

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

It's been nearly four years since the Asian citrus psyllid was first trapped in commercial groves in Ventura County. Since December 2010, when those first isolated finds occurred in Santa Paula and La Conchita, much has changed in California's citrus regions.

The bug exploded across Southern California, overwhelming efforts to stamp it out or hold it at bay. It surged into the

San Joaquin Valley, home to most of the state's commercial citrus production. And most recently, it has even established a beachhead in urban San Jose – far from commercial citrus and the Southern California epicenter of the infestation, but home to a large immigrant population with close ties to the part of the globe known to harbor both the bug and the deadly bacterial disease it transmits.

Here in Ventura County, those early trap detections were followed over the next year and a half by a few other scattered ACP finds – commercial groves in Santa Paula, Moorpark, Somis – and then with increasing frequency in the suburban landscape of Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley. In March 2013, the pace of urban detections had increased to the point that the state, recognizing it was burning through

program resources at an unsustainable rate, suspended urban pesticide applications throughout Southern California except within 1.5 miles of commercial groves.

It was a watershed moment, official acknowledgement that the effort to stop the bug had failed, and that the only reasonable course going forward was trying to keep the population as low as possible. With the entire region to our south generally infested, the new goal was suppression, intended to minimize the chance that the insect vector would locate the disease – Huanglongbing

– in an infected tree and begin to spread it.

As 2014 draws to a close, Ventura County has reached its own watershed moment. For four years, individual ACP detections here have triggered an aggressive eradication-style response, with coordinated pesticide applications in commercial groves within 800 meters of the find site, executed in conjunction with urban buffer treatments. This strategy has been largely effective in knocking the ACP population down to undetectable levels.

But in the eastern end of the Santa Clara Valley – particularly the area around Fillmore, Piru and Bardsdale – that's no longer true. That area has become generally infested as well, and so the eradication treatments there have been suspended. Instead, as detailed in the August issue of this newsletter, the industry will begin employing a strategy known as Area-Wide Management (AWM). Instead of responding to individual trap detections, growers will conduct coordinated treatments in their groves across broad areas, in a narrow time-frame and on a regular schedule. Elsewhere, the eradication strategy will remain in place, at least for now.

As this newsletter went to press, Farm Bureau and the Ventura county ACP-HLB Task Force were planning a workshop for local growers, pest-control advisers, pest-control operators and packinghouse representatives to learn more about AWM and the plan that is being developed for psyllid Management Areas (PMAs) in the eastern Santa Clara Valley. The workshop will be from 9:30 to 11:45 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 5, at the Courtyard by Marriott, 600 E. Esplanade Drive, Oxnard. Admission is free, but please RSVP by calling (805) 289-0155 or emailing taskforce@farmbureauvc.com no later than Monday, Dec. 1.

There's still an important role for urban residents to play in the fight. Much of the remainder of the county continues to see good success with the eradication effort, and owners of landscape citrus can help maximize the effectiveness of that program by cooperating with the treatment protocols. And even as additional parts of the county transition to AWM, urban cooperation within a 400-meter buffer around commercial groves will improve the efficacy of the program.

Everyone involved in the battle against this devastating pest-disease complex knew this day would come. But that doesn't lessen our dismay at its arrival. And it serves as incentive to redouble our efforts to save our citrus, our industry, our landscape and our heritage.

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**Farm Bureau/ACB-HLB Task Force
Psyllid Management Workshop
Friday, December 5, 9:30-11:45 am
Courtyard by Marriott
600 Esplanade Drive, Oxnard
RSVP by December 3
(805) 289-0155 or
taskforce@farmbureauvc.com**

What's Inside?

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Ventura to host international strawberry conference

By Oleg Daugovich

Even in the middle of winter, Ventura is a very attractive destination, especially if you're coming from Canada or Northern Europe. For more than 400 participants with an interest in strawberries, a visit to our beautiful county in the middle of fresh-market production season is a special draw.

Between Feb. 3 and Feb. 6, 2015, we will be hosting a combined meeting of scientists, researchers, growers and strawberry industry representatives from North America and other continents at Ventura Crowne Plaza Hotel. The planning committee received more than 60 presentations on all topics related to strawberries. Even though it is a

North American meeting, we expect nearly a third of attendees to come from overseas.

We will hear about production in EU countries and how they cope with lack of fumigants while facing the same pest issues we have in California, updates from breeding programs in the U.S. and Japan, soil disinfection methods used in Mexico and California, and plant propagation in Brazil. There will be discussions about field and greenhouse production in substrates and in disinfested soils.

The subject areas will range from current research on strawberry genetics and molecular biology methods used by strawberry breeders to applied field-scale and post-har-

vest crop production research.

Along with oral and poster presentations we will have at least six round-table discussions/workshops on some of the most important topics, such as efficacy of fumigants and non-fumigant production, water and nutrient management, and pesticide resistance. They are designed as open discussions intending to align research work with industry needs and evaluate future directions in strawberry-related work.

The program concludes with a tour with stops at conventional and organic fields and research trials. Between the program reception and the tour-ending social, there will be many opportunities to for interaction and networking. So mark those days on your calendar. For more information and registration visit <http://www.nasga.org/>.

It is a great opportunity for us in Ventura County to be good hosts and make connections with visiting strawberry folks that will hopefully last long after the event is over.

— Oleg Daugovich is a UC Cooperative Extension farm advisor in Ventura, specializing in strawberries and vegetable crops. Contact him at odaugovich@ucanr.edu.

Use caution when working with a ladder

By Mike Burns

When used properly, a well-maintained ladder is an indispensable tool for a variety of "elevated" jobs on the farm or ranch—anything from harvesting or pruning trees to repairing the roof of the farm shop.

But ladders can pose a serious danger if they are not properly used and maintained. In the United States, falls are the third-leading cause of worker deaths, and half of these deaths resulted from falls from ladders. Sometimes a faulty ladder was to blame, sometimes the ladder wasn't set up properly, and at other times the ladder was used improperly. All three of these causes are preventable.

Because of the potential danger that comes with using ladders, an occasional review of safety procedures is important. Like any other tool on the farm and ranch, a ladder fills a very important function and when used properly is relatively safe.

Before you use a ladder, you should check it first for structural integrity. This is particularly important if the ladder hasn't been used for awhile. Check first to be sure rails and rungs are strong, properly fastened and undamaged. Be sure to keep ladder rungs free of debris because dirt, mud and oil can easily build up. If a ladder fails a visual safety inspection, it should not be used until it is properly repaired.

When setting up a ladder, make sure it is straight and sitting firmly on the ground without rocking or teetering. Once the ladder is set up properly and you are ready to climb, check the bottoms of your shoes for slippery debris. Always face the ladder when climbing up or down and use both hands. It is very important not to climb too high—never go above the third rung from the top of the ladder.

The most common cause of falls from ladders is overreaching. Sometimes when a person is high on a ladder and a needed object is just out of reach, the temptation is almost overwhelming to stretch and reach out as far as possible—it seems so much simpler than climbing back down the ladder and repositioning it. Wrong!

Remember, most accidents – including those involving ladders – are preventable. Take care of yourself and your employees and make sure there aren't any unwanted statistics on your farm or ranch.

— Mike Burns is Farm Bureau Group manager for State Compensation Insurance Fund. Contact him at mjburns@scif.com. Since 1943, the California Farm Bureau-State Fund partnership has provided affordable worker compensation insurance coverage and accident prevention training for agricultural employers and their employees.

Notes from the CEO

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Farm Bureau hires new water policy specialist

Nancy Broschart, a management analyst in Ventura's water department, has been hired to fill the position recently vacated by Dale Zurawski, who for five years served as FBVC's water quality program manager.

Dale worked primarily as the liaison between the Ventura County Agricultural Irrigated Lands Group, which FBVC manages, and the many agency partners and regulatory entities with which we interact in the water-quality arena. Over time, however, water-supply concerns have come to play a more dominant role in our organization's activities, with drought-related issues, conflict among user groups, and new statutory and regulatory challenges consuming an increasing share of our attention and resources.

Accordingly, the scope of work for the job Nancy inherits has been refocused. It will continue to give priority to regulatory compliance on the water-quality side, but it now will give nearly (continued on page 3)

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Notes from the CEO

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equal emphasis to supply-demand challenges in the water-quantity arena. While I will continue to represent FBVC and the agricultural community in key hearings and stakeholder negotiations, Nancy will be spending a great deal of her time as our representative in a host of new and continuing discussions about groundwater, surface storage and diversion, involving such entities as United Water Conservation District (UWCD), Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency (FCGMA), and whatever new institutions may arise as a result of passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

Nancy has been a management analyst for Ventura Water for the past seven years. In that capacity, she has been involved with numerous regulatory development and compliance programs, including the Ventura County Stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit, Ventura River Trash Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), the Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) and NPDES Permit for the Ventura Water Reclamation Facility, as well as Consent Decree compliance and policy development for the reduction of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) in the city of Ventura. In addition, she has worked with the city's drinking water staff to write, design and distribute Ventura Water's annual Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report for the past five years.

She has also attended meetings of our local watershed groups, including the Ventura River and Santa Clara River Watershed Councils, as well as meetings of FCGMA and UWCD. She's also been an active member of the Association of California Water Agencies' Communications Committee. And over the past three years, she has been primarily responsible for the planning, design, and execution of Ventura Water's public outreach and education program, which includes website and social media management, electronic newsletter design and publication, advertising, brochures and blogs.

Given her familiarity with the key issues and players in Ventura County's water-quality and water-supply worlds, I expect Nancy to hit the ground running when she joins us in January. And with her analytical and commu-

nications skills, I expect her to substantially increase Farm Bureau's ability to engage and educate in these critical areas.

She has a few things to learn about Ventura County agriculture, but that's one of the perks of working for Farm Bureau: We get to spend every day learning about who Ventura County's farmers and ranchers are, what it is that they do, why they do it, and how we can help them continue doing it.

County adopts well-drilling moratorium

Most Farm Bureau members are probably aware that on Oct. 28 the Board of Supervisors adopted a ban on new water wells in some parts of the county. The ban was retroactive to Oct. 22, the day that BOS Chairman Steve Bennett announced during a Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency board meeting that he planned to introduce it.

Stakeholders were given only two working days to analyze and respond to the actual document, and although Farm Bureau and numerous other organizations and individuals made valid arguments about flaws in the proposal and the process, we were unsuccessful. The ordinance passed 4-1 with Supervisor Peter Foy casting the lone No vote.

(This commentary I wrote for the Ventura County Star summarizes our objections: <http://bit.ly/14T8Cz6>.)

There are critical elements in the ordinance that provide for exceptions and waivers from the well ban, such as for replacement wells. But the swiftness of the ordinance's introduction and passage caught even county staff by surprise, so no procedure has yet been established for property owners to apply for relief from the ban in such cases as a well failure.

I've been in contact several times with Watershed Protection District staff charged with implementing the moratorium, and they have assured me they are working on an application and review procedure as fast as possible and will share that information when it is ready. Farm Bureau will distribute that information as soon as we have it.

— *John Krist is chief executive officer of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County. Contact him at john@farmbureauvc.com.*

Member Benefits

TICKETS & DISCOUNTS

Farm Bureau members qualify for discounts on admission to many of Southern California's most popular theme parks and other attractions. To take advantage of any of these special offers, drop by the Farm Bureau office at 5156 McGrath St. in Ventura. You can also place an order and pay by phone, and have the tickets mailed to you. For more information, contact Cissy Perez-Haas at (805) 289-0155. Have your membership number handy. We accept Visa and MasterCard.

Aquarium of the Pacific — Adult (12+ yrs): \$19.95 (save \$9); Child (3-11 yrs): \$11.95 (save \$3). Valid thru 12/31/14 except 12/25 2014.

California Adventure and Disneyland 1-day Park Hopper — Adult (10+ yrs): \$144 (save \$6); Child (3-9 yrs): \$126 (save \$4). Valid through 12/31/14.

Cinemark Theatres — Platinum ticket, valid any show time at all Cinemark & Century locations: \$8.25 (savings \$2.75). Additional premiums may be applied for specially priced films and/or events priced higher than normal box office. No expiration.

Knott's Berry Farm — Buena Park/Palm Springs. Adult (12+ yrs) \$34.95 (save \$27.05); Junior (3-11 yrs) Senior (62+ yrs) \$29.95 (save \$3.05). Valid thru 12/31/2014.

Magic Mountain — \$43.50 (savings \$26.49) General use ticket (3 yrs. +). Valid thru 9/27/15.

Regal Cinemas — Unrestricted tickets \$8.25 (regularly \$9.50 Sun.-Thurs, \$10 Fri.-Sat). Good at Edwards, Regal, Signature and United Artists Theaters. No expiration.

San Diego Sea World — 1 Day Admission. Adult (10+ yrs.) \$68.95 (savings \$15.05); Child (3-9 yrs.) \$68.95 (savings \$9.05). Valid thru 3/15/15.

San Diego Safari Park — (Formerly Wild Animal Park) Adult-African Tram Safari: \$39 (save \$7) (12+ yrs); Child-African Tram Safari: \$31 (save \$5) (3-11 yrs). Africa Tram Safari includes admission, unlimited rides on the Africa Tram, and all shows & exhibits. Valid through 01/31/15.

San Diego Zoo — Adult (12+ yrs): \$39 (save \$7). Child (3-11 yrs): \$31 (save \$5). Includes admission, unlimited use of Guided Bus Tour, Express Bus, Skyfari Aerial Tram and all shows & exhibits. Valid through 01/31/15.

See's Candy gift certificate — One-pound box \$14.95 (Save \$2.05). No expiration.

"E Tickets" are available for certain amusement parks.

FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

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