



# Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: Nov. 17, 2010 (10-28)  
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## **Agriculture Department issues fines for pesticide violations** *3rd quarter cases found worker safety, school notification violations*

**OLYMPIA** – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) issued fines totaling \$3,700 and imposed license suspensions during the 3rd quarter of 2010 for violations of state pesticide laws and rules. WSDA also revoked the licenses of four individuals after finding they had collaborated and cheated on exams to obtain their licenses. Fines ranged from \$200 to \$1,500 for incidents that involved spray drift onto a neighboring property that contaminated a hay stack, failure to post information and notify interested parties about pesticide applications at schools, and the failure to provide workers with adequate training and information about pesticide use on a farm.

WSDA completed investigations in Benton, Clark, King, Okanogan, Thurston, Walla Walla and Yakima counties. The agency issued fines, license suspensions and other regulatory actions in the following cases:

Four high schools were fined for failing to post information and to notify interested parents and employees about pesticide applications at the school. Schools receiving the fines were: Battle Ground High School (\$300), and Prairie High School (\$200)—both in Battle Ground; and Capital High School, Olympia (\$300) and Tumwater High School, Tumwater (\$200).

Joseph Moore, an employee of Simplot Growers Solution, Pasco, was fined \$200 for applying a pesticide to a non-crop site that was not allowed by the label.

The pesticide licenses of four individuals who work for Total Landscape Corporation, Woodinville, were revoked by WSDA after determining that the individuals had cheated on exams required to obtain their licenses. After discovering that the individuals gave the exact same answers, both correct and incorrect, on multiple choice exams, WSDA investigated and confirmed that the group had illegally collaborated to pass the exams.

Cliff Parker, Tonasket, was fined \$450 and his private applicator license was suspended for seven days. In June 2010, a pesticide handler under Parker's direct supervision allowed individuals to work in the same orchard where he was applying a pesticide.

Applegate Orchards and Great Columbia Berry Farms, Burbank. WSDA alleged that the farms had not provided sufficient personal protective equipment and decontamination supplies for pesticide handlers. Additionally, pesticide safety posters, emergency medical information and pesticide application information was not posted, and workers were not sufficiently trained about pesticide safety. The matter was resolved when the farms agreed to pay \$1,500.

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Jesus Valencia, Outlook. WSDA alleged that a pesticide application made by Valencia in March 2010 drifted onto a neighbor's property contaminating his stacked hay. The matter was resolved when Valencia agreed to pay \$450 and have his private applicator license suspended for seven days.

Last year, WSDA investigated nearly 148 complaints involving pesticide use, sales and distribution; pesticide licensing; and building inspections for wood-destroying organisms. The agency registers more than 11,000 pesticide products, licenses about 22,000 pesticide applicators, dealers, consultants and structural pest inspectors, and investigates complaints of alleged pesticide misuse.

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