

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2005-2
January 18, 2005

SUBJECT: Recent Detections of Citrus Canker Disease in Florida

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

There have been recent detections of citrus canker disease in Florida, some of which have been adjacent to or near existing quarantine areas and some in areas away from currently infested areas. Regulatory action is being taken in all new locations.

The recent infestations were found under surveys conducted by the State and USDA. The State is responsible for surveying commercial citrus groves on a regular (usually annual) basis, and USDA conducts a sentinel tree survey program in residential areas. In addition, the State conducts regular surveys at locations in and adjacent to the quarantine areas. New infestations in Cape Coral and Pine Island in Lee County, Punta Gorda in Charlotte County, Sun City Center in Hillsborough County (actually the site of a former infestation), and several locations near Orlando in Orange County are all in or near existing quarantine areas. In addition there have detections in residential areas that are not near any current infestations – in the Kissimmee area in Osceola County, and at Port St. Lucie and Spanish Lakes Fairways in St. Lucie County. The find in Port St. Lucie is about 50-60 miles from existing areas of infestation.

In the case of the new detections in commercial citrus groves there is a similar pattern. Most of the new detections were in or near existing quarantine areas, including those in Collier, Highlands, DeSoto, and Orange Counties. Two of the detections were in areas where there was no history of nearby infestations – a relatively large infestation (850+ acres) in northern Charlotte County, and most recently an infestation in a 30 acre grove in Indian River County.

The recent finds are associated with the three hurricanes experienced by Peninsular Florida in 2004. Nearly every citrus growing area of the State was affected by at least one of the hurricanes, and some areas were visited by two or even all three of the hurricanes. If citrus canker is present, hurricanes can be effective in spreading the disease. At the time of the hurricanes it was believed by State and USDA officials that there were no known infected trees in any of the quarantine areas outside of the Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach County residential areas – the one part of the State that was not directly affected by the Hurricanes.

The State is working to remove infected and exposed trees as quickly as possible to eliminate the chance of further spread. With the exception of the infestation in Indian River County, all infected trees and all other citrus trees within 1,900 feet of any infected tree (exposed trees) at infested groves have been destroyed. Destruction of the infected and exposed trees at the Indian River County grove should be completed by January 21.

Regulatory action has been taken at the locations of all of the new infestations. The movement of fruit and plant material is prohibited from any property where citrus canker has been found. Regulatory action has also been taken to prevent the movement of fruit and plant material from groves and other properties near infested properties while delimiting surveys are being conducted. Once the extent of the new infestations is known, the State in consultation with USDA establishes appropriate quarantine areas. These new quarantine areas will also be incorporated into the Federal Citrus Canker Quarantine (7 CFR, Part 301.75).

/s/ Paul R. Eggert for

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