

Nov. 4, 2004

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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## Ventura County wraps up GWSS treatment season

The season for treating glassy-winged sharpshooters (GWSS) ended recently in Ventura County, just in time to miss the majority of rain that hit the area during the first half of October.

Ventura County received 6 inches of rainfall in October, well ahead of normal. But the precipitation caused few interruptions in treating area citrus groves for the sharpshooter.

"We were wrapping up anyway," says Alan Laird, deputy agricultural commissioner.

Laird says Ventura County didn't receive any rain last year until early November. The rainy season begins Oct. 1 each year.

The county's GWSS management program this year treated 12,500 acres of citrus. Most of that has been lemons, which are shipped year-round from Ventura County. Citrus growers received \$1.6 million in treatment reimbursements through a federal program. About half of the treatments were made with Admire®, the other half with Assail®.

Laird says Ventura County saw higher-than-normal counts of GWSS this summer, as did the San Joaquin and Temecula Valleys.

"We saw a few hot spots of 50 GWSS per trap per week in state monitoring traps in August," Laird says.

Like others, Laird believes warmer



temperatures this summer led to higher sharpshooter populations.

**Nursery program progresses smoothly.** Under state funding, about 12 Ventura County plant nurseries participated this year in a one-time program to treat stock destined for non-infested areas. The GWSS treatments totaled about \$125,000, and included the use of materials Marathon®, Tame® and TriStar®.

Nursery shipments leaving the county fared well, Laird says. Only one rejection for GWSS was reported in October, with only two each in September and August. That's out of about 100,00 flats and containers per month from 25-30 nurseries. The program is designed to contain the spread of GWSS on nursery plants shipped from Ventura County to non-infested areas.

— Catherine Merlo

*Higher-than-normal GWSS counts were seen in Ventura's County's citrus groves this summer. Growers treated 12,500 acres of mostly lemon trees. (Photo: Rosie Lerner, Purdue University)*

## Special thanks

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

## Referendum offers wine-grape growers chance to reaffirm commitment to battle PD

With the Governor's signing of SB 1650, wine-grape growers have an opportunity to reaffirm their continued commitment to helping solve the threat posed by the glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS) and Pierce's Disease (PD).

Previous legislation established a wine-grape assessment to fund research at the direction of the PD/GWSS Board, which is made up of leaders from the wine-grape

industry. The legislation was set to expire in 2006 but is now extended to 2011 with the signing of SB 1650, provided growers vote to continue the assessment in an upcoming referendum.

The referendum will require 40 percent of all wine-grape growers who paid the PD/GWSS wine-grape assessment in 2004 to cast ballots. Of those voting, 65 percent

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## Kern-Tulare GWSS Update

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must vote in the affirmative for the referendum to pass. No date has been slated, but expectations are for the vote to be held sometime between May and July of 2005.

"This assessment has allowed wine-grape growers to leverage their monies tenfold to help in fighting and containing the GWSS and in finding a cure for PD," said Ben R. Drake, chairman of the California Association of Winegrape Growers and one of the industry leaders who spearheaded this and the original legislation.

"Containment and control are still issues being faced today, and until growers are assured that the threat is over, this program is vital in the quest to find a long-term, environmentally friendly solution to PD," says Dana Merrill, PD/GWSS Board member and owner of Mesa Vineyard Management.

The assessment raises approximately \$4 million annually for research, and has funded nearly 100 research projects to date. In addition, those monies leverage substantial additional funding from other sources to underwrite a wide variety of programs ranging from inspections to treatment.

"These other appropriations that have flowed into the fight against PD/GWSS underscore the important contribution that the wine-grape community has made through the assessment," said Merrill.

Legislators charged with approving additional funds have commented on the posi-

tive influence of the industry's financial support, indicating that the growers are taking this fight seriously and deserve the government's help.

**Next steps.** Now that Governor Schwarzenegger has signed SB 1650, the following actions will be set in motion:

- CDFA will establish a list of growers who are eligible to vote in the referendum. That list will be based on who paid the assessment on grapes crushed in the immediately preceding season.

- Any producer or grower will have an opportunity to add their name to the list by identifying themselves as a paid producer and filing with CDFA.

- Voting will take place once CDFA has confirmed the validity of the list and determined an appropriate date.

For several years now, grape growers have been dealing with the threat of the GWSS. The PD bacterium, spread by the GWSS, clogs the crop's water-conducting vessels, interfering with their ability to draw water and other nutrients from the soil. GWSS is known to feed on more than 100 plant species found in urban and rural landscapes, with the potential to increase both the incidence and severity of PD in California.

Counting only grapes, the disease now threatens a crop production value of \$3.2 billion, with an associated economic impact in excess of \$45 billion.



Downs is vice president of government affairs with Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates in Santa Rosa, Calif.

At the meeting, Kawamura presented a plaque to Steinhauer and thanked him for his leadership and service to the board.

Steinhauer will continue to serve on the board but not as an officer.

The 15-member board, made up of growers and processors from California's major grape growing regions, is responsible for making program and research funding recommendations to CDFA.

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Ben R. Drake,  
chairman of the  
California  
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Winegrape Growers

### 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.cdca.ca.gov/phpps/pdcp/>.

### PD/GWSS Board selects new officers

At its meeting Nov. 1 in Sacramento, the Pierce's Disease/Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board voted to recommend wine-grape grower Brad Lange as chairman and Pete Downs as new vice chairman.

Lange, co-owner of Lange Twins Inc. in Acampo, Calif., and the board's former vice chairman, will replace Bob Steinhauer. The board's officer recommendations must now be approved by the California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary, A.G. Kawamura.

Jim Unti, director and vice president for grower relations with Canandaigua Wine Company in Madera, Calif., will remain the board's treasurer.