



Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

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PRESS RELEASE

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TULARE COUNTY WALNUT BUYING PERIOD TO START **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6TH**

Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner Tom Tucker announced today that the walnut-buying period will begin **Saturday, November 6th** as the County's nut theft ordinance continues to be enforced.

"Commercial production and handling of walnuts constitute an important industry here in Tulare County" Tucker said. "Unfortunately, some people steal them from orchards and attempt to sell the walnuts illegally on the streets. County staff has been actively enforcing the nut theft ordinance by conducting compliance checks at places where walnuts are sold to ensure that this practice stops."

In 2017, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved amendments to an existing nut theft ordinance to assist with an issue that has long plagued the walnut industry. Walnuts are typically shaken from the trees until workers can gather them up, making them prime targets for heists.

One amendment to the ordinance mandates that walnut-buying stands shall not operate within the boundaries of Tulare County until a "Walnut Buying Period", as established by the Agricultural Commissioner, is in effect. Tucker said that consensus was reached amongst walnut growers to determine the appropriate start date.

What documentation is required to sell walnuts at a walnut-buying stand?

The County's nut theft ordinance states:

Upon probable cause to believe that any agricultural commodity is in the unlawful possession of any Person, the Agricultural Commissioner or any peace officer may inspect the commodity and request that proof of ownership be provided.

The following information shall be included on the "Proof of Ownership Certificate" or the "Small Grower's Certificate" provided by the Agricultural Commissioner:

- (a) Name, address, driver's license number, telephone number, signature, and thumbprint of seller.
- (b) Name, address, telephone number, and signature of buyer.
- (c) Vehicle license plate number of the seller.
- (d) Common or generic name and quantity of the commodity involved.
- (e) Date and time of the transaction.

A copy of the record shall be retained by the seller for a period of 60 days after delivery and by the buyer for a period of two years from the date of such sale.