

Sept. 15, 2006

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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More participants sought for GWSS nursery treatment program

Encouraged by the success of its nursery treatment pilot project for the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS), the California Department of Food and Agriculture wants to add more participants to the program.

"We're looking for a few more counties and nurseries to get involved," says CDFA's Greg Morris, program supervisor. "But not every nursery can get in."

Morris and his CDFA colleagues want to expand the 15-month-old pilot project that uses a single chemical treatment on GWSS-infested nursery plants. The treat-



Nursery plants in CDFA's pilot project are encased in mesh sleeves after a one-time chemical treatment for GWSS.

ment kills sharpshooter nymphs when they emerge from GWSS egg masses attached to plant leaves.

Morris says the chemical treatment is "one of our tools" in California's six-year fight against GWSS. "GWSS have been 100-percent dead after the treatments," he says.

Nurseries hope the chemical treatment, combined with the pilot project's strict protocols, will ease their high GWSS inspection costs and give them more flexibility in storing and moving plant stock.

As part of the "Contain the Spread" program, nursery and county personnel must visually inspect plant material for the sharpshooter to ensure the pest isn't shipped out of the state's designated "GWSS-infested" areas.

High standards. Although Morris says he'd like to bring on new participants as soon as possible, standards are high for those accepted into the pilot project. "We look at their pest control operations, their history as a shipper," Morris says. "We want only the best. We want to make sure our stakeholders are comfortable."

Nurseries interested in participating in the project should contact their county agricultural commissioner's office. Those names will be submitted by the originating county's agricultural commissioner to Morris' depart-

On board with the GWSS nursery pilot project

With its Robert Mondavi winery, San Joaquin County has much at stake in the GWSS fight

San Joaquin County Agricultural Commissioner Scott Hudson likes what he's seen with CDFA's nursery treatment pilot project. No GWSS nymphs have emerged on pilot project plants reaching the Northern California county.

Along with Jim Allan, the county's deputy ag commissioner and GWSS program supervisor, Hudson believes "the more good data we get, the more we'll learn."

San Joaquin County and Sacramento County are the pilot project's two receiving counties for nursery shipments. Two shipping nurseries, one with headquarters in Los Angeles County and the other in Riverside County, also participate in the program.

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PD Research Symposium slated 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.cdca.ca.gov/phtps/pdcp/ResearchSymposium/gw2006symp.htm.

Special thanks

A special thanks to the California Table Grape Commission for its support of this newsletter.

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More participants sought for GWSS nursery program *(continued from page 1)*

ment. He and destination-county ag commissioners then will decide whether or not to accept the applicant.

"Both the originating and receiving counties have to feel comfortable with the nursery being part of the project," Morris says.

He cautioned that potential participants, whether they're plant nurseries, wholesalers or retailers, must have adequate space to hold the plants for the 14-day post-treatment observation period. Each involved county must also have enough personnel to handle the pilot project's stringent monitoring protocols.

CDFA made two changes in the pilot project's protocol this spring. It boosted the number of allowable GWSS egg masses per plant from 10 to 40. It also waived the requirement that both shipper and receiver had to be part of the same company.

Fewer shipment rejections. Since January 2006, the project has seen 46 shipments bearing 180 GWSS egg masses

reach their San Joaquin and Sacramento county destinations. Morris says 37 of those, with 126 egg masses, had been released from observation after the egg masses were deemed no longer viable. Nine recent shipments are still in the observation mode.

The pilot project's 46 loads are a small part of the state's regular 51,566 nursery stock shipments so far this year. To date, 39 have been rejected for the presence of GWSS. Last year, CDFA counted 53,159 shipments but 74 rejections. "We've cut the rejections almost in half," says Morris.

— Catherine Merlo



Nurseries hope the chemical treatment, combined with the pilot project's strict protocols, will ease their high GWSS inspection costs and give them more flexibility in storing and moving plant stock.

San Joaquin County: On board with the GWSS nursery pilot project *(continued from page 1)*

"We were a logical participant in the project because we have large nurseries here that are based in Southern California and we have a major grape-growing industry," says Hudson.

In addition to its 1,200 acres of nursery production, San Joaquin County has 85,000 acres of vineyards and a grape industry valued at \$190 million. Its numerous wineries include Robert Mondavi's Woodbridge Winery near Lodi.

"There were a lot of questions asked by the wine industry when this pilot project was first brought up," Hudson says. "But at the end of the day, the local industry supported it."

GWSS poses a danger to vineyards because the sharpshooter transmits a bacterium to grape vines that results in Pierce's Disease, which kills the plants and has no cure.

San Joaquin County has received 40 shipments under the pilot project since January. In all, between 2,500 and 3,000 nursery shipments arrive in the county each year from California's GWSS-in-

festated counties, says Allan.

Hudson says he and the nine staff members working in San Joaquin County's GWSS program have made three observations under the pilot project.

They've noticed that any nymphs that do emerge from sharpshooter egg masses die immediately. They've also seen that a high number of the GWSS egg masses are parasitized. That means parasitic wasps, which are GWSS' natural enemies, have laid their eggs in the sharpshooter egg masses. The developing wasps later kill the host eggs.

"We've also noticed that a number of cells among the egg masses never hatch," says Hudson. "We have no idea why."

"We will continue participating in the pilot project," he adds. "We're learning a lot and willing to do anything we can to contribute to the GWSS program."

No GWSS have been found in San Joaquin County outside of a nursery setting since 1999, Hudson says, when a lone adult was trapped in an apple orchard near a nursery. ■

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Scott Hudson
agricultural
commissioner,
San Joaquin County