



# COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

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## The Yolo County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures Welcomes New Detector Dog: Berty

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures is excited to announce the addition of Berty, a 2-year-old Labrador Retriever, as the newest member of their dedicated team. As a certified Agricultural Detector Dog, Berty is already using her exceptional sense of smell and boundless energy to search parcel delivery facilities and airfreight terminals, safeguarding Northern California's agricultural industries and natural resources from a variety of threats, including unwanted plant pests, diseases, and other harmful organisms.

Born in September 2021, Berty underwent rigorous training at the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Detector Dog Training Center in Newnan, Georgia, alongside her handler, Christine Tyler. Dogs selected for this program undergo screening based on criteria such as high food drive, sociability, intelligence, physical soundness, and low anxiety levels. Initially, dogs are trained to detect five specific target odors in parcels: citrus, apple, mango, guava, and stone fruit. Subsequently, handlers and their canine partners expand their range to include the detection of plants, soil, insects, and other agricultural threats.

The Yolo County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures is excited to have Berty and Christine join their team, which has consistently been recognized as one of the top performers for finding regulated pests of concern to agriculture and the environment. Notably, the State has honored the Yolo County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures with a special achievement award for managing the Statewide Dog Team Call Center, which provides support to all California dog teams.

"Agricultural detector dogs like Berty play a vital role in intercepting invasive species and safeguarding California's diverse ecosystem," remarked Lucas Frerichs, Chair of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors. "Over the years, dog teams, including those in Yolo County, have demonstrated their effectiveness by intercepting thousands of significant pests and detecting countless parcels containing agricultural products."

"Dog teams continue to demonstrate that unmarked parcels present a high-risk pathway for significant agricultural pests to enter Northern California. Over a one-year period, a total of 966 significant pests were intercepted by all California Dog Teams. These pests are known to cause serious economic damage to our agricultural production and can be very harmful to our natural lands and waterways. Some of the pests include the Caribbean fruit fly, Cedar and Japanese apple rusts, federally actionable weed species including hydrilla, and several first-detected fungi and noxious weeds not known to occur in California and the United States," stated Humberto Izquierdo, Yolo County's Agricultural Commissioner.

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Christine Tyler, Berty's handler, added, "Berty is the smartest dog I've worked with and an incredible problem solver. Berty and I look forward to protecting Yolo County's and California's agricultural economy and natural environment for future generations."

Beyond package inspections, Berty and Tyler will engage with local civic organizations, libraries, and schools to raise awareness of agricultural protection efforts. The California Dog Teams program, a collaboration among the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), USDA, and county agricultural commissioners, intends to enhance surveillance and inspection activities for plant products entering California, alongside increasing public awareness of the threats dog teams intercept.

When not on duty, Berty enjoys playing fetch and exploring her love for water, reflecting her Labrador roots. If you're considering adopting a non-working dog for companionship and to play fetch with, please consider visiting the Yolo County Animal Services Shelter located at 2640 E Gibson Road in Woodland, or contact their representatives at (530) 668-5287.

To learn more about the Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures please visit [www.YoloCounty.org/Agriculture](http://www.YoloCounty.org/Agriculture). For further information about California's Agricultural Detector Dog program and to explore Berty's online profile, please visit [www.CDFA.CA.Gov/Plant/Dogteams](http://www.CDFA.CA.Gov/Plant/Dogteams).

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