

September 9, 2020 Board Report

Plant Industry



Division Overview

- Pending matters of significance
 - As required by USDA, the department submitted a hemp state plan detailing current authority and procedures for implementing a federally compliant program. USDA responded with clarification to regulations that need to be adopted, even though they are under review by USDA for reconsideration. To proceed with a hemp program by October 31, 2020, these changes will be needed to meet minimum federal requirements. A workshop for NAC 557 was scheduled for August 27, 2020. Below are requirements that are anticipated to impact hemp producers.
 - NAC additions
 - Authority will be needed to designate any variety that tests >0.5% THC as a negligent violation. Failure to register or provide a legal location of the crop are also considered negligent violations. If there are 3 negligent violations within a 5-year period, the certificate holder is ineligible to produce hemp for a period of 5 years from the date of the 3rd violation.
 - Crop must be harvested within 15 days samples are collected by the department.
 - NDA procedure changes
 - The department currently has authority for sampling that meets federal regulations per 2019 SB347. However, it has also been included in the proposed changes to regulation under NAC557. NDA proposed equal parts flower to leaf/stem for sampling. Per USDA and the interim final rules, sampling must consist of flower parts only, which will likely result in higher THC levels.
- Partnership activities
 - NV Native Seed Partnership in conjunction with BLM, NDOW, and State FS Subgroups affiliated with the NV Native Seed Partnership, have begun meeting to accomplish goals listed throughout the NV Seed Strategy with Nevada native seed production from Nevada producers as a priority. The department is working with partners to establish a producer resource webpage and to secure funding, specifically with BLM, to support producers in entering this market.

Program Updates

- Plant Pathology
 - The plant pathology program has submitted 2019-2020 annual accomplishment reports to the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) administrated and funded by USDA-NIFA. The report highlighted:
 - 3 peer-reviewed publications beneficial to producers and state labs
 - 5 outputs contributing to the NPDN, since NDA is an authorized national diagnostics lab

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- 15 first detections of new diseases in Nevada or the United States
- 11 new accomplishments related to new method development and diagnostic capacity enhancement
- 2667 regulatory diagnoses related to ag enforcement, inspections, quarantines, export, and exotic disease surveys
- 15 professional development workshops or events related to college student teaching, industry professional training, NPND diagnostician training and lab accreditation auditing
- The plant pathology lab has evolved into a high-level plant health diagnostic lab and diagnosed almost 4,000 samples/cases in FY 20. The number represents a 100% jump from FY18, and a 33% increase from FY19. The lab provides professional services to industries, government agencies, the general public and other stakeholders.
- Plant pathology secured external funding of \$177,064 in SFY 21, which represents a 38% jump from the previous year. Most of the funding increase is to support the operations of a diagnostic laboratory on a national level.
- Seed
 - The nationwide issue involving unsolicited seeds from China is sweeping through Nevada as well. NDA staff has fielded several hundred calls/emails related to individuals receiving packages (257 as of 8/17/20). Packages vary, but in most cases, the recipient has opened a package to reveal 1-4 small bags of seed. USDA-APHIS is investigating with assistance from the state. When possible, the USDA-APHIS, Reno branch is requesting that packages be sent to their office to be examined.
 - Annual allium crop inspection found two garlic fields infected with stem and bulb Nematode (*Ditylenchus dipsaci*). Both garlic fields were rejected for seed certification and the fields are ordered to remain out of garlic/onion production for a minimum of 2 growing seasons. No white rot has been detected.
- Entomology
 - Total invasive species trap placements are less than previous years due to the lack of an imported fire ant survey this Spring and Summer (COVID-19 hiring freeze), however, over 6,000 placements or service visits were made this fiscal year. Seasonal staff have since been approved and hired.
 - Identifications of physical specimens submitted to the department were less than previous years (155 vs about 400 in past years) due to COVID-19 and a shift in picture identifications through email or text messages (257 vs. 100 the previous year).
 - Over 52,000 identifications were made by entomology personnel during survey activities to screen for target species.
- Chemistry
 - EPA has approved an emergency-use Nevada Section-18 application for the use of pesticide product, Sefina, to control blue alfalfa aphids in alfalfa in Nevada. This will apply to future growing seasons.

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- Growth has been experienced in the registration of fertilizer products as the department has already exceeded registrations in calendar year 2020 with several months remaining for registration.

Fertilizer Products Registration Summary	
Calendar Year	Total Registered Products
2018	5,204
2019	5,329
2020	5,536

- Pesticides Education and Enforcement Program
 - NDA has a pesticide waste disposal and container recycling program. The recycling program is gaining more traction throughout the state and there is more participation from industry. In 2014, the program was in its initial stages with approximately 15,000 pounds collected.

	Fiscal Year 2019	Fiscal Year 2020
Pesticide Waste Disposal	19,840 lbs.	26,800 lbs.
Pesticide Container Recycling	34,317 lbs.	~70,000 lbs (Collection event will not be until October, but all storage areas have exceeded capacity.)

- Per NAC 555.430, Wood Destroying Pest Inspection Reports (WDPIR) are required to be submitted to NDA by pest control companies who conduct structural inspections in homes and businesses. NDA staff is looking to hire an outside contractor to make all WDPIRs online and digitized. If successful, industry would be able to conduct the inspection, fill out, and submit the WDPIR to NDA digitally. The reports would be stored on a cloud server where they would be accessible for compliance assurance or record requests. Over 18,000 WDPIRs were collected during fiscal year 2020.
- There has been a slight reduction in the number of licensed Pest Control Businesses and Pest Control Licensees compared to previous years, though it is unknown if this is directly tied to the impacts of COVID-19.

Pesticide License and Business Statistics	
2018 Licensed Businesses	540
2019 Licensed Businesses	578
2020 Licensed Businesses	538
2018 Pest Control Licensees	1,787
2019 Pest Control Licensees	1,809
2020 Pest Control Licensees	1,723

- Crops
 - The department provides shipping point inspections, which includes USDA grading services to ensure the quality and size meets USDA product standards. Whether these inspections are required is dependent on the buyer and Canada is the primary requester. The table below demonstrates a 37.6% growth in inspection requests experienced in FY20, in addition to a 48.4% increase in volume exported. Industry has indicated that additional production and export is intended for FY21. An additional staff position is needed to meet the growing demand and is being requested as part of the 22/23 budget request.

	FY18	FY19	FY20
Number of Export and Phytosanitary Certificates Issued	537	534	735
Pounds applied for export	7,363,770	6,660,927	9,885,468

- A CARES Act request for applications was released to address COVID-19 food inventorying and distribution challenges. Three projects met the program requirements and were selected for funding which include:
 - Park Farms: \$46,604 to expand their mobile farmers market to two additional locations, which includes tribal communities. They will perform market buyouts and increase product distribution to low-income communities.
 - Fallon Food Hub: \$56,732 to purchase a refrigerated truck and expand distribution of Nevada products. They will be collaborating with the Desert Farming Initiative on pick-up, storage, and distribution methods.

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- A CARES Act request for applications was released to provide assistance to operations that have had to adapt employee and food safety measures and diversify their offerings to meet consumer needs. Eligible candidates include producers, agriculture businesses, farmers markets and food hubs, agriculture product processors, in addition to wineries, breweries, and distilleries that source a minimum of 51% of Nevada grown products. Examples of eligible activities include personal protection equipment, employee housing, crop buy-outs, improved distribution, and land labor costs.
- The hemp program has experienced a reduction in grower and seed producer certification compared to 2019, however participation is similar to 2018. It is unknown if this shift is attributed to new grower challenges, market demands, COVID-19, or federal requirements.

State of Nevada Statistics	Acres	Sq. Ft.
2016 Applied Area =	319.28	400.00
2016 Producers =	11	
2017 Applied Area =	490.20	17,170.00
2017 Planted =	434.50	17,170.00
2017 Growers =	26	
2018 Applied Area =	1,880.06	235,688.00
*2018 Planted =	1,128.00	141,413.00
2018 Growers =	115	
2019 Applied Area =	14,693.86	1,623,022.00
2019 Certified Area =	14,225.66	1,612,342.00
2019 Planted =	4,917.54	266,668.00
2019 Growers =	216	
**2020 Applied Area =	5010.56	972,801.00
**2020 Certified Area =	3821.30	784,623.00
**2020 Planted =	N/A	N/A
**2020 Growers =	112	

**2018 planted area is approximate based upon observations during field inspections.*

***2020 data as of 8/10/2020*

Industry Impact-COVID-19

- Entomology
 - There has been a significant decrease in grasshopper and Mormon cricket surveys in FY20 due to COVID-19 travel and hiring restrictions, which have since been resolved. NDA and PPQ treatments of Mormon cricket infestation were minimal due to issues with finalizing the Environmental Assessment. Humboldt, Lander,

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- and Eureka counties did do some treatments of private and BLM land within their counties.
- Imported fire ant surveys in southern Nevada has been impacted by the same COVID-19 restrictions. We hope to get those surveys underway soon. We have been assisted by PPQ personnel to complete the surveys.
- COVID-19 travel restrictions allowed for a record number of specimens (11,143) to be identified and sorted for the collection.
- Pesticide Education and Enforcement Program
 - Due to state office closures and COVID-19 concerns, pesticide applicator testing was closed from March 16-June 24, 2020. Limited pesticide applicator testing is being permitted on a scheduled basis to allow for social distancing. Upon reinstating testing, individuals who were scheduled prior to the state office closure were given priority. Following this, companies who contacted NDA with testing requests since March 16, 2020 were scheduled prior to any new requests. Testers and staff are required to adhere to the safety procedures found [here](#).