

Summary
CITRUS CANKER TECHNICAL ADVISORY TASK FORCE (CCTATF) MEETING
February 3, 2000 - 9:30 AM
Citrus Research and Education Center
Ben Hill Griffin, Jr. Citrus Hall
Lake Alfred, Florida

Members Present

Mr. John Barben, HCCGA
Mr. Tony Bowen, PRVCGA
Mr. Gregory Carlton, Florida Citrus Mutual
Mr. Richard Gaskalla, FDACS/DPI
Dr. Tim Gottwald, USDA/ARS
Mr. Tom Jerkins, Dole Citrus

Mr. Craig Meyer, FDACS - Executive Committee
Mr. Mike Shannon, USDA/APHIS - Executive Committee
Mr. Chuck Reed, FCNA
Mr. Norman Todd, Florida Citrus Production Managers Association
Dr. Jonathan Crane, UF/IFAS/TREC

Others Present

Ms. Rosemarie Alfaro, FDACS/DPI
Mr. Ken Allen, FDACS
Ms. Lisa Backman, Polk County Farm Bureau
Mr. Ken Bailey, FDACS/DPI
Ms. Wendy Bourland, Florida Citrus Mutual
Mr. Wendell Bowman, FDACS/DPI
Mr. Doug Bournique, Indian River Citrus League
Mr. Peter Chaires, Florida Gift Fruit Shippers, Association
Mr. Ted Combs, Callory Judge Grove
Mr. Jim Cloughley, Berry Groves
Dr. Wayne Dixon, FDACS/DPI
Ms. Lisa Dunson, Highlands County Citrus Growers
Mr. Jim Ellis, FDACS/DF&V
Danny Finch, Pokey's
Dr. Jim Graham, UF/IFAS/ CREC
Mr. Strick Gresham, FCPI
Dr. J. T. Griffiths, Citrus Growers Associates, Incorporated
Mr. Richard Gunnels, FDACS

Mr. Leon Hebb, FDACS/DPI
Mr. Michael Hornyak, USDA
Mr. Ron Hamel, Gulf Citrus Growers Association
Mr. Richard Kinney, Florida Citrus Packers
Mr. Andy LaVigne, Florida Citrus Mutual
Mr. Sergio Melenez, FDACS - Broward County
Mr. Jim McKee, FDACS/DPI
Mr. Sam Mahon, Pokey's
Ms. Barbara Oxford, PRVCGA
Mr. Bill Peeples, FDACS
Dr. Stephen Poe, USDA
Ms. Connie Riherd, FDACS/DPI
Mrs. Florence Roberts, FDACS/DPI
Mr. Jose Rodriguez, FDACS
Dr. Tim Schubert, FDACS/DPI
Mr. Jim Stalnaker, FDACS/DF&V
Dr. Xiaolan Sun, FDACS/DPI
Mr. Bob Terry, USDA/FASS
Mr. John Voombroke, Grower
Mr. Charles Youtsey (Retired, FDACS).
Ms. Debbie Williams, Flo-Tec

OPENING REMARKS

Craig Meyer called the meeting to order and said that later on in the meeting, the lime situation would be discussed. He called on Mike Shannon for his remarks.

Mike Shannon mentioned that he had missed the last two task force meetings. He advised that some things had progressed. They had a meeting last week on the issue of compensation to growers, where they discussed the process of disbursing the \$9 million that Congress had authorized to draw down from the Commodity Credit Corporation. The lawyers advised that they will need to put a notice in the Federal Register, and through rule making, establish this mechanism. They are well on their way to getting that compensation program put forward for commercial citrus growers, as well as having the funds to be able to reestablish the "Shade Dade" program which will now be renamed "Shade Florida" for the residential areas. It was mentioned to him that the Chinese had visited Florida and they are not concerned about Canker, but the European Union is. They are coming here in about two weeks and a group of their scientists will be looking at this situation. **Mike** said they were also able to move on issues that had been raised with respect to gift fruit packers located in regulated areas that needed to pack fruit. They were

able to give them some relief there.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Quarantine Areas

Leon Hebb reported that the quarantine areas, apart from Dade and Broward Counties, consist of approximately 101 square miles in Manatee County involving the areas directly north of the Manatee River, the Duette area, and a newly established quarantine area which is approximately 20 square miles in the Sun City Center area that has just been established and published more broadly last week. In the Immokalee area, there is approximately 60 square miles quarantined in the Sunniland area; 12 square miles in the Indian Reservation of Big Cypress, and approximately 36 square miles in Siboney. There has not been any additional disease in Manatee County since the Duette find. Of course, the Hillsborough County is a new area. In Immokalee, there has been reoccurrence of disease in all the quarantine areas. There was a single tree discovered in the Indian Reservation's Seminole Tribe of Florida. It was some 600 to 800 feet from the original infestation. Whether this was moved by personnel, equipment, birds or wind, is not known, but it did surprise us because the amount of disease in that grove was very low and more than 125 feet was taken out of there. In the Siboney Grove, there was a large number of trees found positive - nearly every block there. The amount of inoculum that was in this property originally when we had some 43,000 positive trees there. All the positive trees have been burned and in most cases several trees out from it surrounding those immediate trees were burned, but they are going to remove the entire grove at this time and when that is accomplished, there will be no more citrus on this property. In the Consolidated Grove, which is south of Immokalee, there have been about 30 additional positive trees in two of the blocks - G1 and G2. In looking at that situation, the amount of disease in those trees was fairly low. It was established in two of the trees in G1; the original destruction in there entailed taking out all the positive trees and removing 400 feet out from the know positive. Consolidated Citrus was very cooperative in taking those out; even that, though, has not been sufficient to stop the disease in this property. Risk Assessment is in the process of preparing a recommendation to remove all of the trees in Blocks G1, G2, G3, and G4, so that all of the blocks in the southern portion of that grapefruit planting will be removed. Besides detection of disease at a grove, one of the alarming things is the detection of the disease in the Montura Ranch area where there have been five positive properties, and they all seem to be related back to Miami, directly or indirectly. We couldn't say the trees came from Miami but all the owners of these properties or previous occupants of the residences, had some affiliation with Dade County and the fact that it was the Miami strain would also indicate that it was the probable source and by some means of plant material got there. That is just in Montura Ranch. There is a similar development - 30 miles to the southwest in Naples where two similar properties with people with connections to Dade County also had infected trees. Those trees have been disposed of; but if we have only looked at a very small percentage of residences and properties in the State of Florida (1% or 2%) and we can add the situation in Palm Beach County - a single situation very similar there which we caught very quickly (probably had only been there for a month to five weeks). How many others are out there? We may have many more residential properties in the State of Florida where the disease has dispersed from the Miami/Dade area or even Palmetto - we just don't know. But to inspect all residential properties in Florida is a near impossibility. The only way to detect the disease is to educate the public and have them call us. It costs about five times as much to look at a square-

mile residential property than it does to look at grove properties and that is because of the density to contact the many owners in that square mile. In Miami, you can have 2,200 to 2,600 different property owners in a single section to contact in order to gain access to that property. In many cases, you have grove owners who own a whole section which makes it so much easier. How do we fight the disease on the residential front and on the commercial grove front, too? These are the kinds of things we are going to have to deal with from now on. Somehow we have to stop the movement of plant material out of Dade and Broward Counties or even possibly out of the Palmetto area. In Duette, which had the Miami strain, there doesn't seem to be a residential property associated with it, so either that disease moved directly to Duette, or it moved from the Immokalee area in one of the properties down there or from an unknown area, to establish the disease in Duette. It is going to become even more important that commercial grove interests make every effort to practice better sanitation.

Status of Statewide Survey

Connie Riherd mentioned to Leon that at the Regulatory Issues Working Group meeting, people expressed a lot of interest in the status of the ongoing Statewide survey.

Leon Hebb reported that the Statewide survey is pretty well established. The Immokalee district not only surveys Hendry and the Collier Counties areas, but they have extended their survey to the whole five-county area and they have inspected all the grapefruit in that area at this time, but there may be a handful of trees in a two-acre grove that has not yet been inspected and they are moving now into the early oranges, basically Hamlins and Navels, and things look pretty good there. In the Palmetto area, they are also conducting surveys well outside of the quarantine areas and even going down into the Sarasota area, the Anna Maria area; also in Manatee County, commercial groves have been inspected every year since the most recent outbreak in that area. Portions of Pinellas County are also being inspected that has had previous citrus canker history.

Question: How about the East Coast?

Leon Hebb answered that on the East Coast, we have done very little survey. We have established an office there on Bandy Boulevard. We are in the process of getting telephones there. Furniture is in place there and computers have been ordered.

Question: How about Palm Beach County?

Leon Hebb answered that there has been very little survey done there; mostly it has been around the one area where the positive tree was found.

Connie Riherd advised that we do have inspectors working on the Caribfly Protocol who are in groves down there so a number of the groves have received inspections but just not a real intensive tree-by-tree inspection that we would like to do.

Richard Gaskalla commented that dooryards have been inspected up there through the program we have in place in Broward County.

Jim McKee mentioned that the southern end of Palm Beach and around the area where the one tree was found have been surveyed, and they are probably 3/4 done around that one-mile survey and within a week or so there is going to be a West Palm Beach office up and running.

Richard Kinney said that, obviously, the Europeans are going to be very interested in the detection program.

Connie Riherd remarked that we have the statistical information to provide to them on what kind of surveys we have been doing.

Leon Hebb stated that he would like to point out that even though it is not a formal survey by the Caribbean Fruit Fly (Caribfly) Program, the older guidelines for survey certification, applied to all countries, not only to the United States, that probably the Caribfly Trapping Program would almost qualify for the older requirements. **Leon** said he has not seen the newer requirements, yet.

Richard Kinney said he would think the Europeans will want to know where we are now on this survey and where we might be when the new season starts relative to Palm Beach north.

Leon Hebb said in past seasons, we have met the requirements. Those requirements were that they will accept no fruit out of a citrus canker quarantine area and if the production grove was in a county that had quarantined areas, such fruit had to be inspected. **Leon** reported that Mike Hornyak mentioned the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are coming up with new requirements but he has not seen those yet.

Jim Griffiths stated, to add to what Richard Kinney said, concerning shipment of grapefruit to Europe, you better be running scared right now about their coming over here to look at this situation. Nobody in their right minds would come in here and look and say that we have an effective program running. We are kidding ourselves if any of us think they are, as well as they manage trade in Europe. You can just thank the Lord that there is not any more grapefruit being grown in Europe at this time, but the Spaniards, the Sicilians and the Greeks are going to want to be tough about anything getting out of the United States and particularly out of Florida into Europe if they can stop it. They accept it from Argentina, but it is beyond him why they are "nice to Argentina."

Richard Kinney said he thinks part of the answer to that is that the scientists and regulatory communities are beginning to acknowledge and realize that the possibility of spreading citrus canker on fruit is slim and if you put the positions against that - infections, etc., again, it becomes even less of a problem.

Jim Griffiths commented, "Be encouraged by that belief!"

Richard Gaskalla advised when the Europeans come over, we will be able to convince them that we do have an effective program.

Jim Griffiths said he don't know how they can, but, good luck!

Richard Kinney said we have the disease in citrus but we have yet to find a citrus canker lesion on any of our commercial fruit in any of our packing houses.

Question: In talking about the Statewide survey, do you have a plan for expanding out in those areas that you are in now?

Leon Hebb reported that we have an office that we are establishing in Winter Haven that will have 24 to 25 people in it. Already, we have approximately 24 people in the Avon Park office, which is now actually in Sebring, but is moving to an established office on Highway 27 just south of Avon Park and we also have three people that formerly worked on the Mediterranean Fruit Fly Program that are working in Tavares. We are trying to find another person to have two teams of two up there. The other unique thing we are trying to do is to incorporate four-way drive vehicles (utility vehicles-Gators) particularly in large groves. If we get into an area like Fellsmere Farms, we can take a couple of vehicles out there and leave them in the property the whole time we are in there, decontaminate when we leave and it would expedite moving through those areas and there would be less contact with trees and better visibility than we do if driving. **Leon** said he thinks this will expedite the surveys. The other thing is we are going to hone in on the varieties that are most susceptible, in other words the varieties that the disease seems to move into from our past experience. That is primarily grapefruit; also seems to be primarily grapefruit blocks in which growers attempted harvesting early fruit; in other words, they spot picked in and out to get the correct size fruit and fruit that meets the maturity requirements. Possibly, it also has to do with the fact that it is that time of year so there may be other factors that we do not fully understand. Most of the disease that we have detected has been in grapefruit and it has also been in groves that were historically early and there was a lot of activity in them to release early fruit. The strange thing is some of these groves in the Immokalee groves were receiving 70 pounds of copper per year. **Leon** said that indicates to him if we had to live with citrus canker, that copper would be of no benefit at all.

Richard Gaskalla said, to wrap up the Statewide survey, just a comment he would like to make is that we could have the Statewide survey completely staffed and running now if we wanted to, but we choose to be a little more selective in our hiring practices. We are trying to get good, qualified people that are going to be with us for awhile that can do a good job for us who will practice the right kind of decontamination and sanitation as they go in and out of these properties and work with the growers to make sure that we are getting the job done, but we are making pretty good progress. **Richard** mentioned that he and **Leon** will be meeting today to select their office supervisor for the Fort Pierce office and then we will get that staffed up. We are going to continue to build this Statewide survey beyond the commercial groves with some type of biometric survey into the residential areas and maybe even pick up a more frequent inspection of some of the citrus nurseries. **Richard** said the point he is trying to make is that this program is going to be with us for a long time and we need to build the right kind of infrastructure and get it staffed to where it is efficient.

Question: Have your personnel requirements increased over what they were six months ago

and how far are we along in meeting those requirements today versus what we predicted six months ago?

Richard Gaskalla answered, that actually, the number of people that we need particularly in South Florida has decreased and that is because we have changed our strategy away from intensified survey up to 1,900 feet destruction radius of citrus so if you go in and find a tree and go out to 1,900 feet, there is no reason to go in there and look anymore; you remove all that citrus, then that is an area we don't have to survey again. We are going to reprogram some of the survey money into control. As far as Statewide resources, they are about the same level as they were. **Richard** said he thinks now that we can run this program with 1,000 employees rather than 1,800-1,900 we were talking about earlier; however, 1,000 is still a lot of people to manage.

Update on The Sun City Center Area

Wendell Bowman reported that they are working Sun City Center out of the Palmetto office and they have completed their 125 feet in December; they destroyed 102 trees; 56 of those were positive; 46 exposed and we now going to do the 1,900 feet. There are people in the area that are mapping the properties and they are 90 percent complete in mapping all the properties. There are approximately 2,000 trees; actual count, yesterday, was 1,850 that we have documented. We have 221 residences that have been served the paper work; 145 of those have signed waivers which means we can get the trees right away. We have 76 that refused to sign waivers when handed immediate final orders (IFOs) and the last two or three days have hampered us due to the inclement weather, but there are 112 IFOs ready to be delivered just as soon as the weather clears. They have been receiving some complaints. They have let a bid for the control work and as soon as they get the contractors selected, they will be cutting up to 1,900 feet. They are on their third survey in the Sun City Center area and they have already completed the survey of the core area and have not come up with any more positives. The same is true of Palmetto - they are in Duette now and the last find there was December 1. Hopefully, they will not find any more canker there.

Update on Dade and Broward Counties

Residential Situation

Ken Bailey reported that the total number of trees destroyed is now 187,947 trees on 86,244 residential properties. The number of employees is about 700 in the South Florida area. The quarantine area has been expanded to encompass about 570 square miles and of that, positive material was found in 312 sections.

Grove Situation

Ken Bailey stated on January 10, 2000, they found the first positive property in a 7 ½ acre lime grove. Since that time, they have surveyed 1,310 acres and of the 1,310 acres, 39 groves are positive involving - 1,110 acres; 15 groves have been destroyed for a total of 320 acres; there are four exposed groves that fall within 1,900 feet or less. We are taking the affected properties which represent 33 acres and there are only six groves (97 acres) that have been negative. It appears that the epicenter so far is on 212 Avenue and 144 Street which is just about the center of the lime production area. There are 67 pomelo trees used as a windbreak and those lesions date back close to one year which means that they were there for all the major weather phenomenons

of this past year, maybe as far back as the "no name" storm in the Spring of 1999. We are receiving cooperation from the lime growers. They are not willing to sign the waiver because for some reason, they feel that would be relinquishing their rights in the future if any compensation should become available, but most of them want to get the machinery in and knock the groves down the day that the confirmation is received back from the laboratory. Unfortunately, legally, we can't do that because if they don't sign the waiver, we have to wait five days. Craig Meyer and the General Council are reviewing that to see if that is something that can be changed in the future. Weather has hampered the efforts to burn because of the winds and many of the counties in the State have a real strict burning requirement although the County Fire Department has been very cooperative with us. They keep an inspector on site and he is pretty flexible.

Ken Bailey talked further about the lime grove area, the groves that they have surveyed there, and the surveys they plan to do there.

Further discussion followed as to how the disease had gotten in the lime grove area, how it had been spread, sanitary precautions that had been practiced in these infected groves, survey that had been conducted there previously, etc.

Jim Griffiths asked about the pomelos that were found infected in that area and whether the stories that he has heard is that these pomelos may have had the disease for two years or longer? Wasn't that an allegation?

Xiaoan Sun remarked that, personally, he did not go to look at the infected trees, but from the lesions from the pomelos, it is very possible because the lesions were in the round wood, but he is not sure.

Jim Griffiths said well, let's say we are not sure, but had anybody ever looked at those particular pomelo trees in the planting?

Jim McKee stated that these pomelos that are showing the oldest lesions lie on the outside of an avocado grove, not a commercial citrus grove. There were commercial citrus groves in the area that we were doing surveys on but we had not done residential surveys down in Florida City. We made it as far as Homestead but had not gotten back because of the movement of the disease we had in the quarantine area and trying to get the surveys done to find out how big an area we actually did have in the residential spots. Yes, the lesions were old on those trees and they were back on round wood, but this thing was on the outside of the avocado grove and we were not looking at avocado groves; we were concentrating on primarily citrus groves. Now we find out that some of these avocado growers are planting grapefruit trees and everything else and they are scattered among these avocados and we now have to start to look at these to find out if there are any scattered trees for this disease because this owner was using this for his own personal use. He was using it to give to his church in Hollywood, Florida (in Broward County) and he has been doing that religiously.

Ken Bailey said to clarify that further, these trees that were inside that avocado grove that was being used for this gentleman's own personal use were nine commercial variety of trees that were

left there from an old homestead. The owner did not go in and intentionally plant these trees inside the avocado trees; however, when we found the 30-acre block, we have found where people have come in and pushed out avocado trees in established avocado groves and have replaced them with lime trees and that is not showing up on any of our records as being a commercial production grove and yet when you have 20 rows of limes that are 1/4 mile long, that certainly makes it criteria for a commercial grove.

Tim Gottwald said it seems that the problem throughout the State of Florida is finding the small infected areas that are non-commercial setting - homesteads and this could be true anywhere in any rural or urban homestead scattered through the State and perhaps we could redirect efforts in that direction. It seems to be a recurring scenario that it is always found that the source is in some sort of a homestead situation. Even in the Smoak Grove in the early 90s - it was a homestead situation and this seems to happen over and over again.

Mike Shannon commented that this is also true of fruit fly problems. One of the advantages we have there, is that we have fruit fly trappers also doing survey for citrus canker.

Craig Meyer said he appreciated Tim Gottwald's insight on this. The good news, as Mike mentioned, is that we have our fruit fly trappers and their protocol calls for them to move their traps as they check them so they are in the urban areas, principally, and they are moving in citrus so we are getting at least some inspections there. They are moving 40,000 traps, four times each year so that is 160,000 locations where a person who has been trained to look for citrus canker is hanging those traps, for the most part, in citrus trees, so even if there are about 140,000 observations, it is a good start towards this kind of focusing effort.

Richard Gaskalla said what you have to do and what Tim is alluding to, is that you got to "keep all the balls in the air." You have to look at commercial areas to satisfy your trading partners that there is no disease there, but, really your biggest risk is probably non-commercial people movement from one urban area to another so we have to factor that into our residential survey and we plan to do that. **Richard** added that personally, he doesn't think we will be able to look at every residence in the State on a short cycle such as every quarter, so we can work with some statistical groups to come up with a valid program, even a biometric survey, to give us some confidence that if the disease is in an urban area that you will find it by looking, for example, at ten properties per square mile biased towards key lime and grapefruit. Those are the things we need to work on and incorporate into the program.

Key Bailey mentioned that in talking with people who lived in Florida for a long time, one person told him about a 40-acre lime grove that was on a key in Key Biscayne that had been abandoned but still is producing limes. **Ken** said he doesn't know if we have ever surveyed it; however, they will be surveying that Monday. This is a real problem and as long as there is a chance that there is feral citrus somewhere, we will never be able to say that we have inspected every know citrus planting in Florida.

Quarantine Zone - Publication in the Federal Register

Mike Hornyak reported that the USDA is very, very close to publishing the new proposed

quarantine boundaries in the Federal Register. They have had that ready to go, thanks to Dr. Poe, but **Mike** has some other things on hold until they can get the South Dade situation delimited. It is difficult for the USDA to make quarantine boundary changes since they do have to publish it in the Federal Register, but we didn't want to do it twice in rapid succession. We wanted to hold up until we get South Dade delimited and do it all at once. I had notice from Leon Hebb that the State has gone ahead and published the Sun City Center quarantine, so the USDA is a little behind on this but per our the cooperative agreement, the USDA needs to publish the quarantine in the Federal Register. **Mike** mentioned and praised the media for the balanced coverage they are giving us. They are doing a fine job in educating the public and there is more an awareness than ever before about the dangers of moving plant materials.

Craig Meyer requested Mike Hornyak to hold up on publishing the quarantine area until he can get together with him next week. **Craig** wanted to give everyone an early warning that while the lime growers are cooperating in the removal of the lime trees, they are not necessarily cooperating in spirit with the rest of the program. **Craig** met with a group of them on Tuesday. They have engaged an outside scientist to review Dr. Gottwald's work.. They have five lawyers and three other law firms writing away at all of the various underpinnings of our program and he expects to hear more from them. The Commissioner and **Craig** are going back down to Homestead tomorrow to meet again. The group that he met with represented ca 3/4 of the acreage either by ownership or by management, and they have a strong feeling about the quarantine area being limited to the immediate area. They were quite strong about actually having a continuous quarantine area all the way up to our existing southern boundary (which makes no sense to **Craig**), but **Craig** is going to quiz the lime people again in depth on that issue because of the restrictions it puts on the fruit movement.

Steve Poe asked **Craig** if he has received any feedback from the nursery people there because when you get down in that area, there seems to be a tropical foliage nursery in almost every section, and while they are not primary producers of citrus, there is a fair amount of citrus nursery stock down there.

Craig Meyer said that is precisely another group to consider if you are moving the quarantine zone beyond the tighter limit, as it will be an impact on those people.

Steve Poe said he doesn't think that those people are selling nursery stock to groves, other than people who are growing limes but there is a whole lot of dooryard nursery stock that goes into the retail trade down there.

Craig Meyer said that is another issue - should anyone be selling retail citrus in this environment and an issue that he is very uncomfortable with is the replanting of citrus anywhere in Dade/Broward Counties - whether it is in a quarantine zone or not.

Mike Hornyak agreed that they would wait until they heard from **Craig** before publication of the quarantine.

Discussion on Possible Future Law Suits

Craig Meyer discussed his ideas as to what he expected further lawsuits might entail and he mentioned if we see the litigation, it will be about over the issue from 125 feet to 1,900 feet and the point he wanted to make is that in the case of an injunction, from the latest science we have, if we got pushed back to only taking out the 125 feet, we will lose the battle.

Question: What kind of liability do the injunctees put themselves in? Don't they put themselves in legal jeopardy?

Craig Meyer replied that is exactly our first line of defense if anyone asks for an injunction. We will insist on a bond and we insist that the value of the bond is somewhat related to the value of the citrus industry, which is a bond that is so high, no one will be able to leap that hurdle. That is our first line of defense.

More discussion.

Compensation and Crop Insurance

Jim Griffiths advised that we have "Shade Dade" and the monies go forward and you have the rules laid down and you know what the compensation is. For the commercial groves, you don't even have a good sound inventory (i.e., how many trees, what kind and what kind of setting in the groves were actually pushed out and destroyed, and to what extent they were exposed or not?) How can you proceed with a compensation program if you don't have a good inventory? **Dr. Griffiths** said he has not heard from anyone who has good inventory. The crop insurance, in his opinion, stinks.

Steve Poe told Jim that the \$15 million provided the money for the continuation of the "Shade Dade" and other monies, was not very thoroughly described in the compensation which was a midnight rider in the budget resolution bill in January. **Steve** said it came as a surprise to them. It was nothing that they had any input on and he is not sure how much input there was in Florida on that.

Craig Meyer said we are in the process of putting that plan in place. We, the government, received this largess.

Steve Poe said we didn't shop for that and the amounts that were selected just sort of came out of "thin air."

Jim Griffiths remarked, not to worry about how they got the appropriation, here. Maybe it has some basis, but what he is saying is when you are planning a compensation program and you are worried about lawsuits, and you are worried about this 1,900 feet and we are not doing any better than what we are, we need to make sure this money is fairly distributed in terms of value of replacement. Whether you are going to destroy those which the law says you don't have to pay for, which is up to 125 feet, but certainly has not said about further than that, so that is an issue and that represents most of the trees. But, until you know something about what you are talking about, you can't settle with somebody. **Jim** says he is disturbed at the rate at which he is seeing concrete information on the compensation program coming forward.

Connie Riherd commented that we do have good records on what has been destroyed, etc.

Jim Griffiths said he wanted to see it by block, variety, tree setting and by age.

Mike Shannon advised that the structure of this does not require that information in order to make it operate, but the industry has put together the economic stuff behind this.

Leon Hebb reported that he can give this information on nearly every block that we have had as far as what was exposed and that type of thing, but to put it into one document as an overall picture is a very difficult thing to do because they are different size blocks to begin with, they are over a period of time. Manatee Fruit Company is over a period of time from 1986 to the present and it is very difficult to demonstrate in one document what has been done.

Jim Griffiths said he has no argument - basically, the figures are there but nobody has yet to put them together and you are talking about compensation, yet the people who are talking about it have never seen the numbers. It seems to him it is difficult to do, and he would not want to attempt it.

Richard Gaskalla said that we could give some of the decision makers the general information which we can follow up with more detailed information when the time comes.

Mike Shannon talked about the Congressional direction that they were bound to follow and that they were able to draw down \$9 million from the Credit Corporation to reimburse commercial citrus producers for trees that had been taken because of citrus canker. **Mike** further elaborated on the plan and mentioned that the Congress's intent is not about paying for each tree lost but is to put commercial citrus growers back into business for the business they lost when their trees were taken because of citrus canker, not buying the trees. The language in the bill is to compensate growers up until either December 31, 1999, or the time they could have obtained crop insurance.

Craig Meyer said that the conclusion at the meeting was that we were not going to count trees. We were not going to pay for trees that were 125 feet - we have never paid for them and we don't have to pay for them. The response of the people gathered was to get away from the tree concept and to identify the group of people in the time frame of the congressional language, who they were and how much acreage they had - what is the cost for putting the trees back on the land and back to production? The number of people in the acreage are fixed and the amount of money is fixed and the time frame is closed so the number of people will never expand - fixed number of people - fixed amount of money. Regardless how much the actual economic value is of putting these people back into business, they can only get a prorated share of the \$9 million. Since there was no beginning date set in this program, they had to reach back and pull in 600 to 700 additional acres in the late 1980s where there was A-strain removal there, so they add that into the pot.

Jim Griffiths remarked that may be a darn good approach, but part of what you are trying to do is prevent law suits.

Question: Do they have crop insurance for limes?

Craig Meyer said that the crop insurance for citrus became available in mid November in Dade County so a rider was attached to their policies on December 15.

More discussion regarding compensation and crop insurance ensued.

Also discussed were survey needs and a plan for aggressive control action (removal of trees 1,900 feet from positive trees) and project personnel needs.

Regulatory Issues Working Group

Sanitary Requirements

Connie Riherd (in George Hamner's absence) reported that the last time they met as a task force, they talked about the issue of whether or not they are going to have Statewide requirements for decontamination regardless of whether or not properties are in a quarantine area. In a quarantine area, it is required, but outside of the quarantine area, it is not. There are certain factions that think that should be required. The major industry groups have gone on record as not supporting that. At the last meeting, George reported to the group that the Regulatory Issues Working Group did not come to a consensus on this issue; and are almost equally divided between regulators on one side and industry representatives on the other. All the regulators think it is a good idea and the industry representatives were far more opposed to mandatory requirements. They talked last meeting about having some type of rules development workshop so they could get additional input into whether or not they wanted to proceed with some sort of formal requirements. They modified compliance agreements so that they would only require what they think is most important and scheduled another regulatory working group meeting. They met again on January 14, 2000. It is important to point out that was after they found disease on the lime groves and had an update on that situation so what came out of that meeting was with knowledge of what happened in the lime groves as well. Essentially what came out of that meeting is that they did not come to any kind of agreement as whether decontamination should be required. The outcome is that in lieu of those requirements, we want to have a renewed educational effort and Andy LaVigne and the Educational Issues Working Group did spend some time on that. We did at that meeting discuss the proposed changes and the modified compliance agreements (**Connie** mentioned that she had copies of the modified compliance agreements for all those interested). George promised at that meeting that he would try to condense it to a one-pager on decontamination and he did that (**Connie** said she also had some extra copies of that, as well.)

Craig Meyer asked **Connie** if there was agreement on what the decontamination should be, if they had to follow them.

Connie Riherd said she thinks there is some kind of general agreement on that but they did not talk about it in great detail because they didn't support it and didn't want to spend too much time on this.

Comment: Some of the questions the industry people had were: If they make this a law in the

State, are they going to have to pull current employees out of the Citrus Canker Eradication Program to enforce this program and will that, in fact, make the project short of labor?. The emphasis on almost of the grower organizations is that we need to concentrate on frequency of survey and elimination of positive trees in this State, and we don't need to do anything to take away from that so there were a lot of us that weren't clear on the economics of this law and, basically, how it was going to be enforced and would it, in fact, help anything if we can't enforce it.

Connie Riherd remarked that they did discuss that and Leon had some figures from the last program where they had Statewide requirements and that took a regulatory staff of 40 or more people Statewide.

Jim Griffiths asked if it is a good thing to do, is there a way to say "do it" to production people and the harvesting people and spell out what it is they are supposed to do and then tell the grower who is going to be involved, "if they do get canker, *"your people have not been doing these things so the chances of your getting any compensation are going to be very remote."* There should be some penalties on failure to do what we know to do to protect ourselves and then if we are unwilling, then we don't deserve compensation. **Jim** says he doesn't know how that can be worked out, but it seems there should be responsibility. There should be self-enforcement.

Mike Shannon stated it sounds to him that they need to include that it into the crop insurance and they will move to do that.

Comment: That is a valid point and we talked about an educational program and laid out these decontamination procedures. We probably need to step up that program more. Informed grove owners are going to enforce the program more than anybody else.

Connie Riherd advised that the Department could move forward to require the sanitation measures, but the group did not agree on that, but this body is just advisory in nature.

Mike Shannon remarked that the reason why there wasn't agreement in some people's minds was that they thought it would bring down our resources to enforce that from more important things the program should be doing and the second reason is that they don't like the government and feel it is none of their business.

Richard Gaskalla said another point is that those figures Leon put together probably included checking the packing houses to ensure they were following proper procedures for decontamination of fruit and we are not talking about that here.

More discussion relative to sanitation procedures ensued.

Ken Bailey stated that he thinks it directly relates to "how much insurance do you want to buy" for your own protection. Does the grower want to make sure; does he want to take the extra_

steps. It is in the grower's interest to follow good sanitation practices.

Connie Riherd said that there are some of the growers who said they are protecting themselves but they were worried about their neighbor who isn't.

Comment: This task force is charged with protecting the industry; not themselves.

Comment: Concerning Statewide mandatory requirements, one of the things that bothers them a little bit is that there are people on that committee that are not doing it yet because they think if they start to do it, they are going to run off the contractors, the herbicide people, run their cost up, etc. You don't decide that when you are making a decision in your own business - you decide on economics and value, worth, and return to you. If this is a Statewide requirement, you are going to bring in all kind of things and yes, we believe it will distract from what you are trying to do in the key hot spot areas and people will not do any more than what they are presently doing until somebody comes and "wraps them on the knuckles" or rides by and "calls their hands on it". They just don't see a Statewide requirement forcing it if the people really don't want to do it. Maybe we could get copies of the Miami Herald for the last ten days. He is concerned that growers, caretakers, contractors, and others just feel it is not in their backyard and somehow we have to convey that it might already be there. We don't disagree with any of the sanitation requirements.

More discussion followed.

Risk Assessment Report

Wayne Dixon explained the risk assessment process. It is a very involved process. They have people coming in who are charged up about the risk assessment group looking at a number of trees and how many they are going to recommend to be cut and they try to factor that into the biology of what they are dealing with. **Wayne** mentioned that he had a one-page write-up explaining the citrus canker risk assessment guidelines, which is being fine-tuned, and a check list of the factors they use as they go through the process of risk assessment (see attachments for full details.)

Question: How long does the risk assessment process take?

Wayne Dixon answered that the biggest thing that it dictates on is how fast he can get the group together, traveling, etc. But mostly it is about seven to ten days with the ones they have been dealing with, but if someone comes in with 100 of them, that is going to suffer unless they can find a way to lump them together.

Wayne Dixon explained the checklist that the risk assessment group use to make their recommendations.

Jim Griffiths said he heard that the scientists make a recommendation and the politicians do

something different. What are we talking about?

Craig Meyer advised that prior to today, there has been no politics involved. There is one that has come to his attention that he needs further clarification (it's not a lime issue); however, it one that he thinks the Risk Assessment Group has overstepped our legal authority on and we will have to have a discussion on it. There is no political influence on the risk assessments at all.

Xiaoan Sun showed and explained slides depicting the control work and spread of citrus canker in four commercial groves that had been found positive in 1999.

Public Relations/Education Issues Working Group

Andy LaVigne advised what they are trying to do, and they will get a note out to the task force and ask them to forward to everyone else that is here, is focus on the grower community and the people that are most likely to transmit the disease - grove caretakers, harvesting, etc. They have put a small group together to focus on the issue (i.e., people that have to be certified with the State, licensed labor contractors, licensed pesticide applicators, licensed dealers as well as anybody else that they know is in the grove care business, hedging and topping.) They are going to be working with the Commissioner's office and will be sending out first class letters to all the growers they have a list of, and focus on them from the prospective of, if they sign a contract with anyone to do work in their grove, they need to ask them about sanitary practices. Then from the grove care side, if they are in groves, they need to incorporate the sanitary measures into their practices. **Andy** said at the regulatory meeting, there were some folks that felt they should go to mandatory regulations such as in quarantine sites and there were folks who said they would like to do that, but it would take away from the focus of eradication in finding the disease around the State. They need to find middle ground and try to focus on it to the industry. That is going back to the first draft that this group pulled together that says, here are the vulnerable areas and here are the actions they can take. They are also going down to growers annual meetings that any grower group has and they will pull together information packets. The extension service is working on pulling together a training program that they will incorporate into their other presentations - whether the program is on production, they will also be talking about citrus canker to increase citrus canker awareness. **Andy** said he will be getting all this information to the task force and they will be moving forward with all of this trying to increase this awareness. They realize that there are a large number of growers in this State that probably have 200 acres and less. They probably very seldom go into the grove throughout the year. They don't know when their fruit is being harvested or when the hedging and topping are taking place since they are not there for a lot of these activities so the only awareness is when they are signing contracts that their handlers, grove takers, etc., are asking those questions. There are two videos in the making; they are working with Connie Riherd and the Division of Plant Industry on one and one video to incorporate something into Worker's Protection Standards, as well.

Next meeting is tentatively set for four to six weeks from this date.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Attachments -

- 1) Citrus Canker Risk Assessment Guidelines
- 2) Citrus Canker Risk Assessment Risk Factor (Variables) Checklist