



## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

April 13, 2010

STACY K. CARLSEN  
COMMISSIONER/DIRECTOR  
FRED W. CROWDER  
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER/DIRECTOR

Marin County Board of Supervisors  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, California 94903

**SUBJECT: FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE PROVIDING CHANGES TO COUNTY'S SCHEDULE OF FEES TO PROVIDE ORGANIC CERTIFICATION SERVICES BY OFFICE OF AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER AND REQUEST TO SCHEDULE HEARING FOR CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION SETTING FEES**

Dear Board of Supervisors:

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Read ordinance by title only and schedule a merit hearing on May 4, 2010 for adoption of ordinance, and schedule hearing on May 4, 2010 for consideration of a resolution approving the fee changes.

**SUMMARY:** The Marin County organic certification program and associated fee schedule, Chapter 23.20 of the Marin County Code, was established by ordinance on Oct. 3, 2000, to provide affordable organic certification services for local organic producers.

This letter is to request authorization to ultimately adjust fees for organic certification so they may more accurately reflect departmental costs. At this time, eighteen percent of program costs are offset by fees paid for services by the producers, while approximately fifty percent of the programs' net county costs are reimbursed by the State of California through Unrefunded Gas Tax (UGT).

Additionally, the department is proposing a late registration fee to encourage agricultural producers who are certified organic by the Marin County Agriculture/Weights and Measures department to submit necessary renewal documents in a timely manner.

In order to accomplish the proposed fee changes, we first request that your Board consider a change to the ordinance. That would allow the fees for organic certification to be set and amended by resolution. Therefore, attachment "A" is the proposed change to the existing ordinance. Attachment "B" is the proposed resolution to increase the fees, which would become effective as of the effective date of the ordinance change.

In FY07/08 fee revenues totaled \$26,000 with approximately \$62,000 of organic program activities being reimbursed by UGT moneys from the State. This same year the department expended approximately \$143,000 in direct and indirect costs for organic certification services, and an additional \$8,000 for reaccreditation audit services by USDA's National Organic Program (NOP).

**DISCUSSION:** Attached are the current ordinance and the fee schedule with current and proposed fees, as well as the proposed changes to the ordinance (attachment "A"), and the proposed resolution to increase the fees (attachment "B"). The proposed fee adjustments are estimated to increase annual fee revenues by \$10,000 bringing revenues generated through fees to \$36,000. This would offset the additional cost of USDA audit and reduce net county costs by approximately \$5,000 annually. Most of the proposed changes in the fees reflect increases in departmental costs; however, the fees for certification of dairy operations were increased to additionally reflect higher costs associated with certifying such complex operations.

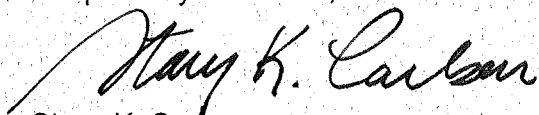
**FISCAL IMPACT:** Expenditure and revenue adjustments concerning fee increases were included in the department's FY 09/10 baseline budget. If the proposed fee adjustments are not authorized, the departments FY09/10 baseline will be adjusted to reflect the change.

**ALTERNATIVE TO RECOMMENDED ACTION:** not adopting the ordinance amendment would result in the department continuing the existing fee schedule.

**REVIEWED BY:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Auditor-Controller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County Counsel	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Respectfully submitted,



Stacy K. Carlsen  
Agricultural Commissioner  
Director of Weights and Measures