As most folks in the California citrus industry are now aware, the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) is the most serious threat our orchards have ever faced. The ACP spreads a deadly plant disease known as huanglongbing (HLB or citrus greening disease), which kills trees and currently has no cure. Psyllids, which can spread the disease from tree to tree as they feed, have spread throughout southern California and gradually are taking hold in the Central Valley.

One of the best ways to limit the spread of HLB is to keep the ACP populations as low as possible so that they are unable to pick up the disease and move it. To accomplish this objective and to preserve California’s long, proud citrus heritage will take industry-wide vigilance and cooperation.

Currently, growers in many regions of California are using insecticides in 800-meter areas in an effort to locally control the pest as it is detected. When psyllids recur in a local area, and eggs and nymphs also are discovered, ACP is considered established, and treatments over a wider area become necessary. This is where the area-wide management program comes into play.
Area-wide management is a process in which neighboring growers coordinate treatments within a designated, short timeframe to achieve maximum protection against the ACP. This effort allows growers to respond swiftly as a group in the event that the psyllids infest an area and protects groves better since the treatment extends to acreage where the Asian citrus psyllids likely exist, but have not yet been found on trap cards or through visual inspection. The concept is based on the successful management of other pests in California, and it is gratifying to note that some growers in the southern part of the state already are working together to implement area-wide treatments.

**WHY AREA-WIDE IS HELPFUL**

Individual orchard treatments are not as effective as area-wide ones. Most pesticide residues break down in three to four weeks or less. If these treatments occur in a patchwork fashion, ACP re-invade from neighboring areas when the residues break down.

However, if treatments occur over a large area during a short timeframe, they have the biggest impact on psyllids, which then have nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.

**HOW IT WORKS**

First, a Psyllid Management Area (PMA) is established. These are small, manageable zones that share a number of factors such as temperature, a grower network and landscape or topography. Area growers work together to identify a captain who then leads communication throughout the zone. When psyllid activity dictates treatment is necessary, the captain contacts the growers in the PMA and schedules a treatment within a two-week timeframe. ACP-effective insecticides are suggested from the menu provided in the UC IPM Guidelines. The selection of treatments will vary by season, other pest pressures that currently are present, chemistry rotation and other factors.

**WHO ENDORSES THE PROGRAM**

Although area-wide management is not a mandated system, many industry leaders such as the University of California, Citrus Research Board, California Citrus Mutual and the Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program (CPDPP) agree with the approach. It boils down to neighbors helping neighbors. We all believe that area-wide treatments will have the most impact on lowering populations of the Asian citrus psyllid and ultimately give the California citrus industry a better chance of defending against ACP and ultimately the deadly HLB disease.

The CPDPP has employed grower liaisons in key regions of the state to keep growers and industry members up-to-date on ACP and HLB. These individuals keep growers and pest control advisors informed of psyllid detections and can help determine if and when an area-wide treatment approach is best.

For questions regarding the program, contact your local grower liaison. If you don’t know who that is, please access the following link: http://citrusinsider.org/grower_liasons/

Get to know your neighbors; collaborating with them will help save California citrus from ACP and HLB. We’re all in this together.

**Additional Information**

https://youtu.be/fzZgNvCI8MY

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