ALLIANCE OF PEST CONTROL DISTRICTS (APCD)

SUBGROUP MEETING of TAC

MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Details

Date: April 30, 2026

Time: 12:00 PM - 3:05 PM (Pacific Time)

Subject: Subgroup Meeting of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Location: APCD Conference Room, 22847 Road 140, Tulare, CA 93274 (in-person) with Zoom option.

TAC Members present:
Dr. Georgios Vidalakis (Chair), Dr. Ray Yokomi, Dr. MaryLou Polek, Dr. Bodil Cass*, Dr. Sandipa Gautam*, Dr. Neil McRoberts*, Dr. Weiqi Luo*.

APCD Staff: Dr. Subhas Hajeri, Dr. Dhiraj Gautam, Mia Neunzig, Tony Patino*, Jose Pena, Kevin Howerton, Hailey Jones, Tina Acevedo*, and Dr. Saurabh Gautam*.

**Attended the meeting virtually.*

CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME, AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 P.M. by Chair Dr. Georgios Vidalakis. Introductions were made, including a visiting delegation from India for the Citrus Clonal Protection Program.

Purpose

To develop a comprehensive multi-pest and disease survey program for the Alliance of Pest Control Districts (APCD), with emphasis on optimizing sampling strategies and resource allocation.

Key Discussion Points

1. **Sentinel Insect Sampling Strategy:** Agreed to utilize Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) as the primary sentinel for detecting multiple pathogens, including HLB, CTV, and CYVCV, to enhance the multi-pest visual surveys.
2. **Resource Optimization:** Discussed reallocating staff time to increase field coverage without exceeding laboratory capacity:
    - Option 1: Cross-train the eight trappers to watch for and flag unusual plant symptoms (e.g., symptomatic trees or suspect tissue) during trap servicing, then refer observations to the inspection team for follow-up.
    - Option 2: Pilot a mixed staffing model (six trappers and four inspectors) to align field sampling volume with lab processing throughput.
3. **Risk-Based Mapping:** Approved to implement risk-based site selection models incorporating travel census (introduction risk), proximity of residential citrus, packinghouses to commercial

citrus areas (distance analysis), transportation corridors, previous finds, and organic citrus to prioritize high-risk sampling locations.

4. **Laboratory Capacity:** agreed to pilot testing 10% of total traps (5,000-6,000) to determine optimal throughput of testing insect samples collected from traps.
5. **Sample Handling Protocols:** Emphasized the importance of proper protocols for suspect samples containing quarantine pathogens, requiring clear communication with CDFA prior to collection or transport.
6. **Quality Control:** Agreed to implement pre-screening protocols for trap readers to assess trap quality before laboratory submission.

Decisions Made

- Adopt ACP monitoring as the primary cost-effective approach for pathogen detection
- Prioritize insect vector-based monitoring over comprehensive visual tree inspections
- Target up to 10% of total traps (5,000-6,000) for whole trap processing in the laboratory
- Integrate risk-based site selection models into field operations
- Establish clear CDFA communication protocols for suspect pathogen findings

Action Items Summary Table

Owner(s)	Action	Deliverable	Priority
Alliance team	Prepare and circulate a concise summary of this meeting's key points and action items for the main committee.	Meeting summary document	High
Subhas/Alliance Lab team	Run a pilot to process and test a subset (targeting 10% of total traps, e.g., 5,000-6,000 traps) of selected high-quality, high-risk insect traps through the lab workflow.	Lab capacity analysis and bottleneck identification	High
Subhas/Alliance Lab team	Develop and implement a protocol for trap readers to pre-screen traps for quality (e.g., presence of target vectors, sufficient insect numbers, minimal non-target insects) before sending them for DNA extraction,	Quality screening protocol with visual criteria and markers/codes	High

	including visual criteria and, where appropriate, markers/codes.		
Subhas/ Weiqi/ Neil	Integrate risk-based site selection models (including cost analyses) into field sampling and trapping plans and provide the necessary data to support model development.	Updated field sampling plan with risk-based site selection and supporting data	High
Subhas/Alliance team, Weiqi, Neil	Analyze operational data to determine optimal resource allocation across pest control districts	Resource allocation plan based on risk, cost, and budget	High
Subhas/Alliance Lab team	Test and optimize lab protocols for processing bulk insect samples (including evaluation of histoclear volume, centrifugation, and DNA/RNA extraction methods).	Optimized lab protocols with increased throughput and reduced processing time.	Medium
Subhas/Alliance Lab team	For traps with low target vector presence, implement a pipeline to filter out non-relevant insects before lab processing.	Insect filtering pipeline using mechanical/chemical methods or AI-assisted screening.	Medium
Subhas/Alliance Field team	Update field inspection protocols so that trappers are more vigilant for unusual symptoms or suspect plant material during trap service and report/flag to field inspection team as appropriate.	Updated field protocols with enhanced trapper vigilance guidelines	High
Subhas/Alliance Field team	Develop clear field protocols for handling suspect samples of high-concern pathogens (e.g., canker, SOS).	Field protocols covering CDFA communication, sample flagging, and chain-of-custody, before engaging with suspect material.	High
Alliance team	Share relevant operational data (trap/inspection locations, sample results, risk factors, etc.) with Weiqi/Neil to support risk model development.	Operational data, including trap/inspection locations, sample results, and risk factors	High

Weiqi/Neil	Provide updated risk maps/models (including integration of recent travel data and distance-to-commercial-citrus analytics) to the APCD team for risk-based site selection.	Updated risk maps with travel data and distance-to-commercial-citrus analytics	High
Alliance team, Weiqi/Neil	Explore grant/funding opportunities (e.g., Farm Bill, SCRI, SRE) to support risk model development and implementation, in collaboration with Weiqi/Neil.	Grant proposals (Farm Bill, SCRI, SRE)	Medium
Alliance team	Evaluate feasibility and protocol for collecting asymptomatic plant samples (e.g., trunk/fruit) for early HLB detection in high-risk blocks, in coordination with CDFA and research partners, as resources allow.	Feasibility assessment and collection protocol	Medium
Alliance team	Consider and pilot the collection of unpicked or cull fruit from orchards post-harvest for targeted pathogen testing as an additional early-detection method.	Pilot program for fruit collection and testing	Medium
Alliance team	Maintain and update a list of CDFA diagnostic contacts and protocols for rapid communication when suspect samples are found in the field.	Updated CDFA contact list and communication protocols	High
Alliance team	Investigate and implement AI-assisted trap reading	AI-assisted trap reading system (pending funding)	Low