



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

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PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

ASIAN CITRUS PSYLLID DETECTED NEAR CITY OF BAKERSFIELD, KERN COUNTY

BAKERSFIELD, September 15, 2014 – The Kern County Agricultural Commissioner, in cooperation with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture are beginning an extensive survey and treatment program in response to the detection of one Asian citrus psyllid along Highway 119, close to Pumpkin Center, near the City of Bakersfield in Kern County.

One adult Asian citrus psyllid was confirmed on Thursday, September 5, 2014 along Highway 119, close to Pumpkin Center, near the City of Bakersfield in Kern County. A treatment program will be carried out on all citrus host plants within 800 meters surrounding the site where the insect was trapped. Residents in the treatment area will be notified in advance.

The pest is of grave concern because it can carry the disease huanglongbing (HLB). All citrus and closely related species are susceptible hosts for both the insect and the disease. There is no cure once a tree becomes infected. The diseased tree will decline in health and produce bitter, misshaped fruit until it dies. To date, HLB has only been detected in one backyard tree and one psyllid in the Hacienda Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles County.

“The Asian Citrus psyllid is a dangerous pest of citrus,” said Ruben Arroyo, Kern County Agricultural Commissioner. “We’re working to determine the full extent of this incident so that we can protect our state’s vital citrus industry as well as our backyard citrus trees. We want to emphasize citrus fruit is safe to eat and the disease is not harmful to human health. Working together we will rid our state of this invasive species.”

The state of Florida first detected the pest in 1998 and the disease in 2005, and the two have now been detected in all 30 citrus producing counties in the state of Florida. The pest and disease are also present in Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina and Texas. The states of Mississippi, Arizona and Alabama have detected the pest but not the disease.

Residents in the area who think they may have seen the pest are urged to call the Pest Hotline at 1-800-491-1899. For more information on the Asian citrus psyllid and huanglongbing disease visit:
<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/acp/> .

We will keep you posted with any additional developments including public meeting dates when they are established by CDFA and our office. If you have any questions, please call the Kern County Department of Agriculture/Measurement Standards at 661-868-6300.