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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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## Goodbye to GWSS leader: USDA's Lloyd Wendel to retire Oct. 1

Dr. Lloyd Wendel, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) scientist credited with uniting California's grape, citrus and other industries in a common front against the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) and Pierce's disease (PD), will retire from the federal agency Oct. 1.

Wendel was honored at a Sept. 15 meeting of the GWSS Task Force of Kern and Tulare Counties in Bakersfield. Representatives of USDA, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the Kern and Tulare Agricultural Commissioners' Offices joined growers and industry members in thanking Wendel for his four-year leadership of California's GWSS area-wide management program.

CDFA's Jerry Campbell presented Wendel with a plaque signed by CDFA Secretary A.G. Kawamura. It read, "Your leadership in quickly developing and implementing effective area-wide pilot programs in the state's GWSS-infested agricultural areas provided affected growers with the hope and protection they so vitally needed against a seemingly unstoppable pest. Thanks to your efforts, production of grapes and other key commodities remains viable in these areas, protecting the state's economy and the livelihood of many of its residents."

The GWSS Task Force of Kern and Tulare Counties also paid tribute to Wendel with a certificate that acknowledged his "foresight, innovative thinking, problem solving and practical sense" in approaching the "complex problem" of managing and suppressing GWSS.

"For your efforts above and beyond your assigned duties in combating PD and GWSS throughout California," the certificate said, "we, the members of the Kern-Tulare GWSS Task Force recognize and thank you for being the driving force behind the successful GWSS area-wide management program and your dedication to the growers in both counties."

On Sept. 14, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors also honored Wendel with a



Lloyd Wendel holds his plaque from CDFA and Secretary A.G. Kawamura. (Photo: Catherine Merlo)

resolution acknowledging and thanking him for his outstanding work.

**Meeting the challenge.** As USDA's new GWSS Program Director with a 20-year track record in area-wide management of insects and weed pests, Wendel began his battle against the sharpshooter in 2000 with the General Beale Road Pilot Project south-east of Bakersfield.

Bringing together growers, CDFA, USDA and the Kern Agricultural Commissioner's Office, and working with industry and government funds, Wendel directed efforts that sent sharpshooter populations plummeting in the pilot program's first year.

The success of those efforts led to requests for an area-wide management program that expanded across Kern County, and later to adjoining Tulare and Ventura Counties.

"The challenge was greater than I initially thought," says Wendel, who joined USDA in 1977. "But it was minimized by many good people coming together to work on the project — people who are now in place to continue to deliver the program to growers."

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**"Your leadership in quickly developing and implementing effective area-wide pilot programs in the state's GWSS-infested agricultural areas provided affected growers with the hope and protection they so vitally needed against a seemingly unstoppable pest."**

—CDFA Secretary A.G. Kawamura, from a plaque honoring Lloyd Wendel



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With Wendel as its group leader, the Co-operative GWSS Area-wide Management Team earned The Secretary's Honor Award in June 2003. The award is the most prestigious accolade within USDA. Its APHIS Division earned the award for participating in a cooperative multi-agency team resulting in the development and implementation of area-wide pest management strategies against GWSS in California. The award was presented under the category of maintaining and enhancing the nation's natural resources and environment.

**Looking ahead.** Wendel will return to his family's cattle ranch in the Texas hill country for a couple of months before deciding what comes next. "I want to look back and see where my strengths have been," he says. "I really enjoy putting together the resources and money to develop programs that impact growers in a positive way. If there are opportunities



out there where I can fit in, I would like that."

No replacement has yet been named for Wendel. USDA is advertising to fill his position.

Wendel holds a doctorate and a master's degree from Texas A & M and a bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University. All three degrees are in entomology. He also served in the U.S. Air Force from 1969-72.

—Catherine Merlo

CDFA's Jerry Campbell (left) presents a plaque to Lloyd Wendel at the Sept. 15 meeting of the GWSS Task Force of Kern and Tulare Counties. (Photo: Catherine Merlo)

### Tributes to Lloyd Wendel

*"When we began the PD/GWSS program in late 1999, we searched the world for the person to handle it. Lloyd Wendel was that person, with an exemplary track record with USDA, scientific expertise, technical experience and the ability to deal effectively with government agencies and growers that would comprise the PD/GWSS partnership. With Lloyd, we knew the program was in good hands — and the rest is history. The program has been a tremendous success."*

— Bob Wynn, California Statewide Coordinator, Pierce's Disease Control Program

*"We use an expression at our office when describing an unusually talented person. We call them 'good-uns.' Dr. Lloyd Wendel is not only a 'good-un,' he's one of the best."*

— Gary Kunkel, Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner, to Tulare County's Board of Supervisors, Sept. 14, 2004

*"Words seem almost inadequate to express what Lloyd has done for Kern County and, for that matter, California agriculture in battling the GWSS. I will truly miss working with Lloyd, but I am grateful to have been able to work alongside him."*

— Ted Davis, Kern County Agricultural Commissioner

*"What a debt of gratitude the grape industry, no, the entire ag industry, owes Lloyd Wendel for his service over the last few years. He was perfect for the crisis we were faced with. He had all the tools necessary to deal with that crisis: intelligence, strength of character, proper disposition and the fortitude to do whatever necessary to get the job done. All of us are better off because we had the opportunity to work with, and become friends with, Lloyd Wendel. He will be greatly missed."*

— Kevin Andrew, Sun World senior vice president and PD Advisory Task Force chair

*"I tremendously appreciate the great job Lloyd Wendel did in getting GWSS under control. He worked very hard on funding and on organizing state, federal and local agencies as well as farming organizations in an unprecedented effort. It's mostly to his credit that all those pulled together and we were as successful as we were. He was the pivotal leader and without him, it wouldn't have happened as successfully as it did."*

— Jack Pandol, grape grower, GWSS Task Force of Kern and Tulare Counties

*"We were very fortunate to have had a leader like Lloyd Wendel working on the GWSS program. Through his efforts and vision, the GWSS area-wide program has become a model of success."*

— Don Luvisi, UCCE Farm Advisor, Emeritus

### GWSS Update goes biweekly

Beginning this week, GWSS Update will be published every other week instead of weekly.