

MEMORANDUM

PLACER COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Joshua P. Huntsinger, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

DATE: March 13, 2012

SUBJECT: Authorize the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer to sign an Agricultural Marketing contract with Merlot Marketing for Agricultural Marketing Services from March 13, 2012 to June 30, 2013 in the amount of \$79,995.

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer to sign an Agricultural Marketing contract with Merlot Marketing for Agricultural Marketing Services from March 13, 2012 to June 30, 2013 in the amount of \$79,995.

BACKGROUND

Placer County General Plan Goal 7.C.1 is "To protect and enhance the economic viability of Placer County's agricultural operations." Historically, one of the ways that Placer County has supported the economic viability of agriculture is through the county's successful Agricultural Marketing Program. This program was first instituted in 2001 via a contract with Joanne Neft. The program continued on until 2009, when economic uncertainty and staffing changes caused the program to be reduced in scope. The Board of Supervisors approved full funding for the program in the Agricultural Commissioner's FY 2011-12 budget. Subsequently, the Agricultural Commissioner worked with the agricultural community during the 2011 calendar year to put together a new agricultural marketing program that will benefit all of the county's farmers and ranchers.

This contract with Merlot Marketing represents a revitalization of the program, and the county's commitment to further its stated goals regarding support for agriculture, as well as open space and economic development. The Agriculture Department, with support from Procurement Services, conducted a competitive recruitment process. A diverse evaluation panel was assembled, and Merlot Marketing of Sacramento was selected from among ten applicants. Among Merlot's strengths were their innovative and fresh approach, knowledge of agriculture, experience, knowledge of Placer County, and cost effectiveness.

ENVIRONMENTAL

This activity does not qualify as a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

FISCAL IMPACT

This contract represents \$79,995 to be paid for work completed in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 Fiscal Years. This contract represents county general fund and is included in the Agricultural Department's budget.