

CAC Focus: Kings County Ag Department



Date Founded: June 3, 1893, following the first meeting of the Board of Supervisors on June 1.

Essentials: The Kings County Agriculture Department has 24 full-time employees, comprised of one Commissioner-Sealer, three deputies, 14 licensed inspectors, two non-licensed inspectors, and four clerical employees. All work out of the office, located at 680 N. Campus Drive, Hanford.



Commissioner: Tim Niswander. Niswander was born in Selma, Calif., and raised on a diversified farm just south of Selma. He completed 10 years of 4-H membership attaining the highest rank of Diamond Star. While attending Selma High School, he was elected FFA chapter president. He attended Reedley Junior College, where he was active in student government. He also was active with the “Aggie Clubs” at Reedley and Fresno State University, where he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in agronomy.



After college, he worked a variety of jobs, including truck driver, farm manager, and pest control adviser/operator. He was hired by Kings County in 1988 as a weights and measures inspector. In 1996, he was promoted to the position of deputy ag commissioner-sealer. He was appointed agricultural commissioner-sealer for Kings County on Aug. 18, 2003.



As a member of the California Agricultural Commissioner and Sealers Association (CACASA), he served multiple years as the project coordinator for the “Restricted Materials Management System” (RMMS), a computer software database that modernized the issuance and management of pesticide restricted use permits and affiliated notices and reports. Niswander also was appointed by CACASA presidents to serve as chairman of the Personnel Standards Committee, the Exam (License) Review Subcommittee, the Information Management Policy Advisory Committee, CACASA representative to the statewide Emergency Animal Disposal Working Group, and the California Agricultural Teachers Association’s statewide advisory committee regarding Ag, Water and the Environment. He was elected to one term as Vice-President of Agricultural Affairs, and just completed a three-year term as executive secretary.

Trends seen, especially those related to pesticides: “Technological advances, especially with global positioning systems (GPSs), are providing more accurate Application patterns as well as allowing applicators to minimize the application of material where pests or disease are not present,” he said.

He noted the successful eradication of pink bollworm—a serious cotton pest -- using the application of biological controls like insect sterilization. He said a similar program is being considered with naval orange worm, a common pest of nut crops.



Recent accomplishments: Niswander is proud of his department’s leadership in implementing technology. This includes a system for allowing industry members to submit pesticide use reports online, and the procurement of tablet computers for field inspectors. As CACASA webmaster, he oversaw a website redesign that provided opportunities for group or committee collaboration, facilitated online conference registrations, and compiled and combined historical commissioner and sealer information into a roster for each county. In 2015, he participated in the 100th Annual Meeting of the

National Conference on Weights and Measures.



As CACASA’s executive secretary, he also successfully brought all counties up to date with their Pesticide Use Reporting reimbursement payments. He also assisted dairy farmers with legal alternative means of carcass disposal during a recent emergency circumstance.

Nov. 30 marks Niswander’s final day in office, ending a dedicated and noteworthy career.

Website: <https://www.countyofkings.com/departments/agricultural-commissioner>