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News Release

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USDA Multi-agency Citrus Greening Group-Requests Suggestions from Public

WASHINGTON, July 1, 2014 –The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA), *Huanglongbing* Multi-agency Coordination Group (HLB MAC), led by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), today announced its launch of the Stakeholder Project Suggestion System for stakeholders to submit HLB (also known as citrus greening) related research suggestions for potential funding.

“Our multi-agency task force is working to quickly put-practical tools in the hands of producers to allow them to combat citrus greening and remain economically viable,” said Secretary Tom Vilsack. “We’re researching a number of strategies to protect citrus industries and the thousands of jobs that depend on them. Many citrus growers, scientists, and other members of the public have knowledge that can help us determine the most innovative approaches in which to make further investments. This effort will allow us to collect as many innovative ideas as possible and set to work investigating the most promising strategies.”

Optimal suggestions will advance or test methods that have been proven by previous research to be of near-term utility to the citrus industry for combatting HLB and/or the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP), the insect that carries and spreads HLB. Specifically, suggestions submitted should demonstrate that they can provide results benefiting citrus growers within one to two years and that the project meets some or all of the rating criteria. The criteria are as follows:

- **Timeliness of impact** – Has the technology, method or product been proven effective and shown to be field ready? Will this provide a positive benefit to the industry within 1-2 years?
- **Scalability** – Is this technology ready to be expanded or commercialized?
- **Economic impact** – Cost/benefit of this solution or tool for growers and industry.
- **End user involvement** – Will this work be carried out on commercially managed or grower land? How will growers be involved in evaluating the results?
- **Adaptability across states and to residential/non-commercial citrus** – Is this broadly applicable? Will it be useful for organic or residential use? How might it need to be modified or tested for adaption across soils, climate, etc., in other states? Is this compatible with overall citrus management programs?

The Stakeholder Project Suggestion System for submissions opens today and will close August 22, 2014. Up to \$8 million is available to fund suggestions that best meet the criteria listed above. Submissions will be reviewed as they are received. Suggestions can be for a one- or two-year period, with the second year of funding based on demonstrated success during the first year. No final decisions will be made until after the submission close date.

The Stakeholder Project Suggestion System can be found at <http://www.cipm.info/hlbmac/spms/>. Guidelines for submitting suggestions can be found at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/2014/06/pdf/hlb_suggestion_guidelines.pdf. If there are questions on submitting a suggestion, please email HLBMACGroup@aphis.usda.gov.

The HLB MAC group will also be holding a webinar on how to submit suggested solutions. Information on when that will take place and how to sign up will be sent through the APHIS Stakeholder Registry and will be posted to the HLB MAC site at <http://www.usda.gov/citrus>. To subscribe to the APHIS Stakeholder Registry and receive webinar information and other HLB MAC and citrus health related updates, please go to [APHIS Stakeholder Registry](#). Once you sign up, you can subscribe to the "Citrus Pests and Disease" topic through the following steps:

1. Select "Plant Health Information;"
2. Select "Plant Health in the US (Domestic);"
3. Select "Pest Management;"
4. Check the "Citrus Pests and Disease" box; and
5. Submit your subscription.

Secretary Vilsack created the HLB MAC Group last December to foster greater coordination among federal and state agencies in responding to citrus greening. Immediately after the Group's origination, USDA established a new, unified emergency response framework to better position the Department to act in a more agile, concerted and direct way to address both the immediate and long-term needs of the citrus industry. The Group includes representatives from USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the MAC lead agency, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as State departments of agriculture and the citrus industry. The HLB MAC Group will help to coordinate and prioritize Federal research with industry's efforts to complement and fill research gaps, reduce unnecessary duplication, speed progress, and more quickly provide practical tools for citrus growers.

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