

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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CDFA's Wynn: Research is moving us toward viable PD-GWSS solutions

Ongoing research is advancing the understanding of Pierce's Disease and the glassy-winged sharpshooter, California Department of Food and Agriculture official Bob Wynn said in opening comments at the 5th annual Pierce's Disease Research Symposium last week in San Diego.

As they learn more about what works and what doesn't, researchers are better able to focus their efforts on projects more likely to result in viable solutions, Wynn said.

Wynn, who is the statewide coordinator for the Pierce's Disease Control Program, made his remarks Dec. 6 before some 200 scientists, growers and industry representatives.

The program's 100-plus research projects are like "building blocks," Wynn said, with "the bottom tiers working up to a solution."

Some are advancing knowledge, while additional studies are disproving other hypotheses.

For example, Wynn said, studies by UC-Davis researchers Andrew Walker and Alan Tenscher are making progress in developing PD-resistant wine-grape vineyard stock and in genetic mapping efforts. On the other hand, research has shown that pursuing nutrient and mineral inputs as a way to combat PD isn't effective.

"As we investigate the possibilities, we can better focus the scope of our research and invest only in those projects that may offer a solution," Wynn said.

Five years of progress. When the PD program started five years ago, neither the industry nor scientists knew much about PD or its GWSS vector, Wynn told the group. Since then, the wine-grape industry has invested \$18 million to \$20 million in PD-GWSS research through its annual crop assessment. Some \$210 million in federal and state monies have also helped fund the program.

"We need to continue the communi-

cation between those who fund the research and those who perform it," Wynn added.

The wine-grape industry voted to extend its assessment for another five years—through March 2011—in a referendum this past summer. "The 90 percent approval rate by wine-grape growers indicates not only the value to the industry of the research but also the dedication, time and leadership role of the PD/GWSS Board," Wynn said.

PD/GWSS Board thanks. Wynn thanked the PD/GWSS Board for devoting its time and efforts to recommending various research projects for funding.

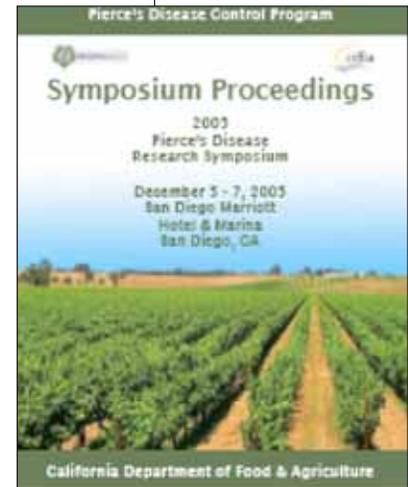
"The board is very interested in funding the right research that will lead us to a solution to the disease problem," Wynn said.

The PD/GWSS Board is made up of wine-grape growers and grower-vintners from across California. The group advises the CDFA secretary on the expenditure of assessment funds to ensure that the research is responsive to the needs of the grower community.

More than 100 research projects on PD and GWSS are being funded. They focus on: crop biology and disease epidemiology; vector biology and ecology; pathogen biology and ecology; pathogen and disease management; and vector management.

The PD-GWSS effort is a partnership of California agricultural interests, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, CDFA, county agricultural commissioners and the University of California. "It's the best public-private partnership I've ever seen in a pest prevention program," Wynn said. "It's been exemplary. It's being used as a model in other programs." ■

—Catherine Merlo



You can view and download the 410-page proceedings of the 2005 Pierce's Disease Symposium at <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/pdpc>. You can also order a copy by e-mailing Athar Tariq at atariq@cdfa.ca.gov.

PD/GWSS Board gets new leaders

Pete Downs, vice president of government affairs for Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates in Santa Rosa, is the new chair of the PD/GWSS Board. He replaces Brad Lange.

New vice chair is **Ben Drake** of Drake Enterprises, who takes the place previously held by Downs. **Jim Unti** of Constellation Wines will continue as treasurer.