

**Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC)
Operations Subcommittee Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2025**

There was a quorum of the Operations Subcommittee, and the following were in attendance:

Operations Subcommittee Members Present:

Kevin Ball*	Jim Gorden	Jason Reynolds
Brad Carmen*	Kurt Metheny	Roger Smith

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Staff:

Dr. Ravneet Behla	Dahmoon Maesomy	Raymond Niem
Kiana Dao	Zachary McCormack	Keith Okasaki
Paul Figueroa	Dr. David Morgan	David Phong
Anmol Joshi	Alex Muniz	Nilan Watmore
Lucita Kumagai	Lauren Murphy	Jennifer Willems

Other Attendees:

Price Adams	Dr. Dhiraj Gautam	Hailey Jones
Dr. Rob Clark	Dr. Saurabh Gautam	Dr. Melinda Klein
Natalie DeAngelo	Ariana Gehrig	Keith Watkins
Aaron Dillon	Dr. Subhas Hajeri	Sandra Zwaal

All attendees participated via webinar

*Subcommittee members declared their inability to use a camera

Opening Comments

Kevin Ball called the CPDPC Operations Subcommittee meeting to order via webinar at 9:02 a.m. on Wednesday, April 9, 2025. Keith Okasaki welcomed Subcommittee members, guests, and staff. There were no public comments.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – FIND AND ERADICATE HUANGLONGBING

HLB Detection, Delimitation, and Tree Removal

Anmol Joshi highlighted major events that occurred since the previous Operations Subcommittee meeting in January 2025, which included an expansion of the Huanglongbing (HLB) quarantine area in the Valley Center area of San Diego County. The expansion added an additional 85 square miles to the HLB quarantine area and encompasses over 2,400 acres of citrus. Treatments in the new expansion area have begun and HLB delimitation surveys are still ongoing in Valley Center as well as Anaheim Hills, Corona, Duarte, Fontana, Irvine, Mission Viejo, Montclair, Ontario, Riverside, and Yorba Linda. Anmol reported that from January through March 2025, a total of 479 trees tested positive in Southern California, most of which came from Orange County. 473 trees have been removed and 323 trees are pending removal.

Laboratory Update

Lucita Kumagai reported the monthly total plant and Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) sample submission for 2025 is comparable to the 2024 numbers. Between the Citrus Research Board (CRB) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) lab, a total of 19,553 plant and ACP samples have been tested since the beginning of 2025. To date in 2025 alone, 507 trees and 19 ACP samples have tested positive for HLB. Since 2012, 9,819 trees and 887 ACP samples have tested positive for HLB.

HLB Risk-Based Survey

David Phong reported that the 2024 multi-pest survey (MPS) cycle two, which began in October 2024, is currently 86 percent complete. Survey is completed in 18 of the 31 allocated counties. To date, approximately 19,500 properties have been surveyed, from which approximately 1,800 ACP and 3,500 plant samples were collected and submitted. In the Northern District, 83 percent of the 70 assigned grids are complete. In the Central District, 89 percent of the 530 assigned grids are complete. In the Southern District, 83 percent of the 212 assigned grids are complete.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 – CONTROL ACP MOVEMENT AND ENFORCE REGULATIONS

Regulatory Activity Update

Keith Okasaki gave a brief update on county regulatory activities. In comparison to the previous fiscal year (Oct 23 – Sept 24), hauler inspections are down while packer inspections have gone up. The amount of Notice of Violations (NOVs) has reduced by half.

HLB Strategic Response Discussion

Discussions have been tabled until after the CPDPC Region-Specific ACP/HLB Working Group convene and make their recommendations.

Statewide HLB Quarantine Discussion

Keith Okasaki provided a list of positive and negative considerations if California were to undergo a statewide quarantine for HLB. Positives include reduction of required mitigations for movement of fruit, simplified compliance requirements that will align closer to federal regulations, and citrus nursery stock (CNS) moved into a structure will be eligible for sale statewide. Negatives include lack of protection for non-infested areas of California, reduction or loss of ability to enforce the exterior citrus quarantine which may put California at further risk for introduction of new pests/diseases, loss of federal funding for HLB prevention programs, possible decrease in market value of citrus commodities, loss of outdoor CNS which will hurt nursery business, and potential for HLB to spread at an increased rate throughout California. If California were to move to a statewide quarantine for HLB, the change would be irreversible.

Safeguarding in Transit Discussion

Keith Okasaki discussed the positives and negatives if safeguarding requirements were removed when moving within the same quarantine zone. Positives include cost reduction and fewer Cal/OSHA-related concerns. Negatives include increased risk of ACP spread, which will increase use and costs of eradication resources. Additionally, changes in requirements for movement may lead to confusion among enforcement officials and drivers, leading to an increase in violations or penalties. The Subcommittee members agreed no change should be implemented at this time.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 – ACP CONTROL/SUPPRESSION

Trapping, Treatment, and Staffing Updates

Southern District

Anmol Joshi reported that delimitation treatments are ongoing in Anaheim Hills, Corona, Costa Mesa, Duarte, Fontana, Irvine, Mission Viejo, Montclair, Ontario, and Valley Center. Delimitation treatments were conducted in Pico Rivera, Whittier, and Yorba Linda. Public meetings were conducted in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties to treat delimitation areas.

Central District

Jennifer Willems reported that since the previous Operations Subcommittee meeting on January 22, 2025, there have been no new ACP detections. Four central staff members will be helping Plant Division with Japanese beetle in April and May. In Santa Paula in Ventura County, 87 trees have tested positive for HLB with 81 trees removed. A public meeting occurred on April 2nd and treatment will soon follow.

Northern District

Nilan Watmore reported that the process for preparing new trapping agreements has begun and Northern district agreements will be reduced by roughly 20 percent. 83 percent of the 2024 MPS cycle two has been completed in the North, with remaining STRs in Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara County. Since the previous Operations Subcommittee meeting on January 22, 2025, there have been 8 ACP detections in Santa Clara County. 493 delimitation traps were removed in the core of the hotspot area and delimitation trapping will only continue in the border grids of the

hotspot area. Eight northern staff members will be helping Plant Division with Japanese beetle for the upcoming months.

Right-Sizing the Citrus Division

Keith Okasaki discussed potential staffing changes to meet budgetary restrictions. Keith started discussions by stating the priorities and activities of each district. Southern district priorities are to detect and remove HLB in and near commercial groves and conduct own treatment and removal when feasible. Central district priorities are to detect and remove HLB near commercial groves and find and eradicate ACP. Northern district priorities are to find and eradicate ACP in priority counties. Currently CPDPD has a total of 168 staff members. It was proposed that 38 staff members be moved, making the new total 130.

Biocontrol

Dr. David Morgan provided updates on the biocontrol release. Currently, releases are ongoing in infested areas with a focus on desert areas due to rising spring temperatures. Production numbers for 2025 are forecasted to be in line with previous years. Following comments made last year, releases in the desert areas have since doubled. Releases are still heavily focused in HLB quarantine areas, with the primary focus being Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Dr. Morgan provided a brief explanation on what goes into the cost of the *Tamarixia*, which includes plant production, maintaining genetic variability, sampling sex ratio to maximize female, collection method, post release monitoring, and outreach.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 – IMPROVE DATA TECHNOLOGY, ANALYSIS, AND SHARING

Data Management Report

David Phong and his team are rolling out the next cycle for the MPS. They are working with Dr. Rob Clark's team to verify the results from his machine-learning risk model. David has been participating in two working groups. One with researchers across the country to define HLB hotspots and identify HLB trends in areas where positivity rates continue to increase, and the Region-Specific ACP/HLB working group.

Other Item(s)

Kevin Ball briefly discussed items that were shared at the Ventura County Task Force Grower meeting. Growers discussed creating a Pest Control District in Ventura County which received a lack of interest but may be investigated further. They also discussed providing funds to growers that are affected by HLB detections on their property in hopes that growers will be more willing to submit samples for HLB testing.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m. The next meeting will be held on July 9, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. via webinar.