

## COUNTY OF SOLANO

### AGRICULTURAL BIOLOGIST (SENIOR)

Rev. 12/95

#### **DEFINITION**

Under direction, performs advanced journey level work in the inspection, detection, prevention, enforcement and control activities in an assigned agricultural program. Performs related duties as required.

#### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

The Agricultural Biologist (Senior) is the advanced journey level in the agricultural inspection series. Positions in this class are expected to use considerable independent judgment and discretion in performing agricultural inspection and enforcement work. Agricultural Biologist (Senior) may also be required to act as a lead worker for subordinate Biologists on special projects. Agricultural Biologist (Senior) is distinguished from Agricultural Biologist (Supervising) in that the latter is responsible for supervising the staff of a specific work unit within the Agriculture Division.

#### **EXAMPLES OF DUTIES**

Depending on assignment, duties may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Investigates applications for pesticide and applicators certificates, licenses and use permits; inspects pesticide mixing, loading, storage and disposal operations; inspects facilities, records, and areas in which pesticides are sold, stored and used; ensures compliance with health and safety laws and regulations; ensures proper notifications prior to pesticide applications; issues or denies use permits; conducts pre-site inspections; investigates episodes of alleged human illness, crop or property loss, adverse environmental impact or other effects; trains pest control advisers, field workers and employees in the proper and safe application of pesticides.
2. Inspects incoming shipments of plant material arriving at post offices, railroads, bus terminals, retail and wholesale nurseries 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 and issues certificates for agricultural commodities destined for export to foreign countries.

**EXAMPLES OF DUTIES (continued)**

3. Inspects commercial crops, range land and right-of-way 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.
4. Conducts surveys and checks for infestation of various weeds, especially noxious weeds; surveys high hazard areas and submits samples of unknown plants for identification; conducts weed control activities, including biological and chemical control.
5. Inspects nurseries for evidence of insects or diseases, quality and care of plants, proper plant 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 operations.
6. Visits stores and seed storage facilities to inspect seeds for compliance with federal and state seed laws; checks labeling, purity of seed percentage of mixtures of variety seeds; takes samples; inspects certified mill harvesters and equipment; issues certificates and intercounty seed permits.
7. Inspects beehives for diseased colonies; registers hives and enforces regulations for registration, movement notices and notifications of pesticide applications; enforces quarantine regulations for imported hives.
8. Issues warnings and instructions for violations; gathers evidence and prepares reports for administrative hearings or court actions, testifies at hearings and in court; trains less experienced staff.

**QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES**

**Education and/or Experience**

Considerable experience in inspection, detection, control, prevention and environmental activities associated with the work of the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, which demonstrates possession of and competency in requisite knowledge and abilities. Typical qualifying experience would be:

Two years of experience equivalent to an Agricultural Biologist in a California Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

**Knowledge/Skills/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 in the areas of certification. Considerable knowledge is required in the following areas: types and uses of pesticides, herbicides and baits; 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** state-of-the-art equipment, substances, techniques and/or computer hardware/software that will assist in meeting program objectives; the location and needs of users of the program's services; departmental and County rules and regulations which impact on program staff, equipment and program operations.

**Ability to** work independently in all eight areas of licensing; understand, interpret and explain laws, regulations and policies governing agricultural program operations; make decisions and independent judgments; project consequences of decisions; communicate effectively with people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and temperaments; establish and maintain cooperative working relationships; determine the appropriate course of action in emergency or stressful situations; understand program objectives in relation to departmental goals and procedures; collect and analyze data to draw logical conclusions and make appropriate recommendations; prepare narrative and statistical reports; comply with laws, regulations and professional and/or support staff; implement and carry out a variety of agricultural program objectives; deal firmly and fairly with clients of different 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; gather evidence and testify at administrative hearings and in court; gather samples; identify plants, animals, pests, weeds, diseases and damage to plants, and agricultural products; assist growers, residents, retailers and others in complying with inspections, certification and issuance of permits and instructions/explanation of laws, regulations, methods and procedures; project a positive public image, provide effective liaison between the department and the public; keep abreast of major changes in assigned program.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

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

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS (Continued)**

Possession of four (4) Pesticide Regulation, Investigation and Environmental Monitoring, Pest Prevention and Plant Regulation Licenses and one additional license of eligibility issued by the California Department of Food and Agriculture under Agriculture Code Section 2101 et. Seq., at the time of appointment, which must include certification in the field of specific program assignment.

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 to 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.

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