



Plant Industry Division January 22, 2016
Board Update

- The vacant deputy administrator position was filled January 4, 2016 by Meghan Brown and has been transferred to the Elko office.
- The Agriculturist III (noxious weeds coordinator) resigned and with this position and the Agriculturist IV (rangeland health manager) position open we will be reevaluating some of the duties between the two positions and start recruiting in February. The rangeland health manager position will also be transferred to the Elko office.
- Pesticide annual registration started in October and closed December 31, 2016 with 95 percent of our registrants successfully registering online.
- With the success of the online registration system, we were able to consolidate the duties of three AAs to two.
- The chemistry lab has developed methods for testing pesticide residues in medical marijuana samples and is receiving samples for analysis from the Department of Public and Behavioral Health.
- All Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey Grants for federal fiscal year 2014 were concluded between September and December of 2015. All surveys were negative for targeted species and all results have been entered into the national databases.
- The Mediterranean pine engraver, *Orthotomicus erosus* (Wollaston), was positively identified from two locations in southern Nevada. One site was near Blue Diamond and the other was a firewood distributor in Las Vegas. The beetles were collected in traps as part of the National Exotic Woodborer Survey funded through the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey. This represents the first record of this beetle in the U.S. outside of California. The beetle appears to very aggressively attack stressed trees and rarely attacks healthy trees. Further investigation of these sites will take place in early Jan. to determine possible hosts and pathways into Nevada. At this time NDA will not pursue any regulatory/quarantine actions, but will be working on educational information on the insect.
- As of March 31, 2016 the NDA will be surrendering our Organic Accreditation. Organic staff has been in the process of completing the 2015 organic inspection review process and are assisting clients towards transitioning to private certifiers. The NDA has provided their organic certification program policies and procedures documents to Great Basin and Range Organics to assist as they apply for NOP organic accreditation, which will create an additional certification option for NDA clients.
- The NDA received a USDA Farm to School Training grant to host two conferences in Southern and Northern Nevada that will provide technical assistance and networking opportunities for those involved in school gardens, procurement of school foods, or other Farm to School activities.
- Nursery Program Inspectors coordinated with big box stores in southern Nevada to remove palm trees infested with *Phaeochoropsis neowashingtoniae*, the fungal pathogen causing diamond scale disease, from sale. Preventing the sale of infested plants keeps the disease from spreading to home gardens and commercial landscapes and from becoming an established pathogen in Nevada.



- The Pest Control program has placed, as free downloads, most of the study guides for the pest control exams. This makes the study guides freely available, and also reduces the need for prospective pest control licensees to make a special trip to the office to purchase them or purchase them by mail. It also allows program personnel to update the study guides in a timelier manner and they don't have to wait for print cycles and inventory clearance.
- Staff in the Pest Control program continue to work with Gayle Willmoth and the Administrator to develop a scope of work to move the pest control licensing to an online system similar to pesticide registration.
- The Seed Program is looking at restructuring the protocol for carrying out Allium quarantine inspections. This may entail the use of drone technology in order to better, more efficiently survey fields for disease presence. Incorporating this technology will allow expedited survey time and will enable the Department to survey fields later in the season, when fungal presence is more identifiable in its mature state. Efforts to certify native seed stands are on the rise and the program has successfully certified multiple native, source identified seed stands throughout the fall season.
- Through collaboration between Jeff Knight and Chuck Moses the NDA Pollinator Protection Plan has been developed and was presented to the Board in September. It is aimed at reducing pesticide exposure to bees and other pollinating insects through timely communication and coordination among key stakeholders, including beekeepers, growers, pesticide applicators and landowners.
- Environmental Services staff participated in discussions related to U.S. EPA regulation changes to the Federal Worker Protection Standard (WPS) and Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP) Certification. The new requirements for WPS will go into effect May of 2017 and the comment period for RUP closes January 2016. Special chemical registrations (FIFRA 24c) for local pest problems were pursued through the EPA on zinc phosphide concentrate for control of ground squirrels in agricultural settings and DRC 1339 to control common ravens, American crows and black-billed magpies around landfills, deadpits or dump sites where they pose a health and/or safety risk to humans.