

DONALD BUTLER  
Director



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# Arizona Department of Agriculture

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Meeting Minutes of the Citrus Health Summit 2011  
University of Arizona – Yuma Valley Farm  
March 11, 2011

## Attendees:

### (Table)

G. John Caravetta, Chair – Arizona Department of Agriculture, Associate Director

Jerry Levitt – United States Department of Agriculture/Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service/ Plant Protection & Quarantine, State Plant Health Director

### (Audience)

Bobby Baker

Brian Blake

Cary Blake

Frank Bonner

Mark Brown

Barney Cabrera

Michael Comeau

Louis Curiel

Kyle Curtis

Allen Dawson

Jerry Driedger

Melanie Fisher

Martin Guzman

Michael Hargrove

Paul Huebuer

Alan Loghry

John Loghry

Mark Loghry

Stacey Loghry

Mike Matheron

Brian McGrew

Dan Owen

Rep. Lynn Pancrazi

Jason Perricone

Jerry Reiffenberger

Gary Rochester

Gary Russell

Bates Sale

Mark Spencer

Chris Sumner  
Reyes Triviso  
Galo Valenzuela  
Daniel Walega  
Mike Wallace  
Keith Watkins  
Clark Webb  
Michael B. White  
Tess Williams  
Bob Woodman  
Scott Woods  
Glenn Wright

#### I. Call to Order

Call to order was given by Mr. John Caravetta on March 11, 2011 at 10:05 A.M. at the University of Arizona – Yuma Valley Farm, 6425 West 8th Street, Yuma, AZ 85364.

Housekeeping items included the attendance sign-in sheet and the mention of information relevant to today's meeting.

Mr. Caravetta stated that there would be a call to the public at the end of each agenda item in order for the exchange of information, questions & answers, and making each agenda item as productive as possible. There would also be a general call to the public at the end of the meeting to comment on any issue not on the agenda, but recognizing that no action may be taken on an item not on the agenda.

#### II. Welcome and Introductions

Opening introductions recognized Mr. Caravetta, Associate Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA), as Chair, and Mr. Jerry Levitt as State Plant Health Director for Arizona with the United States Department of Agriculture/Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service/Plant Protection & Quarantine (USDA/APHIS/PPQ). Mr. Caravetta introduced the ADA staff present: Jerry Reiffenberger, Yuma Operations Manager; Brian McGrew, Quarantine Program Coordinator. Mr. Levitt introduced his staff present at the meeting: Glenn Ball, PPQ Officer; Paul Huebner, PPQ Officer; Melanie Fisher, ACP Coordinator; Bobby Baker, ACP Coordinator; Gary Russell, State Operational Support Officer; Tess Williams, Trade Specialist; Mike Wallace, Supervisor; Allen Dawson, Plant Pathologist; Daniel Welega, SOS Specialist Santa Cruz and Pima County. Mr. Caravetta thanked the staff at the U of A facility for the assistance and providing the space to hold today's meeting before moving on to the next agenda item.

#### III. General Update

Mr. Caravetta outlined the three major topics of today's meeting, the Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP), Citrus Greening (HLB), and Sweet Orange Scab (SOS). The status of ACP detections in Arizona was provided, showing the quarantines for ACP confined to the current quarantine area in Yuma County. Maps on display showed the distribution of trapping in the quarantine area and other trapping efforts in Central Arizona. Current trap totals for central Arizona were 3,864 and for Yuma County 5,763 traps have been distributed inside and outside of the quarantine area. The deployed traps are managed on a bi-weekly basis in a cooperative effort by both agencies [ADA/USDA). There was also a complimentary program being conducted in Sonora, Mexico. Noting that our quarantine boundaries have not changed and the last find of an ACP was in mid-June of 2010. The influence of the programs being conducted in Mexico could possibly be a contributing factor for the lack ACP detections here in Arizona. We continue to see the effectiveness of our treatment protocol (drench and foliar treatment) of each host tree within a 400 meter (or 1200 foot) radius surrounding a detection, which we've had ten of to date since October of 2009. We have had no reoccurrence detections of ACP in any of these areas or outside of those treatment areas.

Citrus Greening, or HLB, has **not** been detected here in Arizona or in California to date. The last known detection of HLB in Mexico was in an infected psyllid in commercial production area between Sinaloa and Sonora, Mexico. Mr. Levitt added the there has been a recent detection of ACP near the Arizona-California border area of Bard/Winterhaven which is being followed up by CDFA.

The latest issue to impact the citrus industry is the detection of Sweet Orange Scab (*Elsinoë australis*), a cosmetic issue of fruit. SOS was determined to be a large problem in Texas and most likely to be endemic there for many years. Once SOS was discovered in Texas, Arizona and California moved quickly to prohibit the movement of fruit into both states since, at that time, we had no indication that we had SOS in either of our states. It was then incumbent upon us to take measures to determine if SOS was present in our state. ADA took some cursory samples in Maricopa County and found that SOS did exist. At that point a broader survey was conducted, but still being cursory, that yielded some eight total positives in central Arizona (Mesa and Queen Creek Area). Also, positive samples were taken from the Valley area in Yuma and on the Mesa area of Yuma. All initial positives have been confirmed by the APHIS laboratory in Beltsville, Maryland using DNA analysis. With the second detection in Yuma County the determination was made to begin this process of assembling all of the data, assemble the public meetings, and then initiate the process for a broader quarantine other than a smaller one just in Central Arizona, especially with the detection of the second positive in Yuma County. The cautionary tale is that a very cursory survey was conducted, late in the fruit picking season, and not at the most opportune time for a survey of this type. We found that we had enough data to indicate that there is a distribution of this disease in the state. It does not appear to be a rampant spread of the disease and it appears to be well managed just in cultural practices and so forth. Again we have put limited resources into the detection of this disease so it most likely more widely spread and endemic than what has been initially detected.

#### IV. SOS Quarantine

With the collection of the data, the distribution of the finds, and so forth, discussions with APHIS were ongoing that we would have to establish a quarantine. With the information available, at that point, a statewide quarantine made the most sense. We had proposed, in our discussions locally between ADA and APHIS, a timeline looking at somewhere around March 25<sup>th</sup> to have the state issue a quarantine for SOS. That quarantine would eventually be adopted into the Federal Order (FO) for SOS. For various reasons, in discussions with higher levels of APHIS, the decision was made to accelerate that quarantine timeline because of issues with our international trading partners and several other considerations with respect to getting a quarantine established sooner, rather than the states schedule. At this time we are still waiting for a FO to be adopted and apply a quarantine to the state of Arizona.

The floor was handed to Mr. Levitt to discuss the timeline, parameters, etc. Mr. Levitt concurred with Mr. Caravetta's statement about the proposed timeline and those discussions. The APHIS upper management stated that our timeline proposal was unacceptable due to the fact that we have detected it here and if we start shipping to places like California there are various liability issues. Mr. Levitt was informed that a revised FO would be issued either today (March 11, 2011) or on Monday (March 14, 2011), as of yet nothing has been seen. One of the reasons for this meeting is to provide the necessary information needed to prepare for the restrictions that will be included in this document. Once this FO is released the only citrus producing state not to have a detection of SOS and not included in a quarantine will be California. California is monitoring for it but we cannot comment on their process. We've had some earlier discussions with the three packing houses in Yuma and it was discovered that none of them could meet all the required processes to ship fruit out of the state. Currently, locations that have an Emergency Action Notification (EAN) issued to them cannot harvest that fruit. Once the FO goes into affect those EAN's will be lifted and harvesting can resume. Currently all other fields are not regulated, but as soon as the FO goes into effect all citrus fruit must go through the approved packing house procedures in order to move out of the state. Fruit will be able to move freely within the state but in order to be moved out of state the packing house requirements must be followed. Those guidelines are found in the handout provided, "APHIS-Approved Packing House Procedures for *Elsinoë australis*, Casual Agent of Sweet Orange Scab (SOS)". The major issue facing packing houses is the section on the surface disinfection portion, time of 2 minutes;

most packinghouses were treating for thirty seconds. Modifying the packing house process prior to the release of the new FO will help in keeping products moving out of the state.

#### V. Commercial Citrus Export Considerations

Mr. Levitt handed the floor to Ms. Tess Williams to provide an update on the issue of foreign export. PPQ is the U.S. Plant protection organization under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). Because of that we are signatories to that convention and we are required to report on pests and diseases that are found. SOS is one of the IPPC listed diseases of concern. Due to our initial surveys and findings we are bound by the convention to report it. Our trading partners have the right to know that we have this disease. SOS is more of a cosmetic and marketability issue. It does not affect the fruit itself or the taste, but it does affect the marketability. Since other countries do have official control for this disease they are allowed to regulate us for it. Countries like Australia, who do have an official control program in place, can impose restrictions on us and creating issues for exporting to their country. As it stands, we are not allowed to issue any phytosanitary certificates for citrus to Australia. We are in process with the Trade Director, Karen Ackerman, to draft a letter and information packet to provide to Australia. We will have to wait and see what the outcome is once they have had a chance to review that information. There are still some other countries that will continue to accept our fruit without the protocols required for countries under official control: Japan, Chile, etc. An audience member asked if Japan accepts our fruit because they have the disease too. Ms. Williams responded that most likely yes. If a country does not have an official control program in place they cannot generally impose restrictions. Other countries have to prove they are doing something to keep that pest or disease out of their country. Another question was asked, are we going to work on some kind of protocol to ship to Australia? Ms. Williams responded that currently the letter and information packet is being sent Australia. Once they have a chance to review we will need to wait for their response. But once they see that we are implementing packing house processes to reduce the risk, most likely they will allow us to continue to ship to Australia. The biggest problem is moving organic fruit through California. California has not yet reported any detection of SOS and moving citrus fruit to those export locations will have to be handled in an approved protocol, whether that be by sealed containers or by some other method.

#### VI. Citrus Nursery Stock Considerations

Mr. Caravetta brought up the next agenda item. The quarantines, between ACP and SOS, have a significant impact on the citrus nursery stock industry in this state. The ACP quarantine area in Yuma County has precluded the movement of citrus nursery stock from the quarantine area, since October of 2009. For over a year there has been a safeguarding rule in development within APHIS, in concert with the citrus producing states and the state regulatory officials, to provide an avenue by which we could have certain measures adopted that would satisfy requirements to move across state lines, and in our case within Arizona, from a quarantine area to a non-quarantine area. This rule would have included safeguards for three major citrus pests: ACP, HLB, and Citrus Canker (a Florida issue). That rule is intended to displace the current FO requirements in place, which do not allow the movement of citrus nursery stock from an area under quarantine to an area of a citrus producing state that is not under quarantine for one or more of these pests. The current update is that the Office of Management Budgets (OMB)(they review rule makings for financial impacts and so forth) had some serious questions for APHIS related to the rule and needed a response to in order to allow these processes to occur. They have recently sent that rule back to APHIS with their concerns and questions. Apparently APHIS is going to revise that rule within a week and return it back to OMB. OMB is then expected to act on the APHIS response fairly quickly. Then, the rule would be ready for publication.

Mr. Caravetta continued, that in respect to SOS, the quarantine of Arizona, as well as other areas under quarantine for SOS in other states, the movement of citrus nursery stock is prohibited to other citrus producing states that are not under quarantine for SOS. Once the FO for SOS is issued then California will be a non-accessible market for all other citrus producing states with SOS for their nursery stock. There were some considerations given and negotiations made to try to deal with an inspection process and a fungicide treatment to allow for that cross border movement. Those efforts have failed, as California has made it clear that they do not have the disease and citrus nursery stock can be a

vehicle and a pathway to move the disease even if the plant appears to be asymptomatic. We were unsuccessful in getting those latitudes to be able to move nursery stock into California. So as the FO currently stands, it allows for the movement of budwood or pieces/parts of the plant but does not allow the shipment of the whole plant. The revision would prohibit citrus nursery stock period, except for ornamental use of leaves. At this point in time, until we have some conclusion on the situation in California, whether they have it or not through their upcoming surveys this season, we will be under that prohibition.

Mr. Caravetta opened the floor for questions. Ms. Stacey Loghry asked who in California determined that these safeguards would not be adequate for the shipment of citrus nursery stock and has it been investigated if they intended to disregard any suggestion of safeguards to corner the market for California citrus nursery stock producers. Mr. Caravetta responded by saying that it is fair statement to say that it is a one-way stream of trade from California to Arizona for citrus nursery stock, that was made abundantly clear to APHIS. We are unsure what those internal discussions were, with whom, and what states. Just anecdotally, that we did receive word that California was not comfortable under those safeguards to allow citrus nursery stock their way. Ms. Loghry asked what timeline are we looking at for the publication of the ACP rule. Mr. Levitt responded that it would be within a week from receiving the final review from OMB. Ms. Loghry asked if there were any major changes to the rule that you are aware of. Mr. Levitt responded that he was not aware of any changes. Mr. Chris Sumner asked, in regards to SOS, does finding a single positive location constitute implementing a quarantine? Mr. Caravetta responded by saying no, we have not operated that way in Arizona and assumingly neither would California for a single find. The area would most likely be isolated and incorporate a smaller quarantine area and then a delimiting survey would be conducted to determine if the disease could be found elsewhere. Mr. Levitt added that here in Arizona, as well as in Florida, in the process of conducting a delimiting survey, going out a half mile from each find, more SOS positive were found. So, it's now been found in 9 counties in Florida, and in Arizona we were finding positives out past eleven miles from one another. We would assume that if California does find the disease that it would most likely be the same situation of finding in many locations. California may try to isolate these incidences but most likely once they do start finding and start moving their surveys outward they will find it in many locations. Mr. Sumner asked if the find in Yuma, being so close to California, would that trigger them to look more closely in the Bard/Winterhaven area? We did go to the Quechan tribe located near the find to collect samples and contacted international services since it was also near Mexico. Our international service did not find any citrus in the area. Rep. Lynn Pancrazi asked if there were any federal laws that required California to follow a certain rule to look for this disease or is it just the state level? How hard are they looking and are they following any rules from the federal government? Mr. Levitt responded that they did have inspectors looking in the packing houses and will be starting a citrus commodity survey looking at 25% percent of commercial citrus orchards. The question has been brought up in several instances and the answer we have been getting is California is doing their due diligence. We can comment that we did our due diligence by conducting a cursory survey, incorporating with the ACP survey work and follow up delimiting survey work. In Texas they also incorporated the SOS survey work with the existing ACP/HLB survey work. If it is in California we are confident it will be detected. Ms. Loghry asked if USDA assisted ADA in the findings of SOS in Arizona. Mr. Caravetta responded that the majority of the work was conducted by USDA and that ADA partnered with APHIS after we had some indications of a couple of SOS positive fruit. Ms. Loghry asked if APHIS has gone into California to look for SOS. Mr. Levitt responded that there is APHIS staff in California looking for SOS. The bulk of the work in California is done by CDFA or the Counties. Due to workloads and budgets APHIS's presence in an SOS survey is somewhat limited. Rep. Lynn Pancrazi asked if more funding for the detection of SOS can be requested. Mr. Levitt stated that currently there are several issues that would limit that; there is hiring freeze, agencies are acting on continuing resolutions, and other budget restrictions. A member of the audience asked if fruit that is already in storage need to be treated once the SOS quarantine goes into effect. Mr. Levitt responded that all citrus fruit will have to go through the approved packing house procedures, even fruit currently packed. Packing houses will be contacted when the FO is published. A member of the audience asked, as a grower, what recommendations are there for the control of this disease. Mr. Levitt stated that this has not been a terrible issue or marketability issue for your groves. Growers seem to be doing what is necessary just by management practices. SOS in Arizona does not seem to be like it is in Texas, it's not been as easy to find. Mr. Caravetta added there is a list of approved fungicides that are registered in Arizona. If they are labeled for SOS or other scabs, that can be a management option. Other practices are, keeping the orchard floor clean and not giving the inoculums a chance to spread, and good

pruning management. These are helpful in reducing the occurrence of SOS. Mr. Mark Spencer asked if processed fruit had to be in a carton. Mr. Levitt responded that no, as long as an approved treatment procedure has been followed, loose bins are acceptable to. Mr. Spencer also asked why is there a requirement that fruit be waxed even if it's going to a juicer. Mr. Levitt responded that he was not sure why it was included for juice fruit but he would inquire to its reasoning. An audience member asked what other diseases is SOS similar to. Mr Dawson stated that the SOS disease looks similar to fruit burn(pesticides) and common fruit damage that gives the alligator skin, scabbing symptoms. It looks similar to a lot of common scabbing. Mr. Wright asked if there would be situation where Arizona would be removed from an SOS quarantine. Mr. Levitt responded, most likely not, but depending on trade it could possibly be deregulated, but it could potentially still affect trade. Mr. Brian Blake asked if this something that could be eradicated at some point. Mr. Levitt stated that without the ability to detect the disease at all times it would be impossible to positively say that it had been eradicated. So eradication is not an option. Mr. Caravetta stated that it is unknown if this is endemic, which would require that you remove all hosts and through some process you would reduce the inoculums enough that you would never have a re-infection. There are some considerations that can be given to slowing the spread or area wide management programs. Eradication is a definite kind of statement, takes a long process, and requires additional funding to implement such a program.

#### VII. Future Direction of ACP Program.

The state is supportive of input from the citrus the industry on what the situation looks liked from their perspective. These meetings are to be informative, but then also to be informed. To have a sense of where and what would most be effective in these situations. APHIS has publically made the statement [referring to The Packer article of this week] that this issue can be dealt with by management and cultural practices. We talk about the use of resources and also possibly the bigger issue, which is Citrus Greening disease. HLB is certainly the greatest threat and that would be our greatest focus going forward. We need input from the industry; we want to work with the industry to see what would be most effective in either containing this disease (SOS) where we know where it is with the objective not to spread the disease to other groves and without adding another production cost in processing fruit. These are the things the state is open to. Working with the Yuma Citrus Pest Control District on other issues such as red scale and ACP has been very productive. Everybody on the yolk is what it takes to come to some sort of solution on how to use the states authority, how to use what resources the state does have, and possible self assessments. We need to have that partnership; there are limited resources to attempt an eradication program on its own. With what we know of this particular pest all parties being at the table and interested in doing something and what should be done, both from a technical aspect, benefit prospects and so forth, we are open to all considerations. ACP was a huge issue and we were unsuccessful in obtaining additional funding except from APHIS to do anything about ACP within Arizona. That is how critical the budget situation is and this particular situation we do not have any hope for securing any funds to augment and support what we would need to do in this state to deal with this directly by ourselves as a state organization. The dialogue is open to where we go with this. We have done a very cursory survey, we don't have the resources to continue more survey work unless we decide that there is some reason to continue and it offers some sort of benefit for doing so. Mr. Mark Loghry asked, that in the case of SOS, wouldn't that make APHIS ensure that there was viable surveys in all of the states to determine is the disease truly is widespread instead of implementing restrictions on industry without the whole picture. Mr. Caravetta stated that there are international implications as well as domestic. There are protocols that the fruit industry has the benefit of through treatment procedures to mitigate the risk. With respect to citrus nursery stock pathway, our expectation is that on the state regulatory level when implementing restriction, that adequate data is provided to prove that risk and that everyone is doing their due diligence to survey. It is our opinion that at this point that there has been a marginal effort on those issues. Mr. Spencer commented, to the earlier issue of the sanitation process for SOS, that the processing line at Associated Citrus Packers is equipped and can handle the sanitation process outlined in the provided treatment protocols.

#### VIII. Call to the Public.

Mr. Caravetta opened the floor for comments and questions. It was asked that if the ADA and APHIS do not have the resources to address the SOS issue, are you asking the industry to provide the funding? Mr. Caravetta stated that there

are, with respect to fruit, measures to mitigate the risk of movement of this particular organism. That said, in the case of a disease, which adds some difficulty and we were not able to delimit as well as we able to with insects (trapping and survey) there needs to be a strategic discussion amongst all parties as to whether or not this issue would warrant additional attention and resources for survey work; if there is a benefit to eradication or suppression, and making those decisions collectively so we use limited resources in the best direction possible. Our major emphasis is trying to detect ACP in other areas of the state. Doing so with significant amount of Federal funding, (\$1.4M annual), for the Yuma area and with existing ADA funding surveying in central Arizona and with a significant partnership with APHIS and resources they've taken out of their funds in order to do that. The greatest threat in the end, to this industry, is going to be HLB. We have a proven process to manage populations of ACP should it come to it if we have that big of a population load in this state. This in turn, will relate to the impact HLB will have on the industry, and on residential customers. Again it's a triage, an assignment of priorities. We choose not to act in a vacuum and we want to work with others who are interested in trying and manage this situation and how best we can get this done, at what cost, and is there a value equation in return.

IX. Adjourn.

Mr. Caravetta thanked the group for attending the meeting and adjourned at 11:30 A.M on March 11, 2011.

Dated this 23rd day of March, 2011