

[HOT NEWS](#)

[Jose Juan Salazar, an Unlicensed Strawberry Handler, Sentenced to Serve 31 days in Monterey County Jail](#) . . .

On June 20, 2007, Jose Juan Salazar pled nolo contendere (no contest) to three misdemeanor charges of embezzlement, willful disobedience of a court order and operating without a license under the Produce Dealers Act. Mr. Salazar was previously licensed as the agent of Monterey Berry Marketing, LLC from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, at which time the license was not renewed. Mr. Salazar continued to handle farm products as a commission merchant without a license, failed to account for farm products received or make payment to growers as required under the Produce Dealers Act. Mr. Salazar was sentenced to serve 31 days in jail, pay court fines, obey all laws and not sell berries unless licensed to do so. A hearing regarding restitution to victims and recovery of investigative costs will take place August 2, 2007. In a similar case involving Mr. Salazar, a stipulated judgment was entered into on April 6, 2005 between Mr. Salazar and the Monterey County District Attorney. Mr. Salazar agreed to pay civil penalties and obey all laws.

[Preliminary Hearing set for Unlicensed Hay Dealer](#) . . . Criminal charges for operating without a license under the Produce Dealers Act have been filed with the Calaveras County District Attorney's office against Dale E. McMihelk. Mr. McMihelk was previously licensed under the PDA until February 8, 2005, at which time his license was revoked for violations of the PDA. An arraignment has been set for August 8, 2006.

[New Legislation Offers Expedited Arbitration](#) . . . As of January 1, 2006, new legislation (FAC 56382.8) offers parties that file a Verified Complaint the opportunity to informally mediate their dispute through the Market Enforcement Branch at no additional cost, other than the initial \$60 filing fee. In addition, if the dispute cannot be resolved through informal mediation, the parties may elect Expedited Arbitration if the claim does not exceed \$30,000. The parties mutually agree upon an arbitrator, who is registered with the department. The department provides the arbitrator with all written submissions. The arbitrator is required to issue a decision and award in writing within 30 days after the case has been submitted for a decision. The Expedited Arbitration fee is \$600 and appearances by the parties are not required. For further information, please contact the Market Enforcement Branch at (916) 341-6276.