



California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association

Issue Fact Sheet

Issue: California Dog Team Program

Background: Pest detection and exclusion are the primary methods to prevent the introduction of exotic pests and diseases into California and the nation. PSCIT is a statewide program operated by county agricultural commissioners to inspect entry points at terminals inside the California borders such as express carriers (UPS, FedEx, and others) and domestic airports.



The first federal funding for three PSCIT teams was appropriated in FY 2006. The teams completed training at the USDA National Detector Dog Training Center and were certified to work regionally. The first three teams worked out of Contra Costa County servicing the greater San Francisco Bay region and San Bernardino County in Southern California.

In addition to these three canine teams, from July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010, California maintained canine teams in Fresno, Sacramento (covers Sacramento Valley) and San Diego. In January 2010 four additional teams began operating in Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Clara counties. In January 2011 three more teams were added in Alameda, San Joaquin and San Bernardino counties. To date California maintains a total of 13 canine teams.

The total cost of the California County Pest Detection Program is \$32,150,000. \$30,500,000 (95%) is from state and county general funds (non-federal sources).

Status: Between July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010, California Dog Teams alerted on 56,753 total marked and unmarked parcels containing agricultural products. Of the total alerts, 2,270 were unmarked parcels containing agricultural commodities.

A total of 53 pests were intercepted during the reporting period, which included 13 actionable A-rated pests (pests of economic/environmental detriment) and 40 actionable Q-rated pests (suspected of economic/environmental detriment). Some of these interceptions involved multiple pest specimens in a single package. Additionally, due to the efforts of the California Dog Teams, 1,560 rejections were issued for violations of state and federal plant quarantine laws and regulations.

For federal FY 2011, the California Department of Food and Agriculture developed required work plans and requested \$3.9 million to expand the California canine inspection program. To date, FY 2011 plans have been put on hold until legislative language is adopted by Congress to allow USDA to use CCC-derived funds for administrative costs to implement the program.

Action Item: Continuous funding is necessary to keep the program functioning at optimal levels. Congress should enact legislation allowing USDA to use CCC-derived funds for this program permanently. California and the nation benefit significantly from the current canine inspection program as a first line of defense to pests and diseases harmful to agriculture and the environment.