

HQ NEOTHEAD
ANNOUNCEMENT

Plumas-Sierra

Department of Agriculture



Weights & Measures



Strategic Plan 2024 -2026

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to promote agriculture and equity in the marketplace, while ensuring the welfare of the public, industry, and the environment.

Vision Statement

The Plumas-Sierra Counties Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measure's Office is the leader in promoting and protecting agriculture and consumers in Plumas and Sierra Counties. Working together with all Plumas and Sierra County stakeholders, the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer builds the necessary structures for long term success into the future. The Plumas-Sierra Counties Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer's Office identifies challenges as they are forming and quickly develops appropriate actions to reach a positive outcome. Excellence of service and continued improvement are key parts of the very structure and operation of the Department.

Core Values

We value...

- Honesty, integrity, and fairness
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Respect for people and property
- Practical collaborative approaches to problem solving
- Science-based approaches: technical and professional competence
- Transparency
- Quality customer service

Budget

The Plumas -Sierra Department of Agriculture budget is approximately \$ 570,000 per year. Most of our funding comes from State reimbursement through contracts, industry fees and the Plumas County General Fund. The budget includes four full-time positions and two seasonal positions.

Program Areas

Pest Detection

A proactive program to primarily detect insect pests before they become established. Traps are placed and monitored throughout the entire county to detect the presence of any exotic pests of agriculture, such as Spongy Moth, Japanese Beetle, European Pine Shoot Moth, etc. These insect pests have an enormous host range and are difficult and costly to eradicate once they become established. Last year in Plumas and Sierra Counties there were 162 traps monitored for the presence of 3 different insect pests. Two new recent detection programs have been implemented for the European Pine Shoot Moth and the European Corn Borer. Through early detection this program is protecting more than agriculture. The environment is protected by limiting the need for more pesticide applications and protecting our forests. The quality of produce is higher when exotic pests are detected early and prevented from becoming established as common pests. Consumers are protected from rising food costs as production expenses are less.

Pest Exclusion

Provides protection to the county by regulatory control using quarantines to prevent the introduction of pests, which are not known to exist or are of very limited distribution within the county. Inspections are conducted at various locations in the area checking incoming plant material for cleanliness. Phytosanitary certificates are issued declaring that commodity shipments to foreign countries meet the pest-free requirements of these other countries. Hay fields and gravel pits are inspected to maintain a high standard of cleanliness for use inside and outside of our counties.

Pest Control

The Agricultural Commissioner's department works with CDFA and USDA to develop the use of effective biological controls for use on troublesome pests of agriculture. Seven (7) different biological control organisms have been released throughout the county to help in the control of such bothersome pests as: Puncture Vine, Yellow Starthistle, Rush Skeleton Weed, Klamath Weed and Dalmatian Toadflax.

The Department also works with USDA Wildlife Services on the non-lethal control of wolves.

Pest Eradication

Weed species under eradication include Spotted Knapweed, Dyer's Woad, Rush Skeleton Weed, and are all very serious weed pests if left uncontrolled. Biological, chemical, and mechanical methods are utilized to eliminate the most serious of these weed pests. Several other weed species are under constant surveillance to keep them under control and prevent their spreading.

Pesticide Regulation

Pesticide use in California is regulated through this program, ensuring the continued safe use of these vital tools for agriculture. This program represents over 60% of the workload of the Agricultural Commissioner. Restricted materials permits are issued for pesticide use and site inspections are performed prior to use. A vital function of this program is the recording of all agricultural pesticide applications from the Use

Reports submitted by growers and/or commercial applicators. Departmental personnel provide outreach to the general community and to growers. All this provides protection for the consumer, the worker, the environment, and the grower, making Plumas-Sierra Counties and California agriculture products some of the safest in the world.

Seed

Inspections are performed at retail establishments that sell seed. Samples are drawn for germination and purity testing. Labeling is inspected for compliance with state requirements.

Nursery

Through this program the Agricultural Commissioner inspects the growing, propagation and production areas of local nurseries to assure cleanliness from pests and that healthy plants are offered for sale to the wholesaler and consumer.

Standardization

This function ensures compliance with California's minimum standards regarding quality, labeling and marketing of all produce commercially grown locally and marketed throughout the state. This provides protection to growers, marketers, and consumers.

Organic Production

The organic commodity registration program is administered through this program. It provides for the inspection of growers and retail establishments that produce and sell organic products to ensure the integrity of the organic label.

Certified Producers and Farmer's Markets

Local producers are inspected and certified for selling their crops at Certified Farmer's Markets and certain retail establishments. Certified Farmer's Markets are certified and inspected through this program as well.

Eggs

Retailers and wholesalers of packed eggs in the county are inspected to assure compliance with state quality, size, grade and labeling standards. Public and producer outreach on poultry production is also provided.

Apiary and Honey

Honey is inspected for compliance with federal regulations. Beekeepers are provided with apiary inspection and certification services. Hives are registered with the state and beekeepers are notified of impending pesticide application that may be harmful to bees.

Industrial Hemp

Through this program Industrial Hemp producers are registered, and their crops inspected to meet stringent state requirements. Information to the public is also provided.

Measurement Standards

- Device inspection and registration – scales, cordage meters, vapor submeters, electric submeters, propane dispensers, fuel trucks.
- Quantity Control – Includes package and labeling inspections.
- Weighmaster – Audits and tare verification
- Petroleum Program – Station and fuel quality inspections.
- Price Verification – includes test purchases.

Statistics

As required by the California Food and Agricultural Code, the County Agricultural Commissioner compiles and records information in the annual crop and livestock report regarding the gross production and value of the county's commodities. Various research institutions, schools, banks, government agencies, and businesses use this valuable information to the benefit of the local economy. Also, disasters to agriculture are surveyed and the information collected is used by other agencies offering disaster relief. Statistics promote and protect the continued production and prosperity of agriculture in Plumas and Sierra Counties.



Key Objectives

Key Objective #1

Operate in a culture of compliance & support

What does this mean?

To operate in a culture of compliance and support, PC Ag/WM must deliver all services in an open, proactive, professional, helpful, and respectful manner focusing on education, outreach and technical assistance while relying on a regulatory backstop. When pursuing program compliance and support, a variety of regulatory tools must be considered, innovative problem-solving process used, and communication completed in a clear, understandable, and flexible manner.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

- Customers and clients report that the department provides effective educational support and consulting.
- Progressive compliance actions lead to conformity with California laws.
- Inspections document high rates of compliance.
- Complaints about serious violations decrease.

Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:

- Employees complete conflict resolution training.
- Employees receive training to better utilize regulatory options.
- Provide employees with the equipment required to create an environment of compliance and support.
- Dedicate employees that know how to navigate compliance procedures to help others in the department.
- Implement compliance tools that are consistent across programs department wide.
- Use data systems to improve compliance tracking.
- Develop new and innovative communications that effectively convey the intended message and are clearly understood by stakeholders.

Key objective 2

Operate as a role model organization

What does this mean?

To operate as a role model organization, PC Ag/WM must maintain a culture of excellence in all employees, work products, and customer service while achieving operational objectives and goals. Effective leadership, fiscal responsibility, an adaptive organizational structure, innovative use of technology, programmatic expertise, and a safe work environment are necessary elements for a role model organization.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

- Employees and supervisors are knowledgeable about and follow state laws, rule, and policies that affect the department, such as public records laws, ethics laws, vehicle use policies, and human resources policies. Supervisors additionally communicate to employees that we value spending time to learn this information.
- Employees show a high level of confidence and respect for fellow employees and for County leadership.
- PC Ag/WM operates with an organizational structure where resources are adaptively allocated to best solve emerging challenges.
- Programs undertake internal and external reviews to stimulate continuous improvement and adaptive management.
- The department continues to have a positive relationship with State partners, as indicated by open dialogue and support for the department's mission.
- Fund balances and resource allocation continue to remain within budget.
- The department budget is submitted by the date requested by the CAO.
- PC Ag/WM continues to increase efficiency and effectiveness through adoption of technology.
- PC Ag/WM manages safety risks and responds to safety concerns raised by employees.

Employees feel safe while doing their jobs and feel supported in leaving a situation where they feel unsafe. Employees feel equipped with the tools needed to lessen the chance of confrontations that can lead to safety concerns.

- PC Ag/WM has organizational capacity to continue key operations even when faced with

unexpected events such as computer failure or extreme weather.

- PC Ag/WM is an inclusive organization that serves all.

Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:

- Advocate for department budgets that continue to support our evolving core programs and values.
- Implement systems to accept and communicate input from all sources.
- Create an effective feedback system from employees and departing employees to drive operational improvements.
- Innovate cost-effective, new ways to deliver service and control costs.
- Increase emphasis on cross-functional work, including holding related discussions and planning during employee meetings.
- Implement a technology plan.
- Develop and implement a communication plan.
- Review and take actions to improve the security of PC Ag/WM employees in the field and in the PC Ag/WM building.
- Make better use of data to improve how we deliver our programs. For example, if a key performance measure is declining, adjust program delivery for improvement and track the impact.
- Develop and maintain a crisis management plan to effectively respond to unexpected potentially negative events without delay.
- Finish and implement the Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) plan.

Key objective 3

Embrace a culture of collaboration

What does this mean?

To embrace a culture of collaboration, PC Ag/WM engages and works with interested parties to evaluate and search for appropriate outcomes through trust, transparency, and respect for different points of view. We use program and project opportunities to grow existing partnerships and develop new partnerships.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

- PC Ag/WM takes proactive steps to engage all audiences/stakeholders of agriculture.
- PC Ag/WM has reached out to new partners and interested parties to engage them in PC Ag/WM work.

Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:

- Complete an inventory and review of partnerships to evaluate opportunities for improvement and expansion.
- Evaluate programs that do not have stakeholder engagement and consider creating this structure as needed.
- Identify strategies to interact with farmers or ranchers who are not members of a state agricultural organization.
- Seek to improve relationships with organizations that show interest and need.
- Evaluate and improve how we typically conduct processes that include public involvement.

Key objective 4

Foster employee excellence

What does this mean?

To foster employee excellence, PC Ag/WM creates an atmosphere that encourages employees to excel as they incorporate PC Ag/WM's mission and values in their day-to-day work. We encourage and challenge existing employees to grow professionally, and we attract and keep new employees who complement and enhance PC Ag/WM.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

- Employees hold themselves and each other accountable for results.
- Employee training is included in the budget and planning processes.
- Employee accomplishments are recognized regularly by peers, supervisors, and Board of Supervisors.
- Most employees report that performance information they receive from their supervisor helps them improve.
- High participation in wellness activities.
- Feedback from the annual employee exit interviews indicate employee work experience receives appropriate management attention.

Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:

- Empower employees to make decisions and take personal responsibility for their work.
- Ensure that every employee knows what their professional development needs are and what is available to them.
- Develop a process for individual, specific, ongoing performance feedback and recommended improvements for all employees, including supervisors.
- Develop and implement an annual employee climate survey.
- Foster an environment that promotes work life balance.
- Develop tools such as desk manuals and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to support succession planning.
- Cross-train employees to meet the department's succession needs.

- Create a mentorship system to help promote employee capabilities.
- Hold an annual supervisor work session to review and re-focus department direction and the strategic plan.



Key objective 5

Provide excellent customer service recognizing the diversity of Plumas and Sierra Counties agriculture

What does this mean?

To best provide excellent customer service that meets the unique needs of Plumas-Sierra farmers and ranchers. PC Ag/WM embraces, supports, and promotes the diversity of all of Plumas-Sierra agriculture regardless of crop type, production practice, size of operation, geography, land or water, market and the numerous other factors used to produce and process Plumas-Sierra agricultural commodities.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

- We solicit, track, and learn from customer feedback regarding services provided and the approach taken to navigate difficult issues.
- Problem solving and cooperation increases across the spectrum of Plumas-Sierra agriculture.
- PC Ag/WM continues to have a reputation for serving the diversity of agriculture.
- Collaborative efforts where PC Ag/WM is involved result in increased benefits to Plumas-Sierra agriculture.

Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:

- Review policies and procedures to ensure they are customer oriented.
- Create opportunities to address customer wants and needs.
- Build organizational capacity to continue key services to customers even when faced with unexpected events such as computer failure or extreme weather.
- Strive to help organic, small farmers, and direct-to-consumer farmers to feel served by PC Ag/WM.
- Help promote a shared understanding of all agriculture by all parties, leading to improved co-existence.
- Learn how to better facilitate collaboration between diverse parties to benefit PC Ag/WM agriculture

Key objective 6

Connect & promote Plumas-Sierra food & agriculture as a valued experience for consumers & as an exciting career choice

What does this mean?

PC Ag/WM raises awareness of the opportunities, diversity, and innovation of Plumas-Sierra agriculture and food sector by connecting residents to the people responsible for farming, ranching, and food manufacturing in our counties. PC Ag/WM serves as an ambassador helping to inform residents about the economic significance of Plumas and Sierra Counties' agriculture, the employment opportunities directly and indirectly available in agriculture, and agriculture's environmental investments to protect, preserve, and enhance Plumas and Sierra Counties' natural resources.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

- The value and role agriculture provides to urban and rural locations in our area increases.
- Partnerships between the department and youth communities expand.

Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:

- Adopt communications strategies, platforms, and messages that resonate with customers and the public by identifying how various audiences receive and access information.
- Actively promote the value of farming and ranching to our residents.
- Communicate with youth about agricultural career opportunities available to them.
- Increase partnerships such as those with FRC, including all agricultural programs.
- Encourage employees to connect with the communities they live in about agriculture and its opportunities.

Key objective 7

Strive for clear, concise, & inclusive communication

What does this mean?

To strive for clear and concise communication with all residents about agriculture and the department's programs, PC Ag/WM uses the most effective tools available to give and receive information. PC Ag/WM employees respond quickly, providing information directly or re-directing stakeholders and the public to the appropriate sources for that information.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

- Stakeholder support increases over time due to increased understanding of PC Ag/WM's work.
- Public awareness of department work increases over time.
- Compliance increases due to PC Ag/WM's regulated community's increased understanding of regulations.
- Employee knowledge of PC Ag/WM programs increases (e.g. onboarding versus demonstrated knowledge over time of employment).
- Number of engagements with PC Ag/WM communications increases (e.g. social media impressions, subscriptions to PC Ag/WM Newsletter).

Examples of what we hope to do over the next five years to realize this objective:

- Continue to use plain language and an easy to digest format (e.g. use of infographics).
- Utilize new methods (e.g. social media) to effectively communicate to evolving audiences.
- Develop inclusive language access to PC Ag/WM documents.
- Provide media training to key program employees.
- Increase the number of opportunities for employees to gain a better understanding of PC Ag/WM and its work.

What's next?

Connecting the strategic plan to day-to-day work

This strategic plan will provide guidance for individual work planning. Each employee will review the strategic plan, identify efforts they will do to accomplish their part, and report status to the Ag Commissioner/Sealer. Where appropriate, the Ag Commissioner/Sealer will address questions of cross-program efforts and resource constraints.

Updating the strategic plan in the future

Rather than wait to the end of the five-year strategic planning horizon to update the strategic plan, the strategic plan will be reviewed annual and updated, if necessary. The current year that is ending will be evaluated and then eliminated from the plan. A new fifth year will be added, and adjustments will be made to the intervening years to reflect needed changes. Shared ownership around a strategic plan that is relevant and used up and down the organization is the goal.



