

**California Pest and Disease Prevention Committee
California Department of Food and Agriculture
Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
March 4, 2026**

There was a quorum of the Ad Hoc Committee, and the following were in attendance. All attendees participated via webinar.

Ad Hoc Committee Members:

Subhas Hajeri
Keith Okasaki

Roger Smith
Ram Uckoo

Claudia Vázquez
Jennifer Willems

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Staff:

Marina Kaiser

Raymond Niem

Edgar Torres Zamudio

Other Attendees:

Marcy Martin

All attendees participated via webinar

Opening Comments:

Roger Smith called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., welcoming the Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) and staff participation. There were no public comments.

Trapping Application:

Keith Okasaki introduced Marina Kaiser to the Committee to present the dashboard for the trapping application, using information shared by the Alliance of Pest Control Districts (APCD). The application shows the location of APCD winter traps, as well as Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division's (CPDPD) static year-round traps in commercial orchards. The application uses a public plan survey system, or MTRS grid, to list the citrus acreage in each grid as well as the number of traps maintained by both entities. The application includes a map, legend, several indicators, charts, and tables, and allows for trapping data to be easily uploaded to ensure information is current. Once placed, the locations of glassy-winged sharpshooter traps in citrus groves will be incorporated. The application should facilitate visibility and inform decision-making to allow APCD to avoid duplicate trapping, as confirmed by Subhas Hajeri.

Official Trap and Pest Identifier Discussion:

Keith Okasaki reported that, according to the CDFA's Legal Department, APCD traps are not considered official or regulatory traps. Official traps must be placed, serviced, and maintained by regulatory officials, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), CDFA, and the County Agriculture Commissioner's (CAC) office, to maintain the chain of custody. Furthermore, as a non-regulatory official or entity, the APCD cannot provide an official pest identification of the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and is not certified to provide official huanglongbing (HLB) diagnostics. Only specific, designated staff within CDFA can provide that official pest identification. Keith went on to explain that even if certain CDFA staff (i.e., Keith or Claudia) found an ACP, they cannot provide official pest identification. Suspect ACP must be identified by a designated CDFA entomologist. Official identification of a target pest can trigger mandatory response activities by CDFA and extends to all target pests, such as invasive fruit flies. Claudia provided an example, stating that suspect ACP collected during multi-pest surveys (MPS) in Southern California are sent to the Citrus Research Board (CRB) lab for *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* testing and not entomological identification. Ram inquired if APCD traps can initiate a mandatory response, as they would be able to react quicker to ACP finds within a pest control district (PCD). Keith stated that PCDs are currently able to conduct their own eradication activities based on their findings, and that would not change with being designated as a regulatory official. Further, APCD traps are not considered official, and any ACP found on such traps would not cause a regulatory response. Per CDFA's Legal Department, a Memorandum of Understanding with APCD for trapping, to consider their traps as official, raises legal concerns, as it would displace civil servants by conducting the same activity in the same place as CDFA. Keith clarified that CDFA Legal's guidance was to prevent litigation, not as a directive.

CDFA/APCD Work In-Progress Discussion:

The group discussed the action item spreadsheet used to track progress, reviewing completed topics, work in progress items, and the “cannot do” category.

1. Topic: Can APCD provide official identification of target pests? (Cannot do)
The APCD already has a non-regulatory lab permit for pathology diagnostics and can react quickly to suspect detections in advance of regulatory actions. APCD cannot officially identify ACP but is still able to encourage grower treatment or conduct treatment with the grower's permission.
2. Topic: Allocation of CPDPD funds to APCD for grower liaisons. (Ongoing)
This is on the agenda for next week's committee meeting.
3. Topic: Coordinated grove trapping. (Completed)
CDFA presented their trapping application that includes CDFA and APCD citrus grove trapping locations. APCD will be able to reduce duplicative trapping in the upcoming seasons.
4. Topic: Coordinated treatment of properties with 25 or more citrus trees in response to a detection. (Completed)
APCD currently can require growers, or properties with 25 or more citrus trees, to treat in response to an ACP detection. Clear communication has been established between CDFA and APCD for when ACP is detected near a 25 or more property. Regardless of an official trap and detection, APCD can still encourage growers to treat and has been successful at doing so.
5. Topic: Establish a subcommittee to continuously review overall activities. (Ongoing)
Ram proposed this with the intention of establishing a platform where all entities can share what they are doing, especially in terms of trapping.
6. Topic: Evaluate utilizing APCD rather than the CACs to conduct residential and commercial trapping programs. (Completed)
Discussed and the group is not willing to divert funds from the CACs, especially considering CACs trap in residential settings. Additionally, CAC-serviced traps are considered official and trigger regulatory action. As a result, APCD can decide not to trap in areas where county and CDFA traps are present.

Closing:

Roger Smith requests a Word document of the action item spreadsheet to adjust if needed. Roger thanked Marcy Martin and Marina Kaiser for their work. The meeting adjourned at 2:09 p.m.