



## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

**GLENN FANKHAUSER**  
Agricultural Commissioner  
Sealer of Weights and Measures

1001 South Mount Vernon Avenue · Bakersfield, California 93307  
Telephone 661-868-6300 · Fax 661-868-6301 · agcomm@kerncounty.com  
website - www.kernag.com

### PRESS RELEASE

August 8, 2017

#### **Kern County Dept. of Ag. Fines Two Companies for Pesticide Drift Incident**

BAKERSFIELD, August 8, 2017 –

The Kern County Department of Agriculture and Measurement Standards (KCDAMS) has taken swift enforcement action against two companies who violated pesticide rules and ordered them to pay a total of \$50,250 after an incident left 5 people seeking medical treatment.

The two companies are Sun Pacific Farming – Maricopa, 33374 Lerdo Hwy, Bakersfield, CA and Grape Man Farms, LP, P.O. Box 1266 Delano, CA.

The enforcement action comes after KCDAMS carried out an investigation into an incident on May 5, 2017, when a crew of fieldworkers harvesting cabbage in a field in the area of Maricopa south of Copus Road and west of I-5 (Section 32, Township 12N Range 22W) complained of an odor.

Sun Pacific Farming – Maricopa had treated tangerine orchards located one-half mile west and northwest of the site with a pesticide product called Vulcan (active ingredient chlorpyrifos) which was just being completed as the cabbage harvesters were arriving. Grape Man Farms, LP had treated vineyards located one-half mile northwest of the cabbage site with Cosavet DF (active ingredient sulfur) during the time the incident occurred.

As part of the investigation, KCDAMS submitted foliage samples to a laboratory for analysis. The lab found the presence of sulfur and chlorpyrifos, indicating that both pesticides had drifted from where they were applied – a violation of California law. The KCDAMS investigation determined that the drift and illness occurred as a direct result of violating pesticide laws.

“Agriculture is vitally important to Kern County. At the same time, we want to do everything we can to protect the public and the environment. Integral to this is agricultural worker safety” said Glenn Fankhauser, Kern County Agricultural Commissioner.

During the May 5<sup>th</sup> incident the Kern County Fire Department was dispatched along with Kern County Environmental Health and inspectors from the KCDAMS. At one point, as many as 37 workers experienced symptoms; however, only five people sought medical treatment.

Sun Pacific Farming – Maricopa has been ordered to pay a civil penalty totaling \$30,250 for violating California pesticide laws and/or regulations including:

- Not using the pesticide Vulcan according to the label directions
- Using the pesticide Vulcan in a manner that exposed five workers, causing illness

Grapeman Farms, LP has been ordered to pay a civil penalty totaling \$20,000 for violating California pesticide laws and/or regulations including:

- Not using the pesticide Cosavet DF according to the label directions
- Using the pesticide Cosavet DF in a manner that exposed five workers, causing illness

Copies of the Notice of Proposed Actions (NOPAs) outlining the individual violations and fine levels is attached. Both entities have the opportunity to request a hearing related to these charges as well as an appeal of the hearing results if desired.

Further information can be obtained by calling the Kern County Department of Agriculture at 661-868-6300.