

MONTEREY COUNTY

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MONTEREY COUNTY RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019

ROOSTER KEEPING IN MONTEREY COUNTY

FINDING (F12): Inadequate cooperation between ACS and The Office of the Agricultural Commissioner has caused poor implementation and enforcement of The Ordinance.

Response, Agricultural Commissioner: The Agricultural Commissioner disagrees with this finding. The Agricultural Commissioner received four different applications on four different occasions submitted by Animal Services. In each instance, the Agricultural Commissioner reviewed Monterey County Code, Title 8, Chapter 8.50.110 – Rooster keeping operation exemption; appeal – documented and visited those premises requesting rooster keeping permit exemption. Each application was found not to be eligible for the rooster keeping permit exemption.

Chapter 8.50.130 - Enforcement states, in part that “The Animal Control Officer shall be primarily responsible for implementation and enforcement of this Chapter.” Conversely, Chapter 8.50.100 – Rooster keeping operation inspections states, in part that “The Animal Control Officer and the Agricultural Commissioner shall have the right to inspect rooster keeping operations. As a condition of the issuance, transfer, or renewal of a rooster keeping operation permit...” Once the Agricultural Commissioner was informed of a rooster keeping operation seeking rooster keeping permit exemption, the Agricultural Commissioner responded and inspected in accordance with Chapter 8.50.110.

The Agricultural Commissioner has a long-standing history of cooperation among other Monterey County Agencies and will seek to cooperate as closely as needs to be with ACS.

FINDING (F22): Without regard to the possibility of spreading Viral Newcastle disease, RMA Code Enforcement mandated owners relocate roosters.

Response, Agricultural Commissioner: The Agricultural Commissioner agrees with this finding. Virulent Newcastle disease (VDN), formerly known as Exotic Newcastle Disease, is considered a serious, highly contagious viral disease by The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) which can affect poultry and other birds.

According to CDFA, “the virus is found in respiratory discharges and feces and may cause high rates of sickness and death in susceptible birds. For poultry, chickens are most susceptible.”

The Agricultural Commissioner does not have knowledge about the RMA Code Enforcement mandating owners to relocate roosters. County Agricultural Commissioners work closely with the California Department of Food and Agriculture on issues of agriculture affecting their respective counties. In the case of VDN and



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other exotic invasive species the County Agricultural Commissioner has knowledge of these pests and can serve as a resource to the RMA and others.

RECOMMENDATION (R5): Immediately, The Health Department should create an interagency task force for the purposes of implementing and enforcing the roster-keeping ordinance, to include the Health Department, ACS, Sheriff, The Agricultural Commissioner and SPCA.

Response, Agricultural Commissioner: The Agricultural Commissioner's Office already responds to rooster-keeping operation exemptions applicants. The Agricultural Commissioner's staff will actively participate if an interagency task force for the purposes of implementing and enforcing the roster-keeping ordinance.