

# 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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## Nancy Irelan: Former Gallo scientist oversees PD-GWSS research

Nancy Irelan will have her hands full over the next year.

Irelan is the new research director for the Pierce's Disease/Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board, which is administered by California's Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

Still getting her bearings since coming on board July 1, Irelan will provide strategic oversight of the Board's research program, which includes 120 research projects.

Irelan will spend significant time away from her New York base visiting research communities around the country. "I'll be working one on one with researchers to get a feel for where their research is going and its outcomes," says Irelan, who has a doctorate in genetics from the University of California, Davis.

**No. 1 priority.** First and foremost on her list is a program assessment of the PD/GWSS program. Irelan will review the program's efficiency and productivity.

"We will look at what's been done since the publication of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report and where we need to be in the next four years," Irelan says.

The NAS report, released in late 2004, recommended strengthening the process and priorities for research funded by state agencies and wine industry groups to address PD and GWSS. Commissioned by California's PD/GWSS Board, the NAS report was produced by a 12-member committee of experts over an 18-month period.

In addition, Irelan will initiate a strategic plan for the program, manage active projects and oversee the on-



going search for new research avenues and opportunities.

Irelan, an independent contractor with a one-year tenure, says it's still too early for her to determine the program's strengths and weaknesses or whether it has adequate funding.

"I look forward to working closely with the CDFA, and our industry and research partners to achieve our program goals of finding a timely and sustainable solution to Pierce's disease," Irelan says.

**"Exactly what we need."** Irelan comes to the new research position with an 18-year background in the wine and wine-grape industries.

"Nancy brings valuable experience to the effort with her abilities to build coalitions, understand the complex scientific research and convey the importance of that research to the rank and file members of the industry," says Pete Downs, PD/GWSS Board chairman.

"Her scientific background and communication skills are exactly what we need at this time

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*New PD/GWSS Board research director Nancy Irelan at her vineyard in northern New York State. She plans to work with the board and CDFA to establish an independent scientific panel "to provide an independent, objective perspective and breadth of scientific disciplines needed to thoroughly assess the research now underway," she says.*

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Nancy Irelan



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in the battle to control, understand and combat this potentially devastating disease.”

Before accepting the new post, Irelan spent 12 years with Ernest & Julio Gallo Winery in Modesto, Calif. Her roles there included vice president of enology and viticulture technology, senior director and director of life sciences, research leader for genetics, and senior research scientist for technology.

Irelan is affiliated with 11 industry organizations, including the National Grape and Wine Initiative; the Viticulture Consortium, American Viticulture and Enology Research Network; and the Australian Society of Viticulture and Oenology. She also holds three patents and has co-published seven scientific research papers related to the wine industry.

In addition to her new duties, Irelan is the owner of The Answer Grape, a technical consulting company. She also is a partner in Rogue Vineyards and president of Red Tail Ridge Winery, all located in Penn Yan, N.Y. She is also an adjunct professor in the department of food science and technology at Cornell University's New York Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, N.Y.

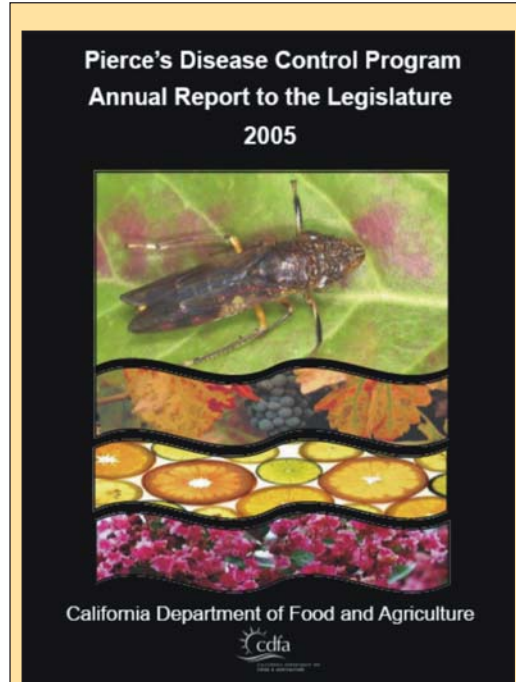
Irelan earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Glassboro State College. Her doctorate focused on grape molecular biology and traditional breeding.

The PD/GWSS Board was established in July 2001 to support scientific research to find a cure for Pierce's disease. An annual assessment paid by wine-grape growers supports its research efforts. The PD/GWSS Board also advises CDFA on a variety of other issues pertaining to PD and GWSS. ■

### PD/GWSS Board launches online forum

The PD/GWSS Board has established an Internet forum, <http://www.pdgwss.net/>, to improve lines of communications between all those involved in the ongoing battle against Pierce's disease and the Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter.

From researchers in the lab, to wine-grape growers in their vineyards, communications has and will continue to play a ma-



### 2005 PD-GWSS Report to Legislature released

The California Department of Food and Agriculture has released its Pierce's Disease Control Program Annual Report to the Legislature for 2005.

“The fight against Pierce's disease is going well, but it is far from over,” reports CDFA Secretary A.G. Kawamura. “Perseverance is the key, and California's growers, researchers and officials are fully prepared to stay the course.”

The 26-page document can be found at <http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/phpps/pdcp/>.

major role in finding a solution to this threat, says the board.

It's asking PD-GWSS stakeholders “to use this forum to get help and to help others who all share a common bond in hoping that one day in the not too distant future Pierce's disease no longer poses the threat it does today.”

### Around the state . . .

● **Renee Reid** is the new program supervisor for Orange County's PD/GWSS Program. She replaces recent retiree Jim Wynn.

● Monterey County deputy agricultural commissioner **Teo Gonzalez** has been transferred from the Pajaro office to department headquarters in Salinas and will head the county's GWSS Program.

### PD Research Symposium set for Nov. 27-29

The 2006 Pierce's Disease Research Symposium will be held Nov. 27-29 at the Westin Horton Plaza in San Diego. (That's a different hotel from last year's site.)

Deadline for hotel reservations as well as early registration is Oct. 28. Online and mail-in registration ends Nov. 17.

Learn more at [www.cdffa.ca.gov/phpps/pdcp/ResearchSymposium/gw2006symp.htm](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/phpps/pdcp/ResearchSymposium/gw2006symp.htm).