

Weekly Ag Radio Report
Cheryl Lauritsen – Agricultural Commissioner’s Office
May 13, 2015

Have you ever wondered if the gas pump is giving you the correct amount of gas or if the scale weighing your bananas is accurate? Well, the Lassen County Department of Weights & Measures has your back. Good Morning, my name is Cheryl Lauritsen and I want to tell you a little about what the department of weights and measures is all about.

The need for trade and commerce has been around since the beginning of societies. People needed an arrangement that would ensure fair and honest trade so they developed a system of weights and measures. Back in those days, measurements came for parts of the body (a hand or a forearm) or the surroundings. Seeds and grains were used for weights and time was measured by the sun and the moon. This wasn't very accurate, so it became necessary to develop a "standard" that everything was compared to. We still use standards today that meet the criteria of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

The California Division of Measurement Standards has been around since about 1913, although it has existed under several different titles. It is a division of the California Department of Agriculture and works closely with county sealers of weights and measures to enforce laws and regulations. In Lassen County, enforcement activities are carried out by those of us at the Lassen County Department of Agriculture. It is our responsibility to make sure that it is a fair and equitable market place for you, the consumer.

Each year we travel around the county certifying the many measuring and weighing devices. We check the accuracy of packaged commodities, scanning devices, meters, firewood measurements, scales and gas pumps. Our duties also include testing the quality of gasoline, diesel fuel, motor oil and brake fluid. You will know we have been there by the seal that is attached to each device that we have tested.

If you feel that you have not gotten what you paid for, contact our office. We will follow up and try to resolve the problem. Some examples of consumer complaints are: deceptive packaging, contaminated motor vehicle fuels, quantities of delivered firewood, products misrepresented on the basis of weight, reduced prices not deducted at the register or scanner problems, just to name a few.

You can learn more about the Division of Measurement Standards at the California Department Agriculture website. There is even a "kids" page!

I also want to remind any growers who plan to spray restricted materials to be sure your permit is up to date, even if you have already renewed. Often field changes are made mid-year which will require updating your permit. Also, remember to NOI and turn in your use reports in a timely manner.

For this or any other agriculture or weights & measures questions, you can contact Craig, Tina or I at the Department of Agriculture 251-8110.

Don't forget to get your tickets for the Lassen County Fair Headliner Show - John Michael Montgomery sponsored by the Diamond Mountain Casino. Tickets are available online or at the fair office.