



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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California Citrus Mutual fully supports the recent announcement by the California Department of Food & Agriculture to initiate an intensive eradication program around recent Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) finds in the San Joaquin Valley. While we believe these two finds are isolated in nature an industry cannot afford to be lax in preventing the spread of ACP or risk infection from Huanglongbing (HLB).

"We believe the five-mile eradication target coupled with a strong recommendation for producers to spray within 800 meters of a detection is the appropriate mandate," states Joel Nelsen, President of California Citrus Mutual. "The previous suggested 20-mile zone would exacerbate the spread of ACP in the opinion of the industry and eradication should be the goal, not control and not suppression." The CDFA statement strongly recommends that all commercial growers, defined by the Ag Code as 25+ trees/acre, treat their groves prior to harvest.

As long as industry is cooperating in the eradication effort the Department will continue the intensive trapping and survey work in the entire five-mile zone, conduct residential education efforts, and treat in residential areas as necessary. "The burden is on the industry," Nelsen continues, "as long as producers cooperate in the eradication effort CDFA will uphold their role in the partnership."

The circumstances surrounding these finds dictate a different course of action than taken in Southern California. Unlike the case in Southern California, the two isolated finds in Tulare County have been in an area of dense commercial plantings. Furthermore, extensive survey work by CDFA shows no signs of an established population in the immediate area. It is crucial that the industry and CDFA move swiftly to preempt an outbreak by implementing a targeted eradication program as proposed.

The pest has become endemic in certain parts of Southern California while other production areas such as Ventura County, Imperial County, and San Diego County are waging a successful fight against increasing ACP population. The topography of the San Joaquin Valley citrus industry is also different than that which exists in Southern California making the risk of spread that much greater but an eradication effort much more targeted.

The objective is to eradicate any other potential hitchhikers, stop a breeding population from being developed, and protect the estimated 200,000 acres of citrus in the San Joaquin Valley.

"The partnership between industry, USDA, and CDFA remains strong," notes Nelsen as our state and industry continue to do what has not yet been done in any other citrus production area, stop the spread of the ACP and prevent the introduction of HLB.

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