

# Quarterly Quips

## Division of Inspection Services

By: *Fiona L. Mattson*

### **Updates from FREP!**

#### **Fertilizer Research and Education Program Grant Program**

The Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP) received 44 concept proposals in response to its 2016 Request for Proposals. Upon selection by the FREP Technical Advisory Subcommittee, FREP invited the writers of 13 concept proposals to submit full proposals. The proposals are due on May 16, 2016, and will undergo several expert reviews to determine which ones will receive FREP grants. For more info, visit: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/Is/ffldrs/frep/CompetitiveGrantProgram.html>.

#### **Nitrogen Management Training for Certified Crop Advisors and Growers**

In January, FREP-funded nutrient management training for Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) was held in Fresno, California, and about 100 CCAs attended. From 2014 to 2016, 890 CCAs have been trained through this program.

In the grower training program, CCAs teach growers how to complete nitrogen management plans as required by Central Valley water quality regulations. Growers may self-certify their own nitrogen management plans if they participate in this CDFA training program and pass the exam. The

grower training was created by FREP and Central Valley grower coalitions. Between January and March 2016, over 30 sessions have been held across the Central Valley. To date, more than 1,322 certification exams have been graded, and the passing rate is 82%.

#### **Save the Date for the 2016 FREP/WPHA Conference!**

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Nutrient Management Conference, hosted by FREP and the Western Plant Health Association (WPHA), will be held in Modesto, California, on October 26-27, 2016.

### **Shipping Point Inspection Keeping You in the Loop!**

#### **World Expo!**

Shipping Point Inspection (SPI) has had a few changes since the last newsletter. SPI had a booth at the World Ag Expo in Tulare and it was a tremendous opportunity to reach out to the agriculture industry and provide assistance, guidance, and education. The World Ag Expo is the largest event of its type in the world and averages more than 100,000 attendees during the three day event.

#### **Inspections**

Cherry season is right around the corner and should be starting in April. SPI will be opening up their El Centro and Coachella District Offices in April as well. Both offices typically run from April through the end of June and inspect onions, potatoes, tomatoes, table grapes, sweet corn, and avocados.



#### **The Leafy Green Program (LGMA)**

LGMA will be starting its 2016 season in April and this will also be the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the program. This program is the culmination of the collaborative effort of industry members and the California Department of Food and Agriculture to develop a food safety program. The ultimate goal is to prevent food safety outbreaks from poor agricultural and handling practices.

## State Organic Program Updates

In an effort to continuously improve our State Organic Program (SOP), the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is convening an Organic Stakeholder Working Group. The purpose of the working group is to review the program and provide recommendations to the Department on how to maximize the effectiveness and responsiveness of the SOP to industry needs. The first working group meeting took place on March 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Embassy Suites in Seaside. Three other subsequent meetings will follow over the next few months.

## Office of Farm to Fork at California Ag Day 2016!

The Office of Farm to Fork teamed up with culinary students from Natomas Unified School District to promote seasonal fruits and vegetables. The students prepared and served a kiwi citrus salsa to hundreds of Ag Day attendees. The Office was also promoting the California Farmer Marketplace which is a free statewide website featuring California produce, grains, meats, and other products for sale. The Marketplace offers farmers the opportunity to post products and connect directly with school food services to increase the amount of California grown foods on school lunch trays. Check out the Marketplace at:

<http://cafarmersmarketplace.com/>



## Department of Food and Agriculture Career Fair

The latest analysis of State employee age demographics reveals that about 40% of our State workforce is eligible to retire in the next five years, with over 20% of the workforce eligible to retire this year. Baby Boomers, many of them senior employees with deep experience, are leaving the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and state service in large numbers, creating a loss of institutional knowledge that, without careful planning, could have a profound impact on

operations. The Career Fair is a key strategy to let the public know CDFA's role to promote and protect a safe and healthy food supply, attract new employees, and plan for the future.

Human Resources will deliver an informative *How to Get a State Job* workshop by providing guests with a short tutorial on how to navigate the CalCareer website and how to apply for state exams and jobs. Each division will host a listening session to showcase what they do for the consumers of

### Welcome Our New Staff to the Division of Inspection Services!

**John Downs** - M CCP

**Kelvin Ho** - CAC

**Amber Morris** - M CCP

### The Division of Inspection Services recognizes with gratitude these Staff Members who have recently retired:

**Joe Weiss** - I&C

### The Division of Inspection Services Future Agriculture Ambassador Recruitment and Mentorship (FAARM) program recognizes the 2016 mentors:

**Michelle Armstrong** - CAC

**Stacey Aylesworth** - CAC

**Natalie Jacuzzi** - FFLDRS

Interns are currently being interviewed and will begin in summer.

California, as well as to provide insight on current and future job opportunities. Additionally, each division will have a booth set up in the lobby equipped with handouts, fact sheets, and staff to answer division-specific questions.

This event will take place:

Wednesday, May 18, 2016 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at 2800 Gateway Oaks Drive, Sacramento, CA 95833.