

Agriculture inspections going to the dogs

By Cynthia Hubert, Sacramento Bee

Under the light of a nearly full moon early Friday morning, Sacramento County's newest agricultural inspector reported for duty.

Dozer, an 86-pound Labrador retriever mix, bolted out of a white van and into OnTrac's bustling shipping warehouse on the end of a leash held by his human partner, inspector Jennifer Berger.

"Let's go!" Berger said. "Check!"

Dozer went to work at the facility near the former McClellan Air Force Base. Within seconds, he pounced upon a box labeled "California Flowers" that likely held someone's Valentine's Day bouquet. Racing through the facility, he sniffed pallets of copy paper, stacks of tires, even a package that held live lobsters, with nary a reaction.

Then he encountered a box with the words "Living Herbs" and pounced again, scratching at it frantically.

"Good boy!" Berger said, and passed him a treat from a pouch attached to her waist.

Dozer is one of 13 highly trained former shelter and rescued dogs that work to sniff out fruit and other plants that may be carrying agricultural pests such as fruit flies that pose a threat to California crops.

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