

California Department of Food and Agriculture

Minutes

Meeting/Conference Call

California Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Committee

Held on Wednesday, May 12, 2010

DoubleTree Hotel, 3100 Camino Del Rio Court, Bakersfield, CA 93308

CCP&DPC

Members Present: Craig Armstrong*, Don Barioni*, Jr., Richard Bennett, Bob Felts, John Gless, Jim Gorden, Gus Gunderson, Nick Hill, J. Link Leavens, Mark McBroom, James McFarlane, Kevin Olsen, Dr. Etienne Rabe, Earl Rutz, Brian Specht, Kevin Severns

*Denotes attendance via conference call

OTHER ATTENDEES

Ruben Arroyo, Jill Barnier, Ted Batkin, Larry Bezark, Charmaine Canlas, Edwin Civerolo, Vic Corkins, Beth Grafton-Cardwell, Nancy Holland, Myron Kimmel, Brett Kirkpatrick, Kathy Kosta*, Joel Nelsen, Beth Stone-Smith, Debby Tanouye, Bob Wynn, Andreana Yribe

*Denotes attendance via conference call

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Nick Hill called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTIONS

Bob Wynn conducted the roll call for the Committee. A quorum was present. There were introductions of members and guests.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark McBroom recommended to the Committee former Imperial County Agricultural Commissioner, Steve Birdsall, as a possible candidate to fill the public member vacancy. Don Barioni provided support.

Craig Armstrong mentioned that after attending a pest control meeting the other day, there were findings of leaves on Mexican Valencia shipments into California, which is causing much concern. The issue with inconsistencies of inspections needs to be addressed.

Mark McBroom mentioned his concerns regarding inconsistencies among counties (including apparent lack of training) in terms of applying regulations. There has to be some common sense regarding material coming in from other counties and a standard for CDFA; counties have their own sense of standards.

Ted Batkin stated that the requirements are the responsibility of USDA, and that these levels are set by the Federal Technical Working Group, but need to be reviewed. Talks should be initiated about setting a federal standard in order to look for inconsistency.

Nick Hill stated that counties need to work with the federal agency to have consistent standards in place and the same compliance regulations for handling imports. This concern will be placed as an agenda item at the next meeting and recommendations for federal regulations with USDA can be discussed at that time.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Chairperson Nick Hill welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He restated the role of what the Committee is charged to do, which is to come up with working plans to educate the community and the public, to educate growers, and to visit public and urban areas in order to provide them with information regarding citrus-related issues. There are some growers who do not understand what this Committee is about, so there needs to be a determination of how the public can be made aware of the Committee and its intentions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Jim Gorden moved that the Committee approve the minutes of the April 14, 2010 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Kevin Olsen and passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE MEMBER TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT AND FORM 700

Larry Bezark, CDFA, explained the procedures and protocols for the completion of the state travel expense claim forms. Due to a request by Earl Rutz, a new Travel Reimbursement Form incorporating more useful information will be created and

provided to the Committee at the next meeting.

AB 604 AND APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE REGARDING THIS COMMITTEE

In regard to the status of AB 604, the bill was quickly introduced as an emergency bill, passed and signed by the Governor.

Nick Hill directed the Committee to look at the Asian Citrus Psyllid Conference Call Group attachment in their folders. He asked that the Committee members look over the handout for any additions, edits, or revisions and to send all requests for changes to Larry Bezark.

OVERVIEW OF CDFA ACP-HLP PROGRAM

Debby Tanouye, CDFA, provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee showing an overview of the current CDFA ACP-HLB operations program (treatments and trapping). She also provided details on the current regulatory activities (quarantine activities) of CDFA and provided information on the total program budget as well as the ACP treatment budget and current expenses. The total funds for the ACP treatment budget are \$2,369,193.

Mark McBroom stated that Imperial County has a lack of funding, and El Centro is getting more psyllid finds. He asked if the Committee can suggest parameters for treatment. Bob Wynn suggested that the Committee can make a recommendation to the Secretary to adopt a work plan.

Discussion followed.

LUNCH

BUDGET/ASSESSMENT

Bob Wynn discussed the budget document that was included in the packets, which showed the monthly assessment totals for Fiscal Year 2009/10 to date. As of March, assessments totaled \$809,692.19. By the end of the fiscal year, total citrus assessments are predicted to reach approximately \$1,000,000.

Larry Bezark stated that the Program is mailing letters to handlers on a monthly basis. Rick Jensen, CDFA Inspection Services, is close to having the form placed on-line in order to provide more convenient accessibility of the form to the handlers. There is concern that all assessments are not coming in on time, so penalties may have to be assessed.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Craig Armstrong presented an HLB Action Plan Sub-committee report. He stated that he sent an e-mail to the Committee which included a revised version addressing ideas and questions at county meetings held in Riverside and Ventura. He asked that the Committee review the revised response plan and he welcomes any comments and questions. Nick Hill made a recommendation that the Committee take home the response plan for review and prepare to vote on the HLB action plan at the next meeting.

Kevin Severns presented a brief CRB Transition Sub-committee report. The CRB Sub-Committee met at California Citrus Mutual last week and they felt that there needs to be some form of assumption of responsibilities and operations of CRB, and in order to do that, an action plan needs to be in place for HLB and ACP. Kevin suggested the possibility of hiring a manager who will be dedicated to running the Program.

Bob Wynn, CDFA, stated that the roles of the Committee are well defined by law and involve recommendations to the Secretary. The Committee can either request that CDFA or the Governor to appoint an individual to manage the program.

Joel Nelsen suggested that it is not ideal to focus on hiring a manager. The Committee has been presented with several documents containing action plans, as well as documents regarding ACP and HLB detection and an understanding of funding, which provides information to make the decision on how to best go forward. What Debby Tanouye is doing is appropriate and CDFA has a legitimate program in place. But action has to be taken that will be effective and cost-effective. The role of the Committee is to prevent and eradicate psyllid infestations, and all the necessary information is provided for the Committee in order to accomplish those goals.

Discussion followed.

REPORT FROM THE CHRP COUNCIL

Ted Batkin and Joel Nelsen presented an update on the CHRP Council. Joel Nelsen stated that it is expected to have USDA funding available by their next fiscal year (October 1, 2010). However, a problem may be encountered by Congress adopting the next budget on time resulting in a continuing resolution. There is a situation with citrus black spot in Florida, and they will take a second look in preparation for a discussion on June 15. The feds have developed a draft plan.

Ted Batkin mentioned that the Florida and California citrus industry are collectively on the same page. A reactivation of the National Communications Committee is currently being worked on, which will assist with maintaining consistency from state to state.

Joel Nelsen questioned that with approximately \$800K in assessments and the occurrence of additional psyllid finds in Imperial County, why there is reluctance to spend money on treatment. With psyllids spreading in Imperial County, it is advised to expand treatment to 400-meters around find sites.

MOTION: Mark McBroom moved that the Committee recommend to the Secretary to use Committee assessment funds, not to exceed \$500,000, to augment treatment in Imperial County for infested properties and those within 400 meters up to June 30, 2010. The motion was seconded by John Gless and passed unanimously.

OTHER ITEMS

Nick Hill will set up dates for informational classes.

DATE & LOCATION FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is set for Monday, June 21, 2010 to be held in Bakersfield, CA at the Doubletree Hotel beginning at 10:00 am.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.