

Sonoma County Winegrape Pest and Disease Control District Coalition

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Winegrape Pest & Disease Control District?

A Pest & Disease Control District (PCD) is a grower funded, grower run Board serving the needs and priorities of the agricultural commodity that funds it.

How is a PCD funded?

As defined in the California Food and Ag Code, Section 6200-6290, funding is generated by a minor per planted wine grape acre assessment. The assessment is collected annually by the County Assessor as part of property taxes, and 100% of those funds are placed into a trust account specific for Pest & Disease Control District. The assessment is capped by State law at \$5.00 per planted acre of wine grapes.

Who forms the PCD Board? How do Growers/Owners know where the assessment dollars are spent?

Wine grape landowners or their duly authorized representatives serve on the PCD Board. Meetings of the Board must comply with the Brown Act. Meetings are open to the public and agendas are posted ahead of the meeting. Agenda and non-agenda items can be addressed by growers at each meeting. Budgets are formed annually and formally presented at Board meetings. Directors, appointed by the Board of Supervisors serve a three-year term. The district is re-authorized by the BOS for 5-year terms.

Why do we need a PCD now, can't we wait until we discover a new pest threat in our vineyards?

No. A PCD serves to manage both established pests, and works to avoid the establishment of new pest threats. A PCD is funded for a cohesive and coordinated system for detection and eradication. Without a PCD, individual expenses could be very high, and isolated eradication efforts may not banish the pest from our industry. Long-term effects could include increased costs for insecticides, increased labor costs for monitoring, establishment of new pest control compliance agreements, organic growers losing certification due to use of non-certifiable insecticides, fruit quality issues, and tarping/monitoring grape loads at harvest.

A Sonoma County PCD will serve to promote and protect the long-term sustainability of our industry by ensuring that our integrated pest management activity remains resilient, protecting both our agricultural interests and our natural resources.

How does a Sonoma County Wine Grape PCD add value to my vineyard?

Over the last 20 years, Sonoma County wine grape growers have seen the introduction and establishment of Vine Mealybug (VMB.) Additionally, Light-Brown Apple Moth (LBAM), Virginia Creeper Leafhopper, Glassy-winged Sharpshooter, and European Grapevine Moth (EGVM) have all threatened the integrity of wine grape production in the County.

A PCD will ensure that early activities for eradication of an invasive pest will be coordinated and can use funds to ensure that those costs don't fall squarely on individual landowners.

www.sonomacountypcd.org

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The PCD will:

- Establish a pool of funding dedicated solely for early detection, monitoring, and mitigation of wine grape pests and diseases
- Create an open forum and dedicated grower board to respond to grower / owner input to determine areas of greatest need, focusing on localized research and education/outreach
- Coordinate with UCCE / UC ANR, Sonoma County Ag Commissioner to leverage funding and labor resources
- Coordinate with neighboring regions, i.e. Napa, Mendocino, Lake, Marin and Solano Counties to extend a buffer zone around Sonoma County's high value wine growing region
- Communicate, coordinate, and cooperate in establishing local research priorities to the UCCE / UCANR
- Establish a Board with a County level voice for requesting co-funding as required from Sonoma County BOS, and State and Federal Grant opportunities.

Does Napa County have a Pest and Disease Control District?

Yes. On January 4, 2022, the Napa County BOS renewed the NCPCD for its fifth consecutive 5-year term since its inception in 2002, when GWSS was first identified as an impending threat to the industry. The District was in place and ready when European Grapevine Moth was discovered, and quickly mobilized trapping efforts to successfully delimit and restrict the migration, and, within two years, eradicate the pest by working in tandem with and resources provided by the UCCE, Napa County Ag Commissioner, and CDEA.

Additional examples of work funded by the NCPCD:

- Vine Mealybug mapping identifying hotspots and published a GIS web map,
 - Public, Grower, and Field worker training and education on VMB,
 - Coordinated mating disruption to decrease insect population, and
 - Funded and Coordinated Anagyrus wasp release to augment biological control;
- Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter (GWSS) –
 - Supplementing funding to ensure that 100% of nursery shipments are inspected,
 - Increasing trapping and seasonal monitoring now that GWSS is established in Solano County
- Pest Identification workshops for all manner of pests, new and exotic threats to the industry

But our Agricultural Commissioner already does plant inspections. Why do we need a PCD?

The Sonoma County Department of Agriculture administers exclusion programs to keep invasive and injurious pests out of Sonoma County. In 2020, staff inspected 1069 nursery stock shipments for GWSS. Additionally, they deployed trap programs for other invasive insects and those 6531 traps were serviced 52,721 times. As robust as our AC's programs are, their priorities are directed at specific pest species and ratings as defined by CDEA. As State and County funding for specific pest management/exclusion programs diminishes over time, PCD's can step in to further fund prevention and monitoring for a wine grape specific pest, disease, or research not addressed by State or County priority.

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