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University of California Cooperative Extension • Tulare County

# Citrus Notes



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## Positive Points Meeting For Citrus

January 11, 2007

9:00-11:00 AM

Tulare Agricultural Building  
4437 So. Laspina St., Tulare

### What Is It And Why Should A Grower Get Involved?

#### Overview Of The Positive Points System (PPS) For Citrus:

For the past 6 years, a group of University of California Extension Specialists, Farm Advisors, and citrus growers have been working together to develop a "Positive Points System for Citrus". The PPS for citrus is a set of 220 questions that cover topics in seven categories of citrus production. These topics include horticulture, soils, water, pest management, post harvest issues, food safety and continuing education. The purpose of the PPS is to help growers determine their strengths and weakness in citrus production, to quantify the adoption of reduced risk practices used in California citrus and to document good agricultural practices. The citrus assessment was modeled after the PPS for Vineyards developed by the Central Coast Vineyard Team.

#### Sample PPS Questions:

The questions in the PPS ask the grower about his/her use of various horticultural practices or knowledge of citriculture in his/her orchard. If the grower says confidently that he uses a practice, or has knowledge of an aspect of citriculture, he gives himself 5 points. If he does not use that practice, or is not aware of the

information described, then no points are assigned. The assessment is weighed towards practices that promote long-term health of the tree and marketability of the crop, reducing dependence on broad spectrum pesticides and protecting the environment and human health. The total number of points in each category reflects the level of adoption of these types of practices by the grower.

### Why Should I, The Grower Complete A PPS For Citrus Assessment?

#### Direct Benefits For The Grower:

- The grower identifies areas of citrus management that need more attention. For example, if the grower finds that he has a low point accumulation in the area of soil management, he knows that this is an area that he should learn more about. The grower can take classes, or read books, or discuss the subject with experts.
- Growers learn about practices that they are unfamiliar with that can be used in their orchard. Growers who were helping us develop the PPS frequently discovered a citrus production practice in the list of questions that they had never heard of before. During that meeting, they were able to ask their Farm Advisor more details about that practice, chat with other growers, and consider adopting the practice in their orchard.

- Participation in the assessment provides documentation for various regulatory agencies that the grower is protecting ground water, air, and the environment. For example, the PPS questions that address irrigation management, sediments, nutrients and pesticides may be accepted by the Regional Water Quality Control Board as documentation of a farm plan.
- Participation in the assessment provides documentation for consumers and regulatory agencies that the grower is producing food that is safe from disease or chemical contamination. The PPS questions that address water quality, use of manures, pesticide use, post harvest handling of fruit, and employee training may be accepted as documentation of 'Good Agricultural Practices' (GAP).

### **Benefits for the Citrus Industry:**

- Growers can demonstrate to the community and regulatory agencies that they are committed to sustainable, integrated citrus pest management practices. The Pest Management Section of the PPS evaluates grower utilization of soft pesticides, natural enemies, and cultural control practices for management of pests.
- Participation shows other growers that implementation of sustainable practices can be commercially successful. Some growers are hesitant to adopt new practices till they "see it work". If the results of the PPS show that a practice is widely used in a region, then a grower is more likely to adopt that practice. When groups of growers over a wide area adopt softer pesticide practices, natural enemies and other nonchemical methods of pest control are more likely to succeed.

### **Benefits for University of California Cooperative Extension:**

- Participating University of California Cooperative Extension Personnel will be provided the results of the assessments for their region. Low scores in any category will alert them to subject areas that need educational programs. The results of the assessment could be used by UCCE personnel to request grant funds for developing a class, field day, video, web site, or publication for a particular subject.
- If the grower completes an assessment each year for a particular orchard then the PPS can document change

in practices over time. For example, a grower may have a low point score in an area such as soil management. If he takes a course, or reads literature, or talks to his farm advisor and increases his knowledge and changes his practices, he is likely to have a higher point score the following year. These data can be used by extension and research personnel to demonstrate that learning and change are taking place.

### **What does it cost to complete a PPS for Citrus Assessment?**

There is no cost, other than your time, for being a "Participating Grower" who completes a PPS for Citrus assessment. It will take you 1.5-2 hours to complete each assessment and this should be done once a year. You may want to complete more than one assessment if you have different management practices in different orchards. While your score will be used to analyze trends, your name will never be published (all scores and their identities remain confidential). Therefore, you won't be comparing your score to anyone else's score. You will be using your score to compare practices used between your own orchards or to look at your knowledge and adoption of practices through time.

### **How do I complete the PPS for Citrus Assessment?**

UCCE Farm Advisors will be hosting six grower meetings throughout the state of California during the fall and winter of 2006-07. During these meetings, growers will fill out a PPS assessment for one of their orchards. Extension personnel will be there to assist and 2 hours of continuing education credits can be earned by participating in the meeting. The information will be collected and tabulated and the individual results reported back to the grower. If you are interested in participating, please contact the nearest UCCE Farm Advisor.

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**Thursday, January 11, 2007**



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