

Record cannabis harvest for California

Contributed by Martin Williams

Good weather and law enforcement's preoccupation with large outdoor plantations made the 2006 growing season a bumper year for California.

The Campaign Against Marijuana Planting (CAMP) reported record seizures, jumping from 1,134,692 plants last year to 1,215,042 this year. They did not offer any statistics on canopy area, so it can't be determined what the actual yield would have been, and while the Attorney General's office estimated the value at \$4.9 billion, a more realistic value would be around \$500 million, according to cannabis expert witness Chris Conrad.

"In any case, the total economic losses due to CAMP seem large enough to qualify as a major economic disaster," noted California NORML Director Dale Gieringer. He estimates that "a legal marijuana market could yield the state some \$1 to \$2 billion per year in tax revenues and cost savings."

Many of the plants were eradicated from very large-scale gardens of more than 5,000 plants. Only 10 percent of this year's take came from the Emerald Triangle counties of Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity.

The early frost led to more purple characteristics in the crop than usual. The season was mostly dry, so there was little damage to the early crop; but along the coast after the rain some bud rot set in.