



July 3, 2014

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TO CONSIDER CONTINUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRY COMMISSION**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is calling a public hearing to receive comments from the California strawberry industry and the general public on whether the operation of the California Strawberry Commission (commission) should be continued. CDFA is required to conduct such a hearing every five years pursuant to Section 77498 of the California Food and Agricultural Code to determine if the commission is fulfilling its declared purposes. The last public hearing regarding the continuation of the commission was conducted in 2009.

The California Strawberry Commission is a state agricultural marketing program that conducts activities in five major areas: food safety, production and nutrition research, trade relations, public relations, and public policy. These activities are funded by mandatory assessments levied upon all California strawberry producers, shippers and processors.

The public hearing regarding the continuation of the commission is scheduled as follows:

Date & Time	Location
Thursday August 7, 2014 Beginning at 1:30 p.m.	Radisson Hotel 3455 Skyway Drive Santa Maria, California

HEARING PROCEDURE

All producers, shippers and processors of California strawberries and other interested persons are invited to provide testimony for this hearing. Testimony may be provided in person at the hearing or it may be submitted in writing prior to the hearing. Written comments submitted prior to the hearing can be mailed to Dennis Manderfield of this office using the mailing address on below or written comments may be e-mailed to dennis.manderfield@cdfa.ca.gov. In order for written comments to be accepted and entered into the hearing record, they must be received at this office no later than August 5, 2014.

At the hearing, a panel composed of CDFA staff will receive testimony on the following matters:

1. The production, economic, and marketing conditions affecting the California strawberry industry;
2. Whether the California Strawberry Commission tends to effectuate the declared purposes and attain the declared objectives for which it was established;
3. Whether the California Strawberry Commission furthers the interests of the residents of California.

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The hearing transcript, written comments, and evidence submitted will form the hearing record. This record will be considered by CDFA in determining whether or not there is a substantial question as to whether the commission should continue. If CDFA determines from the hearing record that no substantial question exists, the commission shall remain operative without the need for an industry vote. However, if CDFA finds from the hearing record that a substantial question exists as to whether the commission should be continued, CDFA will conduct a vote of all producers, shippers and processors of California strawberries to determine if the commission should be continued.

HEARING PREPARATION

Supporters of the California Strawberry Commission should provide testimony that communicates why they believe the Commission should be continued. Conversely, those who oppose the continuation of the commission should provide testimony that substantiates their concerns. Following are some relevant questions that hearing participants may wish to consider in preparing their testimony. In answering these questions, one should try to provide the rationale behind their opinions.

- Has the California strawberry industry benefited from the activities funded by the California Strawberry Commission? If yes, please explain how. If no, please explain why not.
- Has the commission effectively monitored and addressed important trends and issues facing the California strawberry industry?
- What are the most significant accomplishments of the commission over the last five years?
- What are the most significant challenges facing the California strawberry industry? Can the commission assist the industry in effectively addressing such challenges?
- What problems, if any, would the industry face in the absence of a mandatory industry-funded program like the commission?
- Does the general public benefit from the activities of the California Strawberry Commission? If yes, please explain how. If no, please explain why not.
- Have assessment monies been spent wisely, efficiently and according to the authority granted to the commission?
- Are there ways that the operations of the commission could be improved?

Once again, all interested persons are invited to participate in this hearing process. If you have questions regarding this hearing, call Dennis Manderfield of this office at 916-900-5018. If you have questions about the activities of the commission, call the commission's President, Rick Tomlinson, at 831-724-1301.

Sincerely,



Robert Maxie, Chief
Marketing Branch