**California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)**
**Minutes**
of the Meeting/Video Conferencing
of the Nursery Advisory Board (NAB)
Held on Tuesday, April 28, 2026
1220 N Street, CDFA Bistro - Room 150
Sacramento, CA 95833

## NURSERY ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

**Voting Members Present:** David Cox, Mike Doiron, Michael Frantz, James Hessler, Dustin Hooper, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Josh Puckett, Dan Waterhouse, Chris Wichman

**Voting Members Absent:** Bruce Jensen, Carl Pongs

**Ex Officio Nonvoting Members Present:** Emily Robidart Rooney, Wolfgang Schweigkofler

**Ex Officio Nonvoting Members Absent:** Kamal Bagri, Johanna Del Castillo Múnera, Jolene Dessert, John Keller, Isabella Quinonez, Gerry Spinelli

## OTHER ATTENDEES*

Kyle Buecke, Derek Desoto, Carolyn Lambert, Brenda Lanini, Heather Martin, Jasmine Minhas, Keith Okasaki, Kelley Paugh, Michael Paule, Jeffrey Simmons, Hanna Upton, Terra Walber, Kristina Weber, Wendi Wilkinson

*As self-reported in the GoTo Webinar application

## CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

David Cox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. and conducted roll call. A quorum was present for the Board.

## WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Cox welcomed everyone and reviewed the topics of discussion.

## REVIEW MEETING MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 18, 2025 AND JANUARY 29, 2026

Cox directed the Board to review the draft minutes prepared by program staff for the December 18, 2025, and January 29, 2026 meetings.. The Board reviewed the minutes, and no changes or corrections were made.

Board Motion #1
The Board approved the minutes from the December 18, 2025 meeting.

Motion: Jim Hessler
Second: Chris Wichman

Details of Board Vote
In Favor: David Cox, Mike Doiron, Jim Hessler, Dustin Hooper, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Josh Puckett, Dan Waterhouse, Chris Wichman
Against: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Michael Frantz, Bruce Jensen, Carl Pongs

Board Motion #2
The Board approved the minutes from the January 29, 2026 meeting.

Motion: Jim Hessler
Second: Mike Doiron

Details of Board Vote
In Favor: David Cox, Mike Doiron, Jim Hessler, Jay Jensen, David Kirby, Josh Puckett, Dan Waterhouse, Chris Wichman
Against: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Michael Frantz, Dustin Hooper, Bruce Jensen, Carl Pongs

## ACP/HLB ACTIVITIES UPDATE

National Plant Board, APHIS and CDFA are reviewing the citrus nursery stock protocol and may propose changes in the next few months.

Recent ACP/HLB Activity:

- Imperial County: First CLAS-positive ACP detected late last year; no positive tree found, and the tree was voluntarily removed.
- Santa Barbara County: First CLAS-positive ACP on a residential property; surveys and treatments completed; no positive tree and no new quarantine.
- Ventura County: CLAS-positive ACP was found in a commercial grove near Fillmore. Extensive sampling (about 3,200 samples) of surrounding commercial groves all came back negative, so no quarantine expansion.

Retail Nursery Program (LA & Orange Counties): The program started about a year ago to provide clean citrus plants within the HLB quarantine area, where only protected/approved-structure citrus can legally be sold. This helped reduce backyard and unlicensed citrus propagation that filled the supply gap. Program will continue through at least November, then be evaluated.

Backyard vs Licensed Nurseries: There is a mix of licensed nurseries and unlicensed backyard sellers. CDFA provides outreach and education first, but enforcement/abatement actions are taken when needed—especially given the high number of HLB-positive trees in Orange County.

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San Diego Abatement Case: A nursery was recently in the media due to an abatement action. CDFA clarifies that the action followed a formal administrative hearing, where the nursery was represented by counsel. The nursery had not complied with citrus nursery stock regulations within the quarantine zone. Additional HLB-positive trees have been detected in that area. Because related litigation is ongoing, further details cannot be shared.

## BORDER PROTECTION STATIONS BRANCH – INTRODUCTION AND RECENT CHALLENGES

An overview of the services performed by Border Protection Station (BPS) and how these services contribute to the overall mission to protect California agriculture. It was explained how staff prioritize inspections of higher risk vehicles. Also outlined were some of the recent limitations within the Branch due to staffing shortages, uncompetitive wages, etc.

## *PHYTOPHTORA RAMORUM* ACTIVITIES UPDATE

*Phytophthora ramorum* (*P. ramorum*) updates included hold and trace forward protocol clarification, 2026 positive nurseries, and resources guide. After a positive plant is detected at a nursery all regulated plants are held and the hold may also include any other product or article the inspector determines may present a risk of spreading *P. ramorum*. All regulated and nonregulated plants must be inspected during positive nursery response. Trace records are required to be submitted to the USDA within five business days after a *P. ramorum* detection.

In 2026, there were four positive nurseries in California and 3,967 *P. ramorum* samples processed by the CDFA Plant Pest Diagnostics Center. Positive samples were collected from Camellia, Loropetalum, Michelia, Pieris, and Rhododendron species.

## NEW PESTS OF CONCERN IN CALIFORNIA

Staff presented on the difficulties with regulating “New-Old” diseases such as *Xanthomonas hydrangea*. CDFA must consider whether there is evidence that it is new pest of concern or if it is just a new name for an already present pathogen, which creates uncertainty when determining pest ratings. This problem is going to increase in the future as genomics allows for more “new” species to be described in multiple pathology systems.

CDFA was working to revise the Lethal Yellowing of Palm state exterior quarantine (3 CCR § 3282) through the regular rulemaking process.

## JAPANESE BEETLE ACTIVITIES UPDATE

An introduction to the biology and pest significance of the Japanese beetle and the exclusion, detection, and eradication activities that help keep this pest from becoming established in California.

## PEST EXCLUSION BRANCH - QUARANTINES UPDATE

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**Fruit Fly Quarantines**

- Oriental fruit fly (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties)
  - March 23, 2026, eradication was declared and all quarantine restrictions were lifted.
- Active Quarantines:
  - Caribbean fruit fly in Los Angeles County.
  - Mediterranean fruit fly in Santa Clara County.
  - Mexican fruit fly in San Diego County.

**Cotton Seed Bug (CSB)**

One detection in 2026 in Santa Barbara County where the plants were destroyed. In the event of a positive pest find, the nurseries would treat, reinspect, and release or choose destruction. CDFA was not aware of any impacts to interstate shipping related to CSB.

**Cotton jassid**

A new state exterior quarantine had been established for cotton jassid or two spot cotton leafhopper (3 CCR § 3290). The current distribution included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. Regulated articles included leaves and/or plants in the Family *Malvaceae* (Mallow family). There are other known hosts, however, plants from this family are the ones currently restricted due to risk of movement of the pest. Certification requirements include treatment.

## COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONERS' UPDATE

**PEST PREVENTION COMMITTEE**

None

**NURSERY, SEED AND APIARY COMMITTEE**

None

## NURSERY SERVICES PROGRAM UPDATE

The frequency of inquiries regarding minimum license fee had decreased. Licensees seemed to understand the fee increase and the reasoning behind it.

The Program had been receiving applications for nurseries doing online sales from out-of-state locations. Staff were refunding the money and trying to determine the reason for this sudden influx of out-of-state applicants.

## BOARD MEMBER VACANCIES

No current vacancies. Several terms were set to expire January 31, 2027: David Cox, Dustin Hooper, Jay Jensen, Josh Puckett and Chris Wichman. Chairperson Cox informed the Board he did not plan to seek reappointment in 2027.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

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## NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

Next meeting will be in the Fall. A Doodle poll will be sent out around the middle of August.

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Michael Paule, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Nursery Services Program
California Department of Food & Agriculture

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