Data Analysis and Tactical Operations Center

Briefing Paper

INTRODUCTION

The Data Analysis and Tactical Operations Center (DATOC) expert panel convened November 19, 2020 to discuss the potential merits and disadvantages of ceasing insecticide applications targeted at control of the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) in San Jose, Santa Clara County.

After reviewing several sources of data, the panel agreed that proactive suppression of ACP populations is currently our best tool for mitigating the risk of HLB, especially while ACP populations are relatively low and/or geographically restricted. The split of opinion among members of the CPDPC who voted on ceasing treatments reflects the true uncertainty that exists about the best course of action. Without recommending an opposing view to the majority vote, we would like to offer context from a scientific perspective:

- The consensus among panel members was that it will be more cost-effective to continue eradication efforts now, rather than allowing ACP to establish and then attempting to manage HLB later.
- The recurring cost of HLB detection, infected tree removal, and delimitation treatment activities in Southern California are a concern to the CPDPC; the Science Subcommittee has spent an appreciable amount of time and effort trying to assess the cost-effectiveness of those activities.
- We want to ensure that actions taken to manage the situation in Santa Clara/San Jose do not lead to a similar situation developing in Northern California, with all the associated questions over value for money and efficacy.

However, since concerns about cost, uncertainty about effectiveness, and fatigue among the public have led CPDPC to vote to stop insecticide treatments in San Jose, we highlight here a few things to keep in mind moving forward.

MITIGATE THE RISK

Allowing ACP to establish in San Jose will increase the risk of HLB spread; we suggest mitigating tactics be continued or increased. This could include monitoring of high-risk areas for HLB, (such as nurseries or areas near transportation routes), applying buffer treatments around commercial groves, and developing communication strategies to inform residents how to protect backyard trees.

BE PREPARED TO PIVOT

The demographics of San Jose are similar to areas of Southern California where HLB was likely introduced from outside of the state. A similar occurrence is a real possibility in San Jose. If HLB is discovered, or if the situation otherwise changes with regards to ACP populations, the program should be prepared to readdress what activities are appropriate for the area, including a return to insecticide treatments.

COST REDUCTION ALTERNATIVES

Concerns about costs, in this case, revolved around meeting or exceeding allocated funds available for San Jose treatment activities. If the CPDPP ultimately decided to continue treatments, alleviating this concern could potentially be accomplished by exploring ways to cut funds in other areas, which are considered less risky, and reallocating funds to Northern California treatments.

Contributing panel members:

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