

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
Minutes

of the Meeting/Video Conferencing
of the Nursery Advisory Board (NAB)
Held on Wednesday, April 24, 2024
1220 N Street, Room 133
Sacramento, CA 95814

NURSERY ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Members Present: David Cox, Michael Frantz, Jim Hessler, Bruce Jensen, Jay Jensen, Phillip Johnson, David Kirby, Josh Puckett, Dan Waterhouse

Members Absent: Dustin Hooper

OTHER ATTENDEES*

Kyle Beucke, Kiana Dao, Joanna Fisher, Tanya Goodson, Kelsea Jones, Joshua Kress, Brenda Lanini, Phuong Lao, Jim Lawrence, Heather Martin, Jasmine Minhas, Cristy Munos, Keith Okasaki, Lorence Oki, Michael Paule, Emily Rooney, Wolfgang Schweigkofler, Marcie Skelton, Claudia Vazquez, Terra Walber, Kristina Weber

*As self-reported in the Zoom application or sign-in sheet

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

David Cox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.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.

PDEP NURSERY SURVEY

Joanna Fisher provided updates on nursery pest surveys conducted by the Pest Detection / Emergency Projects (PDEP) Branch. Funding for the 2023 season was provided by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) via the Plant Protection Act Section 7721 (PPA 7721) for nursery and ornamental surveys. Surveys took place from July to September 2023 in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Diego counties. Targeted pests were cotton seed bug (CSB), box tree moth (BTM) and pink hibiscus mealybug (PHM).

PDEP used several factors to determine which nurseries would be surveyed. Selection criteria included: nurseries with previous infestations or near previous detection sites, presence of host plants for the targeted pests, and nurseries with large volume of exported stock.

In 2023 there were no positive samples/specimens for the targeted pests. In total, 85 sites were surveyed.

The survey will be continued in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25, with plans to partner with County Agricultural Commissioners in Orange, Riverside, San Diego, and Ventura counties.

ACP/HLB UPDATE

Keith Okasaki provided an update on Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and Huanglongbing (HLB). The HLB quarantine area covered 2,236 sq. miles as of January 24, 2024. As of April 19, 2024, county HLB detection results showed 7,709 detections across 6 counties, including 794 HLB-positive psyllids:

- Los Angeles county: 1,452
- Orange county: 5,421
- Riverside county: 278
- San Bernardino county: 419
- San Diego county: 69
- Ventura county: 70

The 2023-24 sampling season for the Citrus Nursery Stock Pest Cleanliness Program was complete as of this meeting.

A technical advisory group had been formed to review HLB quarantine nursery restrictions and regulations for the Citrus Nursery Stock Pest Cleanliness Program.

Selected regulatory issues between April 2023 to April 2024:

- Eleven backyard/retail nurseries in Los Angeles and Orange counties were discovered.
- Two home nurseries self-propagating citrus were discovered.
- 941 citrus trees were held and destroyed during this timeframe.
- One shipment of trees from Florida was found to be positive for HLB.

CDFA's Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Division was regulating the movement of host materials for *Citrus yellow vein clearing virus* (CYVCV) within one-half mile of detection sites.

INTERIOR PEST EXCLUSION PROGRAM UPDATE

Terra Walber and Jim Lawrence provided an overview of the Master Certificate annual fee and renewal process. In December, letters are sent out to nurseries with a reminder of the fee structure and when fees are due (January 31).

PESTS OF CONCERN IN CALIFORNIA

Heather Martin, Primary State Plant Pathologist, presented updates on *Meloidogyne enterolobii*, guava root knot nematode (GRKN). CDFA's enforcement of state exterior quarantine against burrowing and reniform nematodes helps to keep all nematode-infested plant material out of California. A 2023 GRKN survey was conducted in Merced County focused on sweet potatoes, since it can suffer crop failure due to

GRKN. Field samples were processed by the CDFA Plant Pest Diagnostic Center (PPDC). The GRKN survey collected 333 samples representing over 22,500 acres. The PPDC detected 103 samples containing *Meloidogyne incognita*, and no samples containing *M. enterolobii*.

Fusarium wilt of strawberry, *Fusarium oxysporum f.sp. fragariae*, was not a big problem for crops until after the fumigant methyl bromide was phased out in 2005. This fungus is now known to be in all production areas statewide. University of California has several disease-resistant varieties that are widely planted. Resistant cultivars with the FW1 gene were protected against Fusarium wilt because all strains of the pathogen in California were Race 1 before 2022. In 2023 *Fusarium oxysporum f.sp. fragariae* Race 2 was found to be causing fusarium wilt in California. Race 2 is able to overcome the FW1 gene in resistant varieties. Whole-genome sequencing indicates Race 2 is new to plant pathologists and may have originated in Ventura County.

Kyle Buecke, Primary State Entomologist, reviewed almond pests of concern in California. CDFA conducted an exercise with “Pest Forecasting” to predict what pests may affect almonds within the state. Almonds are a high value crop (\$3.5 billion) and if there was a decrease of production in the state it would have a large economic impact. Forecasting can help tighten pathways and improve chances of pest detection. Using forecasting, CDFA determined there were twelve pests of concern for almonds in California that were reported to decrease yield and/or kill trees. Buecke discussed two of the pests: *Cimex quadrimaculatus* and *Acalitus phloeocoptes*.

PEST EXCLUSION BRANCH UPDATE

Joshua Kress provided an update on quarantine activities related to invasive fruit flies (IFF). In 2023, California established the first known quarantines in the Western hemisphere for Tau fly, *Zeugodacus tau*, and Queensland fruit fly, *Bractrocera tryoni*.

Statewide, IFF detections jumped from 101 in 2022 to over 900 in 2023. Most of the detections were Oriental fruit flies (OFF) trapped in the OFF quarantine area in San Bernardino and Riverside counties (centered around the city of Redlands). In response to the IFF interceptions, CDFA has increased activities by placing additional delimitation traps, eradication traps, pesticide applications, fruit removal, and sterile insect technique for Medfly. At the time of this meeting, there were active quarantines in the following counties: Sacramento (OFF), Contra Costa (OFF), Santa Clara (OFF), Los Angeles (Medfly, Tau fly), Riverside/San Bernardino (OFF), Ventura/Los Angeles (Queensland fruit fly).

New outreach efforts in 2023/24 included a single source webpage for IFF on CDFA’s public website, public and grower meetings, signage, paper and digital outreach materials, and both traditional and social media advertising and engagement.

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

CACASA Pest Prevention Committee – Kristina Weber presented on behalf of Kamal Bagri, San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner

- Counties were considering cutting back glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) trapping activities at the nurseries due to cuts in CDFA contract amounts. CDFA's Pierce's Disease Control Program (PDCP) had requested trap servicing be adjusted from every two weeks to every three weeks.
- Counties were also considering inspecting shipments coming out of the infested areas (blue tag) at a reduced level.
 - The Board requested follow up with PDCP to clarify the blue tag inspection levels at a future meeting.

CACASA Nursery, Seed, and Apiary Committee – Marcie Skelton, Glenn County Agricultural Commissioner

- The new CDFA/California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association (CACASA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the State-County Cooperative Nursery Inspection Program had been approved, allowing for administration of the National Plant Board's Systems Approach to Nursery Certification (SANC) by county agricultural departments.
- Per the Siskiyou County Agricultural Commissioner, Jim Smith, fumigation costs were up by \$1,000 per acre due to mitigation measures put in place by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).
- CACASA was sponsoring Assembly Bill 2827, Invasive Species: prevention.
- CACASA was funding CDFA's Comprehensive Pest Prevention Program Analysis (C3PA).
- The Committee requested that a Nursery Advisory Board member attend the CACASA Spring Conference on May 23, 2024 to speak about industry issues, concerns, and priorities that counties should be aware of.

BRIEF BOARD UPDATES

a. FAC § 242 Update

Cox provided an update on California Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) Section 242 and the program's indirect costs. Cox noted outstanding questions to CDFA on this topic, including:

- Why is the program being charged over 5% of total program revenue for departmental indirect costs, in conflict with FAC § 242?
- What is the specific connection between indirect costs to the program and indirect costs for federal agreements?
- Indirect costs are primarily distributed by head count of employees. Nursery Services has a small number of permanent employees but many seasonal employees. Are seasonal employees counted for indirect cost distribution by full time equivalent hours, or are they counted as a whole?
- When Nursery Services employees work on other programs and their costs are redirected to those programs, are the associated indirect costs also redirected?

Cox provided additional background for new Board Members on this topic. Within the Nursery Services budget, there are indirect costs which go back to CDFA for the department's costs related to the program. FAC § 242 states that departmental indirect costs cannot exceed 5% of program's revenue. The budgeted indirect costs for Nursery Services has historically exceeded 5%. The program's reserves would be in much better shape if indirect costs were not exceeding 5%. The Board has made previous motions recommending that the indirect costs be reduced in accordance with FAC § 242, and Cox was trying to get to the root of this problem on behalf of the Board.

a. **Review Prospective Voting Member Appointment Questionnaire (Form #64-003)**

Weber shared a draft questionnaire that had been amended based on the Board's suggestions at the November 28, 2023 meeting.

Board Motion

The Board recommends approval of the Prospective Voting Member Appointment Questionnaire, as presented.

Motion: Dan Waterhouse

Second: Josh Puckett

In Favor: David Cox, Michael Frantz, Jim Hessler, Bruce Jensen, Jay Jensen, Phillip Jonson, David Kirby, Josh Puckett, Dan Waterhouse

Against: None

Absent: Dustin Hooper

Abstain: None

NURSERY SERVICES PROGRAM UPDATE

Weber updated the Board that the program was updating Registration and Certification (R&C) applications to obtain consistency in the program's forms. R&C program participants may notice some formatting changes, but content remained the same.

BOARD MEMBERS VACANCIES

Cox and Weber discussed there were two voting member vacancies. The vacancies were posted on March 27, 2024. As of April 24, 2024, no applications had been received. The due date for applications was on April 25, 2024.

The program was also working to fill the ex-officio non-voting board member vacancies.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS

The next Board meeting will be set for November 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Michael Paule, AGPA

Nursery Services Program

California Department of Food & Agriculture