

**MINUTES**  
**JOINT MEETING OF THE SCIENCE ISSUES WORKING GROUP (SIWG)**  
**AND THE REGULATORY ISSUES WORKING GROUP**  
**FLORIDA CITRUS CANCKER TECHNICAL ADVISORY TASK FORCE**

June 30, 1999 10:00 AM

Indian River Citrus League Office, Vero Beach, FL

George Hamner opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Tom Jerkins also extended a welcome to the attendees.

CITRUS CANCKER ERADICATION PROGRAM UPDATE

Richard Gaskalla and Leon Hebb gave a Citrus Canker Program Update concentrating on the recent find in Collier County which occurred outside the quarantine area. A suspect sample was collected Friday, June 25. Preliminary diagnostic work indicates that disease is present in two grove blocks. There are 28 positive trees in a 64 acre block and 7 trees in a cluster in a 40 acre block approximately 2 ½ miles from the previous known positive groves in Collier County. The new outbreak is in Section 5, Township 48, Range 30. The grove was last surveyed April 4. There is evidence that the disease has been there 6 or 7 months. They do not yet know how it came in.

Tim Gottwald pointed out that with the current weather conditions, we should expect to see more infection in this area.

George Hamner reminded the group that the main purpose of the two groups meeting together was that the Regulatory Issues Working Group asked the SIWG to look at several issues, and we now need to determine if additional regulatory action is appropriate.

MOVEMENT OF CITRUS NURSERY STOCK FROM QUARANTINE AREAS

The first issue concerned the movement of citrus nursery stock, and George called on Chuck Reed to advise the group of several issues he wished to discuss. Chuck said he wanted it clarified that the SIWG was adamant on not permitting citrus nursery stock movement from quarantine areas even if the nursery was under a 30 day inspection cycle and undergoing strict decontamination procedures. The SIWG confirmed that this was their position.

He also asked for clarification on the length of quarantines and whether or not this should be specified. The SIWG said no, a quarantine period might need to be longer in duration based on various conditions.

Chuck asked about the movement of citrus nursery stock from quarantine areas to non-citrus producing states. There was some concern expressed about plants coming back into Florida, but the Agricultural Inspection Stations prevent that from occurring. This is an issue for the USDA to address, and Steve

Poe was supposed to investigate this issue. The SIWG agrees that this is acceptable as long as the plants are moved in an enclosed container and proper safeguards are in place. The Regulatory Issues Working Group deferred action until the USDA responds regarding compatibility with federal regulations.

Chuck asked that the issue of nursery blocks be clarified. When quarantines are enacted, the only blocks that should be affected are those within the quarantine area and not other blocks located outside of this area. Everyone agreed that this was correct.

Motion made by Chuck Reed and seconded by John Barben: Citrus nursery blocks outside of citrus canker quarantine areas which are under the same ownership or management as nurseries within quarantine areas will not be subject to citrus canker regulations.

Motion Passed Unanimously

The last issue Chuck raised concerned the replanting of commercial groves within quarantine areas. Some growers within these areas have orders pending which could be affected by this. It was understood that this did not concern the policy of prohibiting the replanting of dooryard trees which remain as written. There was considerable discussion on the length of time which growers should wait before replanting positive groves, etc. Earlier action by the Regulatory Issues Working Group said that commercial grove planting should be permitted in quarantine areas based on risk assessment; however, the SIWG has not reviewed this issue.

There was general agreement that this should be referred to the SIWG for review.

#### NONPOROUS LADDERS/PICKING TUBS

The next agenda item was the use of nonporous ladders, picking tubs, etc. in quarantine areas. The SIWG said that this is recommended but should not be mandatory.

Motion made by Gregory Carlton and seconded by John Barben: The Regulatory Issues Working Group adopts the SIWG recommendation that the use of nonporous ladders, picking tubs, etc. in quarantine areas not be mandatory but be recommended.

Motion Passed Unanimously

#### HEDGING/TOPPING IN QUARANTINE AREAS

Dr. Pete Timmer gave a brief summary of the issue paper he developed on this subject. He does not recommend prohibiting hedging or topping in quarantine areas, but it should not be done on a frequent basis. Some level of hedging is needed preferably not during high risk periods for disease expression and spread. If it is not done, then the tree canopies grow together resulting in increased foliage contact by other grove equipment, and this can interfere with survey work. An inspection of the grove should take place prior to hedging or topping.

There was general agreement to accept the SIWG recommendation based on Dr. Timmer's work that hedging and topping should not be prohibited, but the charts should be revised to incorporate his recommendations particularly the one regarding prior inspections.

### FRUIT MOVEMENT FROM CITRUS CANKER QUARANTINE AREAS TO CITRUS PRODUCING STATES

California is opposed to permitting fruit movement from quarantine areas to other citrus producing states. A compromise to resolve the problem of intrastate movement of this fruit was to ask the USDA to allow movement within Florida as a pilot project to demonstrate safeness. George Hamner was reluctant to endorse this without bringing it before the Regulatory Issues Working Group.

Mike Hornyak said they did not even know if the Office of General Counsel would agree to this, but the issue has not yet been presented to them for an opinion.

Dr. J. T. Griffiths said that we should not relax the current regulations because it might jeopardize the European market.

Richard Kinney said that the industry groups had agreed to this because it was supported by sound science. They are looking at the bigger picture on how the industry would be affected if larger areas were quarantined.

Andy LeVigne said we must make sure the science is sound as we move forward before we agree to a pilot program because of non-tariff barriers such as phytosanitary issues. If California does not want it, this may send a negative message to Europe. He wants to take the revised biological assessment to Washington and meet with delegates and the USDA to get this moved higher on the agenda.

**Motion made by Gregory Carlton and seconded by Calving Lloyd: The Regulatory Issues Working Group recommends that we continue to pursue fruit movement from citrus canker quarantine areas to all citrus producing states as previously stated and not limit it to movement only within Florida.**

Motion Passed Unanimously

### DISTANCE FACTORS FOR CITRUS CANKER EXPOSED TREE REMOVAL

Dr. Wayne Dixon described the position of the Citrus Canker Risk Assessment Group - 9, Broward and Dade Counties. In summary they recommended that based on the research conducted by Dr. Tim Gottwald and Dr. Jim Graham:

- 1) Exposed trees should be removed from any property to a radius of 1900 feet from a positive citrus canker-infected tree.
- 2) The 1900-foot radius for removal of exposed trees should initially be implemented in all positive sections in Broward County and proceeding southwards as well as all positive sections in southern Dade County and proceeding northward. Control action for positive and exposed trees in the interior portion of the regulated area will consist of removal of positive and exposed trees from the positive

property and include all exposed citrus trees initially to a radius of 125 feet but would expand to 1900 feet from the positive trees as control action resources become available. Other program actions shall be in accordance with procedures as defined in the Citrus Canker Strategic Plan.

Leon Hebb said that he disagreed with this because you would be taking out a lot of negative trees and this could be used against you in court.

Mike Shannon said that the program needed a specific recommendation not just the group saying remove 1900 feet when you need to, because that leaves the program open to legal action and makes defending their policies difficult.

Ken Bailey said that the reason 125 feet failed is that we didn't have the resources to remove trees quickly and that resulted in subsequent infections.

Considerable discussion ensued over this agenda topic.

**Motion made by Gregory Carlton and seconded by John Barben: Mandate that all citrus trees up to 1900 feet of a citrus canker positive tree be removed based on risk assessment.**

**Motion Passed with Leon Hebb casting a dissenting vote.**

It was generally understood that the risk assessment as stated in the above motion had already been completed on dooryard trees in Dade and Broward Counties.

#### OTHER ISSUES

John Barben advised the group that the decontamination charts need to be revised to change all "optional's" to "recommended's". The SIWG will work on the modifications discussed today.

Richard Kinney said that we needed benchmarks to measure Citrus Canker Eradication Program progress or success.

Lisa Rath recommended that prior to August 1, the program needs to develop a list of dos and don'ts for packing houses and processors. We also need to keep other people who have need to enter groves, such as water management people, etc. of the decontamination requirements.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Connie Riherd  
July 2, 1999