

**U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Plant Protection and Quarantine**

**Citrus Greening Summit Findings and National Plan Development  
April 9, 2008**

**The Intent of the Citrus Greening Summit**

On December 17 and 18, 2007, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) hosted a Citrus Greening Summit in Bethesda, Maryland. APHIS organized the Summit recognizing that a regulatory approach alone could not adequately address the problems associated with this serious citrus disease. The Summit was convened to share and gather the latest information on the epidemiology of citrus greening (CG) and to discuss industry, State, and USDA strategies and activities to address the disease and its insect vector, the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP). A total of 65 sector leaders attended representing USDA agencies, State regulatory agencies in citrus-producing States, research institutions, and citrus and nursery industry-based organizations.

At the Summit, APHIS shared its plans to provide leadership in the development of a national plan to enhance cooperative prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities to safeguard the domestic citrus industry from CG and ACP. APHIS analyzed and condensed the information shared at the Summit and is reaching back to the participating sector representatives to determine the next steps toward developing a national plan that will result in an integrated and coordinated approach to conducting ongoing and future activities targeting these pests.

**Key Messages from the Summit**

Over the course of the Summit several recurring messages and action items were captured during discussions, presentations, and breakout sessions. Five key themes emerged. The five key themes included: 1) the need for strong and decisive leadership, 2) the need for enhanced and coordinated research, 3) the need for increased funding to support a wide array of activities, 4) the need for improved communication among all sectors, and 5) the need to improve coordination between the United States and Mexico to address potential pathways and to coordinate activities directed toward disease and vector control.

**Theme 1: Leadership**

Summit participants identified the need for national leadership to identify required resources and coordinate efforts to address the threat of CG and ACP. While attendees recognized that success will require the input of resources from multiple USDA, State, and industry organizations, it was also understood that APHIS was well positioned to provide overarching leadership and coordination. APHIS must strive to ensure that all

sectors are engaged to maximize coordination of effort so that all are empowered to address CG and ACP in an effective manner. Specifically, participants indicated that a more defined and focused national leadership is needed to address the following needs:

- Disseminating information across State and Federal Organizations and to industry.
  - Outreach
- Enhancing surveillance
- Timely and effective enforcement of regulations

### Theme 2: Research

Summit participants recognized that there is considerable interest and resources available for research on CG and ACP, but that there is a lack of coordination and standards for review and funding of research to ensure that efforts by Federal, State, industry, and academic institutions address key issues in a scientifically sound manner. Research findings are so important to advancing the fight against CG and ACP that mechanisms must be implemented to minimize lag-time between the finalization of research studies and the release of study results. Specific research needs that must be addressed include the following:

- Identification, prioritization, and coordination of essential CG and ACP research on a national basis
- Inventory past and ongoing CG and ACP research projects, domestically and internationally
- Establish a coordinated system to assess research redundancy
- Development of mitigations and Best Management Practices (BMP) for ACP control
- Understand the significance of the “edge effect” and determine how it could serve grove management efforts
- CG-resistant varieties for citrus production and nursery and ornamental stock
- Seed transmission to citrus, nursery, and ornamental stock needs to be characterized
- Improve early detection system
- Improved diagnostic capabilities

### Theme 3: Resources

Summit participants repeatedly identified the need to seek additional and alternative resources (human, fiscal, and physical) to support CG response activities and ACP management. The lack of practical technical solutions (mitigations) to accomplish these response and management efforts points to the importance of appropriately resourced research efforts to identify and develop effective mitigation tools and methods. Resource solutions to address both research and response needs discussed at the Summit go beyond the traditional reliance on Federal funds. Industry in particular recognizes that their

sector must play a significant role in financing initiatives to combat CG and ACP. Resource issues to be addressed include:

- Identify potential alternative funding sources (grants, non-Federal, etc.)
- Mechanism to prioritize resource support for critical research and response needs
- Identify specific State-based needs to address
- Consider resources from various USDA agencies to address CG and ACP based upon their roles, responsibilities, and authorities (e.g. NRCS, CSREES, etc)
- Funds to support Citrus Health Response Plan (CHRP)
  - Citrus fruit inspections at packing plants as well as CAPS surveys for key targeted citrus pests/diseases

#### Theme 4: Communication

Summit participants identified the need to enhance coordination of communication among Federal, State, and industry cooperators regarding CG and ACP regulatory, research, and funding activities. This is a common theme among all initiatives. APHIS will serve a primary role in compiling and disseminating information in support of national CG and ACP initiatives.

Areas needing improved communications include:

- Regulatory actions taken by Federal and State agencies and counterparts in Mexico
- Research projects conducted by and among: Federal, State, industry, and academic institutions
- Funding and resource needs for: Federal and State managed regulatory and research activities
- Convening regular calls to discuss key issues or concerns surrounding the domestic and international status as they relate to CG and ACP
- Keeping stakeholders and industry informed about CG and ACP developments
- Outreach efforts to raise overall public awareness about the CG and ACP threat to domestic citrus and nursery production

#### Theme 5: U.S.-Mexico Citrus Health

ACP infestations are present in citrus-producing areas of Mexico that are in close proximity to the United States border. Further, infestations in other citrus-producing areas within Mexico may result in movement of ACP into the United States via fruit shipment. Accordingly, Summit participants expressed concern that actions be taken to ensure that the geographic scope of the infestation is determined, monitoring for the potential presence of CG is ongoing and effective, and adequate safeguards are in place to mitigate the risk that trade from Mexico could serve as a potential pathway for either ACP or CG. Conversely, Mexico is concerned about the presence of ACP and CG in the United States.

Summit participants discussed the following actions related to Mexico:

- Development of U.S.-Mexico Best Management Practices for psyllid control
- GIS mapping for ACP along the U.S.-Mexico border
- Collaboration with Mexico to improve its diagnostic capabilities for CG and ACP

### **Moving Forward Toward a National Citrus Greening/ACP Plan**

APHIS officials have given careful consideration to the ideas raised at the Summit pertaining to potential approaches for improving our overall ability to protect the nation's citrus and nursery industries from CG and the ACP.

### **Next Steps**

The information sharing and discussions that occurred at the Citrus Greening Summit represented the initial step toward the development of a plan that would integrate activities among all sectors. APHIS is proposing that a plan of national scope be developed to integrate and coordinate existing and new activities in order to enhance prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts targeting CG and ACP. APHIS will work with representatives from States and Tribes, industry, and the scientific community to effectively address these needs identified in the Summit and those that are yet to be identified. Also, ultimate success in developing an effective National Plan for ACP and CG is dependent upon the recognition that the plan must be built upon the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of all parties.

The following key issues have been identified:

1. Leadership to Manage the Development of a National GG/ACP Plan, which would include:
  - National CG/ACP Coordinator: APHIS will identify a National CG/ACP Coordinator who will bring together Federal, State, Tribal, and stakeholder representatives to facilitate development of a National CG/ACP Plan. The role of the Coordinator will be to ensure that regulatory, research, resource, and other issues pertinent to controlling CG and ACP to prevent their further spread within the United States are managed appropriately and effectively.
  - Leadership Steering Committee: This committee will work with the National CG/ACP Coordinator to develop priorities related to the overall coordination of the action plans put forth by the CG/ACP workgroups. The Leadership Steering Committee will be comprised of the chairpersons of each of the CG/ACP workgroups.
2. The development of the National CG/ACP Plan and the coordination of activities to address CG and ACP issues will be facilitated by the following workgroups:

APHIS will work with key Federal, State, Tribal, and industry leaders and citrus experts to establish the four workgroups to address critical issue areas: Research, Resources, Communications, and U.S.-Mexico Citrus Health. Each workgroup will identify needs related to their issue area and determine appropriate plans of action for consideration by APHIS' National CG/ACP Coordinator and the Leadership Steering Committee. It must be noted that these workgroups will have no direct influence over Federal and State appropriations or regulatory activities.

- Research Workgroup: This workgroup will be charged with reviewing the current state of research associated with CG and ACP, sharing information with researchers and regulatory/industry end-users so that research projects can be coordinated and end-users will be apprised of potentially helpful scientific developments. It will be made up of key members of the Federal, State, industry, and academic research community specializing in citrus health and nursery production, especially those with specific experience with CG and ACP.
- Resources Workgroup: This workgroup will be charged with assessing and prioritizing resource needs to support CG and ACP research and management efforts. While Federal and State appropriations processes are beyond the scope of this workgroup's charge, the workgroup will seek to identify alternative resource options to support CG and ACP activities, including private sector sources and Federal grants. It will be made up of key Federal, State, and industry representatives with knowledge of the funding processes and needs of cooperative CG and ACP activities (through the Citrus Health Response Program or otherwise) or alternative sources of funding (grants and non-Federal sources) that can be sought.
- Communications Workgroup: This workgroup will seek to improve communication and information sharing among Federal, State, Tribal, industry, and research institutions engaged in CG and ACP management efforts. It will also work to raise overall public awareness about the threat and impact of CG and ACP to the domestic citrus and nursery industries. It will be made up of key Federal, State, industry, and research institution representatives and their associated public affairs specialists to discuss and consider internal communication issues among cooperators and ways to address external outreach needs.
- U.S.-Mexico Citrus Health Workgroup: This workgroup will seek to improve ongoing efforts to survey and delimit ACP populations in Mexico, CG diagnostic technology transfer and training, and the evaluation of potential pathway risks associated with containerized bulk fruit shipments and possible mitigations. It will be made up of key Federal phytosanitary officials and trade specialists, representatives from border States, citrus and nursery industry representatives, CG diagnostic experts, and representatives of the Government of Mexico.

APHIS will be selecting a National CG/ACP Coordinator, who will lead APHIS' effort to form the Leadership Steering Committee. In selecting the Leadership Steering Committee's membership, APHIS will seek the participation of a cross-section of individuals who participated in the Citrus Greening Summit and other key subject matter experts. Thereafter, the National CG/ACP Coordinator will lead APHIS' effort to establish the four CG/ACP workgroups with the assistance and support of the Leadership Steering Committee.