

MEMORANDUM

PLACER COUNTY AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Joshua P. Huntsinger, Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer 

DATE: July 9, 2013

SUBJECT: Authorize the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer to sign an Agricultural Marketing contract with Merlot Marketing for Agricultural Marketing Services from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015 in the amount of \$163,992.00.

ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer to sign an Agricultural Marketing contract with Merlot Marketing for Agricultural Marketing Services from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015 in the amount of \$163,992.00.

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. The end result of that effort was to hire Merlot Marketing of Sacramento in 2012 to perform a comprehensive PR and Social Media program to promote Placer County's farms and ranches under the PlacerGROWN brand.

This contract with Merlot Marketing is consistent with the county's commitment to further its stated goals regarding support for agriculture, as well as open space and economic development. The Agriculture Department has worked closely with Merlot Marketing over the past 16 months, and strongly supports renewing their contract for an additional 24 months.

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ENVIRONMENTAL

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

FISCAL IMPACT

The total contract amount of \$163,992 over two years is currently budgeted in the Departments FY 2013-14 and 2014-15 budget. There is no net county cost.