

CAC FOCUS: **Humboldt County Agricultural Commissioner's Office**



Date founded: 1912. The county Board of Horticulture was formed in 1889 and, in 1912, the first horticultural commissioner was appointed. In 1929, Humboldt Horticultural Commissioner Earl Mills pushed for the state to change the title of the position to more accurately reflect the job's various duties. A bill signed by the governor that year changed the title of county horticultural commissioners to agricultural commissioners.

Essentials: The Humboldt County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures Office has seven employees. This includes the commissioner, an executive secretary and five inspectors. The office is located at 5630 S. Broadway, Eureka. The county's top agricultural commodities are livestock, timber, livestock products, and nursery plants.



Commissioner: Jeff Dolf. Dolf also serves as commissioner for Trinity and Del Norte counties. Dolf was born and raised in Humboldt County. His family immigrated to the county in the 1800s, so he feels deeply connected to the area. "I feel very fortunate to do this job in this place that I call home and where my family has been for 120 years now."

He began working for the office in 1987 as a seasonal pest-detection trapper. The commissioner John Falkenstrom was a mentor and pushed him toward earning a degree and pursuing a career at the commissioner's office. "Being a 20-something in 1987, and not being sure where exactly where your life path is going to take you, I was fortunate enough to have someone." Dolf earned a bachelor of science degree in wildlife management from Humboldt State University in 2001. He joined the office as a regular full-time employee in 2004 as an agricultural inspection biologist. He was appointed agricultural commissioner in 2009.

"Growing up here, I never really wanted to live anywhere else. I really appreciate being able to do this job here."

Trends seen, especially those that relate to pesticides:

Regulating cannabis is a big issue facing the county. "The big challenge is bringing a formerly illegal, underground industry into compliance with laws – especially regulations related to pesticide use and sales," Dolf explained. "We have this large population in an industry that we know very well is using pesticides in the production of their commodity."

His office's philosophy so far has been to educate growers about the laws. That will be followed by enforcement.

"Our site visits, as we began this, gave us an opportunity to see if people are using pesticides and seeing if we need to bring them into compliance. Once we educate them, we will begin to increase our enforcement response."

He added, "Improvement doesn't happen overnight but you put in place those steps to create awareness of this and then you use your enforcement tools."

Recent Accomplishments:

In May, the office held an informational meeting with cannabis growers to explain pesticide laws. It drew more than 100 people.

In 2016, Del Norte County inked a contract with Humboldt County for Dolf to serve as Del Norte's ag commissioner. He has worked to bolster the county's pesticide inspection program. "We're providing a close working relationship to improve the overall program to ensure that pesticide regulations are being followed. In addition to Humboldt and Del Norte counties, Dolf is commissioner for Trinity County, under a 2012 contract between the counties. Del Norte and Trinity still maintain their own field staffs.

Website: <https://humboldt.gov/org/623/Agricultural-Commissioner>