

**Crisis Communications Plan and Protocol**  
Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program  
*Last Updated: Feb. 16, 2022*

**Purpose of Plan**

The following plan and protocol will be implemented when an HLB-positive tree or CLas-positive psyllid/nymph is detected in a commercial citrus grove located in California. In the instance of a crisis, it is critical to ensure consistency of message when communicating with target audiences. Additionally, collaboration and maximizing use of communication resources will be crucial for the CPDPP due to the large threat posed by HLB.

**Crisis Communications Management Team (CCMT)**

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Victoria Hornbaker | Director, Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention<br>Division<br>CDFA                                      | Office: 916-403-6652<br>Cell: 916-261-1498<br>Email: <a href="mailto:victoria.hornbaker@cdfa.ca.gov">victoria.hornbaker@cdfa.ca.gov</a> |
| David Gutierrez    | Branch Chief, Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention<br>Division<br>CDFA                                  | Office:<br>Cell: 916-704-4714<br>Email: <a href="mailto:david.gutierrez@cdfa.ca.gov">david.gutierrez@cdfa.ca.gov</a>                    |
| Norm Mullaly       | USDA<br>California State Citrus<br>Operations Coordinator   | Office: 916-930-5510<br>Cell:<br>Email: <a href="mailto:norm.mullaly@usda.gov">norm.mullaly@usda.gov</a>                                |
| Helene Wright      | California State Plant<br>Health Director Animal<br>and Plant Health<br>Inspection Service/<br>USDA | Office: 916-281-4283<br>Email:<br><a href="mailto:Helene.R.Wright@aphis.usda.gov">Helene.R.Wright@aphis.usda.gov</a>                    |
| Steve Lyle         | Office of Public Affairs<br>CDFA  | Office: 916-654-0462<br>Cell:<br>Email: <a href="mailto:steve.lyle@cdfa.ca.gov">steve.lyle@cdfa.ca.gov</a>                              |
| David Pegos        | Plant Health and Pest<br>Prevention Services<br>CDFA  | Office: 916-654-0433<br>Cell:<br>Email: <a href="mailto:david.pegos@cdfa.ca.gov">david.pegos@cdfa.ca.gov</a>                            |
| Jay Van Rein       | Office of Public Affairs<br>CDFA  | Office: 916-654-0462<br>Cell:<br>Email: <a href="mailto:jay.vanrein@cdfa.ca.gov">jay.vanrein@cdfa.ca.gov</a>                            |
| Mark McBroom       | Chair<br>CPDPC  | Office: 760-348-9670<br>Cell: 760-497-3966<br>Email: <a href="mailto:desertcitrus@aol.com">desertcitrus@aol.com</a>                     |
| Etienne Rabe       | Vice Chair<br>CPDPC   | Cell: 661-337-0860<br>Email: <a href="mailto:etienne.rabe@wonderful.com">etienne.rabe@wonderful.com</a>                                 |
| Price Adams        | Executive Vice President<br>Nuffer, Smith, Tucker   | Office: 619-296-0605, ext. 234<br>Cell: 714-313-4636  |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | Email: <a href="mailto:pa@nstpr.com">pa@nstpr.com</a>   |
| Casey Creamer                                   | President,<br>California Citrus Mutual                                    | Office: 559-592-3790<br>Cell: 559-706-3640<br>Email: <a href="mailto:Casey@cacitrusmutual.com">Casey@cacitrusmutual.com</a>   |
| Alexis Silveira                                 | Director of Membership<br>and Communications,<br>California Citrus Mutual | Office: 559-592-3790<br>Cell: 559-901-7023<br>Email: <a href="mailto:alexis@cacitrusmutual.com">alexis@cacitrusmutual.com</a> |
| Marcy Martin                                    | President,<br>Citrus Research Board                                       | Office: 559-738-0246<br>Cell: 559-708-3791<br>Email: <a href="mailto:marcy@citrusresearch.org">marcy@citrusresearch.org</a>   |
| County Agricultural<br>Commissioner's<br>Office | <i>Dependent on location<br/>of find</i>                                  |   |
| Regional Grower<br>Liaison                      | <i>Dependent on location<br/>of find</i>                                  |   |
| Environmental<br>Program Manager I              | <i>Dependent on location<br/>of find</i>                                  | Determined by CDFA  |

*Note: Technical experts will be brought in as needed.*

#### **Flow of Communication in Response to Positive HLB/CLas Detection in Commercial Grove:**

1. The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) lab detects a positive sample and sends it to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for confirmation.
  - o Note: If the sample is from an independent lab permitted by CDFA or a USDA-NPPLAP approved lab, the lab is required to notify CDFA/USDA authorities first.
2. USDA notifies CDFA of confirmation of positive lab results for a new detection.
3. CDFA notifies the county agricultural commissioner (CAC) and informs him/her of action that will be taken by CDFA. CAC is asked to join the Crisis Communication Management Team (CCMT) call (see below) and an Incident Command System (ICS) call for the incident.
4. The grower of the grove with the positive sample is notified by CDFA and they discuss next regulatory steps with the grower. CDFA will request discretion in sharing this information prior to a formal announcement.
5. CDFA calls together the CCMT and others, as determined by CDFA, for an ICS call. The local agricultural commissioner will be included.
  - o Note: This should take place on the same day of grower notification.
6. Within 12 hours of the initial call, Nuffer, Smith, Tucker (NST) edits messaging listed in this document to fit the scenario and shares it with the CCMT.
7. CDFA notifies the CPDPC, Grower Liaisons, California Citrus Mutual (CCM) and Citrus Research Board (CRB) leadership via an email notification.
  - o Note: NST to assist CDFA with messaging to Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC) and Grower Liaison, as this notification is likely to be shared with others.

8. CDFA, NST and CAC coordinate on drafting a press release announcing the detection. CDFA is required to be the first to issue the press release and official announcement. NST will distribute the press release via Citrus Insider (and to key media contacts), following the official announcement by CDFA or the CAC.
  - NO EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION MAY OCCUR PRIOR TO THE PRESS RELEASE BEING DISTRIBUTED BY CDFA. Once CDFA issues the press release, external communication is authorized to take place.
9. Once external communication is authorized, CDFA and/or the local Grower Liaison will notify growers within 250-meters of the detection and inform them of actions they should take that are required by CDFA. CDFA should also contact growers within the 5-mile quarantine area regarding new regulatory actions. Grower Liaisons should follow up with all growers to communicate the voluntary best practices approved by the committee in May 2019 and ensure they've been in contact with CDFA regarding regulatory actions.
10. CDFA and the county agricultural commissioner's office will work together to notify packinghouses and nurseries in the HLB quarantine area of the detection and required regulatory/mitigation steps. Grower Liaisons may work alongside the county to verify contacts and locations of key industry operations in the HLB quarantine area.
11. NST/CDFA notify key industry groups (farm bureau chapters, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) extension offices, Pest Control Districts, etc.) and provide templated information that groups can use to share with their members and offer the ability to present at upcoming meeting.
12. CDFA and NST to conduct outreach to elected officials in area where HLB was discovered; NST/CDFA to issue update to other city/county officials alerting them of the news; California Citrus Mutual (CCM) to work with state elected officials.
13. Pending CDFA public affairs' approval, NST will issue pitch/background material to reporters and pitch one-on-one interviews with the CDFA citrus program manager, county agricultural commissioner and/or a local CPDPC member to be included in any media coverage.
  - Media outreach should be:
    - 1) To trade media outlets (Ag Alert, The Packer, etc.)
    - 2) Hyperlocal to the community where HLB was discovered.
    - 3) To statewide media outlets.
    - 4) Key national media (agriculture/science reporters at national news publications).
14. Within two weeks of announcement of detection, it is recommended that the regional Grower Liaison host a grower meeting to communicate recommended voluntary actions and provide resources, either in person or virtually. The Grower Liaison should work with CDFA to ensure a CDFA employee is present and able to answer regulatory questions.

### **Key Message Guidance**

Any type of communication about the crisis incident (i.e., press releases, interviews, industry newsletters, etc.) should incorporate the following message guidance. NST will work with CDFA to finalize verbatim key messages once details on the crisis incident are established, and key messages will be shared with key partners for reference.

REMINDER: No external communication is authorized until CDFA's press release is issued.

### **Holding Statement Prior to Public Announcement**

*The following can be used as a holding statement in the case that an individual or organization is contacted by media or external members of the industry prior to a public announcement (step 8 above):*

- Please contact the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Division, as the department oversees regulatory testing of citrus plant material for HLB.

### **Positioning Statement**

By working together, California's citrus industry has kept HLB out of commercial groves for more than 10 years, and we must continue our vigilance to save our citrus trees and livelihood from this deadly disease.

### **Primary Messaging Concepts**

- While the confirmation of this deadly citrus disease in our state's groves is cause for serious concern, it does not signal defeat. It is more crucial than ever that we stop the disease from spreading by eradicating the Asian citrus psyllid in commercial groves.
- The cost to manage the Asian citrus psyllid is far less than any potential costs or loss to the industry should HLB take hold throughout our state.
- Stay informed about the Asian citrus psyllid and HLB and findings in your area:
  - Get to know your regional Grower Liaison.
  - Review the recommended voluntary grower actions in response to a detection.
  - Regularly visit and sign up for the industry e-newsletter at [CitrusInsider.org](http://CitrusInsider.org).

### **Additional Messaging Requirements**

Partners (i.e., Grower Liaisons, CCM, CRB and UC):

- Reminder on media protocol (CDFA/NST), media tracking log and flow of communication as outlined above
- Key messages
- High level overview of next steps from CDFA

### **Target Audiences**

- Citrus growers and in the 250-meter area surrounding the detection.
- The CAC(s), packinghouses, nurseries, haulers/transporters, Pest Control Advisors (PCA)s and other industry members in the 5-mile HLB quarantine.

- Other citrus industry members and organizations in the state and outside of the 5-mile HLB quarantine.
- Elected officials:
  - City/county (facilitated by CDFA and NST)
  - State/federal (facilitated by CDFA and CCM)
- Residents near the HLB detection.

### **Media Policies**

Individuals/entities who are approved to speak with media are CDFA, USDA, CAC and NST. If any other individual is contacted by the media for comment, they should direct the media to NST for further coordination. NST will then work with CDFA to identify next steps and the appropriate spokesperson.

Collaborative media relations are key to ensuring consistency of message and maximization of communication resources.

In the event of a crisis:

- All parties must communicate with each other to avoid duplicative efforts. In the case of a crisis, a media tracking log will be created by NST in Google Docs and all parties will be responsible to maintain the log on an ongoing basis, as least daily.
- NST will create a media tracking log, documenting media activities related to the crisis.
- NST will also provide ongoing media tracking reports of print, online and television coverage resulting from the crisis, and regularly share it with the Crisis Communications Management Team.

While we understand other parties outlined in this plan also have internal communication capabilities, all parties are always welcome to pass along inquiries to the NST team. Interviews on behalf of the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program should not be facilitated without prior consultation from NST or CDFA. CCM may facilitate interviews directly, however, interviews should be noted in the media tracking log. NST – and others – should pose the following questions to all media requesting interviews:

- Reporter name, title, beat
- Publication name
- Deadline
- Angle/questions
- Other sources
- Reporter knowledge level of the issue
- Expected air/run date

## Checklist for Grower Liaison in Impacted County

|    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | Participate in Crisis Communications Management Team call upon first notification of find. This call is confidential, and information shared during this call <b>cannot</b> be publicly shared.  |  |
| 2. | Before CDFA issues a press release, Grower Liaisons are encouraged to compile a list of contacts in<br>1) the 250-meter treatment area surrounding the detection and<br>2) any industry operations in the 5-mile quarantine area (including packinghouses, nurseries, etc.).<br>This information should be shared with CDFA/CAC for cross referencing.   |  |
| 3. | Press release is drafted by NST and approved by CDFA and CAC prior to release. Upon approval, NST will release it via Citrus Insider. <b>After release, external communication is approved.</b>  |  |
| 4. | Grower Liaisons reach out to network of growers after the press release is live. Notification to growers should include initial announcement and any recommended treatment/response actions growers should take within the 250-meter treatment area, and work with CDFA to ensure information about regulatory requirements of any operation in the 5-mile quarantine area is communicated. Grower Liaisons should follow up with growers to communicate the voluntary best practices. |  |
| 5. | Within two weeks of announcement, Grower Liaison should coordinate a grower meeting to communicate recommended voluntary actions and provide re sources, either in person or virtually. The Grower Liaison should work with CDFA to ensure a CDFA employee is present and able to answer regulatory questions. NST can help with coordination of meeting.  |  |
| 6. | Continued communication and inclusion of the detection on eblasts and other channels of communication encouraged for the weeks following.  |  |