

Notes from the CEO

By John Krist

A standing-room-only crowd of growers, pest-control advisers, pesticide applicators and other individuals involved in

The existing [ACP] eradication strategy had ceased to be effective in the east end of the valley, and the time had come for a transition there to a suppression strategy utilizing broad-scale, coordinated and methodical pesticide applications.

Ventura County's citrus industry packed a hotel ballroom in Oxnard on Dec. 5 to learn about plans to implement area-wide management (AWM) for the Asian citrus psyllid in the eastern Santa Clara River Valley.

For many in the audience, the most sobering information came in a series of slides displayed by ACP-HLB Task Force chair Leslie

Leavens, documenting the sudden and dramatic explosion of ACP trap detections in the waning months of 2014. It was quickly obvious to everyone that the existing eradication strategy had ceased to be effective in the east end of the valley, and that the time had come for a transition there to a suppression strategy utilizing broad-scale, coordinated and methodical pesticide applications.

There were many questions for the speakers, who included UC researcher Beth Grafton-Cardwell, primary architect of the treatment protocols for ACP in California. Some reflected the discomfort many growers feel toward a significant increase in pest-control applications and the consequent expense. There were also questions about the efficacy of certain materials, and about the logistics of coordinating so many actions across such a broad swath of Ventura County.

Additional questions – particularly those related to logistics – were addressed during a second meeting, convened at the Agriculture Museum in Santa Paula. Over the month of December, the Task Force had worked out a set of procedures, communication strategies and timelines in order to implement AWM as efficiently as possible. These details were presented Jan. 12 to growers with groves in the treatment zones, who packed the museum and participated in a lively question-and-answer session.

A third meeting, this one attended by PCAs and PCOs, was convened at Farm Bureau on Jan. 21 to address concerns and confusion that had arisen regarding the types of materials and application rates being recommended under the AWM implementation plan.

The coordinated treatments began at the eastern end of the valley on Jan. 17, and will continue through late March, progressing from east to west between the LA County line and the eastern edge of Santa Paula. It is too early to say how well it is going, but we have scheduled a Task Force meeting in mid-February to review progress and reevaluate the strategy if necessary.

Critical roles are being played by the packinghouses, which have identified their growers within each of the treatment zones, known as psyllid management areas (PMAs), and are utilizing their field divisions to notify those growers of the treatment window for each area. Critical, too, is the role being played by the county's pest-control advisors and pest-control operators, who are working together to coordinate and schedule pesticide applications using a combination of ground-based and aerial equipment.

Sandra Zwaal, the grower liaison for Ventura County, is also integral to the process, following up with those growers who would otherwise fall through the cracks because they don't pack with a commercial house or have not made it into any of our communication databases. Our work also involves close coordination with California Department of Food and Agriculture, which manages treatment of urban host plants near commercial citrus, and with the Citrus Research Board, which produces the mapping and contact data utilized in our design of the PMA/AWM boundaries.

Logistics alone make this undoubtedly one of the most ambitious and complex undertakings in the history of Ventura County agriculture – we are trying to choreograph an eight-week-long ballet involving hundreds of people (plus tractors, spray rigs and helicopters) across nearly 8,000 acres of farmland.

But this undertaking has other dimensions as well. The ACP invasion is forcing a re-evaluation of farm business models, raising doubts about the future of integrated pest management, calling into question the relationships between growers and packinghouses, growers and PCAs, organic growers and their nonorganic neighbors. Some growers are frightened, some are angry, others have embraced the strategy with the understanding that

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UC unveils new tools for managing polyphagous shot hole borer

By Sabrina Drill

As discussed in previous issues of this newsletter, polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB; *Euwallacea* sp.) is a new pest/fungal complex attacking a wide variety of host trees in Southern California, from avocado to common residential and street trees, and native oaks and riparian species. The PSHB is morphologically identical to the tea shot hole borer, *E. fornicatus*, but a genetic analysis confirmed that this is a new species of ambrosia beetle. PSHB has been found to carry several symbiotic fungi, including new fungal species *Fusarium euwallacea*, and an undescribed *Graphium* species.

It was first identified in 2003 in Whittier Narrows, an undeveloped riparian area in Los Angeles County, and was officially first linked to tree injury and mortality in a residential avocado in 2012. Since then, the pest complex, also referred to as *Fusarium* die-back, has spread throughout Southern California and is now present in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Western Riverside, and San Diego counties. The population in San Diego County is a different genotype from that found in the rest of the region, possibly indicating a separate introduction.

The pest/disease complex has caused significant impacts to the avocado industry in Israel, and is now spreading in commercial groves from Escondido to Fallbrook. It has caused injury and mortality of hundreds of ornamental trees in the urban areas, impacting roadways, botanical gardens, parks, and private residences, and it affects all major native riparian trees species. The official list of reproductive hosts, meaning trees that can support growth and reproduction of the beetles and fungi, includes 35 species with several having been confirmed in just the past few months.

The plant pathology, integrated pest management, environmental horticulture, and natural resource management teams working on this pest at UC Riverside and UC Cooperative Extension in San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, and Ventura counties have put together several useful tools that can help you manage this pest. These include a new field identification card set, a decision guide for tree removal, a guide to managing infested plant materials, and information about how to report an infested tree and how to collect samples for lab identification, as well as a

continuously updated web-based map. You can find these at www.pshb.org.

To determine if your trees are affected by this pest:

- Look for a small (tip of a ball point pen) round entry/exit hole surrounded by wet discoloration of the outer bark.

- Follow the gallery to look for the beetle (may or may not be present).

- Look for other hosts (castor bean, sycamore, maple, coast live oak, goldenrain, liquidambar) showing symptoms of the beetle/disease.

- Report suspect tree infestations to eskalenlab@gmail.com with the following information: 1. Your contact info (name, city, phone number, email); 2. Suspect tree species; 3. Description of suspect tree's location (and/or GPS coordinates); 4. Description of suspect tree's symptoms; 5. Photos of suspect tree and close-up photos of symptoms

If symptom photos and descriptions indicate it might be PSHB/FDB a field assessment may be needed or a sample can be submitted following detailed directions on how to col-

lect and submit a sample for fungal confirmation at pshb.org.

To protect your trees, avoid movement of infested firewood and chipped material out of infested areas. Infested material should be chipped to under 1 inch, wrapped in clear plastic, and solarized on site for up to six months (depending upon environmental conditions). Research is ongoing in the use of insecticides and fungicides, as well as exploration of the use of endophytic bacteria as a biocontrol agent.

If you suspect that you have found this beetle or seen symptoms of the *Fusarium* dieback on your tree please contact the Ventura CE office, your pest control advisor or qualified arborist, or contact UC Extension Plant Pathologist Dr. Akif Eskalen at akif.eskalen@ucr.edu. For more information visit www.pshb.org or <http://eskalenlab.ucr.edu/avocado.html>.

— Sabrina Drill is a natural resources advisor for the University of California Cooperative Extension in Ventura and Los Angeles counties. Contact her at sldrill@ucanr.edu.

Notes from the CEO

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actions required to assure their long-term survival must take precedence over actions that serve short-term interests. And no doubt there are a few wondering whether there's even a future for citrus in this county.

Nevertheless, there has been a heartening spirit of cooperation, pragmatism and determination on display throughout the AWM planning and review process – just as there has been from the start, five years ago, when we established the Task Force and launched the local campaign against ACP and HLB. By far the majority of those involved in our many meetings and discussions understand the need for action, are willing to do their part, and are rolling up their sleeves to get it done as efficiently as possible. What's more, they bring to the fight a deep passion for Ventura County agriculture.

That spirit – this remarkable blend of cohesion, practicality and passion – has animated Ventura County's agricultural community for at least a century. Given what I have been hearing and seeing over the course of this long fight, I am happy to report that it shows no evidence of having waned over the generations. And that provides the answer to

those who ask whether there's a future for citrus in Ventura County.

Yes. Yes, there is.

Groundwater lines being drawn

One of the most dramatic changes in California resource-management policy in the past half-century took effect Jan. 1. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act will require that groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) and Groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) be established for important groundwater basins through the state, including most of the basins in Ventura County.

The legislation lays out some guidelines for creating both the GSAs and the GSPs, but it is frustratingly silent regarding potential conflicts among public agencies if more than one asserts an interest in assuming authority over a particular basin.

Any public agency with regulatory authority over water or land use is eligible to step forward and notify the state that it intends to become the GSA for a particular basin. The law carves out a few exceptions – in Ventura County, the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency was granted default status as the GSA for the basins within its jurisdiction unless it declines

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Task Force launches neglected-grove survey

Effective suppression of the Asian citrus psyllid requires that abandoned or neglected citrus trees be removed to eliminate them as potential reservoirs of infestation and disease. To compile a database of such plantings so they can be targeted for eventual removal, the Ventura County ACP-HLB Task Force has created an online survey form for growers, pest-control advisors, applicators, packinghouse workers and others familiar with the area's citrus landscape.

Generally speaking, neglected groves are those that have not been irrigated, harvested or subject to other cultural practices for two or more years. Any time you notice a planting in your area that appears to meet these criteria, please record its location, size, variety and general condition using this survey form. All responses will remain anonymous.

To submit information, follow this link: <http://bit.ly/grovesurvey>.

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the honor, and similar deference was granted the Ojai Basin Groundwater Management Agency. A carve-out was also granted to the Santa Paula Basin, which is managed by local groundwater users under the terms of a court-approved "friendly adjudication" settlement.

But elsewhere, the jockeying for position has already begun. Camrosa Water District's board voted to seek GSA status for the Tierra Rejada Basin and that portion of the Santa Rosa Basin within its jurisdiction, and the Fox Canyon GMA board also voted to seek GSA status over the basins within its jurisdiction – which includes a portion of the Santa Rosa Basin. Clearly that basin should be managed under a single GSP, but it's unclear how Camrosa and the FCGMA are going to work that out.

United Water Conservation District has begun discussing whether to seek GSA status for the Piru, Fillmore and Mound Basins, which lie within its jurisdiction. The city of Ventura, however, has also indicated interest in becoming the GSA for the Mound Basin, which lies partially within its boundaries. Ventura has also indicated interest in becoming the GSA for the Upper Ventura River Basin. But the Casitas Municipal Water District, Meiners Oaks County Water District and Ventura River Water District have also indicated an interest in GSA status for that basin.

Complicating matters further, the Board of Supervisors voted Dec. 6 to direct staff to participate in all the GSA discussions with the intent of involving the county as a "partner" in the process of developing GSPs for the basins over which it exerts land-

use authority. There's some question about whether you can claim to be participating in a "partnership" with an agency that explicitly doesn't want you involved (but has no choice but to accept that involvement under the law), but that's an issue for another day.

Farm Bureau's position is that the county should provide technical assistance and information as agencies with a history of direct water-management activities take the lead on establishing GSAs and developing GSPs. There's a great deal of data and expertise within the Watershed Protection District's groundwater division – which administers the county's well-permitting ordinance, collects extraction and monitoring data, and provides staff support to the Fox Canyon GMA – and it has a useful supportive role to play.

But the state legislation already specifies a role for the county: It is the local backstop, authorized to take on the GSA role for a basin if no other local entity does so. That's important, because it keeps the authority from defaulting to the state. In our view, the county ought to reserve its direct involvement in GSA formation and GSP development only for such circumstances.

Clearly, there's going to be a lot of discussion, negotiation and (quite likely) elbowing going on over the next few months. Farm Bureau's focus will be to ensure that the concerns and interests of private well owners – who are not truly represented by any of the institutional players in the lineup so far – are adequately represented as this cumbersome process lurches forward.

— *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 12/31/15.*

California Adventure and Disneyland 1-Day

Park Hopper — Adult (10+ yrs): \$144 (save \$6); Child (3-9 yrs): \$139 (save \$5). *Valid thru 12/31/15.*

Cinemark & Century Theatres — Platinum ticket, valid all show times at all Cinemark & Century locations: \$8.75 (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) \$36.95 (save \$28.05); Junior (3-11 yrs) Senior (62+ yrs) \$32.95 (save \$2.05). *Valid thru 12/31/2015.*

Legoland — "E" tickets only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$74.95 (save \$10.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$69.96 (save \$9.05). *Includes 2nd day free ticket within 90 days of 1st visit.*

Resort Hopper Ticket — "E" Ticket only. Adult (13+ yrs) \$79.95 (save \$29.05); Child (3-12 yrs) \$74.95 (save \$28.05). *Includes 2 visits to Legoland, including new Waterpark (seasonal) and 2 visits to Sea Life Aquarium. Valid thru 12/31/2015.*

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 Safari Park — (Formerly Wild Animal Park) Adult-African Tram Safari : \$40.75 (save \$7.25) (12+ yrs); Child-African Tram Safari: \$33 (save \$5) (3-11 yrs). *Africa Tram Safari includes admission, unlimited use of the Journey into Africa Tour, Conservation Carousel and other shows/exhibits. Valid through 12/31/15.*

San Diego Sea World — 1 Day Admission. Adult (10+ yrs.) \$64 (savings \$22); Child (3-9 yrs.) \$64 (savings \$16). "E" Ticket: Buy 1 day get 1 year of unlimited visits. 2015 Fun Card Adult (10+ yrs) \$75 (save \$9); Child (3-9 yrs) \$75 (no savings). *Valid thru 12/31/2015. Blackout dates apply. Valid thru 3/15/16.*

San Diego Zoo — Adult (12+ yrs): \$40.75 (save \$7.25). Child (3-11 yrs): \$33 (save \$5). *Includes admission, unlimited use of Guided Bus Tour, Express Bus, Skyfari Aerial Tram and all shows & exhibits. Valid through 12/31/15.*

See's Candy gift certificate — One-pound box \$15.45 (Save \$2.05). *No expiration.*

"E Tickets" — **Disneyland**: 1 day/1 park, 2 day/1 park, 2 Day Park Hopper. **Universal Studios**, buy 1 day, get "2015" FREE (3+ yrs). *Valid thru 12/31/15. Blackout dates apply after first visit.*

FARM BUREAU OF VENTURA COUNTY

5156 McGrath St., Suite #102
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FARM BUREAU
OF VENTURA COUNTY

5156 McGrath St., Suite 102 • P.O. Box 3160 • Ventura, CA 93006
Telephone 805-289-0155 • Fax 805-658-0295 • www.farmbureauvc.com