

April 15, 2005

Kern/Tulare

GWSS Update



A project of the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Task Force of Kern and Tulare Counties. Participants: Agricultural Commissioner's Offices of Kern and Tulare Counties, California Department of Food and Agriculture, University of California-Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture (APHIS and ARS Divisions).

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New parasitic wasp nears release-permitting approval

A small but mighty soldier is poised to enter the battle against Pierce's Disease (PD) and the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS).

Anagrus epos, a parasitic wasp from Minnesota, is expected to be permitted next week by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for release in California.

The insect is minute, even smaller than the tiny parasitoids already being used against the sharpshooter. In fact, it's closely related to the world's smallest insect, the fairy fly. Like other parasitic wasps, *anagrus* lays its eggs in the eggs of sharpshooters. The developing wasp kills the host egg. When adults emerge, the females mate and then disperse to search for more GWSS eggs to parasitize.

What's particularly significant about *anagrus* is its ability to produce more than 10 offspring per sharpshooter egg. That compares to just one offspring from other parasitic biocontrol agents.

The insect offers another valuable benefit. "Unlike other GWSS parasitic wasps, *Anagrus* is capable of surviving severe winters," says David Morgan, a senior environmental research scientist with the

California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). Morgan heads the Pierce's Disease Program's Biological Control Unit.

Currently in quarantine at the Mount Rubidoux Field Station in Riverside, *Anagrus* wasps will be shipped to the Arvin biocontrol facility following permitting approval, and should be ready for field releases two to three weeks later, Morgan says.

The state's biocontrol program currently uses four other parasitoid species against the GWSS. They are: *Gonatocerus ashmeadi*, *G. morrilli*, *G. triguttatus* and *G. fasciatus*. Another species, *G. tuberculifemur*, was collected in Argentina in 2003 and could be permitted for release by USDA in about a year.



The *Anagrus epos* female can outproduce its parasitoid counterparts by 10 to one. (Photo: David Morgan)

(continued on page 2)

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David Morgan,
CDFA Pierce's
Disease Program-
Biological Control
Unit

Arvin facility welcomes USDA

The Arvin Biological Control Facility has a new tenant.

The California GWSS Program has moved from its Bakersfield field lab to the Arvin site, reports Beth Stone-Smith, USDA's program director for the Western Region.

New contact information is:
USDA APHIS PPQ
Western Region-
GWSS Program
13720 Rock Pile Road
Arvin CA 93203
Phone: (661) 854-6636 / 854-6637
Fax: (661) 854-6176

GWSS numbers increasing in Kern, Tulare traps

Low counts of adult glassy-winged sharpshooters are reappearing in Kern and Tulare County traps two to three years after initial control measures were applied.

While the counts total only one to two sharpshooters per trap, the increase warrants concern, says Larry Liggett, field coordinator for the Highway 65 project of the GWSS Task Force of Kern and Tulare counties.

"This indicates the need for continued vigilance through trapping and field inspection to discover the resident populations of GWSS," Liggett says.

Over the next two months, task

force field coordinators will work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to gather trapping data and determine whether area citrus acreage needs treatment to protect nearby vineyards.

Liggett says the reemergence of GWSS in the previously treated areas could be the result of the reintroduction of sharpshooters as well as reproduction of those that have been there all along.

"We're far enough away from the initial treatment that the GWSS have completed enough life cycles for us to start catching them in traps," he notes.



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(continued from page 1)

More than 1.1 million GWSS biological control agents have been released in California since 2000. For the first three months of 2005, releases exceeded 30,000 parasitoids.

"This exceeds all previous releases for the same time period in past years, even though a large proportion of our production is now being dedicated to support of research," says Morgan.

The biocontrol program will increase its emphasis on treating areas—urban, organic and natural environments—that can't be controlled by insecticides. "The cities of Temecula, Bakersfield, Porterville and Tulare will be the subjects of particular attention," says Morgan.

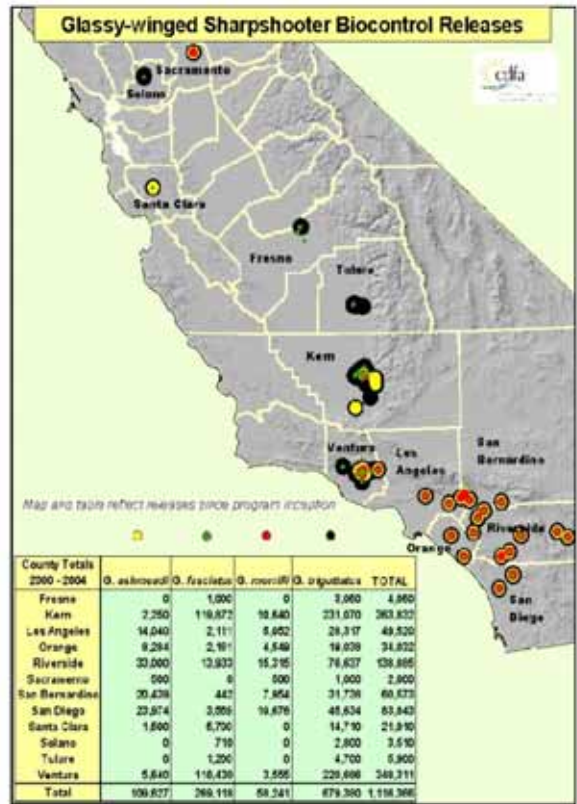
Morgan reports CDFA also is proceeding with plans to buy the Arvin facility by the end of the year. It currently leases the property from Badger Almond Company.

USDA moved its California GWSS Program offices to the Arvin facility this month.

The Arvin site could someday house the office for the pest control district, currently awaiting an assessment vote by table-grape acreage owners.

"CDFA said it would cooperate and work with us—if and when we get to that point—for housing a manager there," confirms Paul Giboney, chairman of Kern County's Table Grape Pest and Disease Control District. "That would be a good thing, especially since USDA recently relocated there."

—by Catherine Merlo



(Map: David Morgan)

PD referendum Website launched to help inform wine-grape grower, vintner community

Wine-grape growers and vintners anxious to better understand why their "yes" votes are needed for the upcoming Pierce's Disease/Glassy-winged Sharpshooter (PD/GWSS) referendum to continue the PD/GWSS assessment can now turn to a new comprehensive Web site: www.savecaliforniasvineyards.com.

Designed and launched by a coalition of the California Association of Winegrape Growers, Family Winemakers of California and Wine Institute, the new site provides in-depth analysis of the referendum and the critical work the assessment program has supported since 2001.

Up-to-date information on a variety of aspects concerning the PD referendum are located on the site, including facts about PD and GWSS, statistics on expenditures, the latest news and links to other sites with information on the PD/GWSS threat.

"We've been very fortunate that the dire predictions about PD and GWSS have not come true, but that's only because of

the tremendous efforts on the part of the industry as well as local, state and federal governments," said CAWG President Karen Ross.

"The success of the overall program has led to complacency within the industry, but we feel that if the wine-grape grower community is made aware of what the PD Board and the assessment have done for them, along with all the other efforts taking place on their behalf, they'll see how critically important it is to continue the assessment," Ross said.

Ballots for the vote on the PD referendum will be sent out the week of May 16. At least 40 percent of eligible growers must cast ballots to validate the referendum. Passage requires either: a "yes" vote by 65 percent of those voting who represent the majority of the assessment that was paid in 2004; or a "yes" vote by a majority of those voting who represent 65 percent or more of the assessment that was paid in 2004.

Kern's pest control board to meet

The board of the Kern County Table Grape Pest and Disease Control District will meet Thursday, April 21, at 8 a.m. in the conference room at M. Caratan, Inc., 33787 Cecil Ave., Delano.

