

**CALIFORNIA CITRUS PEST AND DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAM
OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 5, 2018

Opening:

The regular meeting of the Operations Subcommittee was called to order at 9:00 a.m. on September 5, 2018 in Visalia, California by Chairman Keith Watkins.

Committee Members Present:

John Gless*	Link Leavens*	Keith Watkins
Ted Grether*	Roger Smith	

Committee Members Absent:

Zac Green	Kevin Severns
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CDFA Staff:

Jonathan Babineau*	Tina Galindo*	Ray Leclerc	Bob Wynn*
Cassandra Davis*	Victoria Hornbaker*	David Morgan*	
Sean Farnum*	Sara Khalid*	Keith Okasaki*	

CRB Staff:

Rick Dunn	Holly Deniston-Sheets	Melinda Klein*
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Guests:

Bob Atkins	John Eliot*	Tom Mayhew*	Fred Strickland*
Kevin Ball*	Brian Guess*	Kurt Metheny*	Michele Winemen*
Jill Barnier*	Ellen Kragh*	George Orozco*	Judy Zaninovich
Erin Betts*	Debbie Larmon*	Sylvie Robillard	Sandra Zwaal*
Teri Blaser*	Leslie Leavens*	Cressida Silvers*	
John Demshki*	Stewart Lockwood*	Greg Simmons*	

*** Participated via Webinar**

Opening Comments:

Keith Watkins welcomed the Committee, staff, and members of the public participating in person and online. He stated that there was a quorum for the meeting.

Public Comments:

No public comments.

Grower Liaison Update

Bob Atkins stated that grower liaisons were currently focused on scheduling fall treatments. He explained that they would have some results on Early Detection Technology (EDTs) from the McRoberts lab by next meeting, to assist in completing California 1a and 1b. Work on Florida-1 also continues. Growers continue to work with local Agricultural Commissioners to deal with

neglected and abandoned orchards. Bob noted that Jim Gorden requested the grower liaisons produce and distribute a newsletter to keep local growers abreast of information regarding Huanglongbing (HLB). Bob estimated that half of the grower liaisons had completed that task.

Science Subcommittee Update

Keith Watkins provided a report of the Science Subcommittee meeting. The report stated that risk-based surveys should be biased towards commercial citrus groves. CLAs tree removal and treating trees around find sites remains a core function until the number of trees makes the practice unfeasible. Keith stated that the report stressed that the Committee should adapt to emerging data trends indicating when HLB detection has reached exponential growth, treatment should be proactive and timed based on flush, and that residential treatments are difficult and should be handled on a seasonal and local level such as local pest control districts (PCDs).

When asked, Victoria Hornbaker noted that area-wide treatments would need to be tailored by area. She explained that not all counties have solid PCDs and some may require California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) input, particularly on the coast. She stated that some PCD's will not need funding and others may need assistance. Victoria stated that there would need to be discussion on what kinds of contracts or grants were possible. She also noted that if CDFA funding was involved, CDFA must take lead on CEQA compliance while contractors would be limited to chemicals specified for home-owner use.

In response to a question, Tina Galindo noted that in the past CDFA couldn't complete some buffer treatments. She noted that some areas currently only have 50 percent participation among growers. She stated that CDFA was somewhat slow on treating due to the need for Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) detection, mapping zones, justifying treatment, planning public meetings, bee keeper checks, pesticide use reports, etc. Victoria noted that many of these issues remain if the PCDs are CDFA-funded.

When asked, Victoria discussed the current state of the Pest Environmental Impact Report (PEIR); CDFA filed for an appeal and were granted a stay of injunction during the appeal process. CDFA continues to use the PEIR in pursuit of their duties during the stay. She noted that if CDFA loses the appeal they will need to redo the EIR and treatment processes. Bob Wynn believes the appellate court issue should be resolved in two years.

Ray Leclerc explained that the Science Taskforce discussed trying to put a number to the point of exponential HLB growth where CLAs tree removal was of minimal use, but opinions were divided. Victoria suggested 2 to 5 percent may be feasible but may have sociopolitical repercussions. She gave an example of an owner who gets his tree removed for being under the 5 percent ceiling taking issue with his contemporary seven blocks over not getting his trees removed due to his zone having hit the 5 percent mark. It was suggested that the HLB Data Analysis Tactical Operations Cell (DATOC) study the issue to get a definitive answer on the point-of-no-return, as well as the science justifying continued activity in urban centers and the consequence of abandoning groves to HLB. Victoria explained that CDFA requested Dr. Gottwald add a 20 percent bias to commercial citrus in his risk-based surveys in addition to a risk-based commercial survey for groves. She noted that some sentinel trees and grove trapping is already occurring. It was stated that Brianna is working on a numerical model for HLB and ACP exposure based on 60,000 exposed trees, due in October.

Rick Dunn explained the three items the Committee wanted DATOC to analyze; at what point is the program unable to continue removing trees, how many trees are in each hotspot that would be removed under threat of exposure, and when does the program reach the threshold of exponential growth. Victoria noted that DATOC should consider when performing this analysis that the program is using new, more sensitive primers (new R&R and revised 16-S primers) and have changed their sampling technique recently from a pooled analysis of 20 leaves to independently sampling 20 leaves from each quadrant.

Victoria explained that techniques for testing flush are coming along slowly. There are issues such as an infection point of flush might not be systemic, any work instruction must be backed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and it is harder to pull the necessary mid-rib tissue from flush than mature leaf. It was suggested that CDFA petition USDA to appropriately change the work instruction.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - Control ACP movement and Enforce Regulations

Hand Cleaning Fruit Protocol

Keith Okasaki described a new hand-cleaning protocol for citrus moving from one regional quarantine zone to another. The goal of the protocol was to come up with an enforceable definition of ‘practically free from stems and leaves.’ Keith proposed that 20 or fewer leaves per bin would be an achievable standard. He recommended the growers sign an additional declaration to be added to their compliance agreement that they are aware of the 20 leaves per bin tolerance.

Per the protocol, the grower informs their local Agricultural Commissioner of their intent to hand-clean fruit to the 20-leaf standard; the local Agricultural Commissioner contacts CDFA to apprise them of grower compliance. The origin Agricultural Commissioner conducts random inspections to ensure the standard is met. Growers should notify the destination Agricultural Commissioner 24 hours prior to shipment; the new compliance agreement should be presented, initialed by the origin Agricultural Commissioner. The destination Agricultural Commissioner should conduct random inspections at the packing houses. Keith suggested that grower shipments with more than 20 leaves per bin be rejected and the grower receive a Notice of Violation (NOV). He stated that CDFA can provide optional training to growers and harvesting crews to explain the requirements in English and Spanish.

It was suggested that some districts, such as desert regions which host fewer ACP, should have different requirements. Victoria stated that CDFA prefers a consistent and uniform application for ease of use.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 - ACP Control/Suppression

Biocontrol Updates

David Morgan explained that the Citrus Research Board (CRB) released 400,000 agents last month, bringing total agents released to over 11 million. David stated that production is up compared to last year. He noted that Foothill Agriculture Research (FAR) is no longer part of the program; University California Riverside releases some agents, although they are primarily

contracted for production. He explained that 75 percent of biocontrol releases focused on HLB areas. An extra release was scheduled for Kern County last week, another batch was released in San Luis Obispo and San Jose, and a Santa Barbara release is scheduled for September 10.

David stated that preliminary analyses were being done on three transect areas. He noted that very few ACP were found by these studies within HLB areas, which he credited to the chemical treatments. According to the transect data, within the HLB area zero ACP are found, while further away within 3 kilometers approximately three ACP per flush were found. Around five miles away, there were approximately 20 insects per tree. David also judged that *Tamarixia* releases were linked to fewer ACP in the area. In response to a question, David added that half of the current find sites have had ant bait placed, and there are locations in the transect areas where boric acid is used to decrease ant populations, to see how these treatments affect ACP numbers. David stated that based on monitoring data, ACP numbers are down in urban areas by 80 percent.

David reminded the Subcommittee that *Diaphorencyrtus aligarhensis* production and releases have been discontinued due to expense. He stated that USDA has been analyzing CDFA data to help with spatial and temperature statistics. University of California (UCR) and Davis have been working on ant bait studies and different odor lures for ACP. New release sites in Kern and San Luis Obispo, and David has hired additional helpers. In response to a question, David explained that there were two priorities for the program: increase releases around HLB finds, and release Biocontrol agents in new areas as they become established. The Biocontrol program has been classified as a classical one; the beneficial insect can be released and will cycle, needing no further intervention. When asked, David explained that there are now breeding populations, although *Tamarixia* numbers drop in extreme temperatures.

CLOSING COMMENTS & ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. The next meeting will be held in Visalia, California on October 3, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.