



# County of San Diego

**HA DANG**  
AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/  
SEALER OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WEIGHTS AND MEASURES  
9325 HAZARD WAY, STE. 100, SAN DIEGO, CA 92123-1217  
(858) 694-2739  
FAX (858) 467-9697  
<http://www.sdcawm.org>

**MĒGAN MOORE**  
ASST. AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/  
SEALER OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

September 17, 2021

## **INVITATION AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY (AWQ) PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT WEBINAR:**

The County of San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AWM) is committed to support a diverse agricultural community and a sustainable environment. An important element of that environmental sustainability is water quality.

Water quality in our rivers, lakes, and the Pacific Ocean is related to upstream activities within the region's 11 watersheds. Through its enforcement of a regional Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit (MS4 Permit), the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) requires the County of San Diego to implement a regulatory program that is designed to prevent pollutants from entering stormwater conveyances and impairing regional water quality in the unincorporated areas of the county. The County Water Protection Ordinance (WPO) provides AWM the regulatory authority to ensure compliance of regulated agricultural operations.

AWM's Agricultural Water Quality (AWQ) Program ensures commercial agriculture operations take the necessary measures to prevent pollutants such as fertilizers, pesticides, organic waste, irrigation runoff, and sediment from entering the storm drain system. AWQ currently conducts inspections at production nurseries and investigates other types of agricultural operations based on complaints.

Ongoing water quality monitoring has indicated that the water impairments persist within these watersheds. Due to the continued links between water quality impairments and agriculture within these watersheds, the Water Board has emphasized that AWM needs to regulate all of the commercial agricultural operations in the region, even though the Water Board is regulating these operations through the General Agricultural Order. The Water Board states that "Commercial Agricultural Operations are defined as any agricultural business or trade activity, including farms, nurseries, and orchards, that produce crops or ornamental plants with the intent to make a profit."

As a result, the AWQ Program Enhancement is required to prevent potential pollution generated from those agricultural operations that are not in the current inventory. These additional operations include industrial hemp growers, certified producers selling at Certified Farmers Markets, organic growers, vegetable growers, and grove owners. There is an estimated 1,871 sites to be added to the current inventory of 370 sites.

The MS4 Permit conditions require that all regulated sites are ranked based on their potential to impact water quality. AWQ determines the ranking based on set parameters that include if a site is located within a watershed with water quality impairments related to agriculture activities, proximity to MS4 or receiving waters, pesticide use, possession of hazardous materials, and topography. AWM assessed all the additional operations on a preliminary basis and needs to verify the criteria through onsite visits to determine the final ranking. Program goals are to inspect sites with a High ranking at least annually, and sites with a Medium or Low ranking at least once every five years. An operator's compliance history

supports changes to a lower ranking. AWM will assist the agricultural operations to meet regulatory compliance within the allowed parameters.

When best management practices (BMPs) are required for regulatory compliance, there are multiple technical experts available to assist the growers. There are also multiple funding opportunities for the growers to implement needed BMPs. In addition to guiding growers to financial and technical assistance, AWM will coordinate outreach and education relating to BMP practices and implementation.

The AWM Agricultural Water Quality (AWQ) Program will host informational webinars on the following dates and times to provide additional commercial agriculture operators of the Program Enhancement information and resources applicable to the additional operations.

You are invited to attend a webinar that will include the opportunity for questions and answers. The webinar content is the same with the different dates and times listed below to accommodate your schedule. The webinars will be held virtually and a link to these meetings will be available at AWM's website, <https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/awm/>, where you will be able to access the meeting on the specified dates and times.

When:	Tuesday, September 28, 2021
	<b>12:30 PM – 1:30 PM (<a href="#">Webinar Link</a>)</b>
	and
Time:	<b>6:30 PM – 7:30 PM (<a href="#">Webinar Link</a>)</b>
RSVP:	(858) 614-7786 or <a href="mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov">AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov</a>

When:	Thursday, September 30, 2021
	<b>12:30 PM – 1:30 PM (<a href="#">Webinar Link</a>)</b>
	and
Time:	<b>6:30 PM – 7:30 PM (<a href="#">Webinar Link</a>)</b>
RSVP:	(858) 614-7786 or <a href="mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov">AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov</a>

Please RSVP by e-mailing [AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov) the date/time you are interested in attending. Please include if translations services are requested in Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, or Vietnamese.

التاريخ / الوقت الذي ترغب في الحضور [AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov) عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني RSVP من فضلك يرجى ذكر ما إذا كانت خدمات الترجمة مطلوبة باللغة العربية أو الصينية أو الإسبانية أو التاغالوغية أو الفيتنامية

请通过电子邮件发送 AWQ 来获得 Rsvp。 [AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov) 您有兴趣参加的日期/时间。请包括是否要求翻译服务的阿拉伯语，中文，西班牙语，塔加禄语，或越南语

Por favor, RSVP enviando un correo electrónico [AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov) la fecha / hora en que está interesado en asistir para asegurarse de que no se pierda estas actualizaciones. Incluye si se solicitan servicios de traducciones en árabe, chino, español, tagalo o vietnamita.

Mangyaring RSVP sa pamamagitan ng pag-email [AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov) sa petsa/oras na ikaw ay interesado sa pagdalo upang matiyak na hindi mo nakuha ang mga update na ito. Mangyaring isama kung ang mga serbisyo ng pagsasalín ay hinihiling sa Arabic, Chinese, Espanyol, Tagalog, o Vietnamese.

Vui lòng RSVP bằng cách gửi email [AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov](mailto:AWQ.AWM@sdcountry.ca.gov) ngày / giờ bạn quan tâm đến việc tham dự để đảm bảo bạn không bỏ lỡ các cập nhật này. Vui lòng bao gồm nếu yêu cầu dịch vụ dịch thuật bằng tiếng Ả Rập, tiếng Trung, tiếng Tây Ban Nha, tiếng Tagalog hoặc tiếng Việt.

In addition to the above webinars, a recorded presentation will be made available on the AWQ website: [www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/awm/ag\\_water.html](http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/awm/ag_water.html). The available presentation and script will also be translated into Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. If you require translation into a language that is not listed, please contact AWM to request additional translation services.

If you have questions regarding this notice and the webinars, please contact the following AWM staff members:

Agricultural Water Quality (AWQ) Program: Deputy Agriculture Commissioner/Sealer Jordan Key by phone at (858) 614-7784 or by email at [Jordan.key@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Jordan.key@sdcounty.ca.gov).

### **1. Do I need to do anything to enroll with the AWQ Program?**

Agriculture operations are not required to take additional steps to enroll with the AWQ Program. The AWQ Program utilizes available information from agricultural permits held by commercial agriculture operations to obtain site and contact information for those operations that may qualify for inclusion within the AWQ Program. If your operation qualifies for inclusion within the program, an AWQ inspector will contact you if necessary to verify information or to schedule a site inspection. You are also welcome to contact the AWQ Program if you'd like to preemptively provide your commercial agriculture information for inclusion within the program. Any agriculture operation meeting the following definition by the San Diego Region 9 Water Quality Control Board is qualified for consideration within the AWQ Program: "Commercial Agricultural Operations are defined as any agricultural business or trade activity, including farms, nurseries, and orchards, that produce crops or ornamental plants with the intent to make a profit."

### **2. Will there be any fees for this AWQ Enhancement?**

There are no fees currently for the additional agricultural operations. Program funding comes from the County of San Diego.

### **3. Are there online resources for the AWQ Program?**

The AWQ Program website ([https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/awm/ag\\_water/awq-contact-us.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/awm/ag_water/awq-contact-us.html)) contains a myriad of outreach documents and links to technical and financial resources to assist regional commercial agriculture operations with implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to protect water quality.

The funding resources available to growers to implement BMPs include Healthy Soils Program to improve soil health; SWEEP program to reduce water and energy usage; EQIP program to promote agricultural practices that improve natural resources; the Conservation Stewardship Program that incentivizes improved environmental stewardship; and the San Diego County Watershed Protection Program rebate program for implementing water-saving landscape features. Additionally, AWM has led the application and proposal for a region-wide 10-million-dollar Resource Conservation Partnership Program RCPP grant to assist in BMP design and implementation.

The technical resources available for assistance with implementing the most appropriate BMPs include Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Mission Resource Conservation Service (MRCD), and University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE).