



SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

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Media Statement
July 11, 2014

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Pesticide Drift in San Joaquin County

(STOCKTON, CA) The San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner's Office (SJCAC) in cooperation with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation is conducting an investigation of an herbicide (pesticide) drift from aerial applications made to control vegetation on 4,467 acres off Bouldin Island and Webb Tract. Multiple growers downwind of Webb Tract and Bouldin Island complained of crop damage believed to be from several aerial pesticide applications in May.

In the course of conducting this ongoing investigation, the SJCAC has determined that two pesticide active ingredients are involved: imazapyr and glyphosate. Both of these products are not only used for agricultural production but can also be found on the shelves of home garden centers and used by homeowners. Leaf/vegetation samples were collected from several different crops and were found to be positive for both imazapyr and glyphosate residues at very low levels.

Glyphosate has United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) established residue tolerances for most food crops that represent safe levels that could be consumed by the public. Imazapyr has USEPA established residue tolerances for feed crops consumed by livestock but no tolerances established for food crops. Due to the length of time between the leaf samples collected and actual harvest of potentially affected crops, it is likely that residue levels will degrade substantially to levels below established glyphosate residue tolerances and below detectable levels for imazapyr. A recent USEPA registration review of the pesticide active ingredient imazapyr indicates that this chemical should be of no concern because there is no identified hazard for imazapyr from toxicity studies and there are no risk concerns from exposure to imazapyr. Additional regulatory samples will not be taken. However, many farmers and food processors are taking their own samples of crops as they approach harvest to assure that any concerns with food safety are addressed.

Growers with affected crops are advised to contact their local crop consultants and/or the University of California Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor in managing and minimizing crop damage.

The SJCAC is the local agency responsible for enforcing laws and regulations governing pesticide use. The SJCAC conducts investigations into such cases of alleged crop damage from pesticides that did not stay on target (drift) for the intended field of application. As part of the investigation the SJCAC is responsible for determining the circumstances surrounding the drift incident, however, no determination is made as to the extent of actual damage. Should a pesticide applicator or those involved in the incident fail to follow pesticide label directions or laws and regulations meant to keep pesticides confined to the target fields they may be subject to administrative civil penalty fines by the SJCAC or prosecution by the District Attorney's Office.

Additional information relating to this incident is not expected to be released until a final report is prepared after the investigation is complete.

This press release is meant to inform the public generally about recent events and is not intended as professional advice. If you need specific advice (for example, medical, legal, financial, or risk management) please seek a professional who is licensed or knowledgeable in that area.