

Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture

Information Regarding the Implementation of the County's Environmental Justice Policy

1. What is the level of awareness about the requirements of the County's Environmental Justice Policy for you Department's staff?

Managers and supervisors have a high level of awareness. The level of awareness of other staff varies and may be confined to the specific duties they perform.

2. Does your department have an Environmental Justice Coordinator who ensures the Department is following the Environmental Justice Policy?

Yes. Larry Yost, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner

3. Does your Department have written department-specific procedures for implementing the Environmental Justice Policy?

No.

4. What do you see as the key Environmental Justice issues your department has to address?

The uniform enforcement of pesticide application regulations throughout the county and the investigation of reported pesticide exposure illnesses.

5. How is the Environmental Justice Policy applied in specific activities of your department?

Complaints of pesticide misuse are thoroughly investigated by our staff from all members of the public, regardless of where these alleged incidents occur.

6. What difficulties do you see in implementing the Environmental Justice Policy for your department?

Members of the public from non-agricultural areas may not be aware of the department's existence or the role which we have in protecting public health and the environment.

7. What are the opportunities for the public to engage in projects/programs/policies implemented by your department? How do you make these opportunities

consistent throughout the county, and how do you accommodate segments of the community with special needs in terms of their ability to engage?

Two of our bilingual staff conduct pesticide safety training classes which are attended by hundreds of Spanish speaking agricultural workers each year. These classes are held in eastern Contra Costa County where the majority of these workers are employed.

The department also hosts bi-monthly integrated pest management meetings which are open to the public.

8. How do you determine who are the members of the community with special needs in terms of their ability to engage?

The majority of agricultural workers in Contra Costa County speak Spanish as their primary language. This language barrier seems to be the limiting factor in making the community aware of the regulatory oversight we perform.