

Agriculture, Weights and Measures FY 2014-16 Performance Plan

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I. Mission Statement

The mission of the Agriculture, Weights and Measures Department is to serve the public's interest by ensuring equity in the marketplace, 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 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; 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 program areas:

- Agriculture
- Weights and Measures

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III. Program Description and Responsibilities

Agriculture

Pest management programs of the Agriculture department 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, diseases, and other pests. Examples of exclusion, detection, and quarantine programs include regulation of Sudden Oak Death, the European Grapevine Moth, and the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter. Agriculture department programs also include Pesticide Use Enforcement which involves providing education to industry and residents regarding pesticides, the permitting and registration of pest control businesses and ranchers, pesticide-application inspections by County agriculture staff, investigation of pesticide-related complaints and illness reports, and 100-percent pesticide use reporting to the state.

The standardization programs of the Agriculture department include regulation of direct marketing (farmers markets and certified producers); regulation of nurseries and seed producers; enforcement of fruit, nut, vegetable, honey, and egg quality standards; and statistics gathering and production of the County's Annual Livestock and Agricultural Crop Report.

Sustainable agriculture programs include: Marin Organic Certified Agriculture 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 county, 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 the Asian Citrus Psyllid, Mediterranean Fruit Fly, Gypsy Moth, Japanese Beetle, and the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter
- 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; Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control helps protect the lands, streams, and riparian habitat of Marin County; Safe Harbor agreements with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service protect endangered species such as the Red-legged Frog; and the Marin Carbon project is using innovative methods to build up carbon levels in our local soils which provides ecological and agricultural benefits to our community and beyond
- Fruit, Vegetable, and Egg Quality Control protects 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

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- Livestock and Crop Statistics programs gather statistics for the department's annual Livestock and Agricultural Crop Report, which provides valuable agricultural data to the community and industry
- 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, and helps to ensure consumers are protected from agricultural product misrepresentation

Weights and Measures

Weights and Measures protects consumers by ensuring 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 of prepackaged commodities accurately reflects the quantity and price extension; and the inspection of point-of-sale systems to ensure consumers are charged the lowest advertised or displayed price.

- The Weights and Measures staff is responsible for the following mandates and services:
- Inspection and testing of all commercial weighing and measuring devices within the county to ensure accurate and fair transactions. Devices include scales; taxi meters; cordage, wire and fabric meters; retail water meters; gas pumps; propane meters; vehicle tank meters; and water, gas, and electric sub-meters. Electric meters are inspected and tested at the department
- Quantity Control assures that the sale of commodities, over a scale or prepackaged, accurately represents quantity and price
- Scanner Inspection checks the accuracy of retail scanner-pricing and investigates consumer complaints
- Petroleum Inspection ensures petroleum products meet minimum state standards and investigates complaints of gasoline quality and other petroleum products
- Weighmasters assures commercial transactions by individuals or firms are accurate, in the absence of a third party, and issues certificates when weighing or measuring bulk commodities
- Enforcement of the Single-Use Carry-Out Bag ordinance seeks to encourage the use of reusable bags, protect the environment, and lead to a cleaner community
- Weights and Measures Joint Powers Authority develops efficient methods of sharing equipment between Napa and Sonoma Counties

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IV. Accomplishments for FY 2013-14

- Developed a draft Countywide Ten-Year Invasive Weed Management Plan collaboratively with the University of California Cooperative Extension Marin County Farm Advisor, which has included extensive community input and support, and would address invasive weeds such as distaff, purple starthistle, barb goat grass, and many others (primarily in agricultural areas)
- Held the County's first ever Livestock Protection Guard Dog Workshop in Tomales, which was a huge success
- Provided outreach and education about the department's agriculture and weights and measures programs to over 40 organizations, institutions, industry groups, and individuals
- Began updating nearly 40 multiple-page organic crop and livestock inspection forms for the Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program to fillable PDFs, in preparation for Phase II of MOCA, with support from Information Services and Technology (IST)
- Began working with IST on Phase II of the MOCA program to develop online website services, which will allow industry to complete forms online, make changes, save documents, download and upload completed forms, include comments or ask questions, and make online payments; these upgrades will also allow the department to provide higher quality services and increase program efficiency
- Held a MOCA workshop with certified operations to review new forms and expected online services, and to ensure compliance with the National Organic Program (NOP) requirements
- Worked closely with the Department of Finance Central Collections Division to resolve all past payment issues and ensure the County receives required payments
- Held the department's annual Farm Market Managers meeting to update market managers on current laws and regulations, including any upcoming changes
- Provided support to the Marin County Carbon Sequestration Project, which is using innovative methods to build up carbon levels in local soils while providing ecological and agricultural benefits to the community and beyond
- Worked with the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office on a Memorandum of Understanding to provide help with the implementation of the Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance (VESCO), which will help safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare of County residents by minimizing erosion and sedimentation in connection with vineyard planting and replanting, and assist in the protection of the lands, streams, and riparian habitat of the County
- Worked collaboratively with the State Coastal Conservancy and Friends of the Corte Madera Creek on the spartina (cordgrass) eradication project
- Worked with the community on the Dutch Elm Disease (DED) program, which is a cost-share program whereby the County covers the cost of removing diseased and hazardous elm trees afflicted with DED on County-owned right-of-ways and provides the opportunity for residents to cost-share appropriate replacement trees
- Worked with the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner's Office on a Memorandum of Understanding to allow Sonoma County to perform state-mandated organic spot inspections in the County (since the department administers the MOCA program, which is an Accredited Certified Agency with the NOP, the department is not permitted to conduct this type of inspection).

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V. Key Challenges and Outstanding Issues

- Achieving objective of implementing online and in-person credit card payments to reduce department processing requirements
- Continuing to keep unwanted exotic and damaging pests out of the County through our pest prevention program activities, including invasive plants and injurious insects and diseases
- Working productively to ensure the department continues to meet state and federal mandates, while maximizing limited revenue resources
- Succession planning and ensuring an effective transfer of knowledge to department staff while achieving department goals and objectives
- Providing outstanding environmental and consumer protection through fair and professional enforcement of laws and regulations

VI. Performance Plan

Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal I: Prevent the introduction and spread of exotic and invasive species	IV. Environmental Preservation

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Work closely with the Marin County Farm Advisor, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, Resource Conservation District, Marin/Sonoma Weed Management Area, the agricultural industry, and other organizations to address invasive weed issues in Marin County, particularly woolly distaff thistle and purple starthistle	Agriculture - Pest Management, Pest Detection, Pest Exclusion, Marin Organic Certified Agriculture
Provide outreach and education to the industry and community on exotic and invasive species	Agriculture - Pest Detection, Pest Exclusion, and Pest Eradication
Identify plant pests and recommend Integrated Pest Management approaches for long-term control such as the use of biological and mechanical control methods	Agriculture - Pesticide Use Enforcement
Enforce pesticide laws and regulations and issue permits and Operator ID Numbers as needed for appropriate weed control materials	Agriculture – Pesticide Use Enforcement

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Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal II: Ensure pesticides are used safely and appropriately	II. Safe Communities

Initiative Description	Program(s)
In FY 2015-16, work closely with industry on submitting pesticide use reports online through the statewide software system CalAgPermits; pesticide use reporting will likely become mandatory within a few years	Agriculture - Pesticide Use Enforcement
Provide education and outreach to industry (e.g., agriculture, structural, etc.) and the community on how to safely and effectively use pesticides when they must be used	Agriculture - Pesticide Use Enforcement
Provide pest identification and integrated pest management assistance for the public and licensed pest control businesses (only for unusual pests)	Agriculture - Pesticide Use Enforcement, Integrated Pest Management
Implement Enforcement Response Regulations when pesticide non-compliances are found	Agriculture - Pesticide Use Enforcement



Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal III: Encourage sustainable agricultural practices	III. Sustainable Communities

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Verify Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) operations are complying with new Organic System Plans to be compliant with the National Organic Program requirements	Agriculture - Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA)
Provide education and outreach to industry and the community on the MOCA, Direct Marketing, Pest Detection, Pest Exclusion, and Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control programs through presentations, meetings, and public service announcements, etc.	Agriculture - MOCA, Direct Marketing, Pest Detection, Pest Exclusion, and Vineyard Erosion and Sediment Control
Support Integrated Pest Management and biological control methods for invasive pest control	Agriculture - Pest Management
Collaborate on strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Agriculture - Pest Management
Work closely with the sustainable agriculture coordinator with the Marin Farm Advisor's office to help advise on new and existing certified organic operations	Agriculture - MOCA

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Program: Department - Wide

Objective: Increase the number of certified organic acres in Marin County through the department's Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program

	Workload Measures	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
	Number of operations in the Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA) program	66	65	56	55	56	57
	Number of acres organically farmed	24,027	33,427	36,628	36,600	37,000	37,500


Story Behind Performance:

MOCA has seen an increase of approximately 155 percent in the number of operations it has certified from 2004 to 2012. The “Actual” and “Target” number of operations noted above between FY 2010-11 and FY 2013-14 decreased due to several small fruit and vegetable operations opting out of the program, including some livestock operations. Operations primarily left MOCA due to their relatively small size and lack of substantial economic incentive to being certified organic. Also, for varied reasons, a couple of operations switched to other organic certifiers for certification services. These adjustments were not a result of the existing drought conditions, though if the drought persists, there could be a contraction in the number of operations MOCA certifies.

During this same time period the number of certified organic livestock and crop acres certified by MOCA has increased by about 286 percent. MOCA currently certifies a total of 36,628 acres (approximately 23,400 acres in Marin County, 13,128 acres in Sonoma County, and 100 acres in Riverside County). The vast majority of acreage certified in Sonoma County lies along the Marin/Sonoma county line. The 100 acres MOCA certifies in Riverside County (warmer region) is for local crop producers that farm year-round and must have a steady supply of fresh organic products in the off season.

Program: Department - Wide

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

	Workload Measures	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
	Number of community outreach, education events, and meetings with local agencies	3	65	23	40	18	18

Story Behind Performance:

The department intends to continue to work collaboratively with a variety of organizations

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and agencies to tell its "story", including city mayors/managers, chambers of commerce, and Rotary clubs, as well as the Downtown Novato Business Association, Golden Gate Better Business Bureau, and Marin Professional Women's Network. The number of "community outreach" contacts in FY 2013-14 was higher than expected because of the outreach to numerous local, state, and federal organizations regarding the proposed Ten-Year Invasive Weed Management Plan. The FY 2014-16 target of 18 outreach and education events reflects an estimate of the presentations to be given to various organizations, businesses, and individuals regarding department programs. Routine questions from industry or residents are not included in this target.

Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal IV: Maintain a fair and equitable marketplace	VI. Excellent Customer Service

Initiative Description	Program(s)
Provide education and outreach to the community about the department's consumer protection programs, and how the department protects consumers every day (e.g., ensuring businesses are charging the lowest advertised or posted prices for items, gasoline meters are pumping the correct amount of fuel, and scales have been tested for accuracy and sealed for use)	Weights and Measures

Program: 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 or advertised price for purchased items

	Effectiveness Measures	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
	Percent of businesses complying with scanner regulations	65%	63%	80%	71%	72%	72%

Story Behind Performance:

The department believes having a strong and supportive presence in the business community is especially critical as the economy is still recovering to ensure the public is protected and to provide equity in the marketplace. In FY 2011-12, the Board of Supervisors approved new reinspection fees to cover the department's expense of having to reinspect businesses that failed initial inspections. The reinspection fees were put in place to help provide an incentive for businesses to implement a robust in-house pricing program to ensure customers were being charged correct prices. As shown in the table above, the compliance rate jumped from 63 percent to 80 percent from FY 2011-12 to FY 2012-13. The department credits this jump to both the reinspection fees and to a heavy emphasis on education and outreach, ensuring businesses have the information necessary to succeed. The estimated compliance rates for FY 2013-14, FY 2014-15 and FY 2015-16

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are conservative. The department wants to be sure this trend will continue before setting a higher target that may be unrealistic.

Please visit the department's **Consumer Protection and other Public Service Announcements** for more information.

Department Goal	Countywide Goal
Goal V: Provide increased efficiencies through office automation	IX. Managing for Results

Initiative Description	Program(s)
In FY 2015-16, continue to work with Information Services and Technology (IST) and the County Administrator's Office (CAO) to implement web-based billing, acceptance of credit cards online and over the counter, online registration of weights and measures devices, and further website development	Marin Organic Certified Agriculture (MOCA), Direct Marketing, Pesticide Use Enforcement, Weights and Measures
In FY 2014-15, change to the new online federal phytosanitary certification issuance program	Pest Exclusion