



# ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

AGRICULTURE / WEIGHTS & MEASURES DEPARTMENT

Chris Bazar  
Agency Director

A. Humberto Izquierdo  
Director  
Agricultural Commissioner/  
Sealer of Weights  
and Measures

224 West Winton Ave  
Room 184

Hayward, California  
94544-1215

phone  
510.670.5232  
fax  
510.783.3928

[www.acgov.org/cda](http://www.acgov.org/cda)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2017

Koren Widdel

Deputy Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer

(510) 670-5232

Cosmo's Nose Protecting Alameda County and California from Invasive Pests

**The Community Development Agency's Agriculture Canine Inspection Team** continues to intercept unmarked parcels containing agricultural commodities infested with harmful exotic pests that can damage agricultural and natural environments both locally and around California.

Recently, Agricultural Biologist and Canine Handler Lisa Centoni, and her canine partner 'Cosmo', a black Labrador mix, detected a package of kaffir limes from Florida containing two deadly citrus plant diseases and invasive insects. The Alameda County Canine Inspection Team found the unmarked package during their routine parcel inspections at the Oakland Post Office. County Agricultural Inspectors examined the package, and found the shipment to be in violation of multiple quarantines and contaminated with insects and possible diseases. The kaffir limes were identified as having Citrus Canker (*Xanthomonas axonopodis pv citri*), Huanglongbing (*Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*), and two types of invasive scale insects.



Citrus Canker is a bacterium that causes lesions on citrus fruit and leaves, and fruit production decline. The disease is widespread in citrus-producing regions of the world, including Florida. Fortunately, it has not been found in California. Citrus Canker can be spread by wind-driven rain, people carrying infection on their person and landscaping equipment, and by movement of infected plants and fruit.

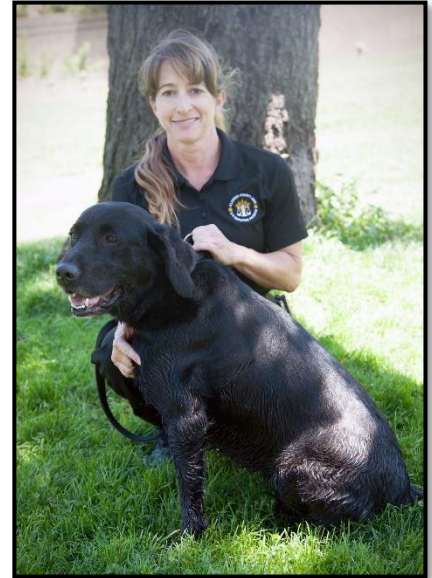
Huanglongbing (HLB) is also a bacterial disease of citrus. HLB, also known as citrus greening or yellow dragon disease, restricts the flow of nutrients within the



plants causing blotchy yellowing of leaves, asymmetrical-bitter fruit, and stem dieback. This disease has been found in Asia, Florida, and a few trees in Southern California. There is no known cure for HLB; infected trees usually must be removed and destroyed. Unlike Citrus Canker, the spread of HLB can be stopped if the vector is eradicated. The vector, Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP), is a tiny insect that carries the disease from one infected plant to another as it feeds. The insects have been found in several areas within California, including areas Oakland and Fremont. Quarantine areas have been established around these areas to restrict movement of the pests.

Protecting California's \$47 billion industry from invasive pests is a primary responsibility of California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the California County Agricultural Commissioners. With the increase movement of commodities and the ease of travel, California's first line of defense against invasive pests is inspecting agricultural commodities as they enter the State and reacting to new pest finds before they become established.

Cosmo and Lisa are one of 14 Agriculture Detector Dog Teams throughout the State. The Dog Teams enhance the inspection of plant products entering California at parcel facilities. For more on the California Dog Team program visit, <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/dogteams/index.html>.



What can you do to help? When mailing agricultural products, mark your packages with contents and growing origin. Comply with agricultural inspectors requesting to inspect your product.

Do not move backyard fruit, vegetables, and plants into and out of California without proper agricultural clearance. Ask family and friends to refrain from sending care packages containing fruit, vegetables, and plants from other states and countries. When buying agricultural products online, ask shippers if their product is certified to enter California. For more information call your local Agricultural Commissioner's Office.