

July 8, 1999

The Honorable Charles Campbell
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Ventura County Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura CA 93009



Subject: 1998-99 Ventura County Grand Jury Report: *Combining
Agricultural Commissioner's Office with Weights and Measures*

Dear Judge Campbell:

The Chief Administrative Office was directed to respond to Recommendations 1, 7, 8 and 10 of the Grand Jury's Report on the Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

RECOMMENDATION 1: *Perform thorough pay parity study, comparing Ventura County Agricultural Inspectors salary/benefits to that of other County inspectors with similar educational/experience and licensing requirements (such as Environmental Health Specialists). The parity study would include comparisons of the salary/benefits of Ventura County Agriculture Inspectors with Agriculture Inspectors of other Southern California counties. Adjust pay accordingly.*

RESPONSE: The Human Resources Department, a division within the Chief Administrative Office, has prepared for the Grand Jury our office's response to the first Recommendation. That submission is being forwarded directly to you by Barbara Journet, Human Resources Director.

RECOMMENDATION 7: *Agricultural Commissioner's Office to supply one of their support staff or recruit for a new staff person to support the Camarillo District office to answer phones, type reports, file documents and other supporting functions.*

RESPONSE: The Human Resources Department's response also includes the seventh Recommendation. Workload indicators do not demonstrate that additional clerical staff are currently warranted in the district office. When district staff are "in the field", phones are answered in the Santa Paula office, which also prepares reports. In addition, the Commissioner's FY 1999-00 budget does not

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allow for an increase in clerical staffing for the district office. It is possible that during the next budget preparation cycle consideration could be given to the development of a part-time clerical position for the district office.

RECOMMENDATION 8: Find a way to bring the Agricultural Commissioner's District Office into the 20th Century by providing standard office equipment such as an answering machine, an automatic copy machine, and desktop computers/printers so that the inspectors/supervisors at the Camarillo District Office can be more effective and efficient. Provide county licensed software, intranet/internet access, and e-mail accounts. Hand-me-down county computers is one way to get started and get some tools into the hands of those people that can put them to good use.

RESPONSE: The Commissioner has indicated that a new copy machine has recently been purchased and one of the older computers and a printer have been replaced. Rather than using an answering machine, the Commissioner prefers that a "live body" answer the phone when Camarillo staff are not in the office; calls are directed to the Santa Paula office and field staff are readily available through the use of pagers.

The Commissioner had previously researched the purchase of a new computer system for the district office. At that time, the County's Information Systems Department (ISD) indicated that a major renovation of the facility's cabling would be required, the cost of which the department could not have absorbed. The Commissioner has indicated he will recontact ISD to again develop a cost estimate for the purchase of a more efficient computer system. It appears that current district staffing would be served by two additional computers with modems, for connection to the Internet for research, and to the County's e-mail system. Currently the Commissioner's budget does not include funding for computer equipment upgrades.

RECOMMENDATION 10: Relocate the Agriculture headquarters in Santa Paula to a location more central and accessible to the citizens and farmer/growers of the county.

RESPONSE: The County owns the building in which the Santa Paula office is located; currently, no rent is charged. Although the current district office location was selected partially due to the availability of rent-free County-owned space, the facility cost for the district office is now \$14,000/year. Consolidation and relocation to an office more centrally located, in Oxnard or Camarillo, would currently be prohibitively expensive for the Agricultural Commissioner, without a contribution from the General Fund. The Property Management division of the Chief Administrative Office could research potential alternative sites for future consideration.

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If you have any questions regarding this response, please either contact me, at 654-268,1 or Ginny Camarillo, Program Management Analyst, at 648-9228.



M.L. KOESTER
Chief Administrative Officer

C: Ventura County Grand Jury
Earl McPhail, Agricultural Commissioner
Barbara Journet, Director, Human Resources Department
Terry Dryer, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Real Property

**Information Systems Department Response To FY 1998-99 Grand Jury's
Recommendation for Agricultural Commissioner's Office.**

Recommendation #8: Provide Agriculture Commissioner's District Office with access to a desktop computer and standard County software, intranet access, and e-mail.

ISD Response: This is mainly a departmental funding issue, not a technology/ISD issue. ISD supports the need for all County professional and clerical employees to have access to a desktop computer and standard County software, intranet access, and e-mail. However, funding and purchasing such items are by County policy, an individual departmental responsibility. With regard to connectivity, the County infrastructure to provide the Agriculture Commissioner's District Office with access to the County backbone network, e-mail and internet/intranet access are immediately available should funding be identified by the Agriculture Commissioner's Office or the Chief Administrative Office to cover the installation and monthly reoccurring cost of such services. Once the equipment has been purchased, an Information Systems Request (ISR) should be submitted to ISD to initiate the required connections and associated services.

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