

**Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC)
Executive Committee Meeting**

**Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2026**

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

Executive Subcommittee Members:

Kevin Ball	Mark McBroom	Keith Watkins
John C. Gless*	Kurt Metheny	

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Staff:

David Gutierrez	Keith Okasaki	Jennifer Willems
Anmol Joshi	ThuyVy Truong	Claudia Vazquez
Raymond Niem	Nilan Watmore	

Other Attendees:

Dr. Subhas Hajeri	Mia Neunzig	Roger Smith
Zak Lafitte	Dr. Etienne Rabe	Jeff Steen
Margaret O'Neill		

All attendees participated via webinar

*Subcommittee members declared their inability to use a cam

Opening Comments

Keith Watkins called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., welcoming Executive Subcommittee, guests, and staff.

Public Comments

Zak Lafitte, President of Wonderful Citrus, expressed his desire for the CPDPC and citrus industry to have a broad discussion about the future of the industry and how to best manage the spread of citrus pest and diseases. Zak contends that the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division (CPDPD) has been focused on prevention for more than a decade and it may be best to shift how the division operates. Keith Watkins agrees that a larger discussion about the future of the industry should be had.

Approval of Minutes

John C. Gless recommended approving the minutes from the last Executive Subcommittee meeting held on November 5, 2025. The recommendation was seconded by Kevin Ball and passed unanimously.

November CPDPC Meeting Motions Update

In the previous CPDPC Full Committee Meeting on November 19, 2025, the Full Committee passed a motion to require the CPDPD obtain approval from the Executive Subcommittee to backfill any staff vacancies. Claudia Vazquez updated the Subcommittee that the motion was not approved by Secretary Ross following analysis from the CDFA Legal Office. However, there is still a hiring freeze within CPDPD, and vacancies may continue to be frozen or unfilled depending on budget constraints and operational needs.

Central Valley Ad Hoc Committee Update

Roger Smith reported on items discussed in the Central Valley Ad Hoc Committee meeting on March 4, 2026. In the meeting, CPDPD staff showcased a new application that showed the Alliance of Pest Control Districts (APCD) and CPDPD trapping locations in the Central Valley. Currently, the app does not include glassy-winged sharpshooter traps as they are not currently deployed, but the ability to visualize where trapping efforts overlap will help prevent APCD from duplicating trapping efforts in the future. The current activities of the Citrus Research Board's (CRB) Citrus Research and Field Trials (CRaFT) program were also shared with the Committee and whether CRaFT activities also overlapped. Another item that was discussed was whether APCD traps and pest identification could be considered official. While the Secretary has the ability to delegate official regulatory authority to other entities, this could cause legal repercussions as it may remove work from CDFA full-time civil servant positions and thus would open the program to potential lawsuits from employee unions. Therefore, the Secretary designating APCD as official sample collectors or identifiers is not likely

Finance Subcommittee Report

Kurt Metheny reported that to date in fiscal year (FY) 2025-26, CPDPD has received \$3.8 million in revenue from 40.2 million packed cartons. The carton projection for FY2025-26 is 191,299,444 cartons.

Kurt showcased the new expenditures breakdown by district and activity, type, and funding source. To date in FY2025-26, \$13.5 million (41-percent) has been expended of the \$33 million budget, leaving a balance of \$19.5 million. The expenditures were further broken down by each district, with the Northern District expending \$1.4 million of their \$4.7 million budget, Central District expending \$2.8 million of their \$7.2 million budget, and Southern District expending \$3 million of their \$7.5 million budget. The Ventura E-Fund was extended to June 30, 2026, and \$567,635 has been spent from the \$1.4 million budget. CPDPD has a total encumbrance of \$10.1 million across all districts and activities with only \$1.7 million expended so far.

Operations Subcommittee Report

Kevin Ball provided updates from the recent Operations Subcommittee meeting held on February 25, 2026. CPDPD is transitioning to incorporate the CRB model to designate which Section, Township, Range (STR) grids will be surveyed in the statewide multi-pest survey. In the Northern District, San Jose delimitation trapping has been reduced as an effort to save staff time spent on traveling long distances. Kevin reiterated comments he received from Jim Gorden about what the next goal is, and how a discussion is needed about the focus of the Operations Subcommittee and how that focus should dictate operational activities going forward.

Kurt Metheny asked if the operational changes to shift survey away from areas with large clusters of HLB finds to the quarantine boundary has caused the HLB quarantine boundary to expand. Keith Okasaki responded that since the operational changes were implemented, the HLB quarantine boundary has expanded simply because finds are now typically in new areas.

Science Subcommittee Report

Dr. Etienne Rabe reported on current research activities that were discussed at the Science and Technology Subcommittee meeting on March 3, 2026. Currently, ethyl formate registration is delayed until the California Department of Pesticide Regulation completes their analysis on ethyl formate and the label is redone. During the meeting, several research projects were presented which included studies on different ACP predators and their effectiveness at controlling ACP, Argentine ant control methods and its impact on ACP population, the use of sterile insect technique on ACP, and the effectiveness of ACP management in HLB quarantine zones in Southern California residential areas.

Other Item(s) and Adjournment

The Executive Subcommittee meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.