



# Measure X Community Advisory Board Presentation: Agriculture Weights & Measures Equity in the Marketplace

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Agriculture Weights & Measures

# MISSION STATEMENT

The Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture under the direction of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Department of Pesticide Regulation, and Division of Measurement Standards, is responsible for conducting regulatory and service activities pertaining to the agricultural industry and the consumers of our county.

The primary purpose and objective of this office is the promotion and protection of the county's agricultural industry, environment, and citizens. We work hard to ensure a safe place to live and a fair marketplace for trade.



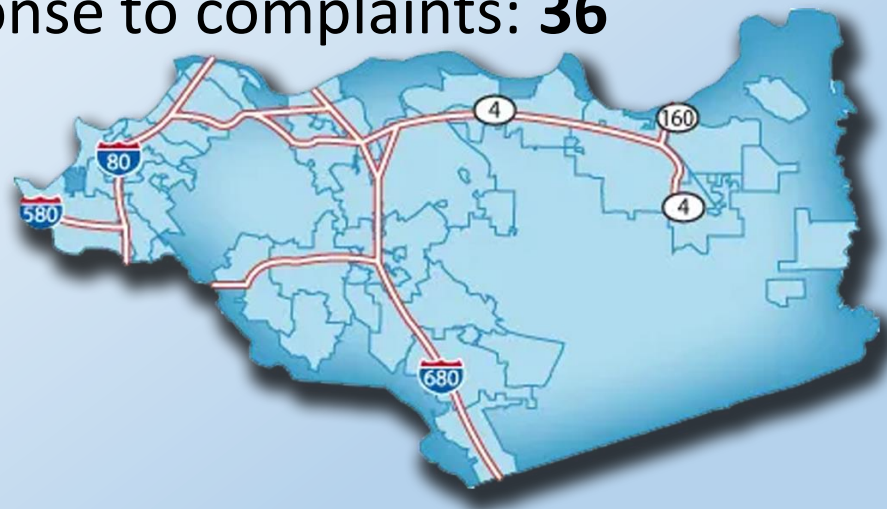
# What Weights & Measures does for you

- Weighing devices
  - Scales
- Measuring Devices
  - Cordage and fabric
  - Taxi Meters
  - Liquid (Gas Pumps, Water, etc.)
  - Electric Charging Stations
  - Gases (LPG, Hydrogen, etc.)
- Quantity Control
  - Testing Scanners in stores
  - Label design/requirements/statements
  - Packaging fill



# Contra Costa County By The Numbers FY 2020-21

- Number of residents: **1.2 Million**
- Number of businesses/locations registered: **2,034**
  - Number of Devices: **32,017**
  - Number of Point of Sale: **5,528**
- Number of inspections: **9,767**
  - Average frequency of inspections/device: **Once every 17.6 Months**
- Number of investigations/response to complaints: **36**
- Staff hours: **12,108**



# Overview



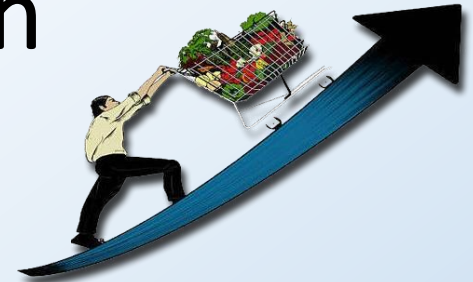
- Weights and Measures
  - Quantity Control Inspections
    - Scanner inspection cost are partially covered by a registration fee
    - The remainder is unfunded, only mandated to check on complaints
      - Legislative analysis found there is no fair way to collect fees for Quantity Control
      - Mostly local benefit
    - No other Weights & Measures programs are completely unfunded
    - Leaves consumers unprotected especially in lower income/disadvantaged communities
- Agriculture
  - Diverting Agricultural resources to cover mandated W&M work
  - With more Weights & Measures inspectors, we can focus more on pesticide use enforcement

# Quantity Control Data

- Statewide average from 2013-2018
  - 13.53% of all test purchases were overcharges (36,589 purchases)
  - 1.5% of all scanner purchases were overcharges (2,127,420 purchases)
- 2019 Statewide survey by AgWM in low income/disadvantaged areas
  - 22.37% of 1,891 test purchases were overcharges (65% higher o/c rate)
    - 62.78% of stores overcharged with an average of \$0.27
  - 5.78% of 1,891 scanner purchases were overcharges (285% higher o/c rate)
    - 32.8% of stores with an average overcharge of \$1.63
  - 31.97% of pre packaged items inspected were overcharges
    - 62.14% of stores with an average overcharge of \$0.33



# QC Data Comparison



- Quantity Control Program

- Contra Costa County does not have a Quantity Control program in place
  - Contra Costa had 44.8% (26 of 58 locations) of locations tested overcharged customers with an average of \$5.51 per item overcharged, the largest being a \$40.87 overcharge for a single purchase
- LA County is one of the few counties that supports Quantity Control inspections
  - LA County had 23.58% (25 of 106 locations) of locations tested overcharged customers with an average of \$4.97 per item overcharged, the largest being \$39.74 overcharge for a single purchase



# Gaps

- Currently the only QC program in the county is for scanners
- No funding mechanism for package inspection or test purchases
- Funding mechanisms for mandated WM programs not sufficient
- Financial Gap:
  - Each inspector's salary starts around \$100,000 with benefits
  - Their top salary with benefits is about \$160,000





# Prevention - what more can be done to help residents

Fund 2 new permanent FTEs WM inspectors

- New inspectors will
  - Allow us to meet all mandated work
  - Do a significant amount of Quantity Control work
  - Will free up Ag inspectors to conduct more Pesticide and Fieldworker safety inspections



# Community Impact



- Need more inspections to ensure consumers are not being cheated
- Protect low income/disadvantaged communities
- Proportional impact – overcharging \$1 to a low income family is the same as \$4 in median income and \$10 in above average communities
- Additionally the poor face “inflation inequities” lacking volume buying power afforded to most consumers and layering their economic plight with an annual rate of inflation at 0.44 percentage points higher than that of higher income families
- Protect businesses who are playing by the rules



# What does Success look like

- Eliminating the inequity in commerce for low income/disadvantaged communities in the county
- Bringing the percentage of overcharged customers down in the county as a whole
- Making the marketplace fair and equitable



# Questions?

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# Thank you!