

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

In the wake of Asian citrus psyllid detections near La Conchita and Santa Paula, the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force will host a workshop for pest-control advisors, and producers of citrus fruit and citrus nursery stock. Growers and PCAs from Santa Barbara County also are welcome to attend.

The workshop will be from 1 to 4 p.m. on Monday, March 21, at the Santa Paula Community Center, 530 W. Main Street, Santa Paula.

The Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) feeds on the leaves and stems of citrus trees and related plants. Although the psyllid can damage plants, the real danger lies in its ability to transmit a deadly bacterial disease called Huanglongbing (HLB). The disease is incurable, untreatable and fatal to all varieties of citrus.

As reported last month in this space, the California Department of Food and Agriculture announced on Dec. 20 that an ACP specimen had been found in a trap in a commercial citrus orchard near La Conchita. On Dec. 29, CDFA announced that a second ACP had been found in a trap in a commercial orchard near Santa Paula. The finds triggered establishment of a quarantine zone encompassing all of Ventura County and part of southern Santa Barbara County.

Prompt eradication of new infestations is necessary to prevent ACP from becoming established. A treatment protocol has been developed that involves use of multiple materials and careful timing to complement IPM programs and treatments for other pests.

The March 21 workshop is intended to provide information about the pest, state quarantine regulations, the treatment protocol for commercial orchards and nurseries, and research into biocontrols. It will include presentations by the following speakers:

- Dr. Beth Grafton-Cardwell, IPM specialist and research entomologist at UC Riverside's Kearney Agricultural Center, and director of the Lindcove Research and Extension Center.

- Dr. Raju Pandey, an entomologist

who has been spearheading research into biocontrol agents for ACP at UC Riverside and in Pakistan.

- Nawal Sharma, supervisor of the Quarantine Response Program for the California Department of Food & Agriculture.

- Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzales.

- Ted Batkin, president, Citrus Research Board.

The workshop is free, but RSVPs are required. Please call (805) 289-0155 no later than March 14 to reserve a spot.

Help in the fight against ACP

Now that ACP has reached our area, Farm Bureau and its partners in the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force are looking for new opportunities to warn local residents about the threat posed by the pest.

The Task Force recently took delivery of several large banners provided by the Citrus Research Board (more are on their way). Originally designed to be affixed to cotton trailers parked near highways in the Central Valley, the banners are 6 feet high and 30 feet wide.

Although Ventura County doesn't have much of a cotton trailer fleet, it does have citrus bins in abundant quantities, and the banners can easily be affixed to them. Based on the standard dimensions of a fruit bin – 28 inches high and 48 inches wide – each banner could be displayed on an arrangement of 24 bins (a stack three high by eight wide).

Initial plans are to place these banners along both sides of the three primary highways carrying traffic into and out of Ventura County: Highway 101, Highway 126 and Highway 118.

If you have roadside property along any of these highways and are willing to host a banner, please contact Farm Bureau at (805) 289-0155 or send an email to taskforce@farmbureau-vc.com. Ideal locations are along relatively straight sections of highway, and provide sufficient space to angle the banners so they can be easily seen from a distance by approaching motorists. Local packinghouses have agreed to provide the bins.

It is not necessary that the location be adjacent to a citrus orchard, but that would be a welcome bonus feature. It's also not necessary that the banner be attached to a stack of fruit bins – a truck trailer or storage container will work equally well, as long as it is of sufficient size.

Established in early 2010, the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force is dedicated to alerting Ventura County residents to the threat posed by ACP and Huanglongbing – the untreatable, incurable and invariably fatal bacterial disease the insect can transmit – and mobilizing

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Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force Workshop
Monday, March 21, 1-4 p.m.
Santa Paula Community Center
530 W. Main Street, Santa Paula

What's Inside?

- Non-fumigant alternative promising
- Employees must use lockout procedures
- Help shape future of the Las Posas Basin
- Member Benefits

Non-fumigant alternative shows promise

By Oleg Daugovish

Over several decades we have relied on methyl bromide to control soil-borne problems. It worked great. During the required phase-out of this ozone-depleting fumigant, a lot of work has focused on testing and refining application methods of alternative fumigants. In fact, Ventura County is a leader in the state in conversion from methyl bromide to alternatives.

“ASD, or anaerobic soil disinfestations ... originated in Japan and Netherlands. We have been working for three years on adapting ASD to the California strawberry production system.”

However, the restrictions on use of most likely alternatives, such as 1,3D+chloropicrin and, more recently, methyl iodide, may limit their use in our county, where urban and agricultural areas interface so closely. We already have to deal with township caps, buffer zones and changes in ap-

plication methods, while the cluster review of fumigants by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is likely to further limit their availability.

The need for developing non-fumigant alternatives has been recognized by the industry and the U.S. Department of Agriculture alike, making it one of the top priorities for grant funding. With support from the California Strawberry Commission and USDA, my colleagues and I have been evaluating alternatives to conventional fumigation such as steam application to sterilize the soil, the use of solarization and mustard products (which can generate small amounts of biocides), and clean substrate troughs designed to isolate plant root growth from potentially infested soil in the field.

Recently we have made progress with another technique – ASD, or anaerobic soil disinfestations – which originated in Japan and Netherlands. We have been working for three years on adapting ASD to the California strawberry production system.

To employ ASD, anaerobic conditions are first created in soil by applying and mixing in a carbon source. We have evaluated a variety of carbon sources from grain brans (e.g. rice bran, wheat bran) to onion waste and cover-crop residues, and we have considered costs, availability, and practical aspects of application.

Next, bedded soil is covered with plastic mulch, which prevents oxygen supply to the soil, and irrigated with installed drip lines until all soil pores are saturated. Application to flat ground has been tested as well, and requires irrigation prior to mulching.

Anaerobic conditions are maintained for at least three weeks, during which anaerobic decomposition of the carbon source takes place. Progress of anaerobiosis can be monitored using electrodes that measure oxidation-reduction potential. Experimentally, we have determined the number of cumulative anaerobic units necessary to reliably kill several soil pathogens in the lab. It is not certain if the anaerobic conditions themselves, products of microbial decompositions or other interactions cause the pest and pathogen suppression.

Finally, the holes are cut in the plastic to aerate the beds in preparation for planting.

This year we used an implement that allowed the rice bran to be mixed into a prepared bed. Then the bed was reshaped before plastic mulch application.

We have placed this experiment at the UC Hansen Agricultural Center. This is a tough environment for growing strawberries: the heavy soil is loaded with a classic strawberry pathogen, *Verticillium dahliae*, which causes plant collapse, and the weed seed bank of the soil is so large that you may be the one needing to bail out. If we can make ASD work here, it should work anywhere else.

We reached very good anaerobic conditions with the warm temperatures this past August. This resulted in greater than 85 percent reduction in *Verticillium microsclerotia* in soil, and 70 percent fewer weeds in ASD plots compared to controls. Most importantly, the plants in ASD plots are growing well and were 70 percent larger than in controls in December – a good sign that they will fruit earlier and would be more productive. We’re currently monitoring fruit yields and will share this information once the season is over.

I and my colleagues would like to acknowledge Hector Gutierrez (Otillo Farms/Tri-Cal) for very valuable help in setting up these experiments.

— Oleg Daugovish is a farm advisor in the University of California Cooperative Extension office in Ventura. Contact him at odaugovish@ucdavis.edu.

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broad public support for efforts to exclude, detect and eradicate the pest.

Ag superintendents sought for County Fair

After many years of dedicated service, Charles and Laurie Vanoni have stepped down as superintendent and assistant superintendent of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Building at the Ventura County Fair. The Fair Board is currently seeking candidates to replace them.

The board is particularly interested in candidates with the skills and background to accomplish the following objectives for the venue, which serves as a prominent showcase for local agriculture:

- Enhance and support agriculture in Ventura County.
- Increase participation by a broader range of local agricultural businesses in the annual fair.
- Develop creative ways to communicate with the community and promote support for the agricultural industry.
- Educate the community about the important role that agriculture plays in the economic vitality and quality of life in Ventura County.
- Work with the fair staff and other superintendents to cross-promote the agricultural experience at the County Fair, making the Agriculture and Natural Resources Building a “must see” destination during Fair time.

Job descriptions are available upon request by sending email to info@farmbureauvc.com. Interested candidates should contact Fair CEO Barbara Quaid at bboester@ventura-countyfair.org.

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

Insist that employees use lockout procedures

By Mike Klimenko

Four out of every five accidents involving injuries to persons performing maintenance or set-up work on machinery were caused because the proper lockout/tagout procedures were not followed.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, failure to lock out or tag out power sources on equipment can result in electrocutions, amputations, and other serious – sometimes fatal – accidents.

Be sure to follow proper lockout/tagout procedures, even for a quick or minor repair. Don't cut corners. Without exception, lockout/tagout should always be required during setups, when performing maintenance, when troubleshooting or when making repairs.

When a piece of equipment has been locked out, a person should never remove any locks or tags other than his or her own. In addition, a person should never try to start equipment that has been locked out or tagged out unless authorized to do so.

Lockout/tagout means that the energy source for the equipment – electrical, mechanical, hydraulic or other – must be disengaged or blocked. There's a big difference between turning off a machine and actually disengaging a piece of equipment. If a lockout/tagout procedure is going to be used, a person should first notify all individuals in the area where the work is to be performed.

Whether you work with one piece of machinery or several, the following prevention program is recommended:

- Identify all equipment that requires lockout/tagout of power sources.
- Post warning signs to indicate that lockout/tagout is required.
- Develop written procedures explaining how lockout/tagout is to be done and allow no deviation from these procedures.
- Train workers in lockout/tagout and conduct periodic refresher training.
- Perform regular maintenance to prevent malfunctioning equipment.

There is also a procedure that should always be followed when restarting a machine that was shut down for maintenance, set up or any other reason. The following items must be checked:

- Have all guards been replaced correctly?
- Are all stray tools and parts accounted for and removed from the work area?

- Are pressure tubing, pipes and hose connections properly installed?

- Have all lockout/tagout notices been removed?

- Is the area clear of all workers?

Be aware of your safety and that of others when working with or around power-activated equipment and machinery. Lockout/tagout procedures can safeguard you from injury or death in the event of an unexpected start-up or release of stored energy.

— Mike Klimenko is Farm Bureau Group manager for State Compensation Insurance Fund. He may be contacted at mnklimenko@scif.com.


Help shape the future of the Las Posas Basin

Well owners and irrigators in the Las Posas Valley are invited to participate in a collaborative effort to develop a management plan for the area's primary groundwater source.

As many growers know, the Las Posas groundwater basin faces many challenges. Groundwater levels have declined significantly in some areas, while other areas have been filled with non-native water that is too salty to irrigate crops. Without the development and implementation of a groundwater management plan that addresses these specific problems, the challenges will become larger and more costly to address. The purpose of the basin-specific plan is to lay out management strategies designed to ensure that our groundwater resources will be able to sustain current and future needs.

The Las Posas Basin-Specific Groundwater Management Plan (LPBSMP) is being developed cooperatively by the Las Posas Users Group – consisting of local well owners and operators – over the next six months. Since the necessary solutions will undoubtedly require an investment by most local pumpers

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Call Kathy at 289-0155

*Exception: Home loan documents

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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 (Age 12+):

\$18.95 (save \$6); Child (age 3-11): \$10.95 (save \$2).

Valid through 12/31/11.

California Adventure and Disneyland one-day

Park Hopper — Adult (age 10+): \$96 (save \$5); Child (age 3-9): \$88 (save \$3). Valid through 12/31/11.

Cinemark Theatres — Platinum ticket, valid any show

time at all Cinemark & Century locations: \$8 (savings \$3.50). Additional premiums may be applied for specially priced films and or/events priced higher than normal box office. No expiration.

Knott's Berry Farm — Adult (12 yrs.+): \$31.95 (save

\$25.04), Junior/Senior (age 3-11 yrs.) (62 yrs.+): \$22.95 (save \$2.04). Valid through 12/31/11.

Legoland — General use ticket: \$55.95 (save \$13 adult,

\$3 child) + 2nd day FREE. Resort Hopper General: \$65.95 (save \$23 adult, \$13 child). Valid through 12/31/11. Includes two visits to Legoland, including new Water Park when open, and two visits to Sea Life Aquarium.

Magic Mountain — General use ticket: Adult (48" + tall):

\$27.95, (save \$32.04); Child (under 48" tall): \$18.95 (save \$16.04). Valid through 12/31/11.

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 — \$49.95 (Save \$20 per adult;

Save \$10 per child) Adult /Child Ticket (3 yrs.+). Valid through 12/31/11.

San Diego Safari Park — (Formerly Wild Animal

Park) Adult-African Tram Safari: \$33.95 (save \$6.05) (12 yrs.+); Child-African Tram Safari: \$26.95 (save \$3.05) (3-11 yrs.). Africa Tram Safari includes admission, unlimited use of the Journey into Africa Tour, Conservation Carousel and all shows/exhibits. Valid through 01/31/12.

San Diego Zoo — Adult (age 12+): \$33.95 (save \$6.05).

Child (age 3-11): \$26.95 (save \$3.05). Valid through 01/31/12.

See's Candy gift certificate — One-pound box \$13.45

(Save \$2.65). No expiration.

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We represent the broad and dynamic interests of the agricultural industry through our diverse membership. We serve members by delivering services, promoting policies, developing coalitions, and fostering community action that will ensure the long-term success of agriculture in Ventura County.

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Help shape the future of the Las Posas Basin *(continued from page 3)*

and possible adjustments to groundwater pumping operations, the group's goal is to develop the LPBSMP in the most fair and equitable manner possible with the least impact to current pumping operations.

As such, all users of Las Posas Basin water are encouraged to participate in the planning process. The Users Group meets on the last Wednesday of most months at Calleguas Municipal Water District (CMWD) at 8:30 a.m. To receive meeting notifications, please provide your email address to Linda Laney. The next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 23, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. in the CMWD Board Room, 2100 Olsen Road, Thousand Oaks.

For more information about the basin-specific planning process, please visit the CMWD website: www.calleguas.com/LPB/LPBMP.htm. Questions may also be addressed to Bryan Bondy, United Water Conservation District, at (805) 525-4431 or by email at bryanb@unitedwater.org.

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