



## ***“From the Director”***

Brian R. Leahy, Director  
Department of Pesticide Regulation

**November 25, 2014**

Hello,

I've spent the last few months visiting lots of places in California and I can't help being impressed in the advances we are making in agriculture. Of course I have a particular interest in pesticides but I was also struck by how much food production has changed over the last few years. This was particularly apparent when I recently visited Napa and met the County Agriculturist of the Year Rich Salvestrin. The River Ranch Farmworker Housing Center was really interesting and I had a productive meeting with local Napa Farm Bureau officials. I also met with Napa County Agricultural staff which gave me a better understanding of the complexities of the job of being a County Agricultural Commissioner.

Here's a snapshot of some other progressive things that have been occurring at DPR.

Have a safe and productive holiday period

Brian Leahy, Director



**Produce Monitoring:** DPR's pesticide monitoring program is undoubtedly the most robust and sophisticated program in the country. And the proof's in our 2013 produce monitoring results. I'm happy to report that 98 percent of all California-grown produce sampled by DPR last year had little or no detectable pesticide residues and posed no health risk to the public. We continue to find a small but significant amount of illegal residues (primarily in produce imported from other countries). This year our enforcement staff gave presentations to approximately 160 Mexican fruit and vegetable growers at workshops in Mexicali and Ensenada, Mexico about the DPR Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program. My thanks to Mike Papathakis, George Farnsworth and the rest of the team who were instrumental in making this happen.

Here's a [DPR video](#), which gives you a full look at our scientists in action. They travel the state sampling produce, which in turn gives Californians assurance that the fruits and vegetables they buy do not have pesticides above legal limits.



**Air Monitoring:** There's also good news to report from our hardworking staff in the field. For the third year in a row, [DPR air monitoring](#) in various rural agricultural communities shows that the majority of the monitored pesticides were found well below levels that indicate a health concern or need further evaluation. DPR staff monitored 32 pesticides and five pesticide breakdown products in Salinas, Shafter and Ripon. We have already taken action on the pesticide 13D and will shortly be announcing measures that offer enhanced protection from short term exposure to chloropicrin.

Don't forget that in order to meet standards of the Clean Air Act and reduce smog, growers in some parts of California will not be allowed to use some pesticides high in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) starting from May next year. Low-VOC products and other alternatives are available.



**Videos:** You can currently find new English and Spanish videos on the DPR [YouTube channel](#), including ones that tackles pesticides in ground water and surface water. DPR is wrapping up production on a School IPM video series that will be available next year. A big thank you to our scientists who worked on these videos, and helped with the scripts, logistics and videotaping.



**Beehive Health Workshops: Apiary Inspectors Training:** Bee health is a buzzworthy topic in the news these days, and DPR is committed to working closer with beekeepers and training county agricultural commissioner staff on how to recognize healthy colonies and to determine if the misuse of pesticides is the cause of a hive's population decline or "bee-kill." It is all part of an effort to help keep colonies healthy. Two successful workshops were held in Parlier and Modesto over the summer, with more than 180 attendees combined. Karen Francone and her team deserve special recognition for organizing both of them. The workshops were open to people who investigate incidents of bee colony damage where pesticides are suspected to have played a role. The participation by several local beekeepers was instrumental in the success of the training. Dressed up in beekeeping suits, participants got a close-up look at bees in action, and watched demonstrations on how to properly open a hive and proper investigative sampling techniques.





Photo: CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Service

**Rodenticide Regulation:** As you know, DPR has adopted a [regulation](#) to restrict a type of rat poison known as Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARS). The products were pulled off store shelves, and were no longer available to consumers after July 1. SGARS have been found in a variety of animals that eat

rodents including barn owls, coyotes, bobcats and the San Joaquin kit fox, which is an endangered species. DPR is proud of this action. Shortly after DPR adopted its regulation a major manufacturer of these poisons, Reckitt Benckiser LLC, agreed with the USEPA to phase out production of these products and to stop distributing them to retailers nationwide by March 31, 2015.



**Proposed Chlorpyrifos Regulation:** DPR is **currently** analyzing public comments received on our proposal to make [chlorpyrifos](#) a restricted material. We want to add additional restrictions to protect workers and the public and aquatic habitat. Chlorpyrifos is one of the most widely used old organophosphate classes of pesticides and is used on numerous crops in California. When chlorpyrifos drifts, workers may be exposed and

suffer negative health effects such as nausea, dizziness, and breathing difficulties. The pesticide may also be toxic to aquatic life. We look forward to getting input from our stakeholders as California continues to usher in more environmentally protective measures that enable us to grow food.



**Grants:** Assisting people to find new methods to replace field fumigants is a priority for DPR. Our Pest Management Research [Grant Program recently awarded](#) more than \$1 million to a variety of projects including the California Strawberry Commission. The commission is looking to improve the effectiveness of a pre-plant soil treatment method known as Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation (ASD) that can protect strawberries from pests and diseases.



**CAC:** DPR continues to oversee and provide support for local county agricultural commissioners and staff. We recently completed three training sessions in Sacramento, Tulare, and [Red Bluff](#). The two-day workshops, called "Neighbors at the Edge," were designed in partnership with UC Davis Extension Land Use and Natural Resources to help resolve conflicts involving urban residents who live near agricultural areas. Another workshop is happening in Ventura later this month.



Finally, don't forget social media... We are making huge improvements and gaining followers. So keep checking our [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) pages for photos, event announcements and updates on all the good work our staff is doing statewide.