

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE
ON HUANGLONGBING



**Session 9:
Regulatory
Approaches to
HLB/ACP**

Orlando, Florida



December 2008

9.0 International Regulatory Agencies - Regulating HLB

An Evening Session on “Regulatory Approaches to HLB/ACP” Moderated by Dixon W. and Berger P.

The evening session was initiated by a brief presentations by Tim Riley (USDA APHIS PPQ) on chronology and response in Florida to detection of ACP (1998) and HLB (2005), followed by David Kaplan’s (USDA APHIS PPQ) historical review of Federal regulations with commentary on international, national and state perspectives. Thereafter, information and discussion was elicited from the session attendees. The major points raised are as follows:

Thailand – bringing in plant material is a concern to the regulatory authorities. The small and numerous family farms are often outside appropriate regulatory attention and are of concern. Even though plant regulatory rules exist, it almost impossible to enforce due to the large number of farms and difficulties of reaching all. This was a common theme in one form or another amongst the session attendees.

Brazil – the regulation and covering of nurseries began in 1997-98 in response to detection of CVC, and was completed by 2002. HLB was discovered in 2004. Government assistance was provided to farms and nurseries to encourage participation in following regulatory rules and guidelines; however, not all immediately participated.

Florida – it was noted that regulations must be science-based or legal problems are inevitable and costly. A key element in the distribution of Asian citrus psyllids and HLB were *Murraya* nursery plants; however, *Murraya* regulation was impossible until the host relationship with Las was proven through appropriate laboratory tests. The Hot Zone concept, centered on family farms in South Florida with ethnic connections to areas where serious pests are known to occur, was used in the successful detection of HLB. There was also acknowledgement of the value of local plant inspectors who know their territory very well.

Costa Rica – in 2006, a budwood registration program driven by a grower group was started and will be mandatory in 2009. However, there were difficulties in getting the government to help enforce. It was noted that the family farm or small grower was not likely to cooperate.

Jamaica – as soon as HLB appeared in Brazil and Florida, a task force was assembled. The Asian citrus psyllid was first detected in 2002 which then prompted budwood registration. Currently, they prohibit all citrus seed import until more is known about the issue of seed transmission of HLB.

South Africa – the citrus industry is highly regulated, but it was acknowledged that regulations could use more teeth for better enforcement. There is a strong movement towards compulsory compliance: which was estimated to be 95% now.

New Zealand – carefully regulates all plant material entering the country, which includes all travelers. There are substantial fines and prison terms for violations. Amnesty bins are placed to encourage collection of contraband. The regulatory agency has the right to destroy on first find, but must compensate for all other removals that may occur. It was emphasized that plant movement controls are designed to be strict.

- **Australia** – very strict plant movement controls are in place. All incoming nursery stock must be fumigated. There is a post entry quarantine of two years for citrus. Plant pests are assigned to either a low, medium and high risk category. There is a cost sharing program with growers and the government for pest programs. Although it was unknown at the time, the Queensland citrus canker eradication program is also the only example of successfully

eradicating Asian citrus psyllid. This was achieved by eradicating the host. It was noted that Australia has much of the same problems as US such as no compensation for plant destruction, weekend market sales and residential and hobby growers. Australian citrus dieback is expected to confound the detection of the arrival of HLB. Finally, the “Pest Specific Incursion Plan” for Australia is in review; it is a major publication that has required time for proper processing. .

- **Dominican Republic** –the Asian citrus psyllid arrived in 2000 and a HLB survey was started immediately. The Brazilian system of management was adopted. It was stated that the grower community is fragmented which has resulted in difficulty in organizing the small growers. There is an emphasis now on acquiring training for HLB diagnostics and establishing appropriate laboratories.

Similar regulatory questions and themes the world over were raised in the session:

What are we regulating, the pathogen or the disease? A group suggestion was made to regulate pathogen because of the latency problem inherent with the disease.

Precautionary regulations are usually not legal and difficult to establish.

In many countries, compensation is not available. In the U.S., no financial safety net for plant pest emergencies like there is for veterinary emergencies. This may be addressed in future farm bills.

Cooperation is highly variable among all stakeholders.

Legal authority (of lack thereof) to achieve biological effectiveness via regulations.- the contrast of biological reality versus legal and political aspects.

Level of anticipatory strategies – what is allowed and not due to legal constraints and perceptions of stakeholders of what needs to be done.

Discussions (or lack of discussions) among stakeholders before the arrival of an anticipated exotic plant pest.