TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

May 8, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I am writing to express grave concern over the threat posed by the Huanglongbing disease (HLB) commonly referred to as "citrus greening" and its vector, the Asian Citrus Psyllid (psyllid), to the U.S. citrus industry. Your assistance is greatly needed in combating these pests.

The occurrence of HLB in Florida has already led to the voluntary destruction of 60,000 acres of citrus crops to stem further damage from this disease. Furthermore, HLB was recently detected in Louisiana and South Carolina and is now threatening citrus crops in Texas, Arizona and California. Texas is particularly threatened since the psyllid was found in our state in 2001 and HLB has now been found in neighboring Louisiana. Since the disease has no known cure, the infected trees usually die in three to five years, and the overall profitability and productivity of citrus groves are drastically reduced.

All citrus-producing states are attempting to address the HLB-psyllid threat to the best of their abilities. However, an extraordinary level of assistance needs to be provided by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to combat this disease on a national basis.

The speed with which the HLB disease can spread, as learned in Florida, and the devastation that follows with the loss of fruit and trees, make it very clear a unified strong national response is warranted to save the U.S. citrus industry.

Realizing the threat the HLB and the psyllid pose to the very survival of the $12.2 billion U.S. citrus industry, the state departments of agriculture of citrus-producing states have jointly developed a budget to combat these pests. This budget is estimated to be $104

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million for the federal fiscal year of 2010, which is a significant increase over the current APHIS funding of about $36 million allotted for these pests via the Citrus Health Response Plan. The attached spreadsheet gives a breakdown of the states' budget request.

We will work with you in any way possible to secure the requested funding of $104 million and we ask that your department take the lead in acquiring the funding required to wage this war. We realize this is a major budget increase, but the accelerated devastation these pests can cause demands nothing less. We urge you to work with President Obama and the Office of Management and Budget, as well as the U.S. Congress, to make the requested level of funding available to combat this significant threat to the U.S. citrus industry.

We stand ready to work with you on this rapidly evolving threat.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

Enclosure

TS/DK/mm

# US and Northern Mexico Wrap Up

## Asian Citrus Psyllid/Huanglongbing Citrus Disease Survey and Response Plan, Budget Year 2010[1]

| Program Components | | Annual Expenditures | | | | | | | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | CA | AZ | TX | Other States | FL | Northern MX | TOTALS | |
| **Major Categories** | **Elements** | | | | | | | | |
| Citrus Nursery Cleanliness | Citrus Nursery Clean Stock Pgm | $3.6 | $0.4 | $1.1 | $0.0 | $3.8 | $0.0 | $8.9 | Inspection of mother trees to ensure stock is disease free |
| Quarantine | Interstate inspections | $2.4 | $0.2 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $3.1 | Border stations; FedX; dog team inspection for illegal plant material |
| | Enforcement | $1.2 | $0.0 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $1.3 | $0.0 | $3.0 | Inspection of nurseries in quarantine areas; make sure they are treated |
| Survey | Statewide/Area-wide survey | $4.8 | $0.5 | $1.8 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.3 | $7.4 | Low density serveys over entire state to find ACP and HLB |
| | Additional targeted surveys | $0.8 | $0.3 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $1.2 | Targeted, higher density surveys in residential or commercial areas to find ACP |
| | Statewide survey/psyllid population assesment/abandoned groves | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $6.8 | $0.0 | $7.3 | |
| | Packinghouse inspections, multiple pest surveys | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $15.0 | $0.0 | $15.0 | |
| Rapid Response | | | | | | | | | |
| | Delimitation survey | $4.8 | $2.1 | $1.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $8.4 | Intensive surveys in 9 sq. mile radius of ACP/HLb detection sites to determine |
| | Area-wide ACP control | $3.0 | $0.8 | $2.5 | $0.0 | $5.0 | $2.2 | $13.5 | Pesticide applications and monitoring |
| | Tree removal | $1.2 | $0.4 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $5.0 | $0.0 | $6.7 | Removal of trees when HLB is detected, tree grinding, approved disposal. |
| | Quarantine enforcement | $1.2 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.2 | Enforcement of quarantine; ensure no plant movement and proper treatment of |
| | Public outreach | $0.6 | $0.2 | $0.4 | $0.0 | $1.0 | $0.0 | $2.2 | Inforamtion descemination to public regarding the threat, advice for treatment, |
| Long Term Response | Biological control implementation | $0.5 | $0.1 | $1.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.6 | Investigation and implementation of biological controls |
| Environmental Compliance | Environmental Impact Report | $1.4 | $0.2 | $0.2 | $0.2 | $2.0 | $0.0 | $4.0 | NEPA, CEQA in California, Env compliance in other states |
| | New product env/health risk analysis | $0.6 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $2.0 | $0.0 | $2.7 | |
| | Environmental monitoring | $0.4 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.0 | $0.0 | $1.5 | Monitoring for compliance |
| Other Operational Needs and Technical Development | | | | | | | | | |
| | Bacteriacides for HLB | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.1 | Finding methods to control HLB |
| | Tree inoculation capability | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.2 | $0.0 | $1.2 | High pressure systems to inject bacterial control materials |
| | Improved diagnostic methods | $0.4 | $0.2 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.3 | $0.1 | $2.0 | Finding improved methods to detect ACP and HLB |
| | More effective insecticides for ACP | $0.4 | $0.2 | $2.0 | $0.0 | $2.0 | $0.0 | $4.6 | |
| | Disease resistant varieties | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.0 | |
| | Improved traps for ACP | $0.4 | $0.1 | $0.3 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.8 | Current traps are unreliable |
| | Development of Biological Control | $0.6 | $0.0 | $0.5 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $1.1 | |
| | Best Mgt Plan for Nurseries | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.2 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.2 | Best practices from seed to tree to avoid disease |
| Diagnostics | Operations | $1.2 | $0.2 | $0.4 | $0.0 | $0.1 | $0.0 | $1.9 | Personnel, space, equipment, supplies to manage detection operations |
| | Mexico | | | | | | | | |
| Infrastructure | Increased diagnostics capacity | $2.5 | $0.3 | $1.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $0.0 | $3.8 | |
| TOTALS | | $31.9 | $6.5 | $15.5 | $0.2 | $47.5 | $2.7 | $104.3 | |

1. This plan represents the citrus industry's operational needs. A parallel plan is being developed that will represent the citrus industry's national research needs.