

## June 3, 2020 Board Update

### Plant Industry Division

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#### Division Update

- Partnership activities
  - Crops
    - NDA will be partnering with NASDA, Oregon and Washington on a Specialty Crop Grant to start a Woman's Farm Food Accelerator which is aimed at providing mentorship to women starting specialty crop agriculture businesses.
  - Noxious Weeds
    - Conservation Districts
    - Noxious weeds staff continue to collaborate with conservation districts while developing or promoting Cooperative Weed Management Associations (CWMA) across the state. Recently the newly formed Washoe Storey CWMA acquired tax exempt status and the Pershing County CWMA elected new board members. By supporting and promoting such active groups the control of noxious weeds becomes a local interest only strengthened by state laws requiring their control.
  - Tribal Collaboration
    - The department's noxious weeds program is continuing to try and establish partnerships with Nevada tribal communities and conservation staff to prompt monitoring and treatment on tribal land. Trainings were to be held with Duck Valley, Duck Water, and Washoe tribe, in addition to the Tribal Council of Nevada however these were postponed due to Covid-19. Program staff were able to meet with the Reno Sparks Indian Colonies, Natural Resources Manager to provide technical assistance concerning two noxious weed infestations on lands owned by the tribe in and around Hungary Valley

#### Program Updates

- Crops
  - Hemp
    - A work program has been submitted to request a new Agriculturist and chemist to support hemp program registration, sampling, and testing requirements. If approved, the Agriculturist position will be housed in Las Vegas, where most production is taking place.
  - Specialty Crop Block Grant
    - This program allocates funds to each state to support education, research, and promotion projects that will ultimately increase the production, consumption, and distribution of specialty crops (sole proprietorships are not eligible). Below is a summary of projects that have been selected for submission to USDA.
    - Women's Farm Food Accelerator to Provide Education, Mentorship to women starting agriculture businesses.
    - Reno Garlic Festival to promote increased sales and consumption of locally grown Garlic through an annual event.

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- Mobile Processing Feasibility study to research the viability of creating a mobile processing vehicle that can be used by small growers.
- Park Farm Mobile Farmers Market to expand farmers market opportunities into underserved minority areas.
- Nevada Beekeepers Conference. To provide education and marketing opportunities for Nevada Beekeepers through an annual conference.
- Funding to support NDA SCBGP grant administration.
- Export
  - 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 the 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
<b>Number of Export and Phytosanitary Certificates Issued</b>	537	534	735
<b>Pounds applied for export</b>	7,363,770	6,660,927	9,885,468

- Pesticide Program
  - NDA pesticide staff is active in conducting inspections and following-up on complaint investigations. During inspections, all inspectors are adhering to social distancing protocols and guidelines provided by the Nevada Health Response.
  - Pest control companies consisting of small and large were randomly selected to complete a questionnaire involving whether requiring a product label on application devices was impractical or created undue hardships. This information gathering was performed in addition to the public meetings and industry engagement that has already taken place for R154-17. Additional information was gathered to further evaluate the concerns expressed from NVPMA. Thus far, out of 15 interviews, 1 was opposed to the requirement.
- Chemistry Program
  - Alfalfa farmers have been experiencing significant aphid issues this spring that are not being resolved with currently approved EPA products. As a result, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and industry have been working on an EPA Section-18 emergency exemption request for Sefina to be used for blue alfalfa aphid control. The NDA has submitted the Section-18 request.

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- ISO accreditation, which serves to ensure analysis precision and consistency, is being researched and initiated. This will be required for labs processing hemp samples per the Interim Hemp Rule. Chemistry is establishing SOPs required under this accreditation, is obtaining quotes, and is preparing for a pre-assessment audit to initiate the process.
- Plant Pathology
  - Plant Pathology Lab has been designated as a Nevada State Hub Lab and classified as “Standard Plus” level Diagnostic Laboratory by the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN). The criteria to qualify for a Standard Plus lab are based on lab capacity and capability as well as lab/staff’s contributions to and leadership in the NPDN. A Standard Plus Lab will receive highest level of funding from the NPDN (through NIFA) and provide region- or nation-wide diagnostic support and continue contributions to the network, which is not required for basic or standard laboratories.
- Entomology
  - 2019 Cooperative Agreement Pest and Farm Bill Surveys for exotic insect pests were completed and sample analyses was completed. Over 3,780 samples were collected from traps for 23 exotic pests, all of which were negative. This represents over 10,000 identifications.

### Industry Impact

- Activities in response to COVID-19
  - Inspection services with minimal to no public contact are proceeding with social distancing
    - Pest Control Operators
    - Ground water monitoring
    - Pesticide Residue analysis
    - Hemp sampling
    - Noxious weeds and bio-control monitoring
    - Weed Free Gravel/Forage Inspections
    - Allium Quarantine
  - Onion grading inspections proceeded with PPE provisions in place
  - Overnight travel restricted. Leveraging regional offices and partners to complete pest surveys in areas that cannot be reached through day trips
  - Pesticide Control Operator licensing was suspended until state offices can re-open since these exams must be proctored. Extensions on licenses current from 3/17/20 (or those that had exams already scheduled that were cancelled due to the shut-down) have been extended 90 days.
  - [Guidance documents](#) have been provided on operating requirements in response to COVID-19 to the following:
    - Pest Control Operators
    - Nurseries
    - Farmers Markets

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- Crops
  - Hemp
    - An accepted State Hemp Plan that meets requirements detailed in the Interim Final Hemp Rules is required for states to have a program as of November 1, 2020. A virtual presentation is being prepared for industry stakeholders, outlining USDA requirements for State Hemp Plans and NDA's authority to proceed. This was also discussed at the Nevada Farm Bureau annual meeting in November of 2019.
- Pesticide Program
  - Pest control industry members have stressed concern about getting new people tested and licensed during the COVID-19 closure of state offices. Pest control is a seasonal business and companies are trying to hire licensed applicators for the spring and summer. Some applicators renew by acquiring continuing education units (CEU) and others renew by testing in lieu of CEUs. Since state offices are closed, testing is not being scheduled. The department is establishing procedures for testing to resume upon the opening of state offices that accounts for social distancing and sanitation procedures.
  - CEU workshop and training session challenges are expected in the fall and winter. Pest control applicators are required to renew their license by acquiring CEU's; all licenses expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. NDA does approve online CEU classes, but most industry members attend live classroom trainings. Staff are working on a possible solution to host trainings using online communication tools.
- Entomology/Plant Pathology
  - Mormon Cricket Program and other surveys
    - Overnight travel restrictions are limiting pest surveys. It is estimated that surveys are being completed at 25% the level of previous years. Continuation of COVID- 19 restrictions will impact detection and rapid response in some of the rural areas, however regional office staff are being trained to assist. Further, staff are reaching out to regional partners to assist with pest and bio-control surveys.
  - Mormon Cricket and Grasshopper Survey and Control.
    - The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Mormon cricket/grasshopper control program prepared by USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine (USDA AHPIS PPQ) was to be finalized on April 7. However, two groups each filed 30 pages of comment, which has not been submitted to this level in the past. USDA-PPQ has been working to address these comments for the last month. Without the EA USDA and NDA cannot perform treatments and have now missed the window for aerial applications of Dimilin. When the EA is completed alternative aerial applications with bait are planned for smaller focused areas.