

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's citrus harvest reveals no GWSS movement so far this season

GWSS numbers have risen in General Beale Pilot Project

Kern County's harvest of its 43,000 citrus acres has moved into full swing, with no truckloads of the fruit being rejected for the presence of glassy-winged sharpshooters (GWSS) so far.

"We've been harvesting for over a month and, to date, there has been no movement of GWSS," says Jack Marks, Kern County's deputy agricultural commissioner.

That doesn't surprise Beth Stone-Smith, USDA's new GWSS program director.

"Overall, GWSS numbers have been real low this year because we've done a lot of treatments in Kern County in past years under area-wide management programs," Stone-Smith says.

Some 4,270 acres of Kern County citrus were authorized for treatment against GWSS this season, according to Darin Heard, agricultural biologist with the Kern County Agricultural Commissioner's Office

who works closely with the bulk grape and citrus movement programs.

Kern County's highest GWSS numbers this season were seen in the General Beale Road Pilot Project, south-east of Bakersfield. In 2001, the pilot program, a 13,000-acre diversified cropping area, was the site of the area's first coordinated management effort

against the sharpshooter. No area-wide GWSS treatments have been made in the project area since 2001. That year's treatments successfully reduced GWSS numbers

(continued on page 2)



A worker picks navel oranges in a fog-shrouded orchard near Bakersfield. (Photo: Catherine Merlo)

USDA names Stone-Smith new GWSS program director



New GWSS Program Director Beth Stone-Smith

Beth Stone-Smith, an entomologist who worked alongside USDA's Lloyd Wendel for three years in the GWSS Area-wide Management Program, has been named GWSS Program Director for the Western Region.

Stone-Smith replaces Wendel, who retired from USDA Oct. 1.

From her Bakersfield office on Vineland Road, she will oversee the allocation of GWSS funds and make management decisions for the four California counties that participate in area-wide management programs against the sharpshooter. They are Kern,

Tulare, Riverside and Ventura Counties.

"USDA is trying to make as seamless a transition as possible but Lloyd Wendel is impossible to replace," says Stone-Smith, a native of Minnesota. "We're trying to make the best team approach we can to get everything in the program taken care of."

USDA scientist Matt Ciomperlik, who worked closely with the General Beale Pilot Program in 2001, will assist Stone-Smith on a consulting basis. "He'll be helping with the scientific side of the program," she says.

Stone-Smith joined USDA's APHIS division in 2001, starting under Wendel in Kern County's General Beale Pilot Project Program. She holds a master's degree in entomology from Kansas State University and a bachelor's degree in biology from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn. ■



Kern-Tulare GWSS Update

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(continued from page 1)

from as many as 500 sharpshooters per trap before the program to one or less.

"This year's numbers were nowhere near those in 2000, but we did see as many as 25 GWSS per trap," Stone-Smith says.

She believes the major hosts of GWSS in 2004 were windbreaks in the pilot project area that help protect crops from the strong winds that blow down from the nearby Tehachapi Mountains. Those windbreaks consist of eucalyptus, beefwood and jojoba trees.

"We've always had trouble treating those windbreaks because they're so tall," she says. "They also require a special application label because they're considered ornamentals."

That special label increases the cost of treatment materials and application. Further, one section of windbreaks has never been treated because it's located beside Highway 58, where normal application measures cannot be used.

NAS releases final report on California's PD efforts

The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released its final report Oct. 28 on California's research priorities for Pierce's disease (PD).

The report can be viewed and purchased at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11060.html>.

The state PD/GWSS Board commissioned the report. A PD/GWSS Board subcommittee reviewed preliminary draft and delivered its response to the full board Nov. 1. The subcommittee noted that the NAS report found that, overall, "past and current investments in PD/GWSS research have been properly targeted."

The NAS report was produced by a 12-member committee of experts who, during the 18-month project, used refereed published literature and meeting with stakeholders to develop its report on research strategies and priorities.

According to the National Academies Press Web site, the report recommends strengthening the process and the priorities for research funded by state agencies and wine industry groups to address PD and its vector. Research should be focused on

The windbreaks will be watched to see if this year's application have any effect. If not, Stone-Smith says, they'll have to work toward better treatment methods.

Kern's citrus harvest is about 30-40 percent completed. No changes in regulations governing the movement of citrus loads to non-GWSS infested areas have been announced this year. Kern County ships roughly 43,000 truckloads of oranges, lemons, tangerines and grapefruit each year, or about one load per acre. Citrus ranks No. 3 among Kern County's crops.

Like the citrus harvest, the county also experienced a smooth grape harvest. No GWSS were found among the county's approximately 10,000 loads of bulk grapes originating in Kern's GWSS-infested zone during either 2004 or 2003.



So far this season, no citrus loads from Kern County have been rejected for GWSS. (Photo: Catherine Merlo)

Annual PD Symposium set for Dec. 7-10

The 2004 Pierce's Disease Research Symposium will be held Dec. 7-10, 2004, at the Coronado Island Marriott Resort in Coronado, Calif. For more information, go to <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/phpps/pdcp/>.

identifying feasible options for controlling the spread of the disease and providing sustainable approaches that are adaptable and affordable over the long term.

The Web site's report description also says several avenues of research should be pursued more intensely, including the genetic makeup of the pathogen that triggers PD, understanding the mechanisms that make grapes resistant to the disease, the possibilities of introducing predator enemies to the sharpshooter, and new ways to manage the planting of crops to help avoid spread of the disease.

The PD/GWSS subcommittee noted the report "provided very good information on a very complex, dynamic, and challenging subject area." It added that the report can be used as a guidance document to help direct the future investment of research dollars on PD/GWSS toward where they will do the most good.

"The subcommittee is optimistic that, given time and adequate resources, solutions to the PD/GWSS problem will be developed," it reported.

