

Public Nuisance Conditions Caused by Eye Gnat Breeding on Organic Farms



Jack Miller, Director
Department of Environmental Health

Jacumba Farm

- Complaints started in 2003
- Approximately 500-acre farm
- Primary crops are lettuce and spinach
- Increased crop production lead to increased complaints

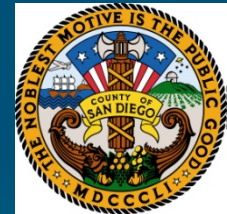
Community Meetings



In 2008, Supervisor Jacob began holding community meetings to find solutions for eye gnat breeding

Coordinated County Approach

- County Departments teamed up to find solutions:
 - Environmental Health (DEH)
 - Agriculture Weights & Measures (Ag)
 - Farm & Home Advisor (FHA)
- FHA conducted research on effective control measures
- DEH and Farmer agreed to voluntary Eye Gnat Prevention Plan last two years, 2010 & 2011
- DEH continues to conduct weekly inspections



Keeping residents Informed

DEH created a website and posts the following information:

- Eye Gnat Nuisance Prevention Plan
- FHA Research Final Report
- Eye Gnat Complaint Log
- Eye Gnat Trap Summary
- Farm Inspection Reports
- Non-Compliance letters

- Link to webpage: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/pests/eyegnats/eyegnats_home.html



Best Management Practices



Eye Gnat Trap

Mass eye gnat
trapping on farm



Best Management Practices



36" tall black barrier cloth to discourage low-flying eye gnats from leaving the farm

Best Management Practices



Alfalfa Buffer Crop

Buffer Crops on outer edge of farm (100 feet) –
treated with conventional pesticides

Best Management Practices

Dry cut crop on ground surface



Avoid tilling fresh vegetation into the soil

Best Management Practices



No planting or irrigation of production crops for six weeks during summer

Results of Efforts

- Reduction of eye gnats in traps from:
 - In 2008: 222.2 eye gnats per trap per day
 - In 2009: 73.3 eye gnats per trap per day
 - In 2010: 1.4 eye gnat per trap per day
 - In 2011: 0.27 eye gnat per trap per day
- Average 40 complaints per week since July 2011

San Pasqual Valley Farm



Authority for Enforcement

Jacumba

- County authority is limited to a general nuisance complaint in an unincorporated area

Escondido

- No County authority since farm is in the City of San Diego

Board of Supervisors Directive

In November 2011 Supervisors Jacob and Slater-Price proposed a Board directive to develop a “tougher strategy” on eye gnats

Eye Gnat Intervention Working Group

- Met five times (November '11 to January '12)

Farmers	Community Members
Eric Larson, Director, Farm Bureau	Danielle Cook, Jacumba
Al Stehly, Farm Bureau	Bill Dennett, Jacumba
Alan Bornt, Bornt Farms	Cindy Morriss, So. Escondido
Bill Brammer, Be Wise Farms	Dr. Larry Michel, So. Escondido
Technical Advisor, Nan Sterman	
Jack Miller, Director DEH, Chair	

Efforts of Working Group

- Crafted proposed ordinance
- Created Report with recommendations, general consensus and dissenting views
- Solicited comments from interested parties
- Received over 1,700 comments
- Comments helped identify need for more extensive environmental review of program/ordinance

What's Next

- Voluntary agreement in Jacumba for 2012
- Seeking voluntary agreement with San Pasqual farm
- Status update to Board of Supervisors on March 28th
- Return to Board with ordinance when environmental review completed