

Sept. 19, 2003

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).

GWSS biocontrol control program remains active

Biological control remains an active component of California's efforts to solve problems caused by the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) and Pierce's disease (PD).

In addition to producing and releasing biological control agents, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has continued to invest in facilities and research supporting biological control.

Dr. David Morgan, a CDFA environmental research scientist who heads GWSS biocontrol programs in Riverside and Bakersfield, reports that continuing biocontrol efforts include:

Facility improvements – Renovations are nearing completion at the Mount Rubidoux Field Station in Riverside. A new greenhouse also has been constructed nearby on University of California grounds and is in full operation. The Riverside facility produces GWSS biological control agents for release in the six southernmost counties of California.

The Oswell Street Biological Control Facility in Bakersfield is responsible for GWSS biological control in counties north of Los Angeles. It recently initiated releases in Tulare County. CDFA is investigating options for purchasing a permanent biological control production facility in the Bakersfield area.

Biocontrol agent production systems – In Bakersfield and Riverside, researchers raise four species of biological control agents. These are *Gonatocerus triguttatus* and *G. fasciatus*, both new to California, and *G. ashmeadi* and *G. morrilli*,

considered native to the Golden State. To produce these agents, CDFA rears GWSS and the host plants on which the pest feeds. The GWSS colonies produce eggs that are, in turn, used to produce wasps. The wasps lay their eggs inside GWSS eggs, killing them as the wasps develop. Once the wasps emerge, they are collected and then released throughout the area affected by GWSS.

Biocontrol agent releases – The number of natural enemies released each year has increased. Of the nearly 800,000 parasitic wasps released since 2000, almost 370,000 were released in the first eight months of 2003. Releases continue in all eight GWSS-infested counties of California.

Ventura and Kern lead in biocontrol agent releases.

"Releases are made primarily in citrus and in urban areas close to threatened resources, such as grapes and nurseries," Morgan says.

Recoveries – The program regularly monitors field parasitism rates. So far, Morgan and his associates have recovered more than 70 egg masses parasitized by *G. triguttatus* and *G. fasciatus*.

Exploration, quarantine and screening – The search continues for more and potentially better biocontrol agents. Researchers are traveling outside of California and the United States to find parasitoids adapted to climates similar to California's. ■

For more information, contact Morgan at dmorgan@cdfa.ca.gov.

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Web sites:

- [www.co.kern.ca.us/
kernag/](http://www.co.kern.ca.us/kernag/)
- [http://cekern.
ucdavis.edu/
Custom_Program444/](http://cekern.ucdavis.edu/Custom_Program444/)

GWSS-citrus meetings planned

The Citrus Research Board is hosting a series of meetings on GWSS for citrus growers and packers. The meetings will cover compliance agreements and the area-wide management program for the 2003-04 season.

All meetings run from 9 a.m. to 12 noon:

• **Monday, Sept. 29 - Bakersfield**

Kern County Ag Commissioner's Office
1031 S. Mt. Vernon Ave.

• **Tuesday, Sept. 30 - Exeter**

Exeter Veterans Memorial Building
324 N. Kaweah Ave.

• **Friday, Oct. 3 - Santa Paula**

Santa Paula Community Center
530 W. Main St.

• **Monday, Oct. 6 - Indio**

Indian Palms Country Club Meeting Room
48630 Monroe St.

For more information, contact the Citrus Research Board at (559) 738-0246.