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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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Kern passes \$8-per-acre assessment for Table Grape Control District

If Paul Giboney looks happier these days, he has good reason.

Ballot counts at Tuesday morning's meeting of the Kern County Board of Supervisors showed an outcome in favor of an \$8-per-acre assessment to fund the county's Table Grape Pest and Disease Control District.

"We are very pleased and excited that the table-grape industry stepped up to the plate and supported the assessment," says Giboney, chairman of the Kern County Table Grape Pest and Disease Control District. "Now we'll be able to carry forth with the projects outlined and provide efficient service in protecting the table-grape industry."

Nearly 58 percent of eligible table-grape acreage participated in the referendum, which asked voters to approve the district's per-acre assessment level. That amounts to more than 34,400 acres. Of that, more than 77 percent voted in favor of the district assessment.

Meanwhile, a similar referendum is underway in Tulare County.

Those ballots are due to be counted Aug. 9. That referendum also asks for an assessment of \$8 per acre to fund activities for a table-grape pest and disease control district.

"If Tulare County approves its referendum, it's likely the two districts will merge under a joint powers agreement," says Giboney, ranch agronomist with Delano-based M. Caratan, Inc. "That will allow us to combine resources and have a more efficient program."

Kern County will now prepare to collect the assessment for the 2005-06 year. The assessment will be channeled through property taxes collected in November and early December.

If Tulare County growers pass their referendum and the two districts merge,



that could produce a shared budget of about \$600,000. Those funds will allow the combined districts to pursue several activities. Among them, says Giboney, will be the hiring of an executive director to handle the day-to-day business of the district. The director also will communicate with government agencies on behalf of the district, search out additional funding sources, keep the district's table-grape industry apprised of research, and alert the industry to any new pests that threaten production.

"The California Department of Agriculture has generously made us an offer of office housing at very reasonable rates at the Arvin Biocontrol Facility," Giboney says.

The assessment funds will be used to augment, not replace, the current work funded by government agencies to combat GWSS and PD.

The purpose of both control districts is to protect the table-grape industry from the glassy-winged sharpshooter, Pierce's disease and other new invasive pests that threaten production.

Joining Giboney on the Kern district board are Eric Casterline of Sun World International; Jason Kosareff of V.B.Z. Farms; Andrew Pandol of Pandol and Sons, Inc.; and Gisela Wittenborn of Marko Zaninovich, Inc.

— Catherine Merlo

Kern County's table-grape acreage owners have approved an \$8 per-acre assessment to protect their vineyards against invasive pests. (Photo: Catherine Merlo)



Kern-Tulare GWSS Update

Wine-grape assessment vote extended to July 14

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) earlier this month extended the deadline for a wine-grape growers' referendum.

CDFA extended the deadline by 30 days to July 14 and is sending additional ballots to growers that have not returned ballots.

The referendum will decide whether to continue the Pierce's disease (PD) assessment that funds research aimed at proactively addressing the threat posed by PD and the glassy-winged sharpshooter.

As of June 22, 42.3 percent of the ballots have been returned. That exceeds the 40 percent required to validate the referendum.

For more information on the wine-grape assessment and referendum, visit www.saveCaliforniasvineyards.com.



California wine-grape growers have until July 14 to vote on whether to continue the PD assessment. (Photo: Temecula Valley Winegrape Growers Association)

PD Research Symposium set for Dec. 5-7

The 2005 Pierce's Disease Research Symposium will be held December 5-7, 2005, at the Marriott San Diego Hotel and Marina in San Diego, Calif.

For more information, contact Athar Tariq at (916) 322-2804 or atarig@cdfa.ca.gov.

Temecula Valley citrus acreage treated for GWSS

Some 630 acres of Temecula Valley citrus will need treatment to suppress sharpshooter populations, reports the Temecula Area-wide Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Program.

As of June 13, 210 acres of citrus had been treated with Admire.

Treatments in organically grown citrus were initiated June 22. PyGanic, a botanical insecticide with a 1.4 percent active ingredient of pyrethrin, is being used in organic orchards.

About 500 acre of citrus will be treated with Admire and 130 acres with PyGanic.

Total Temecula GWSS catch per week for 2005

