

CALIFORNIA CITRUS PEST AND DISEASE PREVENTION COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 19, 2025
Exeter, California

Committee Members Present:

Kevin Ball	Jim Gorden	Jason Reynolds*
Franco Bernardi	Jose Lima	Roger Smith*
Aaron Dillion*	Kurt Metheny	Jeff Steen
Jay Gillette	Dr. Etienne Rabe	Dr. Ram Uckoo
John C. Gless	Rod Radtke	Keith Watkins

Committee Members Absent:

Brad Carmen	Mark McBroom
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California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Staff:

Steven Donaldson*	Alex Muniz*	Michael Soltero*
David Gutierrez*	Lauren Murphy*	Claudia Vazquez
Anmol Joshi	Raymond Niem*	Nilan Watmore
Lucita Kumagai*	Keith Okasaki	Jennifer Willems*
Dr. Cheol Min Lee*	Grace Radabaugh*	Jason Wu*
Dahmoon Maeesomy*	Alisha Rios*	

Guests:

Price Adams*	Julia Inestroza*	Mia Neunzig*
Odalis Avalos*	Hailey Jones*	Dr. Sandra Olkowski*
Justin Brown	Dr. Melinda Klein	Margaret O'Neill*
Melissa Cregan*	Jessica Leslie*	Curtis Pate*
Casey Creamer	Kanya Long*	Nelson Perez*
Diego Cruz	Jasmine Lopez*	Tom Tucker II*
Natalie DeAngelo*	Meagan Lott*	David Wirta*
Lisa Finke*	Marcy Martin	Helene Wright*
Manuel Gaitan*	Marshal McBroom*	Dr. Qijun Xiang*
Dr. Dhiraj Gautam*	Dr. Neil McRoberts*	Judy Zaninovich*
Christopher Greer	Dr. Ivan Milosavljevic*	Sandra Zwaal*
Dr. Subhas Hajeri		

**Attended the meeting virtually.*

1. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Keith Watkins called the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC) meeting to order at 8:59 a.m. Keith welcomed the Committee, staff, and members of the public participating in person and online.

2. ROLL CALL

With 15 out of 17 committee members present, there was a quorum for the meeting. Roger Smith was not present during roll call and briefly joined virtually for the Pest Control Districts (PCDs) and Central Valley Response Activities discussion.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Curtis Pate, Manager of the Imperial County Citrus PCD, shared in July 2025 the Imperial County PCD purchased two dogs trained for Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) detection. The dogs have effectively detected small ACP populations at residential properties. A recent ACP detection, collected during residential survey, was confirmed to be positive for *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* (CLas). The CLas+ ACP was found in a rural residential site in the southern Imperial County more than 10-miles away from the US-Mexico border and the nearest commercial grove. Subsequent ACP detections between the border and the site with the CLas+ ACP have led Curtis to believe the ACP migrated from Mexico. Curtis asks the Committee to re-evaluate the value of border monitoring, and advocates for the use of ACP detector dogs. CDFA will investigate the possibility of shifting resources into these areas.

Dr. Subhas Hajeri, Managing Director of the Alliance of Pest Control Districts (APCD), began by thanking the Committee for creating the Ad Hoc Committee to examine APCD and CDFA activities. Dr. Hajeri continued by asking the Committee to restore a recurring agenda item for a PCD report, which would allow PCDs to share their efforts and activities. Keith Watkins agreed and stated that a PCD agenda item will be for future meetings. Subhas presented the recent activities of the APCD, which included notifying growers of recent ACP detections in Kern County. Lastly, Subhas stated he could not share slides during recent meetings due to the Bagley-Keene Act and asked CDFA to review.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

The consent agenda contained the following items:

a. Minutes from September 17, 2025 Committee Meeting

Motion: To approve the minutes on the Consent Agenda with minor edits.

First: Kevin Ball

Second: Jay Gillette

Motion Carries: The motion passed with 12 yays (Kevin Ball, Franco Bernardi, Aaron Dillon, Jay Gillette, John C. Gless, Jim Gorden, Kurt Metheny, Etienne Rabe, Rod Radtke, Jason Reynolds, Ram Uckoo, and Keith Watkins) and one abstention (Jeff Steen).

5. EXECUTIVE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

a. Microsoft Teams Update

Keith Okasaki shared that CDFA is exploring moving the online meeting platform for CPDPC meetings from GoToWebinar to Microsoft Teams starting in 2026. CDFA initially tested the move for the Executive Subcommittee Meeting on November 5, 2025, and will continue to do so for upcoming subcommittee meetings.

b. Action Items

i. Adopt Updated Bylaws

The CPDPC bylaws were updated to reflect a previous recommendation that the Term of Office shall end following the first meeting of the next calendar year following term expiration.

Motion: To approve updated bylaws.

First: Etienne Rabe

Second: John C. Gless

Motion Carries: The motion passed unanimously.

ii. PCDs and Central Valley Response Activities

Roger Smith, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, presented slides for the PCD and Central Valley Response Activities discussion. At the September 17, 2025 CPDPC meeting, the committee put forth a motion “To establish an Ad Hoc Committee to work between the APCD and CDFA to facilitate augmentation of citrus program activities in commercial areas in the Central Valley, particularly in response to pest detections.” The intent of the Ad Hoc Committee is to optimize funds of the citrus grower community by investigating if there is overlap in activities provided by CDFA and PCDs. Roger Smith acknowledged that transitioning to using the PCDs may not be the cheapest solution for every activity but may be the local control solution that serves the grower community best.

The Ad Hoc Committee created a working document of items split into three columns labelled “Completed”, “Work in Progress”, and “Can’t Do”. Roger felt the Work in Progress items should be the focus of the Ad Hoc Committee. “Work In Progress” items include allocating CPDPC funds to the PCDs for grower liaisons; evaluating grove trapping information to optimize trapping activities between CDFA and PCDs; investigating if samples collected from PCD traps can be considered an official sample; and evaluating costs of County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC) trapping program vs PCDs for performing the same activities. Of the CDFA Central District budget, 39.6-percent is allocated to CAC and CDFA residential trapping, which Roger stated could possibly partially redirected to fund the PCDs.

With the existing motion, the Ad Hoc Committee was only able to discuss commercial agriculture related activities which make up a small portion of the CDFA Central Valley budget. Since much of the Central Valley budget items are not related to commercial agriculture, Roger requested a better crafted motion would be necessary to further expand the scope of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Motion: To modify the existing Ad Hoc Committee motion to focus on Work in Progress items listed on the working document.

First: Etienne Rabe

Second: Kevin Ball

Motion Carries: The motion passed with 13 yays (Kevin Ball, Franco Bernardi, Aaron Dillon, Jay Gillete, Jim Gorden, Jose Lima, Kurt Metheny, Etienne Rabe, Rod Radtke, Jason Reynolds, Jeff Steen, Ram Uckoo, and Keith Watkins) and one nay (John C. Gless).

6. FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

a. Review 2024/2025 Budget and Expenditures and Revenue

Claudia Vazquez presented the CPDPC revenue updates using figures presented from the previous Finance Subcommittee meeting on November 6, 2025. The revenue increased by \$82,571, bringing the fiscal year (FY) 2024-25 revenue received to date to \$17,127,466, which equates to 190,305,177 cartons.

b. Review 2025/2026 Budget and Expenditures and Revenue

Claudia presented the CPDPC FY 2025-26 expenditures to date. After receiving feedback from prior Finance Subcommittee meetings, the expenditure tables have been updated to provide a more comprehensive breakdown of distribution of funds. Tables will now show district/activity with following slides showing the cost of specific tasks in each district. In August 2025, \$1,776,192 was expended, leaving \$28,980,457 of the total budget remaining. Following slides showed a breakdown of August expenditures by activity type and funding source. The federal agreement is not yet executed so all charges have been paid for by the General Fund and Agricultural Fund. Once the federal agreement is executed, the Agricultural Fund will be reimbursed where possible.

Motion: To require the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division (CPDPD) obtain approval from the Executive Subcommittee to backfill any staff vacancy.

First: Etienne Rabe

Second: John C. Gless

Motion Carries: The motion passed with 12 yays (Kevin Ball, Franco Bernardi, Aaron Dillon, Jay Gillete, John C. Gless, Jim Gorden, Etienne Rabe, Rod Radtke, Jason Reynolds, Jeff Steen, Ram Uckoo, and Keith Watkins) and one nay (Kurt Metheny).

7. OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

a. Strategic Priority 1 – Find and Eradicate HLB

i. Laboratory Update

Lucita Kumagai presented the CDFA Plant Pest Diagnostics Center Huanglongbing (HLB) Testing Program data. In October 2025, 3,466 plant and 236 ACP samples were submitted. In 2025 to date, only 49,936 samples have been submitted for HLB testing, which represents a 50-percent reduction compared to previous years. From 2012 to 2025, a total of 6,481 sites, 10,286 trees, and 922 ACP samples have tested positive for HLB. To date in 2025, 534 sites, 950 trees, and 54 ACP samples have tested positive for HLB. The final slide compares positive samples from 2024 and 2025. In 2024, 0.21-percent of risk-based survey samples were positive compared to 0.55-percent in 2025. This increase in positivity rate can be attributed to grid selection improvements made in 2025.

ii. Multi-Pest Survey (MPS)

Keith Okasaki presented the 2025 MPS cycle 1, which began in May 2025, and reported that the cycle is currently 97-percent complete. Survey is completed in 25 of 31 allocated counties. To date, approximately 20,000 properties have been surveyed in this cycle, with approximately 3,300 ACP and 5,100 plant samples collected. In the Southern District, 98-percent of the 258 assigned grids are complete, in the Central District, 98-percent of the 420 assigned grids are complete, and in the Northern District, 99-percent of the 93 assigned grids are complete. 2025 MPS cycle 2, which began only a couple weeks ago includes 860 total grids in 33 counties. The Southern District has 282 assigned grids, the Central District has 435 assigned grids, and the Northern District has 143 assigned grids. Counties with grids from cycle 1 will be completed before moving to cycle 2.

iii. CDFA Operational Update

Keith Okasaki presented the CPDPD Operational Updates. In the Southern District, a residential tree in Murrieta, Riverside County tested positive for HLB. The site previously had a CLas+ ACP detection in July 2025. This HLB detection expanded the quarantine by 129 sq. miles and included roughly 170 acres of citrus, however there were no commercial groves within three miles of the detection site. Biocontrol was subsequently released in the area in August and September. A CLas+ ACP was found in a rural residential area in the southern Imperial County. The tree where it was found has been sampled, treated, and removed by the PCD. Warrants were executed in Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside counties to remove HLB+ trees, and public meetings were conducted

on October 28 to treat delimitation areas in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. In the Southern District between September and October, 77 trees tested positive for HLB, 191 HLB+ trees have been removed, and 198 HLB+ trees are pending removal.

In the Central District, there have been multiple ACP detections. In Fresno County, ACP was found on two sites, one of which with several live nymphs. In Kern County, ACP was detected on residential properties in McKittrick, Mettler, and several sites in Bakersfield. In Madera County, ACP was detected on one residential property. Following these detections, public meetings were held or are scheduled to be held with treatment soon following. Fresno delimitation trapping will be serviced by CDFA staff until December 2025 when county staff will take over responsibilities. Residential MPS, ACP detection, and grove trapping are still ongoing. Commercial grove commodity survey began in October will continue as weather permits. Biocontrol agents will continue to be released around recent ACP detections, as well as in Ventura County. In Santa Paula, Ventura County, there is a total of 125 HLB+ trees with 121 already removed and one pending removal.

In the Northern District, ACP detections continue in Santa Clara County with eight new detections since September 17, 2025. Biocontrol agents will continue to be released in Santa Clara County to supplement the modified delimitation trapping array. Winter trapping began in October 2025 and residential MPS activities are ongoing.

b. Strategic Priority 2 – Control ACP Movement and Enforce Regulations

i. CDFA Regulatory and County Update

No regulatory update.

c. Strategic Priority 3 – ACP Control/Suppression

i. Biocontrol Update

Grace Radabaugh provided the Biocontrol Update. In September 2025, 157,300 *Tamarixia radiata* were released, bringing the year-to-date total to approximately 1.7 million. Releases continue in the HLB quarantine, along the US-Mexico border and trade routes, and around new find sites, which includes properties in Fresno, Kern, and Madera counties.

d. Strategic Priority 4 – Outreach and Collaboration

i. Outreach Report

At the November 5, 2025 Executive Subcommittee meeting, Aaron Dillon discussed what information from the outreach group should be shared during meetings and how outreach should be structured going forward. The Subcommittee felt comfortable with how things are structured as is and wanted a few key points and budgetary updates during reports.

Dahmoon Maeesomy provided the Outreach Report. The grower liaison contract is currently being worked on internally and will be \$80,000 per year for two years total but will require Committee approval for the second year. \$101,713 of the \$500,000 Nuffer, Smith, Tucker contract and approximately \$66,000 of the \$567,000 Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has been expended to date. Outreach activities include updating the California Citrus Threat website, targeted Facebook ads in Fresno, and coordinated interviews.

8. SCIENCE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

a. Ethyl Formate Registration Update

Dr. Etienne Rabe gave the ethyl formate update. Currently, California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is currently conducting a risk assessment of ethyl formate. Jim Cranney and the University of California will provide an ethyl formate demonstration for DPR in January 2026.

9. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) REPORT

Helene Wright was unable to provide an update. Casey Creamer informed the Committee that USDA was fully funded for a year, meaning they would not be affected if the government were to shut down again.

10. CALIFORNIA CITRUS MUTUAL (CCM) REPORT

Casey Creamer discussed the idea of creating a citrus commission, which has the advantage of providing growers with the authority to do what is best for pest/disease prevention management, greater control of finances, and the ability to make changes more nimbly. Keith Watkins argued the biggest advantage of a commission would be greater financial transparency compared to a state agency. The Committee welcomed the idea overall but establishing a commission will take some time.

11. CALIFORNIA RESEARCH BOARD (CRB) REPORT

Marcy Martin reported that CRB has expanded several of their breeding and evaluation programs. CRB has received some funding to re-establish their Citrus

Research and Field Trials program, which will allow them to conduct monitoring in some PCDs.

Dr. Melinda Klein discussed current ACP and HLB research activities which include breeding HLB-resistant varieties, introducing traits through various vectors, studies on bio-pesticides, field studies testing phytohormones in plants under HLB stress, testing gene modification in grapefruit, and studying effects of injecting antimicrobial compounds. Many of these studies are in Florida and focus on HLB-infected trees or minimizing infection in young trees. CRB has also been working alongside EcoData in developing a new risk-based model that identifies best areas to survey.

12. OTHER ITEMS, CLOSING COMMENTS, AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next meeting will be in March 2026 in Tulare County.