



## Quarterly Quips

### Division of Inspection Services

By: *Fiona L. Mattson*

#### **Organic Input Materials Program Recognized by the National Organic Program!**

On December 15, 2015, the USDA-AMS, National Organic Program (NOP) announced that the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Organic Input Materials (OIM) Program met their criteria for a material review organization. The CDFA OIM Program was established in 2010 to review and register organic materials for organic production in California. This acknowledgement by the NOP allows organic certifiers to accept reviews conducted by the CDFA OIM Program. ISO 17065 accreditation was a qualification condition in NOP's Policy

Memo regarding material review organizations. This milestone was achieved by the OIM Program on January 29, 2015.

The OIM Program is the largest organic fertilizer registration program in the nation with currently 1,544 approved OIM products. The list of registered organic inputs can be found at: [https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/fertilizer\\_OIM.html](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/fertilizer_OIM.html). During 2015, the OIM Program conducted over 250 inspections of fertilizing material manufacturers to ensure compliance with the NOP standards. These

inspections are fulfilled by CDFA inspectors, and by Ecocert, an ISO accredited firm.

Our qualified staff are tasked with completing thorough reviews of the organic applications and performing efficient inspections while maintaining a positive, professional relationship with licensees. CDFA has already received favorable feedback from industry regarding this formal recognition.

#### **Center for Analytical Chemistry Grant Funding - Water Conservation**

The Center for Analytical Chemistry (CAC) was awarded \$17,250 in grant funds from the Department of General Services to go toward the Branch water conservation project. The grant funds

will be used to purchase and install auto-shut off sensor faucets in the restrooms, retrofit the toilets and urinals with solar powered sensor activated flushometers that will

reduce the amount of water used, and install aerators on some of the sinks in the lab to reduce the water flow.

#### **Fertilizer Research and Education Program Request for Proposals**

On December 7, 2015, the Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP) released their annual request for proposals (RFP) for grants. The RFP is open for submission of concept proposals until January 29, 2016. FREP's competitive grant program funds research that advances the

environmentally safe and agronomically sound use of fertilizing materials. This year's new additions to the research priorities include: technical education, promotion of practices that optimize nutrient management, addressing barriers to management practice adoption, and

research on the role of soil organic matter and organic fertilizing materials on nutrient management in soils. For more information, go to: <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/frep/CompetitiveGrantProgram.html>.

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

**Lisa Montanez-FFLDRS**

**Brittnie Sabalbro-FFLDRS**

**Brandi Alston-I&C**

**Adrienne Belvedere-FFLDRS**

## Shipping Point Inspections Program

The Shipping Point Inspection Program will have a booth at the upcoming World Ag Expo in February. The Expo presents a tremendous opportunity for outreach, a forum to develop additional work, and provide

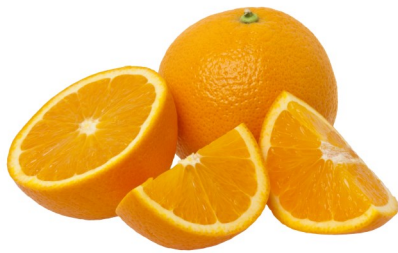


information to interested parties. The Expo is in Tulare, California and runs February 9-11, 2016.

FEBRUARY  
9-11, 2016

## Citrus Program Freeze Efforts

The 2015-2016 citrus harvest is once again off to an early start. Navel oranges started in the beginning of October with early maturing quality fruit. Along with the citrus harvest comes the threat of frost which can have devastating impacts on citrus crops. This year was no different with below freezing temperatures showing up shortly after Thanksgiving. County personnel have been diligently monitoring night time lows with weather stations recording low temperatures and durations. If temperatures reach critical lows and have long enough



durations then county personnel may collect samples of fruit in those cold locations. The samples are held for 72 hours and then evaluated to determine if there is any damage. This year like others, cold temperatures have occurred and some county staff have collected samples and evaluated them with the results indicating the frost events had minimal impact on citrus. County staff will continue to monitor temperatures and take the necessary steps if future critical frost events occur.

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

**Marilyn Boehnke-FFLDRS**

**Holly Chuek-CAC**

**Scott Fredrickson-CAC**

**Serigo Santiago-CAC**

**Rachel Vasquez-CAC**

In memory of Serigo Santiago, who passed away January 21, 2016. He dedicated 29 years of service to the State of California. He will be dearly missed by many.

## Avocado Program

The Avocado Inspection Program has been in preparation mode for the 2015-2016 season. We have been performing maturity tests on the new California crop! The maturity release date for all sizes is January 16, 2016 for all California Hass avocados. The estimated crop size for this season is 392.5 million pounds. Support our California Avocado Growers!



## Updates from the State Organic Program!

The State Organic Program (SOP) has been attending and participating in numerous conferences, as well as a training in the State of Georgia. Danny Lee and Marcee Yount attended the USDA National Program Certifiers Training, held on January 13, 2016 in Savannah, Georgia. The SOP also attended and showcased an informative display at the EcoFarm Conference held

January 21-22, 2016 at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove, California.

The SOP and Direct Marketing Programs will both be attending and showcasing informative displays at the World Ag Expo held on February 9-11, 2016 at the International Agri-Center, in Tulare, California, as well as the Small Farm Conference held on March 5-8, 2016 at the Double Tree

Hotel in Sacramento, California.

Last, but certainly not least, the Direct Marketing Program has chosen Danielle Chapman to fill the Fruit and Vegetable Quality Control Supervisor II Northern California position. Interviews for the Central and Southern positions will be conducted in late January.

## Food Safety Modernization Act Informational Sessions

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) hosted the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Informational Sessions on January 13, 2016 in Tulare, California and January 14, 2016 in Seaside, California. Over 350 individuals attended in person and by webinar.

FSMA was signed into law by president

Obama on January 4, 2011. It aims to ensure that the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus of federal regulators from responding to contaminations to preventing them. On September 17, 2015, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published the final rule for Preventive Controls for Animal Food, and on November

27, 2015 they published the final rule for Produce Safety.

Invited speakers included Jim Houston, Undersecretary, from CDFA, and Jeff Farrar, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Partnerships, Office of Foods and Veterinary Medicine, FDA.

## Train the Trainer and Grower Training

The Central Valley Water Quality Control Board's (CVWQCB) Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program (ILRP), requires Central Valley growers to have a certified Nitrogen Management Plan (NMP) on their farm to document the planning and tracking of nitrogen fertilizer use. The NMPs must be certified by a qualified professional, such as Certified Crop Advisor (CCA), or growers can self-certify their own NMP if they have participated in a training program sponsored by California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) for that purpose.

The Nitrogen Management Training Program (NMTP) for Growers was developed by Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP), UC Specialists, and Central Valley agricultural water quality coalitions. Between October and December of 2015, this project trained 30 CCAs, to become trainers and present the NMTP to growers. Growers who attend this half-day training and pass a certification test are qualified to create and certify the NMPs for lands that they farm. Grower training sessions started in November and are

currently scheduled throughout the Central Valley through March.

Additionally, FREP and the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) are offering a fourth nitrogen management training seminar for certified crop advisers (CCAs). The two day training session took place in Fresno on January 20-21, 2016. More information is available at: <https://capcaed.com>

## Fertilizer Research and Education Program Conference

This year FREP and the Western Plant Health Association (WPHA) hosted the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fertilizer Research Conference in Seaside, California, on November 5-6, 2015. The event brought together 220 industry professionals and academic researchers to learn about the latest research on sound fertilizer

management practices. Speakers from academia, agricultural consulting, regulatory agencies, and industry, provided general and technical information, current research, and practical applications addressing statewide and regional nutrient management issues.



*The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual FREP Conference hosted in Seaside California.*



*Jim Houston, Undersecretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture speaking at the Annual FREP Conference.*



*Panel discussion at the Annual FREP Conference about challenges to the implementations of Best Management Practices on the Central Coast.*