

Federal Funding Position Paper
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NEED FOR INCREASED FEDERAL FUNDING

California's pest prevention program against biological pollution has not kept pace with the increased risks caused by the ease of today's interstate and international movement of people and commerce. Since 1993, the value of U.S. imports has doubled to approximately \$42 billion. On the export side, the federal government's efforts to reduce international trade barriers have increased California's exports by 68 percent. From 1980 to 2000, there was a 127 percent increase in international passenger arrivals. Volumes of air cargo are doubling every five to six years and an increasing percentage of this cargo consists of perishable commodities such as cut flowers, fruits and vegetables.

Ironically, during the past four years, the California pest prevention program that is operated by the County Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture has lost significant levels of funding – and more losses are projected. To provide California and thereby, the USA, with the greatest level of protection against plant and animals pests and diseases that can adversely impact human health, commerce, and our precious natural resources, a baseline of federal funding for pest prevention is needed.

In pest prevention there is no going back, pest that get established are in the United States to stay, with all the magnified costs associated with it. In this case, the simple axiom: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, should read a ton of cure.

California is regularly assaulted by pests that have been allowed to become established in other parts of the United States and those that slip by USDA inspection. In addition because of our diverse ecology and climate and immense variety of agricultural crops, these exotic pests more often become established here and become the center of further expansion into the rest of the country. The usual response, a quarantine of California, is very damaging and to California agriculture and very costly to everyone. The better solution is an effective pest prevention system.

Because of unprecedented levels of international and interstate travel, skyrocketing demands for exotic ethnic fruits and vegetables, and ever more sophisticated means of transportation of these commodities, the threats from both accidental, and intentional, introduction of exotic pests are at an all time high.

We are seeking \$22.1 million to help assure a safe food supply, a better environment and the continued viability of California and U.S. agriculture. The specifics are outlined below.

BACKGROUND

In 1881, the State of California established the County Agricultural Commissioner System, and required every county in California to have an Agricultural Commissioner who is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. Today, each County Agricultural Commissioner manages a regulatory agency serving under the direction of the California Secretary of Agriculture and the Director of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation.

Our mission is to protect agriculture, by enforcing Federal and State laws pertaining to a variety of agricultural programs. Our offices utilize over 1,200 trained and licensed biologists to perform the enforcement work in California – including, the statewide pest prevention program to guard against the establishment of serious agricultural pests, invasive noxious weed management and control, and wildlife management services.

County Agricultural Commissioners work collaboratively with Federal, State and County officials, providing a one-on-one interaction with our counterparts in both delivery and evaluation of regulatory

programs. We work as an Association to provide effective and uniform enforcement, while maintaining the flexibility to address local issues and priorities. Today, the need to protect our food supply is greater than ever. My testimony identifies the key areas where there is a need for additional funding in the regulatory programs that we operate cooperatively with USDA.

THE PEST PREVENTION PROGRAM: Biological Pollution Protection

With today's increasing movement of people and commerce, our environment is at serious risk from the unintentional introduction of exotic and invasive strains and species. These range from plants and animals to insect pests and various diseases. Invasive species are considered the second greatest threat to biological diversity (after habitat loss) and are a leading factor in listings under the Endangered Species Act. Ecologists increasingly refer to this collection of invasive organisms as "biological pollution," a significant threat to California's human health, commerce, and environment.

The County Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture have direct responsibilities to protect our state from biological pollution. We undertake these activities, not just for the benefit of agriculture, but also to protect all Californians, all California industries, and all of California's precious natural resources. Indeed, California would continue to face a significant biological pollution challenge even if agriculture in the state was eliminated and replaced by foreign produce imports. The rest of the nation also benefits from these efforts.

The County Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture manage programs for excluding, detecting, eradicating and controlling harmful animal diseases, insects, weeds, plant diseases, and rodents. Our pest prevention program is comprised of a series of complementary federal and state laws and regulations that restrict entry and movement of products capable of harboring biological pollution. This program is comprised of four interdependent parts that create a shield protecting California's human health, commerce, and the environment against biological pollution: Exclusion, Detection, Diagnostics, and Eradication.

Today, we work to eradicate the Red Imported Fire Ant, a scourge to wildlife and urban environments. We protect public health and safety and the food supply from animal diseases with human impacts, such as bovine tuberculosis and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease). We fight invasive aquatic weeds such as caulerpa, hydrilla, and water hyacinth. We combat terrestrial weeds, such as yellow starthistle, that displace native habitats, contribute to forest fires, and harm wildlife. We have successfully eradicated dozens of infestations of gypsy moth that threaten our forest resources, and have devoted many hours to defeating threats to urban landscapes, ranging from the ash whitefly and red gum lerp psyllid to the Japanese beetle.

These invasive pests and diseases have three things in common:

- They came to California from other areas of the globe;
- Their new home has many of the attributes of their native environments, but typically none of their enemies, making them powerful foes against our native species; and,
- The international movement of people and products brought them here.

THE PEST PREVENTION PROGRAM: Four integral components

Exclusion: Closing Pathways for Introduction

Interception of quarantined pests at points of entry is our primary defense against the introduction and spread of biological pollution. If allowed to enter and become established within the state, impacts from these pests and diseases would include increased food and fiber costs, increased pesticide use, and

damage to native species of plants and animals, forests, watersheds, lakes, rivers, and water delivery systems.

California's sixteen border inspection stations prevent the entry and permanent establishment of biological pollution and are located on the major highways entering the state via Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona. In 2002, over 33 million vehicles passed through the border agricultural inspection stations, including six million trucks and more than 800,000 recreational vehicles. Much of the material identified at these stations is sent to destination for additional inspection by the County Agricultural Commissioner. The effectiveness of the border inspection stations depends on the county component as an integral part of the exclusion network.

County Agricultural Commissioners are also the primary line of defense for all shipments moving into California by air, freight forwarders or other parcel handling companies.

Detection: Maintaining an Early Warning System

Occasionally serious exotic pests slip by USDA inspection, or our border stations, or come in undiscovered in luggage, personal effects or parcel shipments. The County Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture maintain an interior detection program designed to ensure that we are able to detect and eradicate or control small infestations and disease incursions before they become widely established. The Department works with other state departments of agriculture, foreign plant protection agencies, and industry to ensure that all commercial products and visitors entering the state are in compliance with the requirements of our quarantine laws and regulations. Part of this effort includes managing insect pest trapping programs that deploy more than 100,000 traps statewide each year.

As an example, in an effort to stay ahead of the southern California exotic Newcastle disease outbreak in 2003, the Department trained surveillance teams in several Central Valley counties and established an incident command post in Modesto.

Early recognition through adequate surveillance for biological pollution is critical for an effective response. When a new pest or disease is within a defined population, multiple eradication options are available. But, if the biological pollutant is not recognized until it has become widespread, the ability to control or eradicate the disease or contaminant becomes, at best difficult and, in some instances, impossible.

Diagnostics: California's Laboratory System

Any pest prevention program must be based on strong scientific principles in order to protect public health and the environment while successfully mitigating the societal costs of biological pollution.

Working together with the CDFA and USDA laboratories, the County Agricultural Commissioners, maintain a network of plant and insect identification laboratories to ensure that exotic pests are correctly identified in a timely manner so that quarantine action can be taken when necessary and trade is not hampered more than necessary.

Eradication and Control: Rapid Response

When exclusion fails and detection works, eradication follows and has a high degree of success. When both exclusion and detection fail, eradication efforts are much less successful and often impossible. In either case eradication is the most expensive element of a pest prevention program, except living with the pest.

As an example, if foot and mouth disease, one of the most highly contagious animal diseases known to man, were introduced into commercial livestock, the exponential spread would be catastrophic. A study

published by the Agricultural Issues Center in 1999 estimates that the total direct and indirect losses in California alone would reach \$13.5 billion. Because this disease spreads so rapidly, the cost of control and eradication increases by \$1 to \$2 million every hour a response is delayed or the disease goes undetected.

Similarly, actions taken during the first hours of an outbreak will have the greatest impact on eradication success. Government inquiries into the foot and mouth disease outbreak in the United Kingdom in 2001 have concluded that, although agricultural movement restrictions were placed on livestock within three days after the first reported case, this was considerably too late and contributed immensely to the difficulty of containing and eradicating the disease. Indeed, history has demonstrated that the public does not forgive a lack of response preparedness, especially when those with a duty to protect them understand what measures should be taken to reasonably mitigate risk.

Although each eradication campaign is unique, the California Department of Food and Agriculture continually strives to use the most scientifically advanced methods for eradicating pests while minimizing environmental and societal costs. The County Agricultural Commissioners and the California Department of Food and Agriculture use integrated pest control programs that use natural enemies along with other tools to control invasive, exotic pests. These programs provide economic and environmental benefits that are non-polluting, cost effective, sustainable, and, in some instances, permanent. Strategic use of biological control promotes a more judicious and effective use of herbicides and pesticides, which reduces agricultural runoff and increases safety for agricultural workers and the environment.

As an example, in 1988, the ash whitefly invaded California and quickly became a serious pest of several commonly planted urban trees. In fact, the swarms of flies were so thick in some urban neighborhoods they posed a health threat due to breathing impairment. To combat this pest, the California Department of Food and Agriculture imported a single species of parasitic wasp from Europe. Within two years of its release, this wasp greatly reduced the ash whitefly population. Today, although both insects are still present in California, they are difficult to detect in previously heavily infested ash and ornamental pear trees. A cost benefit analysis of this program shows that each dollar invested in the development of this biological control program returned \$265 in saved eradication and product loss costs.

An Effective Coordinated Pest Prevention Program \$15.9 Million

Counties' Pest Exclusion Program Funding - \$8.5 million

USDA periodically requests the County Agricultural Commissioners and California Department of Agriculture to investigate foreign shipments of fruit that contain serious agricultural pests. These agricultural emergencies require staff to be re-directed from other inspection programs in order to respond. In many cases, the fruit may have been partially distributed before the investigation began, and we rely on a statewide emergency response plan that has been developed to deal with a potential fruit fly outbreak in California.

Since California's agricultural production is a major national and international force, and has significant impact on our national economy, the lessons from these experiences are two-fold: 1) although the fruit is not intentionally infested, it brings to light the relative ease of a premeditated and deliberate attack on our agricultural economy. California is a major national and international force in agricultural production and marketing and as such, has a significant impact on our national economy; and, 2) there is a lack of sufficient federal funding for the pest exclusion programs in California. Because current exclusion efforts at our international ports do not always prevent accidental pest introductions, we need a strong secondary program, cooperatively funded in part by USDA, to fortify exclusion efforts to protect California and the nation's agriculture. The safety net for these protections should be in place at the international ports, California domestic border stations and at the local destination terminals.

The County High Risk Pest Exclusion is complimentary to, but not the same focus, as the California state border station program and efforts of USDA and Homeland Security operates at international ports of

entry in California. The State program operates its domestic border stations along the major interstate highways that enter and transect California. The County program focuses its operations at terminals inside the California borders such as nurseries, domestic airports, post offices, express carriers (UPS, FedEx and others), swap meets and many similar locations. All of these locations have just as much potential for the interception of dangerous fruit flies and contraband as the points of entry monitored by USDA and Homeland Security. In fact, when the County program was funded at its optimal level several years ago, high risk pest interceptions increased 300% and shipments of plant materials rejected for violations of plant quarantine laws increased 175%.¹ Each of these pest introductions can come with associated costs.

A recent University of California, Berkeley study found that the investment in pest prevention has returned 8 to 14 times the cost in economic benefits, when just four of the numerous pests are kept out of California. That estimate does not include the external costs of impacts on the environment, or public health from increased pesticide use that is averted.²

The federal government has been, and continues to be, a strong partner with California and other states in the eradication of many unwanted pests, exemplified in the recent efforts against the Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter and Exotic Newcastle's Disease. However, the federal government has not participated fully in prevention and exclusion efforts. While federal funding has been provided to help support the detection and eradication of pests, we ask for funding to keep these pests from becoming established in this country in the first place, and seek to form a funding partnership with USDA in the implementation of the County Pest Exclusion Program in California.

A study of the County High Risk Pest Exclusion Program, commissioned by the State Legislature, suggests the current program funding is \$8.5 million short of the optimal level. These County pest exclusion programs (supervised and coordinated by the state) operate with approximately \$13 million from state and county general funds. There is currently no Federal contribution.

In FY03, many of our California Members of Congress sponsored an FY03 appropriation request by Congressman Honda for \$5.5 million toward this program. The request was successful in raising awareness to the need, but no funding was appropriated. In FY04, the County Agricultural submitted a similar appropriation request for \$8.5 million, and received support from several House and Senate Members. Again, the request was not funded, although awareness was increased.

We are requesting a continuous appropriation to USDA in the amount of \$8.5 million for the County Pest Exclusion Program that the California Agricultural Commissioners operate in conjunction with our California Department of Food and Agriculture.

It is our understanding that many California Members of Congress will express support for our FY05 request and may submit similar testimony.

State/County Pest Detection Funding - \$7.4 million

The California Agricultural Commissioners, in conjunction with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, also operate the County Pest Detection Program. Under this program, County Agricultural Commissioners maintain a statewide network of insect traps and other detection tools to serve as an early warning system against serious agricultural pests. California is particularly vulnerable to invasion by destructive exotic pests due to the diversity of its agricultural production, climatic conditions, rapidly increasing trade opportunities and population. As such, California could easily serve as a gateway to the entire nation for devastating plant pests and disease vectors. This outcome could cost the Federal

¹ "County High Risk Pest Exclusion Program, December 1998 – November 1999, Report to the Legislature".

² "A Cost-Benefit Analysis of California's Pest Prevention Program", Bruce McWilliams, Tsung-Hsiu Tsai, and David Zilberman, 1999.

government millions of dollars in pest eradication efforts, and even more in the cost to state and local governments, businesses, individual families and the environment.

California has a critical role to play in acting as America's guardian against destructive invasive pests, but it is struggling to fund these programs sufficiently on its own. With equivalent Federal support to match the current State/County pest detection funding of \$7.4 million, California would increase detection trapping in the five months of the year that the state/county program does not operate or operates at less than biologically optimum levels; and, the detection program would be expanded to additional "high risk" areas that are not currently being monitored. We must vastly improve pest detection efforts, especially in urban areas, if we are to avoid the costly eradication projects that are required to protect the nation's food supply, and commercial agricultural production areas from exotic pests. Exotic pest infestations, even in urban areas, can restrict or stop export of high value crops to our trading partners. It is well established that pest prevention is crucial to ensuring the continued strong position of California's, and the nation's, agricultural industries, in both the balance of trade and the availability of an ample varied and safe food supply.

In FY04, the County Agricultural Commissioners submitted an appropriation request for \$5.5 million for the program, and received support from several House and Senate Members. Ultimately, the President signed HR 2763, which included \$750,000 for the County Pest Detection Augmentation Program. Although this amounted to partial funding, it represents the foundation for our current funding needs.

We are requesting a continuing appropriation to USDA in the amount of \$7.4 million for the County Pest Detection Program that the California Agricultural Commissioners operate here in conjunction with the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

It is our understanding that a number of California Members of Congress will express support for our FY05 request and may submit similar testimony.

Weed Management and Eradication Program - \$5 million

We are requesting a continuing appropriation to the USDA in the amount of \$5 million for support of weed eradication and management programs by the County Agricultural Commissioners.

The spread of non-native plant species has been recognized by the scientific community as the second greatest threat to natural ecosystems and the health and productivity of agricultural and forestlands throughout the country. According to the scientists, only loss of habitat itself is more threatening than the weed invasion. In 2002, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management stated that the spread of non-native plants cause an estimated \$20 billion in damage annually in the United States. Noxious weeds threaten beneficial uses of California's 102 million acres of land, jeopardize the safety of our citizens due to their extreme flammability and destroy California's rich and unique environmental biodiversity. Private and public landowners and managers have also identified the spread of invasive, noxious weeds throughout California and the western United States, as a serious problem that is growing.

County Agricultural Commissioners and California Department of Food and Agriculture establish and enforce quarantines that guard against the introduction of new noxious weed pests into California. This pest prevention system is based on the simple and proven principle that it is more cost-effective and environmentally sound to exclude weeds and other pests from California than it is to deal with them after they are widespread. While exclusion activities such as quarantine inspections of plant materials and seeds entering the state have prevented the introduction of many noxious weeds, increasing interstate and international trade have increased the pathways into the state and increased the threat from these pests. This coupled with the decline in local public resources available to fight this problem does not bode well for the future.

County Agricultural Commissioners have operated noxious weed eradication and management programs for decades. The focus of the eradication program has been to eradicate small populations of the most

potentially destructive weeds when they are found in the state. Historically, County Agricultural Commissioners have surveyed their counties for the presence of these specific weeds and have implemented integrated vegetation management programs, using a wide array of tools to eradicate the weeds before they spread. If noxious weed introductions are not eradicated, and become established within the state, a management program is implemented to keep the infested areas from growing. The local eradication and management programs emphasize public/private partnerships between the California Department of Food and Agriculture, County Agricultural Commissioners, landowners and managers. Many of these relationships have existed for decades and have proven to be beneficial to the partners.

In FY 2000, the State provided \$5 million in funding for County Agricultural Commissioners to formalize these cooperative public/private partnerships over a three-year period, naming the cooperative program Weed Management Areas (WMAs). The WMAs are consortiums of private landowners, resource conservation groups, and agencies that focus on specific problems that are generally beyond the scope of an eradication effort and demand the focus and resources of multiple groups. The WMAs have oversight committees, comprised of the public/private partners, which decide project funding, guidelines and overall parameters of the program, including protection of property rights and access.

This appropriation expires in June of 2004, and most of the WMAs and county eradication programs will need additional funding to continue to play a vital role in addressing the spread of noxious weeds into, and from California.

Wildlife Management Services Program - \$1.2 million

We are requesting a review of the appropriation criteria, and an increase in continuous appropriation to the USDA-APHIS, Wildlife Services budget of \$1.2 million, to support the California Wildlife Management Services Program at a level that is more reflective of the state's size, topography, diversity of habitat and wildlife species and agricultural production as compared to other states in the Western Region (see display next page).

California is the most populous state in the nation and is the third largest state in terms of land mass. Additionally, California has led the nation in Agricultural production for over 50 consecutive years and according to the 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture ranked third in the nation in livestock and poultry production. Despite these high national rankings, California's vast geography, dense populations, diversity of terrain, habitat and diverse wildlife resources, we ranked 17th out of the 19 states in the Western Region on a percentage basis in federal funding for Wildlife Management Services.

The California Wildlife Management Services programs provide a variety of invaluable services to both the general population and the agricultural community. Cooperating counties receive the services of trained professional Wildlife Specialists. These professionals educate the public on non-lethal methods of addressing conflicts with wildlife; protect the public from attacks by predatory animals and from exposure to rabies. They also protect the traveling public from collisions between wildlife and aircraft on and around airports. They provide protection to numerous threatened and endangered species and protect livestock and fruit, nut and row crops, from depredateing wildlife.

Because of the disproportionately low level of federal funding compared to other western states, and California's unprecedented fiscal crisis, many counties are being forced to consider drastically reducing or eliminating their cooperative Wildlife Management Services Programs all together.

Comparison of Federal and Cooperative Funding for Wildlife Services

Western Region						
Western Region	% Federal Funding	FY 01 Federal Funds	FY 01 Cooperative Funds	Total	Population	Funding per Capita
Wyoming	67.49%	\$ 1,238,322	\$ 596,567	\$ 1,834,889	493,782	2.508
Idaho	66.59%	\$ 1,251,668	\$ 628,123	\$ 1,879,791	1,293,953	0.967
Colorado	61.30%	\$ 745,013	\$ 470,306	\$ 1,215,319	4,301,261	0.173
North Dakota	59.52%	\$ 777,549	\$ 528,793	\$ 1,306,342	642,200	1.211
New Mexico	54.72%	\$ 1,232,293	\$ 1,019,658	\$ 2,251,951	1,819,046	0.677
Utah	47.68%	\$ 935,580	\$ 1,026,649	\$ 1,962,229	2,233,169	0.419
Nevada	45.38%	\$ 773,891	\$ 931,310	\$ 1,705,201	1,998,257	0.387
Arizona	45.12%	\$ 485,347	\$ 590,440	\$ 1,075,787	5,130,632	0.095
Montana	44.48%	\$ 1,430,363	\$ 1,785,566	\$ 3,215,929	902,195	1.585
Oregon	43.82%	\$ 939,705	\$ 1,204,729	\$ 2,144,434	3,421,399	0.275
Nebraska	42.90%	\$ 331,883	\$ 441,688	\$ 773,571	1,711,263	0.194
Kansas	42.06%	\$ 73,543	\$ 101,317	\$ 174,860	2,688,418	0.027
Texas	40.06%	\$ 4,478,608	\$ 6,701,024	\$ 11,179,632	20,851,820	0.215
Oklahoma	28.59%	\$ 746,175	\$ 1,863,786	\$ 2,609,961	3,450,654	0.216
Washington	26.35%	\$ 547,722	\$ 1,531,117	\$ 2,078,839	5,894,121	0.093
Hawaii	25.90%	\$ 439,382	\$ 1,256,747	\$ 1,696,129	1,211,537	0.363
California	25.35%	\$ 1,466,235	\$ 4,318,816	\$ 5,785,051	33,871,648	0.043
South Dakota	22.32%	\$ 321,896	\$ 1,120,104	\$ 1,442,000	754,844	0.426
Alaska	21.98%	\$ 187,651	\$ 666,179	\$ 853,830	696,932	0.269
Total Western Region	40.73%	\$ 18,402,826	\$ 26,782,919	\$ 45,185,745	93,367,131	0.197