



COUNTIES OF INYO AND MONO



AGRICULTURE • WEIGHTS & MEASURES • OWENS VALLEY MOSQUITO ABATEMENT PROGRAM • MAMMOTH LAKES MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT
EASTERN SIERRA WEED MANAGEMENT AREA • INYO COUNTY COMMERCIAL CANNABIS PERMIT OFFICE

DEPARTMENT REPORT

February 2018

Agriculture

Our office has been working on gaining North American Invasive Species Association ([NAISMA](#)) weed free certification inspection authority for our local staff for over a year. This weed free forage certification program has become popular with land managers, and on certain federal lands, certified forage is mandatory. This has created a new market for NAISMA certified feed with significant added value. It now appears that Inyo/Mono staff will receive training this month and that forage produced in Inyo and Mono Counties will be able to be marketed as NAISMA compliant this growing season. In 2017, only 17 acres of hay was NAISMA certified in the entire state of California. Due to the absence of many of the weed species on the NAISMA list in our area, Inyo and Mono Counties may be poised to produce the vast majority of hay qualifying as NAISMA weed free in 2018.

In other alfalfa news, the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) recently published a story in the California Agriculture journal regarding winter flooding of alfalfa fields to promote groundwater recharge. The study found that alfalfa was extremely tolerant of this type of flooding and that groundwater below the fields showed significant recharge. More details can be found in this [press release](#) on the UCANR website.

Our office has been flooded with calls following the passage of cannabis ordinances in Inyo County. Most of these callers are inquiring about dates and other specifics about applying for local licensing, zoning of area properties, and questions regarding the application scoring criteria. We are working on developing and posting an online FAQ sheet to which we can direct these inquiries. Application materials are still under development but progress has been steady.

California Agricultural Commissioners continue to push for increases in gas taxes allocated to agriculture to be used for local programs. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has been holding talks with commissioners and industry to ascertain the best use of these funding increases. CDFA has been exploring other possible uses of this funding including programs linked to climate change and groundwater, in addition to assisting local programs. Funding that was decreased to local Agricultural Commissioner Offices during the economic downturn years ago was never restored, and we would like to see these resources allocated to help rebuild programs that were downsized or lost such as weed management and high-risk pest detection.

With minimal amounts of precipitation recorded so far this year, irrigation water looks to be a potential issue again. Some producers are reporting that they have been advised to expect little to no irrigation in 2018. This should be of importance to both counties due to the significant agricultural economic losses that are associated with reduced or eliminated irrigation.

Agriculture Legislation of Interest

[HR 975](#) – Respect State Marijuana Laws Act of 2017

This bill would amend the controlled substances act to remove regulatory and civil, administrative, and criminal penalties for those who are operating cannabis businesses in compliance with state laws. This bill is sponsored by Dana Rohrabacher of California. Prior to Attorney General Jeff Sessions' announcement that he would rescind the Cole Memo, this bill had 24 co-sponsors (12 Democrats and 12 Republicans) from 14 states. Since Sessions' announcement, support has grown to 42 co-sponsors.

Weights and Measures

With the New Year behind us, weights and measures inspections for 2018 have begun. You should begin to see our new seals appear on gas pumps and counter scales throughout the two counties. The seals have been completely redesigned for 2018, and Inyo and Mono Counties are now one of a handful of California counties with custom designed seals. As the seals were developed with in-house talent, there was no significant cost associated with the custom design



Mosquito Abatement

Staff just returned from the annual [Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California](#) (MVCAC) conference that was held in Monterey. This conference is one of only a few opportunities for our mosquito control staff to acquire the continuing education hours required to maintain their licensing. We also had the opportunity to be one of a few standout programs this year to present a poster. Our poster highlighted our record 2017 runoff year and the adjustments made to ensure adequate control. This was the first presentation that our program has given during a MVCAC conference.



Rob Miller answering questions about our poster



Can we get one of these suits for public outreach at the fair?

One Florida mosquito control program also made a presentation describing conditions following the hurricanes that hit their area last year. One statistic relayed during this presentation was catching nearly 50,000 mosquitoes in one night, a record for their program. For comparison, during peak water spreading and Lower Owens River flows last summer, our program caught about 9,000 mosquitoes in one night. So, here in the desert during a record runoff year with active water spreading, we caught almost 20% of a record trap count in post hurricane Florida!

There was a lot of talk about the use of UAVs for mosquito control during the conference. Very little, if any, work has been done to actually apply larvicides via drone in California. Our program has been collaborating with the University of California to conduct a research project on the feasibility of such applications, and we hope this study may become a reality this year. Could this be next year's poster topic?

Work continues on the 2017 OVMAP/MLMAD annual report. This report is taking more time to compile compared to most other years due to additions that will hopefully serve as a guidance document for future high runoff years. We hope to have this report out soon and will share some of the main points with both Boards of Supervisors at that time.

Invasive Plant Management Program

Staff continues to prepare for the upcoming weed season by prioritizing and scheduling weed management activities and preparing equipment. Not much to report this month, but we expect to see a banner weed year following last year's high runoff and probable weed spreading associated with that runoff and flooding.

Important Dates - February

February 7-8
CACASA Board of Directors Meeting
San Luis Obispo

February 15
SCACASA Meeting
El Centro

February 14
Seasonal Employee Interviews
Weed/Mosquito Programs

February 19
President's Day
OFFICE CLOSED