

FEATURE STORY

Grapevine Trunk Disease Management

RESEARCH AND TRIALS EVALUATE NEW BIOLOGICAL AND CHEMICAL TOOLS

By Ted Rieger

Grapevine trunk diseases (GTDs), also called canker diseases, are a problem in vineyards worldwide. More than 60 fungal species are known to cause GTDs. Multiple fungal pathogens commonly exist in infected vines and they can be difficult to identify and control. Biological and chemical fungicides and sealants are available, and more are being developed, to apply as pruning wound protectants after dormant pruning. In addition, research in California vineyards is underway to identify and test beneficial microorganisms that provide natural defense mechanisms in grapevines to prevent and inhibit GTD occurrence.

DISEASE OVERVIEW

The more common GTDs and their associated fungal species found in California vineyards are:

- Eutypa dieback (*Eutypa lata* and other Diatrypaceae species).
- Esca (a complex of fungi also known as black measles) and Petri disease or young vine decline (*Phaeomoniella chlamydospora* and *Phaeoacremonium minimum*).
- Botryosphaeria dieback or “bot canker” (*Neofusicoccum parvum* and other Botryosphaeriaceae family species).
- Phomopsis dieback and Phomopsis cane and leaf spot (*Phomopsis viticola*).

Most GTD fungal pathogens produce overwintering fruiting structures on infected woody tissue. When conditions are favorable, the fruiting bodies release fungal spores into the environment that can start vine infection through contact on pruning wounds.

A challenge with GTD management is that infection can occur in young vineyards – as early as pruning begins – but these diseases can take several years to develop before causing visible symptoms and damage. Once symptoms occur, it is often too late to



Wedge-shaped cankers in vine cross sections.

save vines without performing significant “surgery” to remove diseased wood. Symptoms include poor vigor, distorted leaves and shoots, shoot and tendril dieback and berry specks. Wedge-shaped cankers in vine cross sections lead to spur, cordon and trunk dieback and eventual vine death.

Early adoption of practices to prevent GTD infection and spread provides cost effective benefits over the life of the vineyard. An online trunk disease diagnostics app, an interactive economic management tool to input data to make economic management decisions, and other information on GTD management are available on the SCRI Trunk Disease Project Page.

PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES AND MANAGEMENT

Dr. Akif Eskalen, UC Cooperative Extension plant pathologist in the UC Davis Department of Plant Pathology, discussed recommended GTD management practices during a recent educational webinar presented by the Lodi Winegrape Commission. He advised using the cleanest plant material available when planting new vineyards and minimizing stress on young vines after planting. Pruning cuts should be clean and smooth to speed-up callusing at the pruning wound. Pruning

FEATURE STORY

equipment and tools should be maintained to produce clean cuts. Mechanical pruning sometimes creates more “ragged” cuts that do not callus well and leave more surface area for spore infection.

Recommended preventative practices are delayed or late pruning, applications of pruning wound protectants and double pruning. In California, pruning wounds are susceptible to infection by fungal spores during the rainy season in December and January. Delayed pruning, in February or March, can significantly reduce susceptibility, as fewer spores may be present, and pruning wounds can heal faster as vine sap flow and seasonal growth begin.

Delayed pruning can be most cost effective as it requires no additional cost to implement. But due to labor availability and scheduling, especially with hand pruning, not all growers can wait until February or March. Growers with mechanized operations may be better positioned to use late pruning. Double pruning involves two passes: one in December or January, often with a mechanical hedger or pre-pruner, and a second pass in March as the final cut to remove the section below the pruning wound that may have been infected after the first pass.

Pruned and infected plant material should be removed promptly to prevent development of GTD fungi fruiting structures in the vineyard that produce spores.

PRUNING WOUND PROTECTANTS

Eskalen’s research and recommendations focus on pruning wound protection. Although total disease control is difficult because of the large number of wounds on a grapevine and the period of wound susceptibility, Eskalen said, “Pruning wounds are the main entry point, and protecting wounds is essential to preventing and reducing infection from GTD pathogens.” He also advises protecting vine wounds resulting from other viticultural operations, such as mechanical harvest.

Timing of pruning and applications of wound protectants in relation to rain events can reduce infection risk by performing these tasks during prolonged dry weather. The efficacies of different pruning wound protectants can vary based on timing, weather conditions and the fungal species present. More than one application is commonly needed during the susceptible time period, and combinations of protectants can increase efficacy. Some protectants can be applied with conventional spraying equipment – both tractor and hand application tools.

Eskalen’s research lab conducted trials in 2019 and 2020 and posted reports: Evaluation of Biological and Chemical Pruning Wound Protectants Against Selected Fungi Associated with Grapevine Trunk Diseases. These trials specifically evaluated efficacies of protectants against *E. lata* and *N. parvum*. Three 2020 trials were conducted in Elk Grove, Delano and Davis. More information is available at the Eskalen lab webpage, with



Example of a clean cut. Pruning wounds are susceptible to infection by fungal spores during the rainy season in December and January.

specific data from recent trials. Based on trials, Eskalen listed the following available protectant options, and promising experimental protectants, that show good results to date.

- **BIOCONTROLS:** Bio-Tam, containing two *Trichoderma* species (Isagro USA). Serenade, a *Bacillus subtilis* strain (Bayer Crop Science). Vintec, a *Trichoderma* strain to control *Esca* from Bi-PA was recently registered by the U.S. EPA but is still experimental in California. Crab Life Powder, a blend of crab and lobster shell powder containing chitin, is an experimental protectant showing good results. GCM, another promising experimental protectant, contains the gelatinase and chitinase producing *Bacillus velezensis*.
- **CHEMICAL FUNGICIDES:** Topsin-M + Rally (Corteva) and Luna Sensation and Luna Experience (Bayer Crop Science).
- **SEALANTS:** VitiSeal, a co-polymer emulsion with natural plant oils (VitiSeal International). Spur Shield, a natural resin barrier (Miller Chemical & Fertilizer). EMP Barrier is an experimental co-polymer emulsion that has shown good results in combination with VitiSeal.

Eskalen began research in 2019 funded by the American Vineyard Foundation to collect and identify naturally occurring and potentially beneficial microorganisms in grapevines from 20 vineyards in 10 counties in California. Cordon, trunk and root tissue were taken from vines using nondestructive methods to isolate, analyze and study endophytic bacterial communities between healthy and diseased vines showing trunk disease symptoms. Bacterial isolates from several genera, including the genus *Bacillus*, are being tested in greenhouse and field trials to evaluate those exerting the highest percentages of inhibition against important GTD pathogens. Trials are also being conducted at commercial grapevine nurseries with chemical and biological products using a vacuum chamber to infiltrate the fungicides into dormant cuttings prior to grafting.

“Naturally occurring bacteria live in plant tissue without causing any damage, and some can secrete secondary metabolites that inhibit harmful GTD microorganisms,” Eskalen said. He added, “There is no single pesticide we can apply to address all GTD pathogens. We are trying to come up with a biocontrol system so the vine can have a defense from multiple pathogens.”



Looking Ahead to 2021

A sincere thank you to all of our members for your continued support during a challenging 2020. Please contact CAWG staff, an officer or your district director if you have questions or concerns, or if you want to be more engaged in CAWG efforts. We are optimistic about the year ahead and look forward to working on behalf of winegrape growers.

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2021 – The Year Ahead

By Michael Müller

The following is a brief summary of what we can expect in Sacramento from lawmakers and regulators in 2021.

NEWSOM ADMINISTRATION

Gov. Newsom is losing key staff to the Biden administration. These positions may be hard to fill as Newsom may be facing a recall and these positions may be seen as short term. Additionally, Newsom has gone through a shakeup of his highest-level advisors. While Newsom enjoyed relative stability in his first two years, his staffing may be in flux in the weeks and months ahead.

Environmental protection continues to be a high priority for Newsom. Last year, he issued executive orders requiring administrative regulatory actions to preserve working lands (including ag land and waterways) and to move California toward zero reliance on fossil fuels by 2035. We anticipate proposed regulations in the months ahead that may impose mandates intended to achieve Newsom's goals.

COVID-19

The good news is that agricultural employees are a priority (phase 1b) to receive COVID-19 immunization shots. The plan to make vaccines available in rural communities is still being developed.

There are also several unresolved questions about how employers are to comply with Newsom's COVID-19 prevention emergency temporary standards (ETS). The ETS was adopted with only five days of public comment in November and is being contested in court by a coalition of agricultural and business organizations, including CAWG (see page 7).

The California Legislature has adopted a general philosophy that employers are to provide the social safety net for the COVID-19 community-spread virus. Consequently, we expect additional proposed requirements on employers relative to workplace safety, reporting, compensation and more.

WATER POLICIES

There will be several water issues discussed in 2021:

- The California Water Resources Control Board (board) released its proposed General Waste Discharge Requirements for Winery Process Water. CAWG is working closely with Wine Institute in raising concerns with the order. The order includes costly provisions that we believe can be adjusted to reduce costs without harming environmental protections.

- The board is also considering other revisions to stormwater management and discharge regulations.
- Central Valley Salinity Alternatives for Long-Term Sustainability (CV-SALTS) becomes operational this year.
- The Legislature may consider legislation creating stringent clean water goals to mark the 50th anniversary of the federal Clean Water Act in 2022.
- The Strategic Growth Council is beginning to play a larger role in Sustainable Groundwater Management Act implementation, which could potentially complicate and delay matters.



LABOR LAWS

In addition to the ETS issue, there are several labor proposals that will be debated this year. Hours of work and compensation for ag employees continues to be a legislative and regulatory topic of discussion.

Last year, the Legislature passed an expansion of California's paid and unpaid leave laws. This year, the Legislature is considering requiring employers to make paid bereavement leave available to its employees. Additionally, the compensation levels for paid family leave, disability insurance and unemployment insurance may be increased.

The Legislature will also consider proposals to provide additional protections for ag employees potentially exposed to wildfire smoke in the workplace.

STATE BUDGET & TAXES

The governor recently released his proposed \$227.2 billion state budget for 2021-22. The proposed budget includes the following relative to COVID-19:

- \$2.4 billion to fund \$600 stimulus payments for about 4 million Californians who make less than \$30,000 a year.
- \$4 billion to create jobs and help small businesses recover from the economic downturn brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.
- \$2 billion to help schools as they transition to more in-person learning.

Continued on page 6

Newsom Recall

By Michael Müller

A campaign to recall Gov. Gavin Newsom is gaining more media and voter attention. However, in considering whether this effort has real potential, we need to first look back at the 2003 recall of Gov. Gray Davis.

DUMP DAVIS

In November 2002, Gov. Davis (D) was reelected by defeating Republican Bill Simon by a five-point margin. Davis was recalled only 12 months later by a 10-point margin.

The signature gathering campaign to recall Davis was centered on a few key issues, including the energy crisis, increasing vehicle fees, high workers' compensation costs and large contracts to public labor unions. However, the underlying message that resonated most was that Davis lacked charisma and leadership and had lost touch with voters.

The "Dump Davis" recall campaign was primarily funded by Rep. Darrell Issa (R-El Cajon), who originally hoped to replace Davis himself. A major factor in the success of the recall was that Arnold Schwarzenegger decided to run for governor. In the media circus of 135 candidates for governor, the top three were Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) 49%, Cruz Bustamante (D) 32% and Tom McClintock (R) 13%.

WHAT IS A RECALL?

The California recall process was created in 1911 as the result of reforms that spread across the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The ability to recall elected officials was part of the initiative and referendum processes created to hold government officials accountable.

To trigger an election for recall of the governor, proponents must gather statewide signatures that are equal to 12% of the total votes cast in the previous gubernatorial election. For a Newsom recall to qualify for the ballot, proponents must collect nearly 1.5 million signatures by March 17, 2021. Proponents may want as many as 2 million signatures in case some signatures are invalid.

Once the recall has qualified, a recall election will be scheduled. In that election, voters would essentially be asked two questions:

1. Should the governor be recalled from office?
2. If recalled, among the list of candidates, who should replace the governor?

If, by majority vote, the voters choose to recall the governor, the top vote getter then becomes governor in a few weeks upon certification of the election.

WILL NEWSOM BE RECALLED?

In answering this question, we must consider that only one California governor has been recalled. Five efforts to recall Newsom have already failed, as there are major challenges in gathering signatures.

Typical costs are between \$3 and \$6 per signature to hire signature gathering companies to circulate the recall petition. As there have been more than 1 million signatures gathered thus far, proponents would need roughly \$2 million in additional funding. A recent \$500,000 influx of funding helps. The additional challenge in gathering signatures is that COVID-19 restrictions hamper proponents' ability to gather signatures in public places, such as entrances to grocery stores.

If a recall qualifies for the ballot, the biggest hurdle may be that California is bluer today than it was in 2003 and Newsom remains popular with Democrats. Additionally, there is no popular candidate yet identified to replace Newsom. Absent a popular opponent, the question of the recall becomes more difficult as voters ponder a "bird in the hand" kind of decision.

In the 2003 recall, voters saw Schwarzenegger as a popular and viable option. While Newsom would not have an opponent of equal popularity, he would face significant challenges due to the pandemic.

Early on, California was seen as leading the nation in responding to COVID-19. That public perception changed substantially in recent months. Additionally, media coverage of Newsom's November 2020 dinner at the French Laundry will be used in an attempt to convince voters that Newsom does not comply with the COVID-19 rules he foisted upon the rest of us.

In the months ahead, Newsom needs to decide whether to lean left to shore up his base or lean right to deal with concerns of moderate voters. Both approaches come with risks.

Gov. Hiram Johnson, a Republican and reformist, created the recall process, calling it a "precautionary measure by which a recalcitrant official can be removed." Newsom's executive orders, shutdowns, distribution of vaccines, testing efforts and other pandemic actions would weigh heavily on voters who would decide whether he is recalcitrant or should continue to serve.



2021 – The Year Ahead *continued from page 4*

California's revenue collections have increased despite the pandemic because the tax code relies on wealthy earners who may have been less affected. The result is a one-time budget windfall of about \$26 billion creating a surplus of about \$15 billion. Newsom wants to use some of the surplus funds soon, including the COVID-19 spending above, as part of what he's calling an "early action" proposal.

The Legislature will likely explore building on the current windfall by creating an ongoing source of revenue through proposed tax increases.

The Legislature will be debating the proposed budget over the next few months and has until June 15 to pass a final 2021-22 budget.



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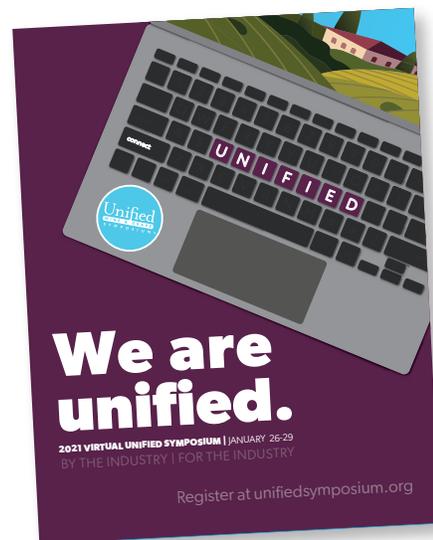
Join us for the only tasting session at the symposium on Thursday, Jan. 28 (1-2:15 p.m.). This grapegrowing session – The World Is Changing, but the Varietals We Grow Have Not. Are We Missing Out? – will showcase commercially produced pure varietal wines of the new Pierce's disease-resistant hybrid grapevines developed by Dr. Andy Walker.

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CAWG Part of Coalition Challenging Cal/OSHA ETS

The following is a Dec. 31 press release that has received widespread media coverage. CAWG will continue to provide members with updates on the litigation. The first hearing on the case could be as early as Jan. 28.

A coalition of agricultural and business employers has filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court challenging the COVID-19 related emergency temporary standards (ETS) recently approved by the California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board (board). The complaint alleges, among other things, that the board lacks statutory authority to impose many of the sweeping measures of the ETS on California employers.

For California’s multigenerational farmers, the health and safety of their employees and consumers they serve is their top priority.

“In the weeks and months following Gov. Newsom’s emergency declaration in March, California farmers and processors moved quickly to implement dramatic new safety practices aimed at mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace,” Western Growers President and CEO Dave Puglia said. “While these measures helped reduce transmission in workplaces, this virus has swept through communities large and small in spite of lockdown orders and mask mandates, and through every sector of the economy as well despite extraordinary efforts by employers and employees alike. The board imposed unrealistic, unfounded and economically harmful standards in total disregard of these realities. We have no choice but to seek judicial relief.”

The standards promulgated by the board are unprecedented and sweeping. They were adopted with little public notice or opportunity for comment based on a purported “finding of emergency” and a declared need for immediate action, even though it took the board nine months to enact these rules. Furthermore, Cal/OSHA staff insisted the ETS were not necessary for the agency to enforce the continually evolving general and industry-specific guidelines for the prevention of COVID-19. As stated in the complaint, “the ETS does not solve a crisis as much as it creates one.”

“We take this unfortunate yet serious action because we believe there are unconsidered mitigation steps that have and would continue to better protect farm workers while allowing our

farmers to continue to produce a consistent supply of fruits and vegetables,” Grower-Shipper Association of Central California President Christopher Valadez said. “As this pandemic has shown us over the last several months, it is imperative that science and data drive policy. That is at the core of what we seek in this lawsuit.”

The ETS create significant new obligations and liabilities for employers, and subject well-meaning California farmers and other businesses to additional enforcement actions and substantial penalties. The practical effect of these emergency standards is to shift the public health and economic costs of COVID-19 monitoring, investigation, compliance and remediation onto employers, all without any consideration of the financial damage inflicted on businesses already struggling to recover from the pandemic.

“These regulations will disrupt food supply operations all along the line, but it will be especially hard on our 20,000 small family farming members,” California Farm Bureau Federation President Jamie Johansson said. “They and their employees are the unsung heroes of the pandemic but once again, they must react to a rule handed down by fiat instead of going through a deliberate regulatory process where the voices of farmers would be heard. We hope the court forces government to follow the law.”

It is important to note that the ETS will have a disproportionate impact on California farmers and their employees since one aspect of the regulations is to substantially reduce and eliminate vitally needed agricultural housing during a statewide housing crisis. A reduction in already-scarce housing will directly impact farmworker communities and harm rural economies across the state that depend on agriculture.

The lawsuit filed by lead attorney David A. Schwarz, Kent R. Raygor and Barbara Taylor, with Sheppard Mullin, argues that in enacting the emergency regulations without due process, the board failed to explain the causal link between the ETS and the emergency situation to be addressed, or to adequately justify the necessity of the new rules. Additionally, the complaint contends that many of the regulations have nothing to do with workplace health or occupational safety, but are designed to address non-work-related COVID-19 exposure risks.



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WHEN

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WEBSITE

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Federal COVID Relief Package

The massive year-end legislative package – signed by President Trump on Dec. 27 – included the following provisions:

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP)

The PPP reopened the week of Jan. 11 for new borrowers and certain existing PPP borrowers, per an announcement by the U.S. Small Business Administration and Treasury Department. Another \$284 billion to provide a second round of forgivable loans to small businesses was included in the COVID relief plan. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said, “This updated guidance enhances the PPP’s targeted relief to small businesses most impacted by COVID-19. We are committed to implementing this round of PPP quickly to continue supporting American small businesses and their workers.”

CRAFT BEVERAGE MODERNIZATION AND TAX REFORM ACT (CBMTRA)

The CBMTRA was made permanent in the legislative package. Wine and other beverage alcohol groups had increased their lobbying efforts in the final months of 2020 to encourage Congress to pass the CBMTRA before Dec. 31, when it was set to expire. The CBMTRA reduces excise tax payments for all wineries, including the 4,000-plus in California.

FUNDS TO AGRICULTURE

The package provides an estimated \$13 billion that will be allocated to ag programs, including the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) and the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.

CA Receives Millions for Pest Mitigation, Plant Health Projects

USDA allocated \$17.1 million to California as part of its effort to support pest detection and surveillance, identification and threat mitigation, and to safeguard the U.S. nursery production system. Funding is earmarked for numerous activities, including:

- Eliminating transmission of xylella fastidiosa by the glassy-winged sharpshooter using CRISPR.
- Postharvest treatments for spotted lanternfly.
- Surveying for invasive fruit flies.
- Supporting ag detector dog teams that search for harmful invasive plant pests.
- Supporting National Clean Plant Network foundation plant stocks (including grapes).
- Supporting California’s Emergency Plant Health Response teams in managing outbreaks of exotic plant pests.

►2021 SPENDING PLAN

GRAPE CRUSH REPORT – PRELIM

Release date: Feb. 10 @ 12 p.m. PST

Report: Impact of Wildfires on California Agriculture

The Assembly Ag Committee on Nov. 18, 2020 held a hearing to explore the impacts wildfires have had on California agriculture over the past five years. A recently-released report features participant testimony and policy issues that arose from the discussion and information submitted by stakeholders. Additional information can be found on the committee’s website.

►REPORT

►COMMITTEE WEBSITE

FREE COVID Testing for Ag Workers

The California Farmworker Foundation (CFF) is administering free COVID-19 tests for ag employees in the Central Valley. CFF is the first farmworker nonprofit in California to conduct testing. CFF is working with CDEA and the California Department of Public Health to ensure ag employees have access to COVID-19 testing at their worksites and communities. The self-swabbing tests have a two to three-day turnaround for results. For more information, contact CFF’s COVID-19 testing lead, Daity Tapiat at (661) 778-0015 or daity.tapia@californiafarmworkers.org.

2020 Year in Review

In a year-end report, CSWA highlighted its numerous accomplishments: Specialty Crop Block Grant projects, California Code of Sustainable Winegrowing (updated edition), strategic plan, virtual events, harvest protocol workbook and more.

►REPORT



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Snapshot 2020

2,247 certified vineyards
204K acres / 32% of statewide acres

171 certified wineries
255M cases / 80% of statewide production

Wine bearing certified logo/claims
6.2M cases / 74.4M bottles

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DIG is committed to developing products that meet the needs of the marketplace for efficient and environmentally conscious irrigation products. We believe our customers deserve the highest quality customer service. We continuously review and improve our services to satisfy customer requirements and technical service needs.

CALENDAR



JANUARY

- 22 CAWG & Wine Institute Webinar: The COVID-19 Vaccine – How it Will Impact Your Workplace and Business Operations
- 26-29 Unified Wine & Grape Symposium — *virtual*

APRIL

- 21 CAWG Advocacy Day — *save the date!*



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