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Annual Report 1986

San Luis Obispo County
Department of Agriculture and Measurement Standards



County Department of Agriculture/Measurement Standards

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To Honorable Board of Supervisors:

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District One
William Coy
District Two
Evelyn Delany
District Three
James Johnson
District Four
Carl Hysen, Chairman
District Five

And: Clare Berryhill

Director

California Department of Food
and Agriculture

And: William Briam
Administrative Officer

Agricultural commodities produced in San Luis Obispo County were valued at an estimated \$232,593,000 during calendar year 1986. This figure represents "gross receipts" and does not intend, in any way, to reflect profit to the farmer or rancher.

The 1986 crop values set an all time record for the county. This is due to a significant jump in vegetable crop production. In fact, vegetable crops now represent nearly half the total value of all crops produced locally. A brief overview of each major commodity group follows:

Animal Industry

Generally prices remained depressed for livestock and related products. Growth in the horse industry stabilized with slight decreases in the sales of arabian horses.

Field Crops

Overall dryland crop value was very close to 1985. Production increases, due to adequate rainfall, were offset by lower prices received by producers. The federal government's conservation reserve program, implemented in the fall of 1986, will affect 1987 production and values.

Fruit and Nut Crops

Total value for the various fruit and nut crops grown in the county remained stable. Almonds continued to decline in value due to slumping production. Walnut, avocado, and strawberry producers enjoyed an improved price level in 1986 which raised the overall value for these crops.

Vegetable Crops

Vegetable crop production set an all time record for the county with an estimated value of \$114,314,000. Vegetable crops now account for 7 out of the top 20 crops grown in the county. The vegetable industry is responding to a strong demand for fresh vegetables created by an increased nutrition awareness by consumers. Increases in acreage and yields were responsible for the jump in total value.

Nursery and Seed

The reduced value in this category is due to a \$3,000,000 reduction in cut flower production countywide.

Our annual report includes a financial statement and description of program functions and activities. This year we have focused on our Pest Prevention Programs which keeps our county free from new pests. I wish to thank all the members of the agricultural community and the department's staff whose combined efforts helped complete this report.

Sincerely,

Richard Greek

Richard Greek
Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

The Cover:

Our cover depicts the many jobs of an agricultural biologist involved in pest prevention. The initial action in "stopping" pests from entering the county is accomplished by our Pest Exclusion program. As a back-up for those few pest that may manage to get by Pest Exclusion we "trap" insect pests countywide as a part of our Pest Detection program. If a pest is found, we then determine whether an infestation exists, and if so, our final action "eliminates" the pest through our Pest Eradication

program. (The last two pages of the report give a more thorough explanation of Pest Prevention.)

Recognitions:

The department wishes to thank the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner for the use of their "Don't Bug Me" orange logo. We found it very appropriate in portraying our theme.

Design and Production:

Kim Frank, Agricultural Inspector II



Vegetable Crops

Crop	Year	Harvested		PRODUCTION		VALUE		
		Acreage	Per Acre	Total	Unit	Per Unit	Total	
Beans (Green)...	1986	389	464.0	180,496	30#	\$ 7.80	\$ 1,408,000	
	1985	355	424.0	150,250	30#	8.32	1,252,000	
Broccoli.....	1986	5,510	531.0	2,925,810	23#	4.74	13,868,000	
	1985	4,176	500.0	2,088,000	23#	4.96	10,357,000	
Cabbage.....	1986	468	747.0	349,596	45#	4.47	1,563,000	
	1985	526	791.0	416,066	45#	3.53	1,469,000	
Carrots.....	1986	2,218	38.5	85,393	Ton	171.53	14,647,000	
	1985	1,422	32.0	45,504	Ton	205.44	9,348,000	
Cauliflower.....	1986	2,643	570.0	1,506,510	25#	5.28	7,954,000	
	1985	1,690	542.0	915,980	25#	6.09	5,578,000	
Celery.....	1986	767	1,140.0	874,380	60#	6.65	5,815,000	
	1985	890	1,089.0	969,210	60#	5.29	5,127,000	
Chinese..... Vegetables	1986	724	792.0	573,408	80#	6.92	3,968,000	
	1985	735	611.0	449,085	80#	6.68	3,000,000	
Lettuce..... Iceburg	1986	7,992	730.0	5,834,160	50#	5.20	30,338,000	
	1985	8,956	620.0	5,552,720	50#	5.08	28,208,000	
Lettuce..... Leaf	1986	1,105	646.0	713,830	50#	4.07	2,905,000	
	1985	751	824.0	618,824	50#	4.44	2,748,000	
Peas..... Edible Pod	1986	4,500	570.0	2,565,000	10#	8.93	22,905,000	
	1985	3,344	100.0**	334,400**	45#	42.75	14,296,000**	
Peppers..... Bell	1986	585	575.0	336,375	30#	6.61	2,223,000	
	1985	499	616.0	307,384	30#	7.93	2,438,000	
Romaine.....	1986	INCLUDED IN LEAF LETTUCE						
	1985	310	869.0	269,390	60#	4.18	1,126,000	
*Miscellaneous...	1986	1,920					6,720,000	
	1985	1,605					5,321,000	
TOTAL VEGETABLE CROPS		1986	28,821				\$114,314,000	
		1985	25,259				\$ 90,268,000**	

*Anise, Artichokes, Brussel Sprouts, Chili Peppers, Garlic, Onions, Parsley, Parsnips, Radishes, Spinach, Squash, Sweet Corn, Tomatoes, Tomatillos, Turnips, Watermelons

**Revised



Fruit and Nut Crops

Crop	Year	Bearing Acreage	PRODUCTION			VALUE	
			Per Acre	Total	Unit	Per Unit	Total
Almonds.....	1986	5,000	0.001	5	Ton	\$5,000.00	\$ 25,000
	1985	5,949	0.006	36	Ton	1,200.00	43,200
Apples.....	1986	356	6.300	2,243	Ton	338.00	758,000
	1985	356	6.000	2,136	Ton	325.00	694,200
Avocados.....	1986	1,340	2.590	3,471	Ton	1,045.00	3,627,000
	1985	1,340**	2.500	3,350**	Ton	850.00	2,847,500**
Grapes (Wine)...	1986	6,084	3.800	23,119	Ton	412.00	9,525,000
	1985	5,480	4.400	24,112	Ton	407.00	9,814,000
Kiwi Fruit.....	1986	114	0.560	64	Ton	2,000.00	128,000
	1985	101	1.500	152	Ton	1,430.00	217,400
Lemons.....	1986	830	14.450	11,994	Ton	193.00	2,315,000
	1985	830	16.500	13,695	Ton	280.00	3,834,600
Walnuts.....	1986	3,054	0.500	1,527	Ton	1,200.00	1,832,000
	1985	3,054	0.220	672	Ton	678.00	455,600
Strawberries....	1986	246	26.500	6,519	Ton	655.00	4,270,000
	1985	212	26.000	5,512	Ton	540.00	3,445,000
*Miscellaneous...	1986	420					1,260,000
	1985	420					1,840,000
TOTAL FRUIT & NUT CROPS	1986	17,444					\$23,740,000
	1985	17,742**					\$23,191,500**

*Apricots, Bushberries, Cherry, Feijoa, Lime, Valencia Orange, Peach, Pear, Pistachio, Pomegranate, Prune, Table Grapes, Raisin Grapes
 **Revised



Nursery Stock

Crop	Year	Harvested Acreage	Greenhouse Production (sq ft)		Value
Cut Flowers.....	1986		635,000		\$ 2,223,000
	1985		1,508,000		5,264,000
Woody Ornamentals.....	1986	58			1,199,000
	1985	54			1,489,000
Fruit & Nut Trees.....	1986	73			4,214,000
	Vegetable Transplants	1985	51		3,926,000
Indoor Decoratives.....	1986		1,022,460		2,870,000
	1985		710,730		2,290,000
Christmas Trees, Cut.....	1986	79			157,000
	1985	103			217,800
*Miscellaneous.....	1986	10	85,000		675,000
	1985	10	80,000		660,000
TOTAL NURSERY STOCK	1986	220	1,742,460		\$11,338,000
	1985	218	2,298,730		\$13,846,800

*Small producers



Crop Seed

Crop	Year	Harvested Acreage	Value
Vegetable.....	1986	205	\$222,000
	1985	201	219,600
Barley.....	1986	879	174,000
	1985	2,630	388,000
Oats.....	1986	1,712	377,000
	1985	753	199,000
+Wheat.....	1986	118	18,200
*Miscellaneous.....	1986	115	19,000
	1985	115	20,000
TOTAL SEED CROP	1986	3,029	\$810,200
	1985	3,699	\$826,600

*Flower Seed
+New Category



Field Crops

Crop	Year	Harvested Acreage	PRODUCTION		Unit	VALUE	
			Per Ac	Total		Per Unit	Total
Alfalfa Hay.....	1986	6,775	6.40	43,360	Ton	\$ 94.00	\$ 4,076,000
	1985	7,245	6.50	47,093	Ton	94.00	4,427,000
Barley.....	1986	83,000	1.10	91,300	Ton	85.00	7,761,000
	1985	90,000	0.80	72,000	Ton	108.00	7,776,000
Garbanzo.....	1986	2,500	7.50	18,750	Cwt	30.00	563,000
	1985	750	5.00	3,750	Cwt	34.00	128,000
Grain Hay.....	1986	41,000	2.16	88,560	Ton	49.00	4,339,000
	1985	35,000	1.80	63,000	Ton	70.00	4,410,000
Grain Stubble..... (Grazing)	1986	117,000			Acre	4.00	468,000
	1985	135,000			Acre	4.00	540,000
Irrigated Pasture..	1986	5,800			Acre	200.00	1,160,000
	1985	5,900			Acre	200.00	1,180,000
Range/Dryland.....	1986	1,075,000			Acre	5.50	5,913,000
	1985	1,084,000			Acre	6.00	6,504,000
Safflower.....	1986	4,225	0.46	1,944	Ton	248.00	482,000
	1985	2,165	0.34	736	Ton	240.00	176,600
Wheat.....	1986	32,000	0.98	31,360	Ton	92.00	2,885,000
	1985	30,000**	0.70	21,000**	Ton	113.00	2,373,000**
*Miscellaneous.....	1986	3,730					720,000
	1985	3,800					730,000
TOTAL FIELD CROPS	1986	1,371,030					\$28,367,000
	1985	1,393,860**					\$28,244,600**

*Silage Corn, Dry Beans, Sugar Beets, Sudangrass
**Revised



Animal Industry

Commodity	Year	Number of		Unit	Per Unit	VALUE	
		Head	Production			Total	
Cattle and Calves	1986	80,000	460,000	Cwt	\$ 53.00	\$24,380,000	
	1985	85,000	467,500	Cwt	54.00	25,245,000	
Hogs	1986	4,900	10,600	Cwt	47.00	498,000	
	1985	4,275	9,630	Cwt	47.00	452,600	
Horse Work/Pleasure	1986	1,000		Each	1,700.00	1,700,000	
	1985	1,200		Each	1,600.00	1,920,000	
Race/Show Investment	1986	1,200		Each	18,000.00	21,600,000	
	1985	1,100		Each	22,000.00	24,200,000	
Market Milk	1986		227,010	Cwt	11.94	2,710,000	
	1985		306,010**	Cwt	12.48	3,819,000**	
Sheep and Lambs	1986	7,213	7,573	Cwt	68.50	519,000	
	1985	8,560	9,675	Cwt	70.00	677,300	
Wool	1986		83,200	Lbs	0.66	55,000	
	1985		76,600	Lbs	0.63	48,300	
Honey	1986		160,420	Lbs	0.70	112,000	
	1985		208,000	Lbs	0.55	114,400	
*Miscellaneous	1986					2,450,000	
	1985					2,850,000	
TOTAL ANIMAL INDUSTRY							
						1986	\$54,024,000
						1985	\$59,326,600**

*Eggs, Poultry, Goats, Game Birds

**Revised

Total Production Acreage

1986: 1,420,544
1985: 1,432,122

Ten Year Value Comparison

YEAR	ANIMAL INDUSTRY	FIELD CROPS	FRUIT & NUT CROPS	VEGETABLE CROPS	NURSERY & SEED	TOTAL VALUATIONS
1977	28,405,800	12,457,200	7,284,000	41,400,600	3,151,000	92,698,600
1978	31,400,000	20,646,000	10,255,000	60,664,000	5,195,000	128,160,000
1979	47,242,600	25,026,000	22,875,000	45,700,000	7,006,000	147,849,600
1980	40,012,300	41,775,000	18,921,000	51,499,000	7,846,000	160,053,300
1981	41,945,500	36,842,000	18,109,000	84,789,000	8,982,000	190,667,500
1982	58,998,000	39,825,000	21,317,000	78,510,000	9,509,000	208,159,000
1983	60,383,000	45,091,000	18,933,000	97,139,000	7,871,000	229,407,000
1984	58,229,400	33,712,000	19,433,000	87,403,000	10,396,000	209,173,400
1985	59,326,600**	28,244,600**	23,191,500**	90,268,000**	14,673,400	215,704,100**
1986	54,024,000	28,367,000	23,740,000	114,314,000	12,148,000	232,593,000

**Revised

Major Accomplishments of Agricultural Commissioner

July 1985 - June 1986

Administration and Special Services

The County Department of Agriculture/Measurement Standards made additional progress from past years in implementing new administrative goals in areas such as long-term planning, personnel, and accountability. Word processing capabilities have generally increased productivity and efficiency. Other computer programs have increased the effectiveness and accuracy of budgetary controls and reduced the time spent on manual preparation of data. Greater emphasis was given to special projects which included further development of a permanent crop locator system and the initiation of a refinement process for the Nuclear Emergency Response Preparedness plan. The Commissioner increased his participation in several statewide organizations and held the position of Secretary in two organizations. Playing an expanded role in the area of Land Use Planning, the Assistant Agricultural Commissioner provided the County Environmental Coordinator with assessment of potential impacts from proposed changes in agricultural land use or zoning. The construction of a new warehouse building adjacent to the Paso Robles field office, provided efficient storage for rodent control baits, and weed control chemicals. It also provided work areas for related operations.

Measurement Standards

Measurement Standards, as mandated by California state law, is responsible for guaranteeing that equity prevails in all commercial transactions involving weight, measure, or count.

During fiscal year 1985-86 the department began developing a computerized file system for all devices, resulting in a higher degree of accountability. The new system for testing retail gasoline meters that was conceived last year, is now a reality resulting in a safer and more efficient program.

In Fiscal Year 1985-86 Measurement Standards staff inspected 2,603 devices, made 2,513 quantity control inspections for a total of 326,746 packages checked. Furthermore, staff completed 297 weighmaster and petroleum establishment inspections, made 69 test purchases and responded to 33 complaints. Enforcement action continued strong with the issuance of 137 Notice of Violations, one office hearing and three citations. One civil complaint was filed and \$820 was collected for infraction and misdemeanor fines.

Pest Management

With an increased emphasis on protecting resident rare and endangered species such as the California Condor, San Joaquin Kit Fox, and the Giant Kangaroo Rat, the Department continued to use care in its supervision over the use of vertebrate pest control materials. Staff contributed pertinent agriculturally related information and testimony into the public hearing process concerning future management of the Giant Kangaroo Rat habitat. Vigilance in this area afforded an effective and problem-free program in which 948 properties, representing 94,710 gross acres, were treated.

After a three year transition, the County road right-of-way weed control program was turned over to the County Engineering Department. An advisory role was retained with technical assistance and training given to engineering personnel as needed. Other weed control efforts involved noxious weeds on state highway right-of-ways within the county and special weed problems were addressed by the Department. Since the first known county infestation of western grapeleaf skeletonizer was detected in 1985, departmental personnel along with state biologists instituted a biological control program utilizing a parasitic wasp and fly. Staff expended 39 staff days and established about four release sites.

Product Quality Control

The Department's Product Quality Control program has as its major goal the reasonable guarantee that a commodity, when it reaches the marketplace, meets legal quality standards. Quality is assured through periodic inspections. Major efforts were directed in the inspection of lettuce, nursery stock, seeds, and eggs.

For example, during the Fiscal Year 1985-86 approximately 4,300 cartons of Iceberg lettuce were inspected representing a statistical sampling of more than 5.4 million cartons. Also, 144 nurseries were inspected for conformity to standards of pest cleanliness and compliance with labeling requirements, whereas 37 lots of seed were inspected for proper labeling. Egg inspections were carried out at 36 wholesale and retail outlets using a sampling method similar in principle to that used for lettuce.

Environmental Protection

The Pesticide Use Enforcement program continued strong with an increased emphasis on field monitoring inspections. During the Fiscal Year 1985-86 Agricultural Inspector/Biologists were involved in the following activities: issuances of 823 restricted material permits, review of 6,218 Notice of Intent to apply restricted pesticides, 1,673 field inspections, and completion of 32 investigations involving pesticide related incidents. Various levels of enforcement actions were taken in 252 cases. Additionally, the Department pursued three compliance actions concerning structural pest control operations with one fine being collected.

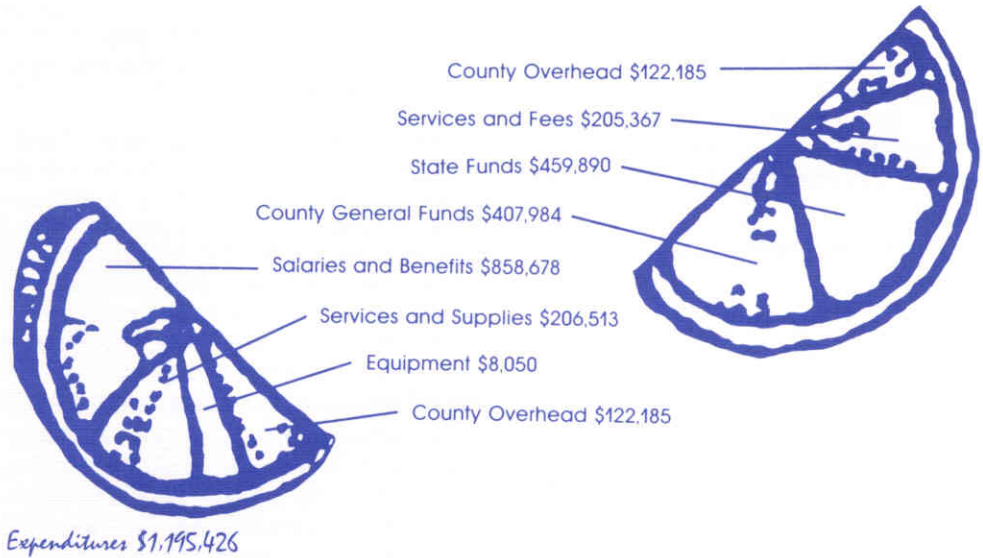
Additionally, the Department sampled and certified locally grown watermelons as part of the state's follow-up efforts to assure the public that the melons were free from illegal pesticide residue.

Top Twenty Crops and Values

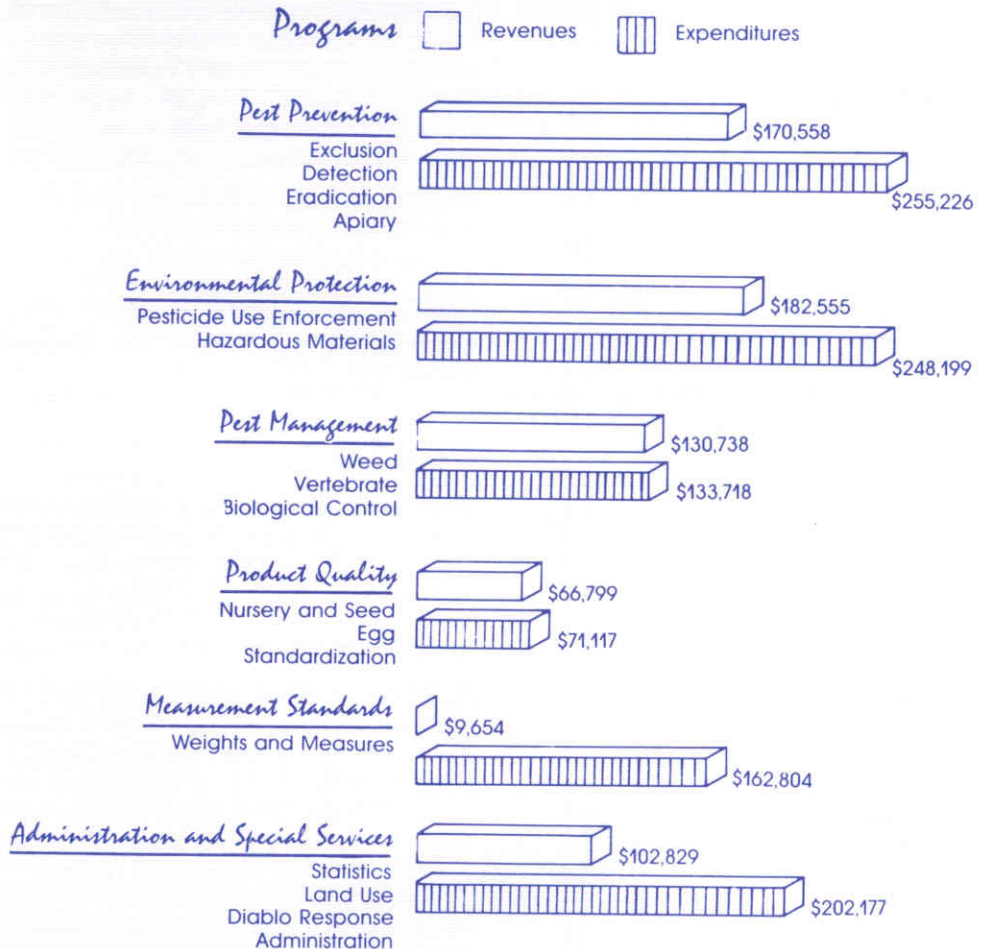
1. Lettuce, Iceberg	\$ 30,338,000
2. Cattle and Calves	\$ 24,380,000
3. Peas, Edible Pod	\$ 22,905,000
4. Horses, Race/Show/ Investment	\$ 21,600,000
5. Carrots	\$ 14,647,000
6. Broccoli	\$ 13,868,000
7. Grapes, Wine	\$ 9,525,000
8. Cauliflower	\$ 7,954,000
9. Barley	\$ 7,761,000
10. Range/Dryland	\$ 5,913,000
11. Celery	\$ 5,815,000
12. Grain Hay	\$ 4,339,000
13. Strawberries	\$ 4,270,000
14. Fruit, Nut Tree and Vegetable Transplants	\$ 4,214,000
15. Alfalfa Hay	\$ 4,076,000
16. Chinese Vegetables	\$ 3,968,000
17. Avocados	\$ 3,627,000
18. Lettuce, Leaf	\$ 2,905,000
19. Wheat	\$ 2,885,000
20. Indoor Decoratives	\$ 2,870,000

Financial Report 1985-1986 FY

Funding Sources \$1,195,426



Total Expenditures by Program 1985 - 1986 FY



Pest Prevention

San Luis Obispo County is blessed with abundant natural resources and human capability of producing a cornucopia of agricultural products. The same characteristics that make this county desirable for agriculture also makes the county attractive to new residents and visitors alike. Many new residents and visitors are welcomed into the county which is highly regarded as a friendly and popular place.

There are, however, some types of visitors which are entirely unwelcome. These include exotic pests such as: the Mediterranean Fruit Fly (Medfly), Gypsy Moth, and Japanese Beetle. These unwanted pests consist mainly of insects, but also include weeds, plant diseases and exotic animals. They can sneak, unnoticed, into our farms, gardens, and natural landscapes wreaking havoc. It is by means of the Pest Prevention program that the State and counties take action against these invading pests. Past encounters with the now infamous Medfly and Gypsy Moth serve to remind us of expensive lessons learned when we ignore pest prevention. As a result, a greater emphasis is being directed towards developing a sophisticated and effective program of pest prevention.

The Pest Prevention program consists of a three part strategy: exclusion, detection, and eradication. The three operate independently yet are designed to support and complement one another. The goal of this overall program is to prevent the establishment and spread of exotic pests. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office not only operates this program locally, but contributes to the protection of the state and continental United States through cooperation with state and federal agencies.

Exclusion

The pest exclusion strategy is aimed at preventing the introduction of exotic pests into the county. This involves inspecting incoming articles which can present a risk of transporting a pest. During FY 1985-86, biologists inspected nearly 8,800 separate shipments. Inspections occurred at U.P.S., post offices, nurseries and other channels of entry. Articles of outdoor furniture coming from the Gypsy Moth infested northeast were also closely monitored. In addition to looking for pests, biologists checked these shipments for compliance with about 80 quarantine regulations. In all, 47 shipments were rejected for the presence of live pests or violations of plant quarantine regulations.

Another part of the Exclusion program is the certification of outgoing plant shipments. Similar to California's tough quarantine regulations, other states and foreign countries have their own quarantines to protect themselves from pests which exist in California. In FY 1985-86, 447 plant shipments were inspected and certified as being in compliance with specified import requirements. Local nurseries are also certified to ship within California through a system of periodic inspections.

Detection

Even the best efforts and staffing in pest exclusion do not guarantee that the appearance of exotic pests will be prevented. Occasionally they can find their way in. Pest detection, the second component in the prevention scheme, deals with such an event. As a back up to exclusion, the goal is to find invading pests before they become firmly established and spread throughout the region. This goal is primarily accomplished through the Trapping program.

In San Luis Obispo County, approximately ten different types of insect traps are used. Each trap is designed and baited for the purpose of catching a specific target insect. These traps, as many as 1,250 last fiscal year, were strategically located (with owner's permission) in host trees throughout the county. Traps were monitored on either a bi-monthly or weekly basis, which in the last fiscal year resulted in nearly 30,000 trap servicings. Trapped insects suspected of being exotic are immediately sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) laboratory for identification. Any target pest infestations found would result in an Eradication program. As of yet, none of these target pests have been found in the county.

To supplement the Trapping program other detection functions were carried out. Eighty three sites of high, out of state, visitor use such as; state parks, truck stops and recreational areas were visually inspected for hitchhiking pests. Additionally, right-of-ways on a total of 286 miles of highways, railroads and waterways were examined for noxious weeds. Local wheat fields, citrus groves, lakes and vineyards were surveyed for potentially devastating diseases and weeds. When killer bees invaded neighboring Kern County, staff effectively responded to the flood of phone calls concerning this exotic pest. Several reports of suspicious bee activity were investigated. Fortunately, no killer bees were detected. The general public also aids the department's effort in pest detection by reporting any unusual pest infestations or bringing in samples for identification. Over 100 hours were spent working with county residents in identifying specimens.

The Commissioner's staff tenaciously attempt to find potential infestations in an efficient and timely manner.

Eradication

The third line of defense in the pest prevention scheme is the Eradication program. As a companion to pest detection, the goal is to totally eliminate an exotic pest infestation. Due to the exotic pests' capability to reproduce and spread rapidly, a timely response to a new infestation is critical. In preparedness for the ever present threat, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has developed a comprehensive emergency response plan. The plan identifies: key individuals and agencies, outlines quarantine boundaries, survey methods and treatment procedures, and sets up a communications network. All of these are necessary for a well coordinated eradication project. The use of pesticides may be called for; but, the plan greatly emphasizes keeping the public and local health authorities well informed of any chemical treatments. Fortunately, this emergency response plan has not been utilized locally. However, the plan is updated annually to assure that the department is well prepared.

As a part of the Eradication program, the department is methodically working at eliminating three weed pests: Skeleton weed, Oblong spurge and *Salsola vermiculata*. These three exotic weeds are established and threaten local agriculture. However, through careful monitoring and chemical treatment the infestations have been reduced. Over 30 staff days were employed last fiscal year toward controlling these weeds.

Apiary

Though not a component of the strategic plan of pest prevention, the Apiary program falls within this program division. The primary program goal is the judicious enforcement of a county bee ordinance. The Department regulates the location of bee hives throughout the county, therefore, protecting the public from potential nuisance or hazard. Five complaints were investigated last fiscal year. Deficiencies in the ordinance were identified and the Agricultural Commissioner initiated steps to upgrade and improve the ordinance.

In Fiscal Year 1985-86 a small mite pest of bees was detected in several areas of California. In response, staff statistically sampled nine local apiaries for this pest with negative results.

Severe economic hardship on growers, consumers and home owners could result if such "super pests" like Medfly, Citrus Canker, or Gypsy Moth were to become established. The resulting pesticide use could increase the potential for human exposure and environmental contamination. To complicate matters further, increased worldwide commerce and travel has escalated the threat of introducing hitchhiking pests. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office, through the execution of the Pest Prevention program, works to avoid these problems and with continued vigilance will protect the county's people and agricultural community from unwelcome pests.



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