

April 29, 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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**Web site:**

[http://cekern.ucdavis.edu/Custom\\_Program444/](http://cekern.ucdavis.edu/Custom_Program444/)

## Grape growers to vote in May on state, district funding programs for GWSS, PD

Over the next three weeks, California grape growers will vote on two key measures, both of which propose funding for programs targeting vineyard pests and diseases like the glassy-winged sharpshooter and Pierce's Disease.

Kern County table-grape acreage owners are expected to receive ballots soon after May 6 to vote on a proposed assessment of \$8 per acre to fund a local table-grape pest and disease control district. The Kern County Board of Supervisors must first authorize the mailing, which it's expected to do at its May 3 meeting. The Clerk of the Board will then mail out ballots May 6.

Likewise, referendum ballots will be sent statewide to wine-grape growers during the week of May 16 to determine whether to continue the Pierce's Disease (PD) assessment.

Tulare County table-grape acreage owners also will vote this spring on an assessment level to fund activities for a local table-grape pest and disease control district. The district's board of directors, however, is still developing its ballot.

**Districts' intentions.** "The Districts' sole purpose is to protect the table-grape industry from glassy-winged sharpshooter, Pierce's disease and other new invasive pest species that constantly threaten our industry from abroad," board members of the Kern and Tulare pest districts note in a letter slated to be mailed to table-grape growers next week.

Since 2001, state and federal governments have spent more than \$135 million in Kern and Tulare Counties to combat GWSS and PD.

"Your new district is asking for only \$8 per acres, plus a maximum of a 2 percent annual increase at the discretion of your



district board of directors," the letter says. "Those funds will be used to augment, not replace, the current work funded by the government."

The Kern and Tulare table-grape districts plan to actively support the current area-wide GWSS monitoring and control programs. Among other strategies, the districts intend to provide education so all table-grape growers can recognize and test PD-infected vines for removal.

"The district has abatement authority, if needed, to ensure a more equitable and complete control," notes the letter. "In the past, the reaction to new invasive pests has been too little and too late. Now, there will be a mechanism in place to bring in state and federal government support to eradicate new invasive species.

"The district will develop aggressive eradication strategies for new pests and diseases which will almost certainly enter the Central Valley," the letter adds. "A rapid response to invasive threats (e.g. Medfly, Gilli mealybug) may well prevent their establishment. This is even more important if valley airports are opened up to international travel."

The letter concludes, "The government  
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CDFA's David Elms inspects a GWSS trap in the Highway 65 area. "The funding of the Kern and Tulare County Table Grape Pest and Disease Control Districts will enable ongoing trapping and research to continue in the areas where GWSS and PD are active," says Larry Liggett, field coordinator for the GWSS Highway 65 project.  
*(Photo: Catherine Merlo)*



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programs have been an unqualified success, significantly reducing the GWSS/PD threat. However, if those programs were to disappear due to lack of grower interest and support, the very survival of the table grape industry will again be at risk.”

**Wine-grape growers’ PD/GWSS assessment.** For the statewide PD assessment, at least 40 percent of eligible wine-grape 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 as-

essment 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.

PD/GWSS wine-grape assessments now fund more than 100 research projects. This year’s wine-grape assessment level was \$2 per \$1,000 of crop value.

According to [www.savecaliforniasvineyards.com](http://www.savecaliforniasvineyards.com), a Web site supported by a coalition of wine-grape growers and vintners, the following organizations have endorsed a “yes” vote on the PD assessment referendum:

- Alexandra Valley Winegrowers
- Allied Grape Growers
- Amador Vintners Association
- California Association of Winegrape Growers
- California Farm Bureau Federation
- Central California Winegrowers
- Central Coast Wine Growers Association
- Family Winemakers of California
- Lodi District Grape Growers Association
- Napa County Farm Bureau
- Napa Valley Grapegrowers
- Napa Valley Vintners
- North Coast Grape Growers
- Paso Robles Vintners and Growers Association
- Sonoma County Grape Growers Association
- Suisun Valley Grape Growers Association
- Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association
- Wine Growers of Napa County
- Wine Institute

#### Kern County Table Grape Pest and Disease Control District Board of Directors

Eric Casterline, Sun World, International  
Paul Giboney, M. Caratan, Inc.  
Jason Kosareff, V.B.Z. Farms  
Andrew Pandol, Pandol and Sons, Inc.  
Gisela Wittenborn, Marko Zaninovich, Inc.

#### Tulare County Table Grape Pest and Disease Control District Board of Directors

Art Foster, Delano Farms  
Max Jehle, Sunview Vineyards  
Bob McCloskey, Green Valley  
Clarence Robbins, Sundale Vineyards  
Blake Ueki, Lagomarsino Farming

**“It is important that the industry educate critics and send the unequivocal message that the table-grape industry is willing to assess itself and provide leadership alongside the government agencies which are involved in the area-wide management program.”**

From a pending letter to local table grape growers from the boards of the Kern and Tulare County Table Grape Pest and Disease Control Districts