

COUNTY OF SOLANO

DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL BIOLOGIST

Rev. 12/95

DEFINITION

Under general direction, performs inspection, detection, prevention control and enforcement activities for all agricultural program areas within an assigned geographical area; performs related duties as require.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This class is characterized by the performance of advanced journey level Agricultural Biologist work. Incumbents usually work independently within an assigned district, however, in the event of a major incident or peculiar situation, specialized or supervisory staff may be temporarily assigned to the district. This class is distinguished from Supervising Agricultural Biologist in that the latter carries specific program responsibility and regularly exercises full line supervisory prerogatives.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Duties may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Inspects incoming shipments of plant material arriving at post offices, railroads, bus terminals, retail nurseries and other points of entry to ensure compliance with federal, state and other points of entry to ensure compliance with federal, state and local quarantines; inspects agricultural products for evidence of diseases or insect infestation; enforces plant quarantines and supervises treatment or destruction of quarantined products/materials; collects, identifies and submits for analysis specimens from shipments for detection of pests; inspects feed and grain mills to ascertain freedom from weed seed pests; issues state and local certificates of origin compliance for shipments destined for other states and counties; issues federal and state phytosanitary certificates for agricultural commodities destined for export to foreign countries.
2. Investigates applications for pesticide applicators certificates and use permits; inspects pesticide mixing, loading, storage and disposal operations; inspects facilities, records areas in which pesticides are sold, stored and used; ensures compliance with health and safety laws and regulations; ensures proper notification prior to pesticide applications; issues or denies use permits; conducts pre-site inspections; investigates episodes of alleged human illness, property loss, adverse environmental impact or other effects; trains pest control advisors, field workers and employees in the proper and safe application of pesticides; consults with and submits reports to the Pesticide Use Enforcement unit to assure compliance with current laws and regulations.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (Continued)

3. Inspects commercial crops, range land and right-of-ways to detect, manage, control and eradicate pests; visits residents, County and city parks to assist in identifying and controlling garden and household pests; conducts surveys to determine the presence or spread of pests; collects insects, nematodes and diseased plants for laboratory analysis; mixes and sell bait for rodent and other vertebrate pest management/control; sets and inspects traps to detect pests such as gypsy moths, fruit flies etc.; notifies the appropriate unit of significant problems finds or incidents which will require specialized attention; works as part of the unit to correct/improve situations attention; works as part of the unit to correct/improve situations; provides liaison between the unit and the residents of the district to ensure effective public relations; and enlists public cooperation.
4. Conducts surveys and checks for infestations of various weeds, especially noxious weeds; controls infestations by cutting weeds or by applying herbicides; surveys high hazard areas and submits samples of unknown plants for identification; may request intense or specific weed control measures.
5. Inspects retail markets, packing facilities, fruit and vegetable stands, warehouses and other places where fruits, vegetables, nuts, honey and/or eggs are sold to enforce standards for quality, freshness, proper labeling of containers, maturity size, freedom from insects, mold, decay and mechanical damage; issues certificates to permit individuals to sell products; certifies fruits, vegetables, nuts and hone for shipment; inspects egg production growers for compliance with federal egg surveillance program; consults with/advises program supervisor of significant incidents or finds.
6. Inspects nurseries for evidence of insects or diseases; quality and care of plants, proper plants and product labeling; supervises treatment of soil for nematode or other pest control; provides guidance and information to nurseries concerning pest control, plant identification and care; certifies eligibility of nursery for operation.
7. Visits stores and seed storage facilities to inspect seeds for compliance with federal and state seed laws; checks labeling, purity of seed and percentage of mixtures of variety seeds; takes samples; inspects certified mill harvesters and equipment; issues certificates and inter-County seed permits.
8. Inspects beehives for diseased colonies; registers hives and enforce regulations for registration, movement notices and notifications of pesticide applications; enforces quarantine regulations for imported hives.
9. Issues warnings and instructions for violations; gathers evidence and prepares reports for administrative hearings or court actions; testifies at hearings and in court; may assist in training less experienced staff.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (Continued)

10. Keeps the public informed of departmental operations, federal, state and local rules, regulations and procedures; resolves disputes between neighbors arising from pest infestations; gathers/compiles crop, orchard, production, price and yield/acre data for annual crop report and reports to various state and federal agencies.
11. Participates in rotational office duty with other biologists; receives public requests/inquiries/complaints; identifies problems and takes or directs actions to resolve them; issues federal and state phytosanitary and quarantine certificates; issues fruit, nut and vegetable market producer certificates; sells rodent baits and gives information/instruction on their use; issues burn permits; issues insect and disease block replacements; answers questions from the public and the media on agriculture issues.

QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

Education and/or Experience

Some experience in each program area of the Agriculture Division which demonstrates possession of and competency in requisite knowledge and abilities. Typical qualifying experience would be:

Two years experience equivalent to a journey level Agricultural Biologist in a California Agriculture Commissioner's Office.

Knowledge/Abilities

Considerable knowledge of the goals and objectives of a comprehensive agricultural inspection and regulation program; the federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations governing agricultural inspection and regulation; types and uses of pesticides, herbicides and bait; types of weeds and pests found in the County and effective methods for the management, control, eradication or prevention of infestations; various species of plants; types of agricultural products, fruits vegetables and nuts raised, sold, imported or exported from the County and symptoms/causes of damage to these products; symptoms of diseased beehives.

Working knowledge of effective public relations methods; the geographical, typographical, demographical and entomological make up of Solano County; botany and zoology.

Ability to work independently within an assigned district; schedule and complete work on individual initiative; understand, interpret and explain laws, regulations and policies governing agricultural program operations; make decisions and independent judgments; communicate effectively with people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and temperaments; establish and maintain cooperative working relationships; determine the appropriate course of emergency or stressful situations; understand program objectives in relation to departmental goals and

Knowledge/Abilities (Continued)

procedures; collect and analyze data to draw logical conclusions and make appropriate action in recommendations; prepare narrative and statistical reports; comply with laws regulations and professional practices governing agricultural programs, services and operations; secure cooperation and teamwork among professional and/or support staff; implement and carry out a variety of agricultural program objectives; deal firmly and fairly with clients of various socio-economic backgrounds and temperaments; maintain accurate records and document actions taken; ascertain and resolve complaints/problems/violations; organize and prioritize work assignments; make routine arithmetical calculations; research regulations, procedures and/or technical reference materials; project consequences of decisions; gather evidence and testify at administrative hearings and in court; gather samples; identify plants, animals, pests, weeds, diseases and damage to plants, animals, pests, weeds, diseases and damage to plants and agricultural products; assist growers, residents, retailers and others in complying with agricultural standards and regulations through timely inspections, certifications and issuance of permits and instruction/explanation of laws, regulations, methods effective liaison between the department and the public; coordinate district activities with specialized work units.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of or ability to obtain a valid Class C California driver's license is required.

In accordance with California Agriculture Code Section 2101 et. seq., incumbents must possess five (5) licenses of eligibility issued by the California Department of Food and Agriculture at the time of appointment.

Independent travel will be required.

Incumbents will be required to drive autos or small trucks through fields or orchards; and to walk agricultural lands in various weather conditions.

Incumbents may be required to spend a great deal of time in a vehicle during hot weather.

Positions allocated to this class may require bilingual skills.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Incumbents may be exposed to chemicals, plant/animal diseases or poison oak. Incumbents must have a tolerance for chemical and agricultural odors.