



# TEXAS CITRUS PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

## **NOTICE OF REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY CITRUS PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

On October 24, 2016, the Texas Department of Agriculture concluded a referendum pursuant to Texas Agriculture Code, Ch. 80, and Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 4, Ch. 27, Subchapter B, for the establishment of a citrus pest and disease management zone, a maximum annual assessment rate and a board of directors to be administered by the Texas Citrus Pest and Disease Management Corporation (The Corporation). On October 31, 2016, The Texas Department of Agriculture concluded that the referendum passed establishing the Lower Rio Grande Valley Pest Management Zone, a maximum assessment rate of \$125 per acre as well as electing the board of directors which include: James Bettiga, R.L. Dreibelbis, Jud Flowers, Paul Heller, Jim Hoffman, Dennis Holbrook, Fred Karle, Steve Lievens, Jimmy Pawlik and Bruce Sutton.

The Texas Citrus Pest and Disease Management Corporation, Inc. (TCPDMC), a Texas nonprofit corporation, is now recognized by the Texas Department of Agriculture as the entity to plan, carry out, and operate suppression programs to manage and control pests and diseases, including the Asian citrus psyllid and citrus greening, in citrus plants in the state under the supervision of the department.

The pest management program pertains to Texas citrus producers in The Lower Rio Grande Valley Zone which consists of all of Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. A Citrus producer is a person in the Zone who grows citrus and receives or intends to receive income from the sale of citrus. The term includes an individual who as owner, landlord, tenant, or sharecropper is entitled to share in the citrus grown and available for marketing from a farm or to share in the proceeds from the sale of the citrus from the farm. The term includes a person who owns land that is primarily used to grow citrus and that is appraised based on agricultural use under Chapter 23, Texas Tax Code, regardless of whether the person receives income from the sale of citrus, and there is an irrebuttable presumption that the person intends to receive income from the sale of citrus.

### **§27.301. Requirements for Program Participation**

All citrus producers within a pest management zone are required to participate in the suppression program. Participation in the suppression program includes:

Timely reporting to the Corporation of all commercial and noncommercial citrus and of all citrus grown for ornamental, research, or any other purposes and the location of such acreage, must be reported to the Corporation by the producer no later than **January 15, 2018** for the current reporting cycle. Please note that this reporting deadline will be on December 15<sup>th</sup> for all subsequent years. Acreage reports can be submitted as a copy of your most recent tree insurance acreage report, by appointment to sit down with a

corporation employee to review maps, or by using the appraisal district acreages shown on the most recent notice.

The assessment rate will be voted on by the board of directors every year and can change. Billing statements for assessments will be sent to citrus producers by **May 1, 2018**. Assessment payments are due by **June 30, 2018**. Payments will be considered **past due on July 1, 2018**.

Compliance with any rules or procedures established by the Department or the Corporation for implementation of the suppression program in the pest management zone is required. The suppression program itself will consist of a coordinated effort to mitigate the threat of HLB transmission to commercial citrus groves by scouting for ACP in managed groves and using an ACP biocontrol approach in residential areas near commercial citrus groves.

Compliance is achieved in any individual grove by a finding of ACP population levels at or below a threshold of an average of 10 ACP per grove or 10% egg/nymph infestation. If a grove stays at or below the accepted threshold for all 3 consecutive cycles, the grove is considered in compliance and monitoring is terminated after the end of the 3rd cycle.

If ACP population levels are above threshold (non-compliance) during any of the 3 consecutive cycles, as a first step at helping to improve the situation the TCPDMC will provide educational materials on suggested treatment programs to the affected grove owner and request that they arrange treatment for the grove as soon as possible. On the next scheduled visit (2 weeks later), if ACP levels remain out of compliance a Corp. representative will meet with the owner and ask for verification of ACP treatment through spray records. On the third visit (1 month after initial non-compliance), if ACP levels remain out of compliance the TCPDMC will initiate its own treatment of the grove as soon as possible. A follow-up visit will be conducted 1-2 weeks post-treatment to confirm that ACP levels are in compliance.

Through grant funding, the Corporation is providing biological control near conventionally-treated groves throughout the citrus production zone, organically-certified commercial groves throughout the citrus production zone and abandoned and smaller residential groves (not traditionally managed for ACP).

### **§27.303. Penalties for Non-Payment of Assessment and Failure to Timely Report Acreage.**

Upon receiving notice from the Corporation that a producer has failed to pay an assessment by the past due date of July 1, 2018, the Texas Department of Agriculture may assess an administrative penalty against the producer. A penalty assessed for failure to timely report acreage shall not exceed \$50 per acre.

For more information regarding this program, contact The Texas Citrus Pest and Disease Management Corporation at 956-580-8004.