program (NOP) pasture regulations	III. Sustainable Communities
2. Provide education and outreach to industry and the community on the Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program and the proposed Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance (VESCO)	VIII. Effective Communication
3. Implement proposed Single-Use Carry-Out Bags and Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinances	IV. Environmental Preservation

GOAL IV
Maintain a fair and equitable marketplace

FY 2011-12 Key Initiatives	
Initiatives	Countywide Goals
1. Finalize billing procedures for scanner and device programs to ensure uniformity, accountability, and clarity with the billing process	X. Financial Responsibility
2. Provide education and outreach to the community about weights and measures programs, especially	VIII. Effective Communication

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FY 2011-12 Key Initiatives	
how the department protects consumers every day	
3. Collaborate with city mayors and city managers to identify and educate new businesses that may fall under one or more weights and measures programs	VIII. Effective Communication

GOAL V
Provide increased efficiencies through office automation

FY 2011-12 Key Initiatives	
Initiatives	Countywide Goals
1. Work with Information Services and Technology (IST) Department and the County Administrator's Office to obtain a daily time program which would drastically reduce staff time needed to keep records	IX. Managing for Results
2. Work with Information Services and Technology (IST) Department and the County Administrator's Office to implement web-based billing, acceptance of credit cards, on-line registration of weights and measures devices, and website development	IX. Managing for Results
3. Identify funding sources to purchase electronic notebooks, software, and associated hardware	IX. Managing for Results

V. KEY CHALLENGES AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES

- Working efficiently and effectively to ensure the department meets state and federal mandates, while maximizing these limited revenue sources
- Providing adequate professional development and succession planning while accomplishing department goals and objectives to maintain quality public service with reduced resources
- Providing outstanding environmental and consumer protection through fair and professional enforcement of laws and regulations

VI. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

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1. AGRICULTURE

Pest Management activities of the Agriculture department programs include Pest Exclusion, Pest Detection, Pest Eradication and Quarantine. These programs protect agricultural and environmental resources from the introduction and establishment of invasive and destructive weeds, insects, pests and disease. Recent examples of exclusion, detection, and quarantine programs include regulation of Sudden Oak Death, Light Brown Apple Moth (LBAM), and Glassy Winged Sharpshooter. Agriculture department programs also include Pesticide Use Enforcement which involves the permitting and registration of pest control businesses and ranchers, pesticide-application inspection by county agriculture staff, investigation of pesticide-related complaints and illness reports, as well as 100 percent pesticide-use reporting to the state.

The standardization programs of the Agriculture department include regulation of Direct Marketing / Farmers Markets, regulation of nurseries and seed producers; enforcement of fruit, nut, vegetable, honey and egg quality standards; and gathering statistics for and the production of the County's Annual Livestock and Crop Report.

Sustainable agriculture programs include: Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) which provides organic certification services; the Livestock Protection Program which assists Marin livestock producers with the implementation of non-lethal livestock-protection methods; and the Marin/Sonoma Weed Management Area Group which assists with the coordination of local noxious weed control activities.

The Agriculture staff is responsible for the following mandates and 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 (LBAM) and the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS)
- Sustainable Agriculture programs, such as Organic Certification and Grass-fed Livestock Certification, 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 programs gather statistics for annual livestock and agricultural crop report, which includes crop loss due to environmental disasters
- Direct Marketing program (farmers' markets and certified producers) regulates and certifies local growers so they may sell directly to consumers at farmers' markets and other direct market outlets

2. WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

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Weights and Measures ensures that all local weights and measures transactions are fair and equitable. The program provides both consumer protection and a transparent marketplace for local industry. Program responsibilities include inspection and testing of all commercial weighing and measuring devices to ensure device accuracy and fairness of transactions; inspection and complaint investigation of weighing and measuring devices, testing gasoline and petroleum product quality; verification of accuracy of commercial transactions when weighing or measuring bulk commodities; verification that the direct sale of commodities made over a scale and the sale of prepackaged commodities accurately reflect the quantity and price extension; and the inspection of point-of-sale systems to ensure consumers are charged the lowest advertised price.

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

- Weighing and Measuring Device Regulations program provides for inspection and testing of all commercial weighing and measuring devices within the county to ensure accuracy and fair transactions
- Quantity Control assures that the sale of commodities, over a scale or prepackaged, accurately represent quantity and price
- Scanner Inspection 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 assures commercial transactions by individuals or firms, in the absence of a third party and issues certificates when weighing or measuring bulk
- commodities

VII. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

AGRICULTURE

Objective: Increase the number of agricultural growers participating in Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program

MEASURES	FY 2007-08 Actual	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Target	FY 2011-12 Target
Workload Measures					
→ Number of growers in the Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program	49	58	62	66	70
→ Number of organically farmed acres	17,675	17,683	19,706	23,570	28,500

→ Indicates Key Measure

Story Behind Performance:

Organic certification and the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices encourage resource preservation, ensure continued productivity of agricultural lands, provide added value to local agricultural products, and help local producers remain financially viable.

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Sustainable agricultural practices in Marin County are strongly supported and encouraged. In 2002, the Marin County Agricultural Commissioner's office was one of the first counties in California to offer an organic certification program to qualified agricultural producers and handlers at an affordable cost. This is consistent with the countywide goal of Sustainable Communities, Environmental Stewardship and Preservation. Since 2006 Marin County has seen a 51 percent increase in the number of operations certified, a 44 percent increase in certified organic livestock production, a 32 percent increase in certified pasture acreage, and a 41 percent increase certified fruits and vegetables. Additionally, the value of organic production in Marin has more than doubled since 2006.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Objective: Improve industry compliance with the scanner program (point of sale systems) to ensure the public is properly protected and are paying the lowest displayed price for items

MEASURES	FY 2007-08 Actual	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Target	FY 2011-12 Target
Effectiveness Measures					
➔ Percent of businesses complying with scanner regulations	68%	70%	63%	65%	68%

➔ Indicates Key Measure

Story Behind Performance:

Weights and Measures is committed to protecting the economic health of the community by preserving and maintaining confidence in the accuracy of weighing and measuring instruments, product standards, and business practices used in commerce. Through this balanced commitment and timely response to citizen requests, consumers and businesses are assured the means of accurate value comparison and fair competition.

For well over a century, weights and measures departments throughout the United States have been responsible and committed to consumer protection. "Trust, but verify" is a worthy motto that every consumer should follow. Most businesses are honest with good intentions, but even honest people make mistakes. Alert consumers are the best defense against inaccurate transactions. The department recommends consumers bring sale advertisements with them when shopping. When selecting items from store displays, make a note of the price and verify that it is the same when the item is scanned during check out. The correct price is the lowest price advertised or posted price. If stores have scanners for customer price verification located on the salesfloor, use them. Department stores often give additional markdowns at the register, so be sure to point out sale items to the clerk. Be aware of the expiration dates for sales. When purchasing items where a checkstand scale is used, verify it is set to zero. The readout must be visible to the customer, and if it isn't, point it out to the checker. A scale set ahead of zero shortchanges every customer.

Having a strong presence in the business community is especially critical during this economic downturn to help ensure equity in the market place and ensure the public is protected. As the scanner (point of sale) program is expanded to include more businesses, the department expects the compliance rate to remain fairly stable. Over time, as the department do more scanner inspections and businesses correct any system deficiencies, the compliance rate will begin to climb.

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Objective: Inform the community about the valuable services the department provides through public communication, education, and outreach

MEASURES	FY 2007-08 Actual	FY 2008-09 Actual	FY 2009-10 Actual	FY 2010-11 Target	FY 2011-12 Target
Workload Measures					
➔ Number of community outreach, education events, and meetings with local agencies	n/a	n/a	3	8	15

➔ Indicates Key Measure

Story Behind Performance:

The public should be aware of what services their tax dollars support in the community. It is the responsibility of public officials to ensure the community understands and appreciates the critical work the government performs. The department protects consumers every day through weights and measures programs, ensures pesticides are safely used, detects and prevents exotic and invasive pests from becoming established in the county, ensures organic growers are truly organic, and much more.

The department believes a strong community education and outreach program will help the public better understand where and how their tax dollars are spent. A proactive approach will help garner public support for our programs. Without public awareness, these vital services cannot be fully appreciated and supported. By educating the community about our programs through multiple channels, a greater understanding of the departments responsibilities will result. The department intends to work collaboratively with a variety of organizations and agencies to tell our "story", including each city mayor/manager and Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, Downtown Novato Business Association, Golden Gate Better Business Bureau, and the Marin Professional Women's Network. Additionally, the department plans to upgrade its website to clearly showcase its programs and services, and provide easy access to information and events that may be of interest to the community.