



Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office

Head Lettuce Inspection Program



Henry S. Gonzales

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights & Measures



Leaf Lettuce





Images of Head Lettuce

Head or Iceberg Lettuce





Monterey County Inspection Authority

California Food and Agricultural Code section 42821:
"An enforcing officer may enter and inspect..."

Monterey County Code - Chapter 10.16.010 – 10.16.060 Produce Inspection - HEAD LETTUCE & SALAD PRODUCTS

ESTABLISHED in 1976, UPDATED 1985, 1986, 1990, 1993, 1998

10.16.020 – Inspection and certificate required.

10.16.030 – Fees – Schedule. (\$0.0225 per carton)



Head Lettuce Inspection Program

Inspections required for:

- Quality
- Maturity
- Standardized Containers
- Container Markings
- **NOT FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS**

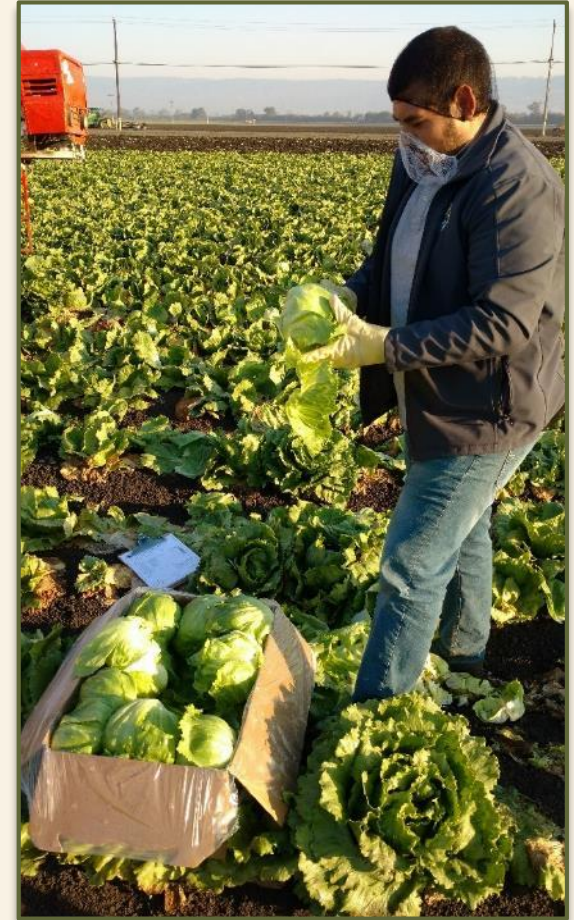




Head Lettuce Harvest & Inspection



- Inspection at time of harvest
- Neutral (3rd) Party inspections
- Protect Reputation of Quality
- Ensure Fairness in the Marketplace
- Higher market prices for Monterey County lettuce





Market Changes ~ 42 years

- Industry Standards higher than State Regs.
 - *Fewer violations, better product before packing.*
- Improved Lettuce Varieties
 - *pest resistance*
 - *improved quality*
 - *longer shelf-life*
- Market driven by Consumers and Buyers, not local Brokers
- Increased popularity of Leaf Lettuce, and a decrease in Head Lettuce



Head Lettuce Acres & Inspectors

- 1994 = 38 inspectors
- 2018 = 6 inspectors
- 1994 = 73,347 acres
- 2018 = 38,000 acres



Finances

- \$0.0225 per carton fee
- Refund approximately \$200,000
- Loss of Administrative/Overhead Costs - \$130,000 for FY2019/20
- Will Eliminate 10 vacant and 2 filled Produce Inspector Positions



Program & Industry

- Industry believes program is no longer of value
- Growers Shippers Association requested Head Lettuce inspection repeal
- Monterey County Ag Advisory Committee recommends repeal
- Board of Supervisors action needed



Summary

- County Ordinance outdated and unnecessary
- Less production/inspection/violations
- State standards below industry
- Industry no longer sees value





Thank You

Henry S. Gonzales

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights & Measures

