



## Contra Costa County

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NEWS RELEASE  
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### **Celebrating National Weights and Measures Week in Contra Costa County March 1 – 7, 2019**

#### **Why it Matters - Every Consumer is Impacted**

(Martinez, CA) – Do you ever wonder what truck scales do? When you fill up your tank at the gas station, how do you know if you are getting the 10 gallons of gas you're paying for? Or, does that box of cereal at the grocery store really hold 18 ounces of product?

From luggage to jewelry, how do you know you are getting what you're buying? Celebrating National Weights and Measures Week March 1 – 7, 2019 means recognizing Contra Costa County's Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures and its work "behind the scenes".

"The County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures is watching out for all of us to make sure that we get what we expect and pay for," said Board Chair, Supervisor John Gioia. "We believe it's important to insure that the weights and measures used in our County are accurate and transparent."

From sales of gasoline to cherries, charges for taxi rides, or your grocery bill, every commercial transaction in some way is based upon a weight, measure, count or volume. Weights and Measures officials inspect and verify the accuracy of commercial transactions involving scales, meters, price scanners, and net quantity labeling on packaged goods throughout the marketplace.

"In Contra Costa County, the investment in regulatory oversight is approximately \$1.30 per resident per year," explained Scott Paulsen, Interim Agricultural Commissioner/Director of Weights and Measures. "Almost nothing, when you compare the chance of losing much more than that in a single trip to the grocery store or gas station without the protections and assurances our Weights and Measures Program provides for each of us."

For example, at \$4.00 per gallon for gasoline, a one percent inaccuracy of the meter over-registering a 20-gallon delivery of gas will result in an 80 cent overcharge for that single transaction, or when buying a steak at \$10.00 per pound, just a one hundredth of a pound error

over-registering the weight of that steak will result in a 10 cent overcharge to the consumer. Day in and day out, all this can add up to significant losses or gains for buyers and sellers.

On an annual basis, the Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures inspects approximately 10,200 commercial weighing and measuring devices and conducts 455 electronic point of sale inspections at various retail locations, scanning over 12,000 packages. In 2018, 198 overcharges and 42 undercharges were found out of 12,002 packages scanned. When errors are found, warning notices are issued, and when overcharges are significant, fines are levied to encourage future compliance.

The County's Department of Agricultural/Weights and Measures regularly inspects devices such as petroleum fuel meters, utility sub-meters, vehicle odometers, taximeters, LPG meters, grocery store check-out scales, deli scales, jewelry, postal, vehicle, luggage, cattle, truck and shipping scales. Inspectors even make "undercover" purchases at grocery and retail stores to compare prices charged to prices advertised or posted on store shelves.

All this helps ensure that commercial weighing and measuring devices are accurate, the products you purchase contain the quantity stated on the label, and the scanner prices charged to you are correct.

If you have questions regarding overcharges, contact the Contra Costa County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures at (925) 608-6600, visit [www.contracosta.ca.gov/1542](http://www.contracosta.ca.gov/1542), or your local weights and measures office.

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