

Citrus Research Board (CRB)

HLB Data Analysis Tactical Operations Cell (DATOC) Coordinator

CRB Project #: 5300-182

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INTRODUCTION

The DATOC Coordinator is an employee of the California Citrus Research Board (CRB). He or she serves as a resource to both the CRB and the California Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Committee (CPDPC). The employee plays a key role in the citrus industry's Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) / Huanglongbing (HLB) management program. The employee gathers, standardizes, integrates, and graphically depicts project related data from diverse sources, placing it in a centralized virtual facility (the DATOC cell) for review by expert scientists at frequent, regularly scheduled, meetings. The employee facilitates those meetings, produces meeting agendas and minutes, and reports the resulting discussion and recommendations to the CPDPC Operations Sub-committee. The specific focus of this position is on ACP/HLB epidemiological risk analysis interpretation and evaluation of the efficacy of mitigation tactics being employed.

The CRB is a multi-faceted, grower funded organization, with responsibility for administering Board functions, diverse scientific research efforts and educational outreach to the commercial citrus industry of California. All CRB staff may be called upon at any time as needed to support appropriate activities not explicitly defined in their particular job descriptions.

MAJOR DUTIES

The DATOC Coordinator plans, organizes, and facilitates the scientific review and interpretation of quantitative risk analysis with special emphasis on risk communication and the transition between quantitative analyses and qualitative risk communication. He or she is able to understand, and communicate the technology and methods used to assess the risk associated with ACP/HLB.

The Coordinator reviews and evaluates risk analysis, spatial analysis and statistical methods used to characterize ACP/HLB epidemiology. He or she assesses the value of different, often complex, risk management strategies and tactics for mitigating ACP/HLB in commercial citrus production areas.

The Coordinator utilizes spatial analysis (Geographic Information Systems (GIS)) as applicable to ACP/HLB risk analysis, mitigation and depiction. He or she identifies, evaluates and applies appropriate simulation models produced by the scientific community for best applicability to ACP/HLB mitigation challenges. Potential sources of data at this time include but are not limited to: California commercial citrus production data (CRB Statewide Commercial Citrus Layer), ACP/HLB confirmed detection data (CDFA PDR data), ACP/HLB treatment and mitigation data (County Pesticide Use Reports (PURs)), and Early Detection Technology (EDT) suspect HLB detection data. Additional pertinent data sources may be identified and added in the future.

The DATOC Coordinator facilitates and conducts meetings of a panel of participating scientists.

He or she prepares agendas, invites attendees, records minutes and prepares summary graphic exhibits for presentation to the CPDPC Operations Sub-committee. The Analyst may, if called upon, present such information to the full CPDPC committee, CRB full board or committees, at grower outreach and education meetings, or for publication in the CRB Citrograph magazine and other print media

Knowledge Required by the Position:

The DATOC Coordinator must be familiar with science and the study of organisms and environmental conditions that cause disease in plants, the mechanisms by which this occurs, the interactions between these agents and the plant, and the methods of managing plant disease in an agricultural setting as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. He or she integrates this knowledge with that of other fields such as: bio-informatics, mathematical statistics, soil science, agronomy, entomology, botany, simulation modeling, ecology, agricultural economics, geography/cartography/spatial analysis (GIS), and website administration/information technology (IT).

The Coordinator has formal training in, or the proven ability to interpret quantitative risk analysis, computer simulations of crop disease epidemiology, spatial analysis, applied statistics, and geographic information systems. The ability to implement a secure, user-friendly, web-based interface (dashboard) for DATOC participants utilizing knowledge of content management systems such as Drupal, and programming languages such as HTML, CSS and/or JavaScript is an additional, highly desirable skillset.

The Coordinator possesses a comprehensive, well-rounded professional knowledge of biology with mastery of the advanced theories, principles, and concepts associated with the control of plant pathogens. This knowledge must be sufficient to understand and describe new methodologies and solve novel and obscure scientific and related logistical problems.

A high level of written and oral communication skill is essential. This includes the ability to write for publication as well as the competence needed to make understandable live presentations before Board committees and the grower public.

Superior analytical and project management skills are required. The ability to work as part of a team is essential: furthermore, the Coordinator must be able to assume a leadership role in planning and conducting DATOC panel activities.

Supervisory Controls:

The DATOC Analyst is classified as a regular, exempt, at-will employee of the CRB and as such enjoys all benefits and policies described in the CRB Employee Handbook. He or she is under the direct supervision of the CRB Data Department Director (Supervisor), who in combination with the Project Principle Investigator (PI), defines broad objectives, policies, areas of investigation, and benchmarks. The Supervisor and PI work together to review work for attainment of objectives and effectiveness. The Coordinator's activities are matched with program needs through a close working relationship with the Supervisor, PI, PI's staff, CRB President, and other CRB staff. The Coordinator's technical recommendations are normally accepted without significant change after being reviewed for appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency. DATOC panel recommendations are subject to CPDPC Operations Sub-committee approval and action. Work is reviewed in terms of meeting project benchmarks and objectives.

Guidelines:

Basic guides are the policies and objectives of the Citrus Research Board, CRB management, Supervisor, and the Project PI. Confidentiality and the protection of personal information are a critical requirement of this position. The Analyst is required to strictly adhere to CRB's written confidentiality policy in that regard. Independent initiative and experienced judgment is desired when recommending modification of current methodologies, developing new approaches, and resolving deficiencies or problems encountered in the course of work.

Complexity:

This position potentially provides varied and diverse assignments and involves broad and markedly different activities associated with technical and scientific issues and activities, managerial demands in coordinating the available resources and active participation in selling, influencing and motivating diverse interest groups. The evaluation and analysis of ongoing ACP/HLB management programs requires the assessment of unusual circumstances and issues and in consultation with Supervisor and PI, the skillful adjustment of methods, procedures, and plans to overcome unexpected difficulties. Problem resolution may involve recommending the development and implementation of new or revised operational procedures, the initiation of guides for operating personnel, and the evaluation and analysis of the current program execution. The Coordinator must exercise a high degree of resourcefulness and ingenuity in devising long and short-range solutions to problems. These problems may be unique or novel in nature which precludes the application of standardized methods.

Scope and Effect:

The purpose of the work is to provide additional technical support needed for California's ACP/HLB Risk Analysis and mitigation program.

Personal Contacts:

Contacts are with key management and scientific professionals in academia, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), USDA APHIS, USDA ARS and other federal agencies, as well as additional pest management professionals and commercial citrus industry entities. Contacts are also with officials representing international agencies, state governments, and local governments. In addition, the Coordinator may have contacts with representatives of organized farm groups, farm owners, cooperators, contractors, and others in similar positions.

Purpose of Contacts:

The purpose is to plan and develop, through formal negotiations, working agreements, and cooperative endeavors, to exchange information, and improve ACP/HLB mitigation activities. The Coordinator maintains contacts with individuals and organizations who may have opposing viewpoints and/or who apply pressure to further their specific goals. Meetings, particularly with key industry, international, state and local officials, may involve decisions and commitments which have important far-reaching implications for CRB, CPDPC, and CDFA programs and are outside the authority of the DATOC Coordinator.

Physical Demands:

The work is generally sedentary; however, some situations may require physical exertion such as walking through agricultural settings and climbing ladders. Some overnight domestic and foreign travel may be required.

Work Environment:

The work is usually performed in a typical office setting, occasionally some exposure to moderate discomfort is encountered on field trips such as extremes of heat and cold, and inclement weather. The incumbent must be able to lift 40 pounds and climb ladders.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Incumbent must have a valid driver license in order to operate a CRB vehicle (this includes operating a rental car while on official travel).