



Quarterly Quips
Division of Inspection Services
 By: *Fiona L. Mattson*

Food Safety Modernization Act - Produce Safety Rule

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) was recently awarded \$11.7 million for state-level implementation of the Produce Safety rule under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). This follows the recent Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) announcement to invest \$21.8 million in 42 state departments. In order to secure the five year funding opportunity, states were asked to submit implementation proposals tailored to their jurisdictions needs.

CDFA's proposal considered all necessary resources required of California's diverse produce industry. Along with consideration for the various production and packing operations recognized throughout the state.

This multi-year plan to implement an enhanced produce safety system emphasized the following:

- Education, Outreach, and Technical Assistance,
- Inspectional Program Development,
- Infrastructure Development,
- Collaboration with Federal, State, and Territory Regulatory Entities,
- Annual Work Plan Development, and
- Continued training of Regulatory Body.

CDFA's multi-year funding is based on the vision of education preceding regulation. This funding is vital to the continued commitment of helping producers and packers reduce the incidence of

foodborne illness. This is extremely important, to an industry providing over a third of the country's vegetables and two-thirds of the country's fruits and nuts.

CDFA is focused to continue working on front line preventive efforts, and the continued efforts to ensure farmers are provided a clear path to compliance. The cooperative work between the FDA and CDFA will continue moving forward to meet initial FSMA compliance dates. With larger farms needing to meet with certain aspects of the Produce Safety Rule requirements beginning in January 2018, and smaller produce operations having additional time to comply.

Lean Six Sigma

The Center for Analytical Chemistry (CAC), under the leadership of Sarva Balachandra, Senior Environmental Scientist, completed a project of implementing a Lean Six Sigma green belt program to standardize the Chain of Custody protocols, from Test Sample Receipt to Sample Disposal. Over a six month period, Sarva received green belt training on various analytical and advanced statistical tools to improve the process capability. Sarva and the selected team consisting of Stephen Siegel, Stan Kobata, Senior Environmental Scientists, Todd Yee, Environmental Scientist and Jim Echelberry, Lab Technician evaluated the existing process functions and worked on process improvement. Failure modes that resulted in sample losses, even though sporadic in nature, were addressed through staffing rearrangement, establishing standards, visual

management, and checklists. Effective improvement measures were put in place at every process component as the sample passes through various steps of the Chain of Custody, with an emphasis on "mistake proofing" the process. A measurement system was created to fully document any future losses with a feedback system for corrective actions and periodical monitoring of its remedial measures. With these improvements, the loss rate is expected to be minimized.

Beneficiaries are the CAC clients, who would receive effective service and the laboratory, would in turn, see improved competitiveness and increased service opportunities.



Graduating Green Belts



CAC Team

Olive Harvest 2016

Shipping Point Inspections (SPI) began the 2016 olive season under revised processes for olive inspections. In previous years, SPI inspected olives destined for processing and assigned grades and sizes as part of Federal Market Order 932. This year, the California Olive Commission (COC) voted to suspend the size and grade requirements of the Order. This effectively removed USDA oversight from the inspection process. Because the commission continues to utilize a grading process, it requested

SPI provide oversight. Specifically, SPI will oversee the operation of an electron scanning machine which automatically sizes samples much faster than the traditional manual method.



Welcome Our New Staff to the Division of Inspection Services!

Adrienne Belvedere - MCCP

Marilyn Boehnke - FFLDRS

Misty McDaniel - MCCP

Ellana Reyes - FFLDRS

Carla Sanchez - Administration

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

Frank Delgado - FFLDRS

Almond Harvest 2016

Federal Marketing Order 981 requires all harvested almonds be inspected. Inspectors collect data such as moisture content, variety, and weight and perform quality control on nut meats, inedibles, and foreign material. The information collected is passed on to the handler and the Almond Board of California to track product entering the market. Shipping Point Inspections (SPI) program also inspects almonds that are

exported out of the country, which is approximately 60% of the crop. As all almonds sold in the United States have to be pasteurized, SPI audits the pasteurization machines several times a year to see that the process is being followed to the proper specifications.

The 2016 almond harvest started in earnest in early August. It began with the nonpareil variety, but didn't take long for the other varieties to start. This year's

industry is predicting a crop of over 2 billion pounds. This would be the second time the harvest has been this high in the history of California almond production. With all the new plantings, it won't be long until California reaches 3 billion pounds a year.



State Organic Program Update

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) State Organic Program (SOP) recently released a *Report of Recommendations* from the Organic Stakeholder Work Group. The purpose of the Work Group was to review the existing

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and provide recommendations to the Secretary of CDFA on how to maximize program efficiency and responsiveness. The Work Group was comprised of a diverse group of organic industry

representatives. The report is available on the new State Organic Program's Publications and Documents webpage, https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/i & c/organic_publications.html.

Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement Annual Buyer Tour

On August 31, 2016 in San Benito County, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) participated in the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA) annual buyer tour presented by the LGMA.

Tour participants included the following companies: Taco Bell, Raleys, Chick-Fil-A, Darden, Starbucks, Wegmans, Chipotle, Avendra, and H-E-B Texas Grocery.

The aforementioned companies sent representatives responsible for handling their respective businesses' food safety/quality control units for purchasing leafy green products.

During this tour, CDFA demonstrated all of the elements involved in conducting a leafy green field and harvest food safety audit. The audit check list consists of: general requirements for water, soil amendments, environmental factors,

worker practices, and field sanitation to the actual field and harvest protocols.

This checklist is essential to growers as they are being audited.

Moreover, these critical points are checked because this is where food safety issues usually arise.



Updates from the Medical Cannabis Cultivation Program!

The Medical Cannabis Cultivation Program (MCCP) added two administrative support staff members in September and will fill five additional positions by the end of October. The program will continue to build staffing infrastructure to a total of 17 positions by the end of fiscal year 2016-2017.

The preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) is well underway, which will provide the public, state and local agencies, and permitting agencies information about the potential environmental effects associated with the adoption and implementation of statewide medical cannabis cultivation regulations. A contract was executed in July with an economist to conduct research on the economics of medical cannabis in the State and from that, prepare an economic impacts analysis that meets the requirements of the Administrative

Procedures Act.

A Notice of Preparation was published on September 1, 2016 and circulated to local, state and federal agencies, and entities interested in reviewing or commenting on the regulation outline or Draft PEIR at this stage in the process. Additionally, eight public scoping meetings were conducted throughout the state during September; giving the public and stakeholders an opportunity to provide input regarding the environmental analysis and regulation development.

The program expects to submit a draft set of regulations to the Office of Administrative Law by early 2017. The submission begins the 45-day public comment period, which is the first step of the Administrative Procedures Act process of formal adoption of the MCCP regulations into the California Code of

Regulations.

MCCP continues to work closely with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Department of Public Health, Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Water Resources Control Board, Air Resources Board and the County Agricultural Commissioners, and Sealers Association to coordinate implementation of the Medical Cannabis Regulation and Safety Act; and, to collaborate on cannabis related issues including the development of regulations.

For more information and program updates, please visit the MCCP website at: www.cdca.ca.gov/is/mccp.



Keeping Up with FREP!

FREP Special Request for Proposals

This summer FREP released a Special Request for Proposals (RFP) focusing on various aspects of soil nutrient management in California agricultural systems. The priority topics included: The Role of Biochar on Nutrient Management in California Soil-Crop Systems, Technical Education projects, and Addressing Challenges and Barriers to Improving Management Practices. Full proposals were due September 1, 2016. Fifteen full proposals were submitted to FREP and have been reviewed by FREP's Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TASC). For more information on the Special RFP visit FREP's

grant website at: <https://www.cdca.ca.gov/is/ffldrs/frep/CompetitiveGrantProgram.html>

FREP Conference

This year, FREP and the Western Plant Health Association (WPHA) are hosting the 24th Annual Fertilizer Research Conference in Modesto, California. The event will be held on October 26 and 27, 2016. The event brings together industry professionals and academic researchers to learn about the latest research on sound fertilizer management practices in California agriculture. Speakers from academia, agricultural consulting,

regulatory agencies, and industry will provide general and technical information, current research, and practical applications addressing State-wide and regional nutrient management issues.

To view the full conference agenda, register online, and see the approved continuing education units, please visit the conference website: <http://cdca.ca.gov/go/FREP>.



Updates from the Office of Farm to Fork!

Food Drive

The Office of Farm to Fork is the State lead for the California State Employees Food Drive and coordinated a fresh produce kickoff event for this year's drive at the Capital Mall Farmers' Market on September 29, 2016. The kickoff event echoed this year's theme "Giving is in Season Year Round" and the existence of hunger beyond the holiday season. Employees who work near the Capitol Mall Farmers' Market were encouraged to purchase produce from farmers and donate directly to the Reverse Food Truck, a program of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California Foundation. With the help of some very generous farmers, over 450 pounds of fresh produce was collected

and was delivered to River City Food Bank in Sacramento.

Request for Proposal - California Nutrition Incentive Program

The Office released the Request for Proposals for the 2017 California Nutrition Incentive Program. Applications are due October 14, 2016. The California Nutrition Incentive Program will provide incentives to CalFresh participants using their benefits to purchase produce at Certified Farmers' Markets. Please visit the following for more details: https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/egov/Press_Releases/Press_Release.asp?PRnum=16-035

Social Media

Over the past few months the Office launched Instagram and Pinterest accounts to better communicate statewide efforts to increase food access. To stay connected with Office of Farm to Fork projects subscribe to their blog, [Tales from the Field](#) and follow them on [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#).

New Additions

The Office is also excited to introduce a new member to the team, Tomi Jimenez. Tomi serves as the main point of contact for office budgets and contracts. Tomi has been with the State of California for over 16 years with a background in accounting and compliance. Welcome Tomi!

GIVING
IS IN SEASON YEAR-ROUND

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