

Board of Agriculture Quarterly Update
Plant Industry Division
June 3, 2015

All Division staffs NPD 14's (work performance standards) and NPD 15's (evaluations) were completed and approved by the Deputy Director as of March.

The entomology, rangeland health, noxious weeds, seed certification and plant pathology programs have all hired or are in the process of hiring seasonal employees to conduct a variety of surveys for this summer. In total approximately 11 Plant Industry seasonals will be hired in the Sparks, Elko and Las Vegas offices.

The rangeland health and noxious weeds programs were instrumental in coordinating with Congressman Amodei's office to get the Carson BLM office to treat noxious weeds in their district. A Sage grouse report was released by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) which proposes large regulation recommendations that grossly overstated the participation of western state departments of agriculture. These programs, in cooperation with Congressman Amodei's office and Western Policy Group, intend to make it known that the publication of this report was poorly executed and not supported by NDA. The noxious weeds coordinator gave a well-received presentation on NDA's EddMAPS app at the Western Plant Board meeting in Colorado in May which sparked the interest of many other states. In a separate agenda item on the June 3, 2015 BOA meeting staff will give an update the production of a phone app which assist ranchers in conducting their own rangeland monitoring and the status of the Sage grouse EIS and the work that staff have been involved in.

PCO and ADMIN staff are currently working together to develop the scope of work to get the PCO online registration system developed. To date this will be the most diverse online registration system for NDA. It will encompass relicensing, CEU tracking and the ability to schedule and take exams all through a website interface with an administrative backend for approvals and tracking. As with the online registration for pesticide, the goal here is to significantly reduce staff time in the registration process and also allow for more layers of data, more efficient organization and be able to run more comprehensive and useful reports.

Environmental services was involved with an investigation by a local TV station of a possible pesticide misuse by RTC on public busses in Las Vegas. Ultimately it was found that the pesticide in question was safe to use indoors, however the NDA made recommendations that RTC use an alternative product that is specifically labeled for use on busses.

Ground squirrels continue to be a big problem this year due to drought and a mild winter. Since February, 365 bottles of strychnine paste were produced and sold immediately. A PO for more raw strychnine was expedited through state purchasing and we intend to have more paste for sale by mid-June. Cost on the raw product went up \$0.50/per ounce which will equate to an additional \$3.00/bottle to our customers.

It is anticipated that the plant pathology lab will have received its System for True, Accurate & Reliable Diagnostics (StarD) national accreditation from the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) by the end of May. Only two other labs (universities) have received this accreditation in the nation and NDA is the 1st department of agriculture to earn it.

The first report of the season of Mormon crickets came from the Gerlach area; the entomology program surveyed the area late May and found a small band (~3-5/sq yd). It is still too early in the season to predict if populations of Mormon crickets or economically damaging grasshoppers will be a factor for Nevada this year.

Updates concerning the Organic Certification program will be discussed during a separate agenda item at the June 3, 2015 BoA meeting.

Peggy McKie our Nursery Program manager retired on May 29th. Peggy worked for NDA for more than 21 years. Over that time she had managed the Nursery, Organic, Phytosanitation, USDA-AMS, Producer Certification and State Free Sale programs. We appreciate all of her hard work and dedication to the department and wish her a happy and fulfilled retirement.