



Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

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The Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process was designed to solicit input from a variety of stakeholders.

The process included:

Interviews with Full Committee, Industry Partners & CDFA Staff

One-on-one interviews were conducted with a cohort of citrus industry leaders, including all active Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC) members, along with select industry partners and Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division (CPDPD) staff with a unique understanding of the state of the California citrus industry. Interviews about the strengths and weaknesses of the CPDPD, along with opportunities and threats for the citrus industry. They also provided input on key elements of the plan, including the mission, vision and strategic priorities of the organization.

Technical Review Team

The CPDPC's Science Subcommittee commissioned a Technical Review Team (TRT) to answer foundational questions the subcommittee believes will best inform the refresh of the program's strategic plan and fuel operational efficiencies throughout the CPDPD. While many questions were operational in nature, the request to the TRT was to provide a science-based response to these questions. The full TRT report may be found [HERE](#).

Strategic Planning Meeting

Inputs from the interviews above were used to facilitate a strategic planning meeting with the cohort. Together, the group laid out a draft plan, including mission, vision, a "north star" for HLB and strategic priority areas of focus for the CPDPD. During this meeting, the group identified short- and long-term action items for CPDPD staff to achieve under each strategic priority.

While these steps represent key elements of strategic plan development, strategic planning is never done. Rather, the plan should be continually referenced to ensure all CPDPD activities are in alignment with the plan.

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

Mission (CPDPD's Core Business):

To protect all of California's commercial citrus industry from invasive pests and diseases through the development and implementation of effective policies and regulations.

Vision (Destination We Are Working Toward):

To keep all of California's commercial citrus thriving in the face of emerging pest and disease threats.

North Star for Huanglongbing (Our Goal Specific to HLB):

Keep HLB from spreading in commercial groves.

Strategic Priorities (Areas of Focus to Achieve the Vision/North Star):

Overarching Strategy: Acknowledging that each region in California has unique circumstances that can influence the Division's ability to achieve its vision, the committee recommended that the following strategic priorities be approached from a regional perspective. Please note these priorities are not ranked in order of importance.

- A. Detect, suppress and locally eradicate ACP populations
- B. Detect and eradicate HLB-diseased trees
- C. Control movement of psyllids around the state; enforce regulations
- D. Outreach and collaboration
- E. Operational excellence

Using This Plan

The strategic plan is intended to serve as a roadmap for all CPDPD activities beginning upon acceptance by the full CPDPC. Activities not in alignment with the plan should be avoided. Additionally, in instances where direction is needed, the strategic priorities can help guide the organization. Key plan elements – mission, vision, north star for HLB, strategic priorities – should remain intact for the duration of the plan while actions can be reviewed and, if needed, updated annually.

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

Strategic Priority A: Detect, suppress and locally eradicate ACP populations

The Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division's regional approach to suppressing ACP populations emphasizes region-specific activities and operations to minimize the spread of the ACP and the potential impacts the pest can cause to commercial citrus. By conducting these strategies with a regional approach, this strengthens pest control measures and reduces the risk of HLB.

To achieve this, the following short- and long-term recommendations were developed by the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee for Division staff.

Short-Term Recommendations:

- a. Develop a strategic ACP suppression plan tailored to each region.
 - o Considerations should include:
 - a. ACP-infested vs. non-infested regions
 - b. Regional nuances (weather conditions, commodities grown, etc.)
 - c. Proximity to large commercial growing areas or dense residential areas
 - o The suppression plan should clearly lay out specific actions and operational activities per region, including:
 - o Tarping protocols and potential adjustments
 - o If surveying, trapping and other detection activities should be adjusted in certain regions
 - o Residential proximity to commercial citrus areas
 - o Develop a clear definition and/or map of each "region"
 - o The current ACP quarantine map may help serve as a guide for this development

Longer-Term Recommendations:

- b. Submit a request with Dr. Bodil Cass and work to identify organic ACP treatment options for effective suppression within HLB quarantine zones.

To support the Division's efforts for this Strategic Priority, the following action items were developed by the Science Subcommittee following the Technical Review Team's report of Division activities. Some action items may include members of Division staff.

Science Subcommittee Technical Review Team Action Items:

- c. Assign the existing CDFA PCD Task Force Committee to evaluate what activities can transfer from CDFA to regional entities ([Question 2](#)) and conduct the corresponding

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

cost analysis. If this strategy is employed, it should be an incremental process, and an initial “test case” should be done to understand the impacts better.

- d. Convene a working group consisting of Etienne Rabe, Kevin Ball, Neil McRoberts and Melinda Klein to recommend region-specific pest and disease management activities ([Questions 3, 14, and 15](#)). The group will build off the “Commercial Citrus Regional Management” document the Technical Review Team provided. This working group will also address the question of what the expected impacts are if we are to reduce program activities in areas where commercial citrus doesn’t exist ([Question 12](#)).
- e. Dr. David Morgan (CDFA) has coordinated *Tamarixia* releases to avoid pesticide treatment areas and should work with CPDPC staff to establish concentrated, coordinated efforts in future releases using CDFA’s pesticide treatment records ([Question 7](#)).
- f. Dr. Neil McRoberts to create a short paper for the CPDPC summarizing what is known about the effect of California’s climate on ACP control ([Question 17](#)).
- g. CPDPC to discuss how long an area previously under ACP quarantine needs to be ACP-free to warrant removal of the quarantine ([Longer Term Question 1](#)). CDFA to submit another proposal to the USDA to remove regions from the ACP quarantine.

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

Strategic Priority B: Detect and eradicate HLB-diseased trees

In addition to conducting a regional approach to detecting and eradicating HLB-diseased trees, the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee recommended activities be separated by commercial grove/industry and residential areas. This regional effort will minimize disease spread, safeguarding citrus groves and supporting long-term industry sustainability.

To achieve this, the following short- and long-term recommendations were developed by the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee for Division staff.

Commercial Groves:

Short-Term Recommendations:

- a. Collaborating with USDA, develop a commercial HLB response plan with a regional approach, including:
 - A clear definition of what the “tipping point” looks like for HLB infestation in commercial groves (i.e., at what point does the response switch from tree removal/eradication to HLB management)
 - Approaches should include treatment recommendations, tree removal, delimitation surveys and sampling, etc.
- b. Develop recommendations for non-regulatory sampling opportunities for industry members to consider.
- c. Determine the implications of what a statewide HLB quarantine may look like for California and evaluate the pros and cons, including:
 - Impacts on the import of nursery stock and/or fruit into California from other states under a statewide quarantine.

Longer-Term Recommendations:

- d. Collaborate with USDA to determine opportunities around changes to existing federal requirements, including:
 - Mandatory tree removal in commercial groves (see “tipping point” definition above)
 - Reduction of quarantine area (less than 5-mi.)
 - Defining metrics for the expiration of HLB- and ACP-quarantine areas (see Priority C)
- e. Review the recent adjustments made to the commercial risk-based survey and evaluate what areas may need to be adjusted to accurately reflect the current HLB

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

environment in California and other considerations mentioned above (i.e., regional HLB response plan approach).

- Consider outreach implications if growers are identified to be in high-risk areas (align with Strategic Priority D)
- f. Evaluate opportunities for PCDs to support survey/trapping or other activities.

Residential Areas:

Short-Term Recommendations:

- a. Develop a strategic HLB response plan tailored to unique residential scenarios/geographies, taking into consideration proximity to commercial groves and “hot spots” of HLB infections.
 - Work to define:
 - What is considered “near” a commercial grove?
 - How a “hot spot” would be quantified?
 - How would a “buffer area” around a commercial grove be measured?
 - Plans should consider a strategic IPM approach (particularly in “hot spot” areas), and varying delimitation areas

Longer-Term Recommendations:

- b. Review the recent adjustments made to the residential risk-based survey and evaluate what areas may need to be adjusted to accurately reflect the current HLB environment in California and other considerations mentioned above (i.e., regional HLB response plan approach).
 - The following definitions determined above should be considered: proximity to commercial groves, hot spot areas and buffer area measurements

To support the Division’s efforts for this Strategic Priority, the following action items were developed by the Science Subcommittee following the Technical Review Team’s report of Division activities. Some action items may include members of Division staff.

Science Subcommittee Technical Review Team Action Items:

- c. Convene a working group, with members Keith Okasaki, CPDPD’s EPM1s, Subhas Hajeri, Dr. Rob Clark, Ram Uckoo and one additional committee member, to study the best way to reallocate resources from urban areas to areas adjacent to commercial citrus ([Questions 1, 4, 5, and 9](#)). Specifically, the group will make recommendations on:
 - The level of activity to retain in the hotspot area(s)

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

- Resources to move to the edge of hotspot areas to establish a modified containment strategy
- Increasing ACP and plant testing closer to commercial citrus
- The impact of changes made in fall 2023 to the multi-pest and delimitation survey methodologies
- Developing an approach for increasing HLB surveys in commercial citrus survey; expand upon the recommendations provided in the TRT Report for Question 9
- d. Convene a working group consisting of Etienne Rabe, Kevin Ball, Neil McRoberts and Melinda Klein to recommend region-specific pest and disease management activities ([Questions 3, 14, and 15](#)). The group will build off the “Commercial Citrus Regional Management” document the TRT provided. This group will also address the question of what the expected impacts are if we are to reduce program activities in areas where commercial citrus doesn’t exist ([Question 12](#)).
- e. Convene a working group consisting of Dr. Weiqi Luo, David Phong, Dr. Matthew Daugherty, Dr. Neil McRoberts and Dr. Robert Clark to identify criteria for defining hotspots within which the current response protocols are no longer effective ([Question 6](#)). The TRT report indicates that this definition should be supported by statistical modeling and by the positivity rate (%) of CLas+ plants at the STR level.
- f. Approach regulatory agencies (USDA) to provide rationale/support for implementing the 5-mile radius ([Question 13 a and b](#)). Convene a group to discuss with regulatory agencies the issues with regulated entities (growers, nurseries, etc.) and how they can be part of developing quarantine boundaries.
- g. CPDPC to discuss how long an area previously under ACP quarantine needs to be ACP-free to warrant removal of the quarantine ([Longer Term Question 1](#)). CDFA to submit another proposal to the USDA to remove regions from the ACP quarantine.

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

Strategic Priority C: Control movement of psyllids around the state; enforce regulations

The Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee agreed that controlling the movement of ACP and enforcing regulations remains a key strategic focus. The Committee believes these efforts should be regionalized in alignment with Strategic Priorities A and B. However, regulatory implications on the state and federal levels should be considered.

To achieve this, the following short- and long-term recommendations were developed by the Committee for Division staff to further explore.

Short-Term Actions

- a. Evaluate current mitigations for bulk citrus movement and determine opportunities for regional adjustments to allow for ease of fruit movement while accounting for regional risk factors (i.e., moving from a low-risk area to a high-risk area, and vice versa).
- b. Develop a list of pros and cons for a regionalized approach for tarping mitigations regarding bulk citrus movement across the state, considering the following:
 - What enforcement challenges will be presented?
 - Merits of post-processing/packed fruit and tarping
 - Cost analysis
- c. Evaluate the current nursery regulations within an HLB-quarantine zone (i.e., tree sales to residents) and discuss the implications of lessening or adjusting.

Longer-Term Actions

- d. In collaboration with USDA, define metrics for expiration of ACP-quarantine areas (see Priority B).

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

Strategic Priority D: Outreach and collaboration

Outreach and collaboration should focus on fostering partnerships and engaging key stakeholders to raise awareness and promote coordinated action against the ACP and HLB. This strategy should be tailored by region and target audience (residents, industry members, elected officials).

To achieve this, the following short- and long-term recommendations were developed by the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee for Division staff.

Short-Term Actions

- a. Develop an approach for the reorganization of regional Grower Liaisons and how current Grower Liaison responsibilities may be transferred to other entities, including:
 - Movement of responsibilities to CDFA staff
 - Movement of regional grower communications to PCDs, task forces, packinghouses and other industry partners
 - Movement of regional Grower Liaison responsibilities to one statewide Grower Liaison (following a similar format to Pierce's Disease)

Longer-Term Actions

- b. Align the Division's outreach plan and contractor activities to mirror the outcomes of the other Strategic Priorities, as needed.
 - Explore additional tactics for engaging with ag-focused organizations, including nurseries, Ag in the Classroom and others.

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

Strategic Priority E: Operational excellence

Operational excellence as a Strategic Priority was based on feedback from the Committee about improving the operations of the Division and addressing potential vulnerabilities that may need to be addressed in order to best serve the other Strategic Priority areas in this plan.

To achieve this, the following short- and long-term recommendations were developed by the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee for Division staff.

Short-Term Actions

- a. Evaluate the implications of moving back to a “program” and no longer operating as a “division,” including:
 - A cost analysis/economic evaluation
 - Impacts to how being a “program” would affect or change the Division’s current operations, including:
 - What would it look like if the Division was absorbed under the Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services Division? PEDP?
- b. Identify new options and/or improve accounting systems to monitor fiscal spending.
- c. Continue efforts to improve communications with Committee members, including clarity on what staff needs from the committee, providing access to key program data via dashboards and other updates.
- d. Create an official onboarding process and responsibilities document for new Committee members, which may include:
 - Committee meeting responsibilities
 - Managing expectations for state operations and processes
 - Division staff may work with the outreach contractor for support in the development

Longer-Term Actions

- e. Once the Strategic Plan is finalized, evaluate the structure, membership and governance of the Committee in full to ensure operational efficiencies.
- f. Define a “tipping point” in the progression of ACP and HLB at which time the Division’s current regulatory authority is no longer needed, and a full restructure of the Division’s Action Plan and/or Committee structure may occur.
 - Consider: What would be the implications of becoming a non-governmental, quasi-marketing order (similar to Citrus Research Board) and what milestones would need to be met to realize a benefit?

Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division

Strategic Plan

As of: Feb. 26, 2025

The Science Subcommittee's Technical Review Team's report identified three additional action items of lower priority, outlined below, for the committee's consideration:

Science Subcommittee Technical Review Team Action Items:

- a. CPDPC to debate the importance of multi-pest survey and tree removal. The TRT and the Science Subcommittee have a range of opinions on this question ([Question 8](#)).
- b. CPDPC to debate the impact of refusals on the Program's effectiveness in surveying for and eradicating HLB ([Questions 10 and 11](#)). The TRT does not see refusal as a major issue for treatment and multi-pest surveys. However, in the case of commodity surveys, a higher refusal rate in certain regions (i.e., Ventura) could skew results.
- c. Discuss at the full CPDPC meeting and the lessons learned from the Texas Tree Removal Program ([Longer Term Question 2](#)). The TRT Report identified the following two lessons:
 - Aggressive tree removal needs to be coupled with aggressive psyllid management for the greatest impact.
 - The number of commercial finds near residential areas also suggests coordinating management between residential and commercial production areas will significantly benefit commercial production areas.

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