

California Pepper Commission

531-D North Alta Ave ~ Dinuba, CA 93618, Phone (559) 591-3925 Fax (559) 591-5744

-January 2025-

Chairman, California Pepper Commission **Matthew Terra, Eckert Cold Storage**

The California Pepper Commission focuses its efforts on improving the chemical, disease and pest issues that concern the pepper industry. The Commission met earlier this year with the purpose of discussing any current and future issues along with research projects that can improve the California Pepper industry. Consisting of five producers, five processors and one public representative, these members are nominated by the industry to represent their interests on the Commission.

Our annual newsletter contains summaries of the research projects completed during the 2023-24 year. Each of these projects were reviewed by the Commission and carefully considered prior to funding. Most of our projects have been ongoing, focusing on the more practical issues of farming peppers, while some focus on more basic research that the Commission feels deserves attention.

The Commission is currently working on upgrading its website where you will be able to view the full research reports along with updates on industry issues including this newsletter.

Every five years the California Department of Food and Agriculture must hold a referendum to determine if the industry would like to continue the Pepper Commission. CDFA conducted this referendum last year asking both handlers and producers to vote on the continuation of the Commission. CDFA announced the continuation of the California Pepper Commission as the majority of submissions voted in favor.

After 26 years as the California Pepper Commission Chairman, Glen Fischer stepped aside opening up the opportunity for Matthew Terra who was elected as Chairman during the last annual meeting taking place February 24, 2024. Ben Migliazzo was also elected as Vice Chairman when Mike Chuck who has also served in that capacity for 26 years, decided to also step aside.

The California Pepper Commission would like to recognize both Glen Fischer and Mike Chuck for their many several years of dedicated service as Chairman and Vice Chairman. As an example of that dedication, both will continue to serve as members on the Commission.

Every three years the Commission holds a series of nomination meetings to allow interested producers an opportunity to serve a three year term on the Commission. As we approach the next fiscal year beginning March 1, 2025 nomination meetings will be scheduled to set the roster for the next three year term 2025-2028. The processors/handlers are chosen by a recommendation from within the industry. A notice of these nomination meetings will be sent out to the industry for those interested in joining the

Commission. Changes to the roster provide new perspectives and experience within the Pepper Commission.

The Annual Pepper Commission Meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, 10:00 A.M. at the West Side Field Station, 17353 Oakland Ave., Five Points 93624.

In order to maintain balanced producer representation, the Pepper Commission is discussing the possibility of adjusting the producer districts which are represented on page 4.

For the past several years the Commission has been a member and active participant with the California Specialty Crops Council (CSCC). The CSCC provides the Commission the opportunity to work with similar groups to focus on research, education, and regulatory activities, which can affect California agriculture. By representing a variety of groups, the CSCC is well supported when communicating industry issues with state and federal agencies. The CSCC also acts as a conduit of information between its members and various entities. For more information you can visit the CSCC website at www.specialtycrops.org.

For the past several years the Commission has contributed to the Alliance for Food and Farming www.foodandfarming.info to help support the safe fruits and veggies message of “eat more produce.” Science-based data at www.safeffruitsandveggies.com educates the consumer on how conventional produce is just as safe as organic and how we should be consuming more.

The Commission is currently working on a comprehensive email list to streamline the distribution of information to the industry in a more efficient and cost-effective method. Please reach out to the Commission office or email nathan@tabcomp.com to be included.

2023-24 Research Projects

Chow Yang	Insect Pest Management	\$22,000
Bob Gilbertson	Surveillance for TSWV Resistance	15,000
Bob Heisey	Transplants using PlantTape	9,879

Insect Pest Management on Peppers

Chow Yang Lee, and Greg Kund, UC Riverside

Two pepper field trials were conducted this year. The first location was at the University of California Riverside Agricultural Operations. Bell pepper, *Capsicum annuum* L. ‘Double Up’ seedlings were transplanted in a sandy loam-type soil on 25 May, 2023. The project included five IPM trial rotations, three single application treatments, a chemical standard, and a non-treated control. The field trial was conducted using a large-scale commercial field design to evaluate treatment rotations against a complex group of insects for efficacy. A second field trial targeted pepper weevils in Santa Paula, CA.

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The first field trial had five IPM trial rotations and three single application treatments and was compared to a chemical standard and an untreated control for efficacy. The first IPM treatment consisted of a rotation of Intrepid 2F + Sequoia 2 SC and Radiant SC. A second IPM rotation consisted of Intrepid 2F + Sequoia 2 SC and VST-Exp. + Leprotec. The third IPM rotation was VST-Exp. + Leprotec and Radiant SC. The fourth IPM rotation included Mustang Maxx, Avaunt eVO, and Exirel. The organic IPM treatment comprised Pyganic 1.4 EC, Trilogy EC, and Entrust SC. The materials used in the IPM trials were applied according to rotational strategies that would support a commercial grower operation. All IPM treatments, including the organic IPM treatment, were applied up to five times each in a rotation. The three single-application treatments consisted of a soil drench, a foliar application of Sivanto Prime, and an experimental product. The chemical standard consisted of one application of Sequoia 2SC, four applications of Mustang Maxx, and a single application of Exirel.

A mid-season field count was done, and overall, the insect pressure was low to moderate this season. The insects of concern, except the pepper weevil, were present in the field. Field insect counts included potato psyllids, lepidopterans, leafhoppers, thrips, aphids, and whiteflies. The fruits from the study were harvested and assessed for insect damage. This assessment included damage from lepidopteran worms, pepper weevils, stink bugs, aphids, mites, potato psyllids, and bagrada bugs.

Our harvest assessment revealed low to moderate numbers of insects and damage in the various treatments, and there was no statistical separation except for the bagrada bug. Over the past several pepper growing seasons, we have seen an increase in bagrada bug damage.

The second field trial in Santa Paula targeting pepper weevils was done in a commercial grower operation to test the efficacy of current grower standard IPM rotations (not disclosed) with a treatment rotation of Mustang Maxx and Avaunt eVO, a low rate of Plinazolin, and a high rate of Plinazolin. The Plinazolin treatments were applied twice. Mustang Maxx and Avaunt eVO treatments were each applied once. The Plinazolin, Mustang Maxx, and Avaunt eVO treatments were combined with the grower standard treatments. No field counts were taken during this trial, and the harvest assessment was used to evaluate the treatments.

The results from the harvest assessment showed that the two poorer performing treatments were the low rate of Plinazolin, sustaining 15% pepper weevil damage, and the grower standard

had 10.5% damage. The two better-performing treatments were the high rate of Plinazolin with 4.5% damage and the Mustang Maxx and Avaunt eVO treatment with 5.5% pepper weevil damage. These are encouraging results as additional treatment options for pepper weevil control.

Virus Surveillance in Peppers for Resistance-breaking (RB) Strains of Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV) and Assessment of the Susceptibility of Peppers to Emerging Tomato-infecting Tobamovirus

Robert L. Gilbertson, UC Davis

1. There was a very low incidence of pepper virus diseases in 2023, which may have been partly due to the cool wet winter and early spring weather negatively impacting insect vectors (beet leafhoppers and thrips)
2. No curly top samples in 2023
3. A hotspot of RB pepper TSWV was identified in Woodland (Yolo County) in 2023 and most of the isolates were identified as the new super RB (SRB) that overcomes the TSW gene in pepper and the SW-5 gene in tomato
4. This is the third such hotspot: Merced, Monterey (Gilroy) and Yolo counties
5. ToBRFV infects and causes severe symptoms in the Lo pepper genotype, but the L genes for tobamovirus resistance in pepper are providing strong resistance of ToBRFV in most genotypes

Evaluation of Transplants using PlantTape Automated Transplanting System

Bob Heisey

Root growth, specifically diameter of the roots was a noticeable difference between the PlantTape and field variety. Plants from the PlantTape trial did show noticeable increase sizes in secondary root production. An average of two larger sized roots were notable. Plant roots from the field variety did not display larger roots as the trial. Depth of Roots were also increased vs the field variety due to the larger roots that were produced in the trial.

An observation with this trial would be to use sprinklers immediately after transplanting the PlantTape since the PlantTape plugs were planted very close to the surface of the bed. Beds need to be bed shaped to a very flat surface. Depth of Plants were only 2 inches and many of the plugs were exposed at soil level or slightly covered. Attempts were made to immediately saturate the entire bed utilizing the underground drip tape. The irrigation system could not cover the complete bed and therefore many plants died or were severely stressed.

**Full Reports will be Available at the Commission
Office or website www.calpeppers.com**

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The accompanying financial report shows the Pepper Commission income and expenditures for the fiscal 2023-24 fiscal year is not as financially comfortable as previous years. The Commission based its income off 240,000 tons of fresh and processed peppers. In order to maintain a healthy budget, the Commission agreed to increase its assessment rate to \$0.40 per ton which is a 5-cent increase from the previous year.

The Commission’s books are audited annually by an independent Certified Public Accountancy firm, and any pepper industry member wanting a copy of said audit may apply to the Commission office.

Fiscal Year: March 1, 2023 through February 29, 2024

Account Name	Amount
INCOME	
Assessment Income, 2023-24	\$108,882
Interest Income	<u>2,400</u>
Total Income	111,282
Carryover from 2022-23	63,829
Income/Carryover	\$175,111
EXPENDITURES	
Management Services	\$36,000
Audits	4,375
Office Supplies	565
Telephone	905
Subscriptions	2,400
Travel & Mileage	198
Meetings	461
Insurance	778
Website	1,950
Marketing Branch, CDFA	15,621
California Specialty Crops Council	6,000
Production Research	<u>30,087</u>
Total Expenditures	\$99,340
Net Income	\$11,942
Cash Balance	\$75,771

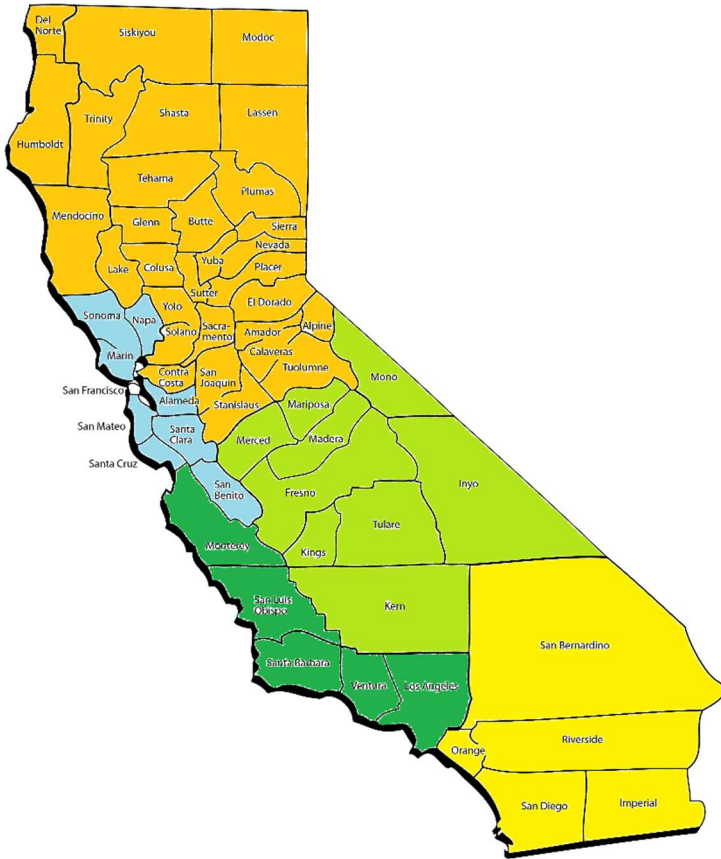
The Commission and staff are always available to answer questions or assist in any way they can. Nathan Sano (nathan@tabcomp.com) is the Board Manager, and JD Allen (jdallen@tabcomp.com) is the Assistant Manager, and they can be contacted via email or at (559) 591-3925.

California Pepper Commission		
MEMBERS		ALTERNATES
Producer Representatives		
Robert Meyer Arroyo Grande	District 1	John Hook King City
William Terry Ventura	District 2	Cornelio Blanco Oxnard
Mike Chuck Gilroy	District 3	Dan Fiorio Gilroy
Ben Migliazzo Le Grand	District 4	<i>Vacant</i>
Adrian Zendejas Coachella	District 5	Patrick Pinkard Helm
Handler Representatives		
Matthew Terra Escalon	Bell Pepper Processing	<i>Vacant</i>
<i>Vacant</i>	Chili Pepper Processing	<i>Vacant</i>
Glen A. Fischer Ventura	Bell/Chili Pepper-Other	<i>Vacant</i>
Yosh Kamine Fresno	Fresh Bell	<i>Vacant</i>
Bob Heisey Hollister	Pepper Seed	Brandon Kreutz TS&L Seeds
Public Representative		
Dave Nirenberg Camarillo		<i>Vacant</i>
Staff		
Nathan Sano (Manager) Dinuba		JD Allen (Asst. Manager) Dinuba

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Proposed Districts



District One: Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Tuolumne, Contra, Costa, Solano, Yolo, Lake, Mendocino, and all Counties north to the Oregon border

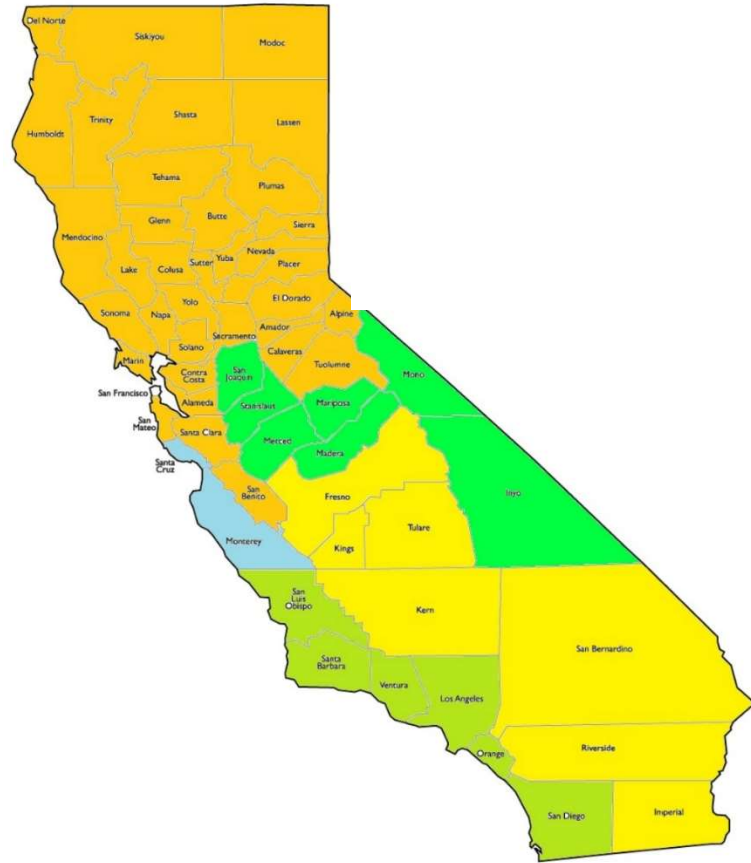
District Two: Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties

District Three: Merced, Mariposa, Mono, Madera, Fresno, Inyo, Kings, Tulare and Kern Counties

District Four: Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles Counties

District Five: San Bernadino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego and Imperial Counties

Current Districts



District One: Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties

District Two: San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego Counties

District Three: Tuolumne, San Benito, Santa Clara and all Counties north to the Oregon border

District Four: Stanislaus, Merced, Mariposa, Mono, Madera, Inyo and San Joaquin Counties

District Five: Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Kern, San Bernadino, Riverside and Imperial Counties