

DISTRICT BRANCH OFFICES

To obtain more information about our resolution services, please contact MEB at the following offices:

SACRAMENTO OFFICE
2399 GATEWAY OAKS DRIVE, STE 210
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EL MONTE, CA 91731
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VISIT US AT:
WWW.CDFA.CA.GOV/MKT/MEB



MARKET ENFORCEMENT BRANCH

RESOLUTION SERVICES



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

BRANCH SERVICES

Market Enforcement Branch (MEB) provides California farm product producers and licensees various avenues to resolve disputes from a breach of contract to non-payment issues involving farm products. The following identifies the types of resolution methods utilized:

Verified Complaints (VC)

The initial process to resolve a dispute is the filing of a verified complaint. A complainant is required to complete the verified complaint form that sets forth the allegations and submit it to MEB along with copies of all supporting documentation and a filing fee of \$100. Upon receipt of the VC, the respondent is notified and afforded an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Some complaints may be resolved immediately, while others require further examination. However, within 90 days of the VC filing a summary, which outlines the facts presented, is provided to all parties for further consideration of resolution options.

Informal Mediation

During the VC process, it may be determined that the issues involved in the dispute can be remedied by informal mediation, i.e. an opportunity for the parties to voluntarily come together to discuss their differences in the presence of a neutral and unbiased party. These informal mediations can occur via telephone conferencing or face-to-face meetings and attorneys need not be present. If the matter is not resolved, no information gathered during the course of the meeting can be used against either party.

Expedited Arbitration

This is MEB's newest service wherein if a settlement cannot be reached during the Informal Mediation process, the parties may agree to utilize the Expedited Arbitration process. This allows for a binding decision awarded by the Arbitrator confirmed by both parties.

EXPEDITED ARBITRATION PROCESS

Expedited Arbitration (FAC §56382.8)

- Provided for complaints that do not exceed \$30,000 and for which Informal Mediation has not resulted in a resolution of the dispute.
- \$600 filing fee paid by complainant. If a counterclaim is filed, the counterclaimant shall also pay a fee of \$600.
- An arbitrator registered with the department shall be selected by the department and confirmed by both parties.
- Once the arbitrator is appointed, the department will transmit the necessary documents to the arbitrator.
- The complainant will have 30 days after appointment of the arbitrator to submit in writing additional documents not previously submitted.
- Within 5 days of the department receiving these documents, it will transmit a copy of them to the respondent, who will have 30 days from date of receipt to submit in writing any additional documents not previously submitted. The respondent's written submission in support of its counterclaim, if any, must be sent at the same time as the responsive submission.
- Once the arbitrator has received all the documents, a written decision and award in writing shall be issued by the arbitrator within 30 days.
- No hearings or live testimony shall be conducted.