



DISTRICT ATTORNEY
LARRY D. MORSE II

550 W. Main Street
Merced, CA 95340
Phone (209) 385-7381
Fax (209) 725-3669

Chief Deputy District Attorney
HAROLD L. NUTT

Chief Deputy District Attorney
ROBERT O. CARROLL

Director of Administrative Services
JEANNETTE M. PACHECO

INVESTIGATIONS
(209) 385-7383

Chief Investigator
WILLIAM K. OLSON

VICTIM WITNESS
(209) 385-7385

Victim Witness Program Director
LISA DeSANTIS

LOS BANOS DIVISION

445 I Street
Los Banos, CA 93635
Phone (209) 710-6070
Fax (209) 827-2029

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For More Information Contact:
Amanda McCoy (209) 628-1646

NEW TECHNOLOGY TO FIGHT AG CRIME TO BE UNVEILED
BY SHERIFF AND DISTRICT ATTORNEY

SmartWater, a revolutionary new technology to assist law enforcement in combating agricultural theft, will be unveiled for members of the Merced County Farm Bureau during a presentation at 1 p.m., Monday, February 26th at the Merced County Fairgrounds Pavilion building, Merced County District Attorney Larry D. Morse II and Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke announced today.

SmartWater products are colorless, chemically coded solutions that fluoresce under a special light. Once SmartWater has been applied to an item such as agricultural equipment, it provides traceability and an undeniable proof of ownership. Every bottle of SmartWater carries its own unique chemical code that is registered to a certain person or location. The solution can be used to mark anything from agricultural assets like tractors and trailers to farm tools, electronics and personal possessions, Morse said.

At the Fairgrounds presentation, Smartwater CSI representatives will demonstrate how their products work and can be used to deter theft and convict thieves. Merced County will be only the second in California to offer this technology to members of the agricultural community, Morse noted. It is being offered free of charge to members of the Farm Bureau. Personnel from the Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's office will be on hand to register those who wish to sign up as SmartWater users, Morse added.

"The SmartWater CSI program that we're creating is a collaborative effort between the Sheriff's Department, the District Attorney's Office and the Farm Bureau to combat theft in the rural areas of Merced County," said Sheriff Vern Warnke. "SmartWater is an important new tool that will assist law enforcement in the arrest and prosecution of thieves targeting folks in our rural communities," he added.

Merced County Farm Bureau President Joe Scoto said the use of SmartWater technology will be a tremendous asset to members of the agricultural community who are plagued by theft.

"Farmers and ranchers in Merced County have a desperate need to protect one of their biggest investments, equipment. On a daily basis we are using

equipment to feed animals and grow crops and when a piece of equipment is stolen it not only disrupts the whole operation but delivers a gigantic blow to our business. Smart Water will be another tool in our tool box that agriculture can use to help deter and hopefully prosecute these criminals.

“As President of the Merced County Farm Bureau, I would like to commend Sheriff Warnke and District Attorney Morse for their efforts to help protect the number one industry in Merced County.”

For more information on this event, contact the Merced County Farm Bureau at (209) 723-3001.