Date: March 9, 2004

To: All Interested Persons

From: Greg Van Wassenhove, Agricultural Commissioner / Sealer

Subject: Agricultural Commissioner’s Report

1) **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) Update:** The field investigation of the case of BSE in a cow in the State of Washington is complete. The BSE positive cow slaughtered on December 9, 2003 was born on a dairy farm in Calmar, Alberta, Canada, on April 9, 1997. She was moved to the United States in September 2001 along with 80 other cattle from that dairy.

The epidemiological investigation to find additional animals from the source herd led to complete herd inventories on 51 premises in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The inventories involved the examination of more than 75,000 animals. All herd inventories have now been completed.

A total of 255 “Animals of Interest” were identified on 10 premises in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. “Animals of Interest” are animals that were – or could have been – from the source herd in Alberta, Canada. All 255 animals were depopulated and BSE testing was negative on all of them. The carcasses from all of the euthanized animals were disposed of in landfills in accordance with all federal, state and local regulations. For additional information on BSE, contact the USDA’s website at: [www.usda.gov/BSE/](http://www.usda.gov/BSE/)

2) **Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Update:** As of February 1, 2004, more than 660,000 cattle in 503 herds have been tested in California for bovine TB since the current investigation began in 2002. To date, three herds were quarantined and approximately 13,000 cattle have been depopulated.

State and federal officials are currently testing all dairies in Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties, and slaughter surveillance has increased in all California slaughter plants. In addition, California now requires a TB test on all breeding dairy cattle entering the State.

Forty-six states are classified as Accredited TB Free. California, Texas and New Mexico are Modified Accredited Advanced, Michigan is Modified Accredited, and Arizona has just detected a TB infected heifer. Arizona must now show there has been no spread of TB to maintain its Accredited Free status.

**Board of Supervisors:** Donald F. Gage, Blanca Alvarado, Pete McHugh, James T. Beall, Jr., Liz Kniss

**County Executive:** Peter Kutras, Jr.
California is preparing to apply for Free status in April 2005. For more information on bovine tuberculosis, visit web sites at [www.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov) or [www.aphis.usda.gov/vs](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs).

3) United States Bans Importation of Birds from Southeast Asia: In February, the U.S. Health and Human Services and U. S. Department of Agriculture announced a ban on importation of birds from eight Southeast Asian countries. The ban is designed to protect poultry and humans in the United States from the possible spread of avian influenza.

The ban applies to birds and bird products from Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, China, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. It excludes bird products processed to render them noninfectious. Processed avian products from these countries must have an import permit and government certification of treatment.

Southeast Asia is experiencing an outbreak of a highly pathogenic avian influenza. It is an extremely infectious and fatal poultry disease that spreads rapidly from flock to flock. It can also spread from birds to humans, and in Southeast Asia most of the 22 human fatalities have been among people closely associated with poultry.

The current avian flu outbreaks have caused significant concern among health authorities worldwide because of the potential for the human and avian flu viruses to swap genes, creating a new virus to which humans would have little or no immunity.

4) USDA Agricultural Economic Survey: California agricultural producers will have the opportunity to participate in the Agricultural Resource Management Survey conducted by United States Department of Agriculture. The survey provides the leading economic indicators about the agricultural industry, which are used by members of the agricultural community and their legislators when making important decisions that support America’s farmer and ranchers.

Data collected will present an objective, true picture of the financial well-being of California farm operators and will provide an accurate portrayal as Congress monitors the benefits of the Farm Bill. The data also serves as a resource when policymakers determine federal assistance.

Agricultural producers chosen to participate in the survey will represent from 50 to 100 fellow producers, and will make an important contribution to the overall welfare of America’s farmers and ranchers. All individual data collected is strictly confidential by law.

The survey will be the first to provide state-level data for 15 key agricultural states, including California.

Results from the survey will be used by agricultural producers, producer organizations, commodity groups, lenders, university researchers, news media, local USDA agencies, farm suppliers, and other to evaluate economic challenges facing America’s food and fiber producers, measure the profitability of agricultural production, assess the ability for producers to maintain sustainable farms, and determine the need for farm financial assistance.

The first report results will be released July 15, 2004. For a copy of the completed report or to obtain other agricultural statistics, visit the National Agricultural Statistics Service web site at [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/) or call 1-800-727-9540.
5) **Update - Investigation of Guava Fruit Fly Infestations:** In October last year, two Guava Fruit Flies were trapped in southeastern San Jose. An eradication program began on November 3, 2003 in an area of approximately nine (9) square-miles surrounding the find.

This marks the third successive year (since 2001) that infestations of Guava Fruit Fly were discovered in southeast San Jose. As a result of these repeated infestations, federal and state biologists are investigating potential pathways for the introduction of fruit illegally imported into this area from foreign sources. The Agricultural Commissioner’s office will provide periodic updates on our efforts to close the Guava Fruit Fly pathway to southeastern San Jose.

Since the last report, high risk sites in the area have been identified and inspected, and monitoring plans are being developed. The sites include flea markets, specialty markets, wholesale brokers, roadside vendors, community centers and churches. Additional traps are being placed on the sites and adjacent properties in order to pinpoint potential fruit fly introductions. In addition, an educational brochure is being developed in Vietnamese to elicit community support for pest prevention efforts. Other languages will follow as necessary.

The Guava Fruit Fly is known to occur in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. If allowed to become established in California, it has the potential to become a major pest of citrus, peach, and several kinds of tropical and subtropical fruits.

6) **Glassy–winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) Update:** To date, the Santa Clara County Division of Agriculture found two Glassy-winged Sharpshooters in 2004. Both finds are within existing infestations in south San Jose. The first insect was found in a trap in a citrus tree near Branham Lane and Almaden Expressway. The second GWSS was found in a trap in a magnolia tree near Blossom Hill Road and Monterey Highway.

In response to recent GWSS finds, the California Department of Food and Agriculture approved additional funding for Santa Clara County’s treatment program. Treatment of infested properties and surrounding areas is scheduled to resume in April.

Glassy-winged Sharpshooter is an insect pest native to southeastern United States. It recently became established in southern California and is under suppression efforts in northern and central California. It vectors the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*, which causes a number of devastating plant diseases, including Pierce's disease of grapes, almond scorch, and oleander leaf scorch.

7) **Perchlorate Outreach and Education – Bottled Water:** The Santa Clara Valley Water District has solicited the assistance of the Farm Bureau and Agricultural Commissioner to send out information to growers, farm labor contractors and others who work in areas where wells have tested positive for perchlorate. The mailer will provide information on how to obtain well testing and sources of free bottled drinking water if well sources are tested positive.