

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

I. DEPARTMENT MISSION AND PROGRAM GOALS

Agricultural Department:

The Department serves the citizens of Contra Costa County through effective enforcement of the California Food and Agricultural Code and the provisions of the California Business and Professions Code. The Department's main mission is protecting and promoting the agricultural industry of the County and its environment, ensuring the health and safety of the Counties citizens, and fostering confidence and equity in the marketplace through education and fair and uniform enforcement of state laws, regulations and county ordinances. Our goal is to achieve compliance at the lowest levels of enforcement when possible, with emphasis on education of the regulated community. Progressive enforcement is used when violations occur.

University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE):

UCCE is residents' direct connection to UC knowledge and expertise. UCCE is part of the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) a statewide network of University of California researchers and educators dedicated to the creation, development and application of knowledge in agricultural, natural and human resources. Our educators and Advisors, all with Master degrees or Ph.D.s, work and live in this community, saving public dollars and enhancing the quality of life for people in many ways. Overriding goals are to increase percentage of program participants who report a gain in knowledge and improved behavioral changes.

II. MAJOR PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

A. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS

1. Enforce State and Federal quarantines. Inspect plants and goods arriving in the County for the presence of exotic invasive insects, nematodes, pest animals, diseases, noxious weeds, and seeds that are or might be detrimental to the property of the citizens of the County and to the agricultural industry of the County.
2. Eradicate infestations of exotic pests that threaten agriculture, county residents and the environment.
3. Survey agricultural, commercial, and residential areas for pests and diseases not generally distributed in the County. Deploy and inspect specialized insect traps to intercept new or serious pests of economic significance.
4. Monitor pesticide applications for compliance with State law. Review requests for restricted use pesticide permits and issue the permits if environmental and safe use conditions and concerns are met. Perform

pre pesticide application inspections to assure that safety and environmental issues have been properly evaluated.

5. Enforce Pesticide Worker Safety and other pesticide laws to ensure safe working conditions for employees who may be exposed to pesticides, to ensure compliance with environmental protection requirements, and to ensure safety to the citizens of the County.
6. Investigate all pesticide-related illnesses and complaints alleging misuse of pesticides.
7. Tabulate reports on pesticides used by growers, the pest control industry, and government agencies.
8. Register and inspect apiaries for disease and infestations and supervise the destruction of hives when necessary.
9. Control and eradicate certain noxious weeds to protect from damage and invasion into agricultural lands, parklands, open space and endangered species habitat.
10. Continue involvement with the Integrated Pest Management Committee and work cooperatively with a diverse set of county stakeholders to maintain, and keep current with the changing times, a comprehensive IPM policy used in regard to managing pests.

BUDGET:\$2,848,753
FTE: 29.12

B. CONSUMER PROTECTION PROGRAMS

1. Inspect nursery stock, fruits, nuts, vegetables, eggs and agricultural seed to ensure compliance with regulations and quality standards.
2. Inspect Certified Farmers Markets, certified producer operations and organic grower operations to assure that they comply with state laws and regulations.
3. Inspect weighing and measuring devices such as gasoline pumps, taxi meters, electric meters, and retail store scales in order to insure accuracy.
4. Inspect scanners, pre-packaged consumer goods, and petroleum products to ensure compliance with regulations and label accuracy.

BUDGET:\$1,226,548
FTE: 12.25

C. SERVICE PROGRAMS

1. Provide the public with information on control options for minor pests encouraging IPM and biological control techniques.

2. Administer a ground squirrel program to protect agricultural land, roadways, dams, earthen levees, and other critical structures.
3. Compile an annual crop and livestock report to show conditions, acreage, production and value.
4. Develop special reports for disaster relief purposes and to provide updates on local conditions for the news media.
5. UCCE Agricultural Program: This program is designed to directly serve and assist the counties 650 farmers and ranchers through sound science. 87% of these are small and/or low income operations with limited resources. 30% are relatively new to agriculture with less than 10 years in the business. The program provides growers with:
 - Basic technical information to get started and to survive economically; knowledge they need to be good stewards of the land; research-based information to help them address specific local issues.
 - Assure the public of a sustainable, safe, and environmentally friendly food system.
 - Provide leadership to the eradication of invasive pests that threaten agriculture viability
6. UCCE 4-H Youth and Community Development Program: This program celebrates its 100th year in 2013. Emphasis is on fostering youth citizenship, leadership and life skills using experience-based “hands-on” education methods. Development of social skills and competencies necessary for successful adolescent and adult life is encouraged through focus on their capacities, the individuals own strengths, and needs rather than on their weaknesses and problems.
7. UCCE Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Program: Provides science-based information to promote a healthy lifestyle free from chronic disease. Families and children are taught healthful ways of eating; where food comes from; how to prepare simple and healthy meals; how to stretch the food dollar. Two financial literacy curricula are offered: *Making Every Dollar Count* (for adults) and *Money Talks* (for teens).
8. UCCE Urban Horticulture Program: Extends research-based gardening information to residents and agencies. 200 Master Gardeners volunteers, all who receive over 100 hours of training and pass rigorous tests, are the primary source for disseminating information. Goals include:
 - Decrease the use of pesticides in the home garden.
 - Decrease the use of water in the home garden.
 - Teach backyard gardeners how to grow nutrient-rich vegetables.

BUDGET:\$266,568

FTE: 1.75

UC Funded Staff Allocation: 6.64

D. ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Provide employee development through training, mentoring and participatory management.
2. Provide personnel, payroll, fiscal administration, department clerical supervision, and automated systems services.
3. Develop policy and direction to meet mandates and respond to local needs.
4. Administer University of California program.

BUDGET: \$1,316,359
 FTE: 5.0
 U.C. Funded Staff Allocation: 0.50

E. DEPARTMENT DATA

BUDGET:\$5,658,228
 FTE: 28.0
 PIE: 18.12
 U.C. Funded FTE: 7.14

CLASS	ALLOCATED POSITIONS
Agricultural Commissioner-Director Weights & Measures	1
Executive Secretary	1
Clerk – Senior Level	1
Clerical Specialist	1
Assistant Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer	1
Deputy Agricultural Commissioner	3
Agricultural Biologist/Weights & Measures Inspector III*	10
Agricultural Biologist II, I, or Trainee*	4
Pest Detection Program Assistant	1
Lead Pest Detection Specialist	1
Pest Detection Specialist – Project	19
Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Specialist - Project	3
Deputy Sealer of Weights & Measures	1
Weights and Measures Inspector II, I or Trainee*	4
UC Paid Personnel (Director, Advisors, Field Assistants and Nutrition Program Administrative Assistant)	7.14

* Flexibly staffed based on time in grade and # of state licenses.

EMPLOYEE PROFILE (county staff):

	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Caucasian	19	17	36	73.5
Hispanic/Latino	4		4	8.2
African/American	3		3	6.1
Pacific Is/Asian	5		5	10.2
Native American		1	1	2.0
Total	31	18	49	100

III. DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**A. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS**

1. High Risk Exclusion work continues with early morning quarantine inspections of all express carriers. This facilitates industry's need to expedite deliveries and improves our ability to intercept potentially devastating exotic pest organisms. In 2012 our Biologists performed over 54,888 exclusion inspections and discovered, and rejected entrance into California 250 shipments that were in violation of shipping requirements. In addition, during the course of inspecting these shipments, 16 significant pests with potential detriment to our agriculture, environment and urban landscaping were intercepted.
2. As a part of the High Risk Exclusion work two county Agricultural Canine Handler positions were created as a state pilot program in 2006. The handlers were sent to a 10 week USDA training program and were issued USDA canines that specialize in detecting agricultural commodities contained within parcels. The two Contra Costa teams have now branched out and work in ten Bay Area counties at UPS, FedEx and the U.S. Post Office parcel facilities. The teams were so successful that 11 additional county teams have been established in both Northern and Southern California. Salary and expenses for our two teams are reimbursed through a contract with the California Department of Food and Agriculture using pass-through USDA money.
3. The Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) presents a threat to agricultural crops, backyard fruit crops and landscape plants. Our program continues to be very successful in keeping this pest out of Contra Costa County. 3,069 nursery shipments were inspected by our staff for GWSS in 2012. Over the 12 year span of the program a number of nursery shipments were found with live life stages of GWSS and were destroyed or rejected entry into our county. On two occasions staff detected very early stages of incipient infestations that had started within nurseries requiring closing and treating those nurseries at their expense. Staff monitored these treatments for

efficacy. No new infestations have been detected in our county since the eradication of GWSS from Brentwood in 2003.

4. In addition to numerous outreach training sessions on a varied subject matter including plant disease, pesticide safety and pest exclusion, five training sessions were held to train pesticide handlers and agricultural fieldworkers in pesticide safety. The training was presented in Spanish by bilingual staff to 202 workers attending the five classes.
5. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation continues to perform annual effectiveness evaluations on our Pesticide Use Enforcement program. Suggestions for improvement to keep pace with changes in pesticide laws and regulations have been incorporated into our existing program and have met with approval by state evaluators.
6. Since 2006 forty-nine properties in the county were found to be infested with Japanese dodder. This parasitic plant can grow up to six inches a day. It has the potential to completely engulf, parasitize and kill all landscaping as well as natural and stream vegetation. The department mechanically removed all infested plant material on the 49 sites including mature trees, shrubs and vines. Of the 49 sites within Contra Costa the department has so far successfully eradicated it on 46 of the sites.
7. AG and UCCE: Implemented an aggressive Cherry Buckskin eradication program. Teams surveyed over 600 acres for Cherry Buckskin and through over 20 years of efforts now have this disease confined to only one orchard. Our eradication program won was recognized as the Western Cooperative Extension Directors' 2012 award winner. Cherries are a \$5.8 million crop in Contra Costa.

B. CONSUMER PROTECTION PROGRAMS

1. Staff performed 367 point-of-sale (scanner) inspections in 2012. 220 violation notices and 61 administrative actions were issued involving \$23,500 in proposed fines. Administrative actions were also issued against one service agent
2. One major weights and measures consumer case was settled by our District Attorneys based on work performed by our staff. The cases involved a recycling company. Our departments' investigative data was also used in four statewide District Attorney cases. These cases involved a major drug store chain and a major hardware store chain, a recycler and the concessions area of a major movie theater chain. The judgments totaled \$1,874,000 in civil penalties. Our Department received \$17,371 in investigative cost recovery. Our District Attorney's office was involved in one of these cases and received \$100,000 in direct fines.

C. SERVICE PROGRAMS

1. UCCE: Coordinated research on controlling Spotted Wing Drosophila, a new pest that infects cherries. Information was disseminated through local grower meetings. As a result the 2012 commercial cherry crop was excellent in quality with very little pest damage.
2. UCCE: Continued testing walnut rootstocks developed at UC Davis to find walnut blackline disease resistance. This disease is the main limiting factor to walnut production in Contra Costa. As a result of the trials UC Davis officially released a new walnut rootstock that will prevent this disease
3. UCCE: Handled over 300 personal contacts with clientele in the form of farm calls, office visits, e-mails, and telephone calls. Organized or co-organized 11 meetings and delivered 12 presentations reaching 689 growers. Produced 8 grower newsletters and authored or co-authored 7 other grower oriented publications.
4. UCCE: Engaged 460 youth and 151 adults in the 4-H Club and School Enrichment programs. Youth learned leadership, citizenship and life skills. Youth completed projects in agriculture, nutrition, leadership, science and technology, gardening, and others. Participants contributed 11,325 volunteer hours to club projects and community service which equates to \$273,838 in community support.
5. UCCE: Trained 124 teachers who delivered nutrition education in their classroom. They delivered an average of 14 hours of nutrition education to 5,141 students from 22 low-income sites (pre-K-12th grade).
6. UCCE: 234 low-income 4th and 5th grade students and 9 teachers participated in a nutrition event, which is a collaborative effort with the Food Bank and Pittsburg Unified School District. Teachers reported that the event favorably impacted had their students' nutrition and physical activity habits.
7. UCCE: Educated 1,392 low-income adults on key nutrition behaviors such as reducing the intake of sweetened beverages; increasing the intake of fruits, vegetables and whole grains; using food labels to choose healthier foods; and stretching food dollars.
8. UCCE: Graduated 287 low-income parents from the "Eating Smart Being Active" nutrition series (completed 6-8 lessons) and tracked marked improvements in nutrition and food choices made by participants.
9. UCCE: 1,650 students, 64 teachers and over 400 chaperones participated in a nutrition/gardening field trip activity that included

harvesting and tasting a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from the garden. Teachers reported that they had used or planned to use the follow up nutrition related lessons and 95% agreed that their students were more aware of the origin of food after participating in the garden and agricultural-themed activities.

10. UCCE: Trained/managed 200 Master Gardener volunteers who contributed 15,800 hours (valued at \$308,289) educating local residents on a wide range of topics that promote healthy and sustainable homes and communities: proper plant problem diagnosis; safe pest management techniques that minimize pesticide use; water conservation and drought tolerant landscaping; composting and green waste reduction; and home food production with an emphasis on food security and healthy eating.
11. UCCE: In collaboration with the Contra Costa Times, offered weekly classes from April – October, to the public at their edibles demonstration garden. The garden raised over 3,000 pounds of fresh produce that was donated to low-income residents in the Monument Corridor.
12. UCCE: Provided instruction and technical assistance to school and community gardens. In collaboration with the public libraries, delivered talks to the public on topics including garden pests, protecting wildlife, growing vegetables in small spaces, soil testing, water conservation.
13. UCCE: Made a large variety of research-based information available to public on their website: <http://ccmg.ucdavis.edu/>

D. ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPPORT SERVICES

Our service contract with Department of Information Technology continues to work extremely well in dealing with troubleshooting, technology updates, and the general technological help on computer-related issues and problems. The technologist assigned to our department has become very familiar with the departmental specialized programs and needs and therefore has become an invaluable asset to the Department.

IV. DEPARTMENT CHALLENGES

A. INTERNAL TO DEPARTMENT

1. Providing the right type and balance of training necessary to keep existing staff current on issues and regulations, while at the same time keeping staff in the field to meet program workloads, the Department is charged with a wide array of complex functions. Almost two-thirds of the staff are state-licensed professionals. Staff training and development are essential to maintain our staff at a high standard.

2. Providing adequate and qualified staff for seasonal program demands.
3. Meeting mandated inspections in Weights and Measures has been especially challenging due to one Inspector position that has not been filled due to the hiring freeze.
4. Continuing to work with stores that use scanning systems for pricing through education in an attempt to improve the level of compliance in what they charge the consumer.
5. Developing staff expertise necessary to keep computer systems running effectively and efficiently and to keep our website vibrant and current.
6. Developing effective e-government options that will benefit the regulated community as well as the citizens of the county.
7. Training new staff to achieve the high level of quality work that is required in the inspection and enforcement arena.
8. Developing the expertise to work with emerging issues such as air and water quality, endangered species, agricultural preservation and new technology.
9. Our Pest Detection Program has a staff of 19 and has long needed lead support staff to coordinate the activities within the districts. Though a position was approved by the Board unexpected funding shortfalls in our proposed budget does not provide enough funds to fill this position.

B. INTERNAL TO COUNTY OPERATION

1. Working with a limited Human Resources Department staff.
2. Continue to develop and improve, where opportunities arise, the departmental Integrated Pest Management program.

C. EXTERNAL TO COUNTY OPERATION

1. Expanding local efforts to resolve Ag/Urban interface issues.
2. Preserving a viable agricultural industry and working with the Agricultural Land Trust and government agencies.
3. Addressing environmental issues involving endangered species, water quality, air quality and habitat preservation.
4. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Noxious Weed program has been eliminated due to state budget cuts. Some of our Weed Management Area (WMA) noxious weed programs involved their assistance. The coordinated oversight that CDFA provided

statewide will be missed; populations of some noxious species are anticipated to increase.

5. The CDFA Integrated Pest Control Branch, which housed the Bio-control program for the state, has been eliminated due to budget cuts. This branch had active programs to acquire, increase and release populations of bio control organisms that would have potential in benefiting our counties efforts in controlling such pests as Yellow Star Thistle, Arundo or giant reed, among others while reducing the need for chemical controls.
6. Addressing concerns over invasive weeds in agricultural and open space areas with reductions in available funding.
7. Alternative fuel hydrogen and electric vehicles are entering the marketplace. This will involve greater staff time as weights and measures inspectors will be required to check new measuring devices.
8. As the price of gasoline rises so does the number of complaints involving gasoline dispensing devices. This involves greater staff time.
9. Taxi meter other measuring device technology is evolving resulting in increased staff training and inspection time.
10. Responding to budget cuts in the most effective manner possible.

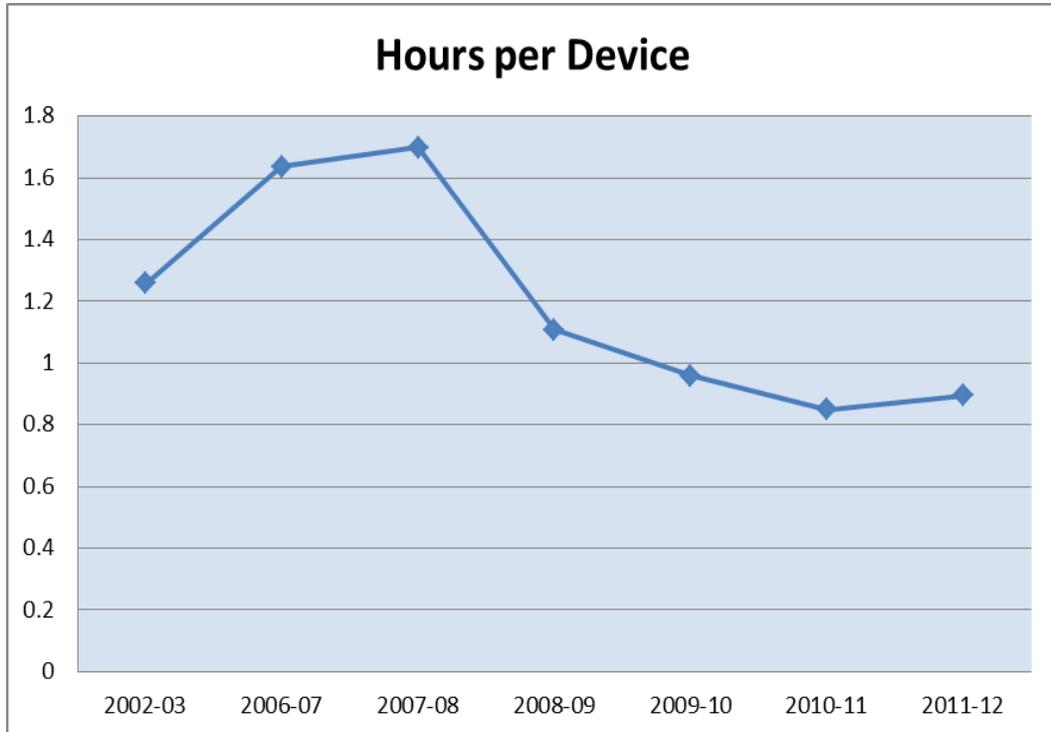
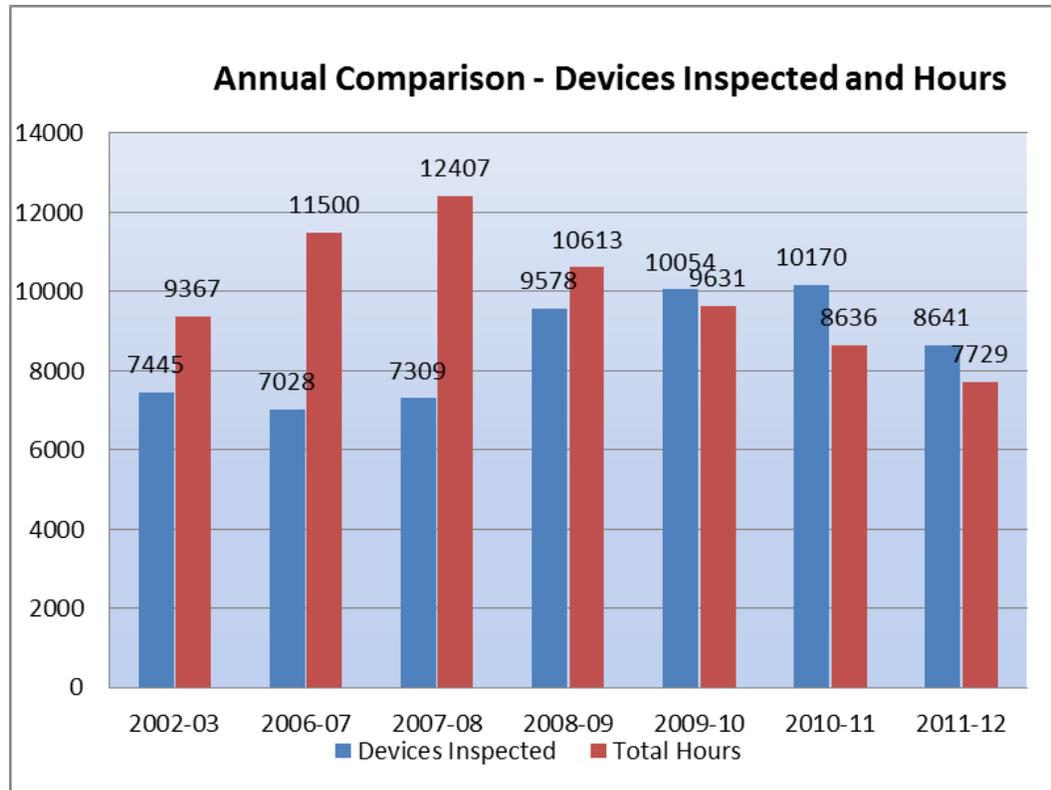
V. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A. Environmental Protection Programs

The California Dog teams statistics for the period of July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012 truly displays great performance. During that time the teams alerted on 36,564 total parcels with 2,114 being unmarked and containing agricultural commodities. This is quite notable as the normal human inspectors only catch the parcels that are marked as containing plant material or are leaking or odiferous, unmarked parcels slip by unnoticed. Of these total alerts, 87 actionable pests were intercepted and 1,509 were in violation of state and federal quarantines laws and regulations and rejected.

B. Consumer Protection Programs

The number of weights and measure devices inspected relative to the hours expended on this program continues at a high rate. This is a reflection of focused training , staff experience and efficiency, and specialized testing equipment that was obtained for this program. Lower overall hours expended in this program is due to staffing shortages. This is summarized in the 2 charts below:



C. Service Programs

It has been the Department's long term goal to reduce and eliminate artichoke thistle, purple starthistle and certain other rated noxious weeds. This is to the benefit of our agricultural and ranch lands as well as to the natural environment and biodiversity of Contra Costa County.

By the 1970's Contra Costa County had one of the heaviest infestations of these weeds in California with over 100,000 acres infested. Since 1979 the Department has gradually worked to control these weeds in most areas of the county adding new sites as workload permitted. Work includes survey and spot treatment of historically infested sites each year to eventually deplete the reservoir of residual seeds that continues to germinate for up to twenty years or more for certain targeted species. Work is done on parkland, rangeland, open space areas and infested areas adjacent to cropland. In addition, the Department has treated new areas in East Bay Regional Park's Wildcat Canyon and Tilden Park under contract to help them reclaim their open space from artichoke thistle and other targeted noxious weed species 100% of the extremely heavily artichoke thistle infested park is now under the treatment program. The Department completed the twelfth year of a contract with Mt. Diablo State Park. All of this park's 20,000 lightly infested acres were surveyed and treated.

The long-term goal of the noxious weed program is to increase or maintain gross acres treated while net acres treated declines as populations are reduced.

In total the department targets 16 noxious weed species. Three of these species are only found at a single site in the county and nine are found at less than ten site locations. In total there are 867 sites that range in size from one acre to 5,000 acres. The noxious weeds at these sites are mostly greatly suppressed with total eradication of the target species having been achieved at 196 of the sites. This shows great progress toward our goal of eradicating these harmful invasive species.

	Artichoke Thistle		Purple Starthistle	
	Acres Treated		Acres Treated	
Year	Net	Gross	Net	Gross
2004	369	79,126	129	13,724
2005	296	80,359	116	17,106
2006	59	86,994	74	12,096
2007	207	56,256	155	8,158
2008	394	45,536	29	94,327
2009	128	67,858	97	16,046
2010	143	82,323	91	27,182
2011	206	67,037	153	22,787
2012	105	185,524	61	27,089

In addition to protecting the natural environment of Contra Costa County and endangered species habitat, the control of noxious weeds helps to reclaim and

protect land from pests that render it unusable for continued agricultural and open space enjoyment.

Our Department provides technical assistance to the public and agencies on the proper control methods for ground squirrels. We also perform work at cost to protect agricultural settings, highway and railroad rights-of-way, flood control creeks, levees, water canals, county maintained roads, reclamation districts, sanitation plants, city parks and open space areas for homeowners associations. The demand for assistance continues to increase each year.