

Kern/Tulare

GWSS Update



A project of the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Task Force of Kern and Tulare Counties. Participants: Agricultural Commissioner 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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State Senate approves GWSS pest control district bill

Senate Bill 633, the proposed legislation that would create pest control districts in California to combat the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) and Pierce's Disease (PD), has garnered the approval of the state Senate and has moved to the legislative consent calendar.

The bill, which passed 37-0, now heads to the state Assembly's Local Government and Agriculture committees. If approved there, the bill would move to the floor of the Assembly. It must be approved by the Assembly by Sept. 12, and signed by the governor by Oct. 12 to go into effect this year.

The bill contains an urgency clause, which means it would become law immediately if signed by the governor.

"We're very happy at the direction the bill is going," says Alex Ott, director of government relations for the Fresno-based California Grape and Tree Fruit League, which is sponsoring the bill. "We hope the bill continues to move through at its current pace."

SB 633 would assess table grape growers not more than \$15 per acre to support research and aggressive treatment projects involving GWSS and PD.

—Catherine Merlo

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—Alex Ott,
California Grape
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Tulare County treats Porterville; plans biocontrol study

For the past month, we have been applying Merit in the urban areas of Porterville. Surveys have shown a low level of GWSS in the urban ornamentals within this area. The area-wide trapping program would indicate a much higher level of GWSS in the nearby commercial citrus groves.

Our goal is to establish a program of urban treatments to compliment the expected comprehensive commercial program set to start in the near future.

Our grant proposal is in the final stages of approval. It has been reviewed by the USDA, Tulare County Counsel, and next Tuesday will be on the agenda of the Board of Supervisors. From there, it's back to the USDA for final approval. Then the money will be made available to initiate a program of treatments and reimbursement similar to the one which has been so successful in Kern County.

Biocontrol plans. Plans are underway for conducting a study of the effects of biological control (egg parasitoid) releases in an urban environment, namely Porterville. Last week, Dr. David Morgan with CDFA and Dan Bigham of our office toured the Porterville area looking for suitable release sites for this study.

The good news is that overall popula-

tions of GWSS in Porterville seem to be very low at this time. We do, of course, expect those populations to build this summer, just as they have in the past. The ultimate goal will be to suppress the build-up of GWSS through the combination of releases of parasitic wasps and pesticide treatments in and adjacent to commercial infestations.

The ¼-mile trapping grid is in place all the way to the county line with Fresno. We have finally received the last of the equipment necessary to input the data directly into the computer. A few technical issues must still be resolved before you'll see all of the northern traps posted on the Web site, but progress is being made. During this interim period, these northern traps are being read on a regular basis and no new populations of GWSS have been found.

The areas where GWSS are being found in significant numbers continue to be those adjacent to northern Porterville and the groves south of Ducor and east of Highway 65. Both areas are having visual surveys conducted by CDFA/USDA personnel to assure that they meet the previously established guidelines for treatment and reimbursement under the current area-wide management program.

—Dennis Haines, Tulare County
Agricultural Commissioner's Office