



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

GREG COX
First District

DIANNE JACOB
Second District

PAM SLATER
Third District

RON ROBERTS
Fourth District

BILL HORN
Fifth District

DATE: November 30, 2004

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED AGNET PROGRAM TO PROTECT AGRICULTURE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (District: All)

SUMMARY:

Overview

This action requests the support of the Board of Supervisors for the proposed one-year pilot AgNet program in order to encourage the allocation of federal and state funds for the program.

AgNet is a proposed one-year pilot program designed to increase communication and incorporate the efforts of several County departments, local law enforcement, other agencies, and the agricultural community in fighting crimes that impact agriculture in San Diego County.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR HORN, DISTRICT ATTORNEY DUMANIS, AND SHERIFF KOLENDER:

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter for the Chairwoman's signature expressing support for the proposed AgNet program to U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Fiscal Impact

There are no current or future year costs or staffing level changes associated with this action.

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

N/A

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED AGNET PROGRAM TO PROTECT AGRICULTURE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (District: ALL)

BACKGROUND:

Overview

The lack of an integrated communications strategy among law enforcement, agricultural and resource agencies within the region is believed to result in many crimes with agricultural implications going undetected in San Diego County. During the 1999-2000 Mexican Fruit Fly quarantine in the Fallbrook area, there was a noted lack of coordination between various responding government agencies that highlighted this lack of an integrated strategy. This had a profound economic impact on the specialty crop producers of the area. The quarantine event exposed a significant void in communicating information regarding crimes that impact the agricultural sector between responsible agencies.

A proposal developed by the County of San Diego would deploy a multi-department enforcement effort focusing on crimes directed at and/or impacting the agricultural sector. The intent is to facilitate resource coordination among three San Diego County departments, and various external agencies, including three Imperial County departments, that encounter crimes in the agricultural and rural sectors. This pilot project would bring direct interaction among both Counties' Sheriff's Departments, the Departments of Agriculture, Weights and Measures, and the District Attorney's Offices. The proposal would also create an agricultural crime telephone hotline and utilize the Internet to disseminate information and interagency communications in a timely manner. The proposal also includes funding for essential equipment, travel expenses, overtime for special operation, and the administration of the Rural Crime School. This pilot project would include funding for a Senior Agricultural Standards Inspector to work directly with staff from the Sheriff's Department. Additionally, it would fund two Sheriff's Project Managers positions and a Deputy District Attorney. The funding would also provide for one analyst to support the unit.

Department and Agency Capabilities

The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer of the county. With the large number of deputies deployed in these two counties, it is critical that these deputies are experts in enforcing all of the appropriate California Penal Codes, Food and Agricultural Code, and Fish and Game Regulations. Law enforcement officer's responsibilities include enforcing quarantine, transportation of livestock, and food commodities laws, as well as investigating crop, plant, and equipment thefts.

The District Attorney's office investigates and prosecutes the cases presented to it from both law enforcement and regulatory agencies. Prosecution of agriculture related crimes requires specialized knowledge and training in a wide variety of applicable codes. Vertical prosecution is a strategy that allows one prosecution team to handle an entire case from beginning to end including support for the investigation. Vertical prosecuting enhances enforcement by advising judges on the unique status of the crime and the loss.

The San Diego County Department of Agriculture, Weights, and Measures provides regulatory oversight on a broad range of agricultural activities throughout the County. The Department's inspection staff has in-depth, first-hand knowledge of the operational characteristics of local agricultural enterprises as well as a broader understanding of local cultural and economic aspects

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED AGNET PROGRAM TO PROTECT AGRICULTURE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (District: ALL)

of these operations. Inspectors from the County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures serve as valuable resources to local law enforcement agencies and have proven their value in several cases involving the trafficking in stolen produce as well as violations of State and federal quarantine regulations.

Other agencies such as the State and Federal Agriculture departments, the Border Patrol, State Parks department, and the Bureau of Land Management occasionally encounter crimes that include agricultural components. However, these agencies frequently lack the expertise and resources to adequately assess the agricultural implications of a crime. Sharing resources and speeding communication through the deployment of appropriate technologies and direct interaction with both internal and external agencies will foster cooperative relationships. This project also proposes to administer the Rural Crime School in San Diego and Imperial Counties. The objective of the Rural Crime School is to provide training to law enforcement and regulatory officers in identifying and appropriately responding and investigating rural crimes and thoroughly preparing the cases.

Future Funding

Working together to produce measurable results is essential to securing additional funding for this effort. Showing local resolve to increase the detection, arrest and prosecution of individuals engaged in crimes related to agriculture is an essential first step in obtaining State and Federal commitment to fund this effort. On March 11, 2003 (26), the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Officer to identify funding in the amount of \$200,000 to be used as a match for federal funding.

Additionally, in light of national security issues that have arisen within the last few years, including a focus on ag-terrorism and protection of the nation's food supply, it is anticipated that federal resources may soon become available for projects like AgNet. Deployment of a local program with real results could facilitate this County's ability to be a leading force to successfully compete for these funds.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Horn
San Diego County Supervisor, Fifth District

Bonnie Dumanis
San Diego County District Attorney

William Kolender
San Diego County Sheriff

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED AGNET PROGRAM TO PROTECT AGRICULTURE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY (District: ALL)

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s): Agriculture, Weights, and Measures

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Supervisor Bill Horn

CONTACT PERSON(S):

<u>Phil Rath</u>	_____
Name	Name
<u>(619) 531-5555</u>	_____
Phone	Phone
_____	_____
Fax	Fax
_____	_____
Mail Station	Mail Station
_____	_____
E-mail	E-mail

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____