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PD/GWSS Research Symposium Brings Researchers from Around the World Together

Sacramento, Calif. — December 19, 2011 – More than 100 people from around the world attended the 11th annual Pierce's Disease Research Symposium in Sacramento last week, giving top researchers the opportunity to meet and discuss the latest progress in the search for a solution to Pierce's disease.

"This symposium serves as an annual reminder and acknowledgement on our part that the key to the long-term success of Pierce's disease control in California, and of many similar efforts to control and eradicate agricultural and environmental pests, is research," said California's Secretary of Agriculture Karen Ross.

The symposium highlighted research projects in disease and insect management, biology and ecology, as well as crop biology, and economics. A poster session held during the symposium allowed researchers to present their results and speak to attendees on a one-to-one basis and encourage further discussion in a more casual setting.

"As researchers unravel the mysteries of Pierce's disease and the glassy-winged sharpshooter, they are better able to focus their future efforts on areas promising to yield practical approaches for managing this disease," said Pete Downs of Jackson Family Wines and a member of the PD/GWSS Board. "This year's symposium, from both a grower and board member's perspective, showed that we have made significant progress towards reaching this goal."

The annual two-day symposium is organized by the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Pierce's Disease Control Program. The symposium provides the forum for Pierce's disease researchers to meet as a group and share information, encouraging scientific collaboration and accelerating the progress of research.

The 2011 Symposium Proceedings document is available online and can be downloaded from the CDFA website at www.cdfa.ca.gov/pdcp/. Printed copies are also available and can be requested from the Pierce's Disease Control Program by calling 916-900-5024.

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The PD/GWSS Board was established in July 2001 to support scientific research to find solutions to Pierce's disease. An annual assessment paid by California's winegrape growers supports the research efforts. The PD/GWSS Board also advises the California Department of Food and Agriculture on a variety of other issues related to Pierce's disease and the glassy-winged sharpshooter.

The importance of the work of the Board is underscored by the fact that Pierce's disease has no known cure and, left unchecked, could be devastating to California's grape industry. A study released in 2009 by the Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers estimated the total annual statewide economic benefit of California's winegrape industry to be \$61.5 billion.

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