

## New members appointed to state Pierce's Disease/Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter Board

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SACRAMENTO &ndash; California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura has appointed two new members to the Pierce's Disease/Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board: Marilyn Wolf of Constellation Wines US/Robert Mondavi Woodbridge and Jim Ledbetter of Vino Farms. "Both of these candidates came very highly recommended both by local growers and producers and by statewide industry representatives," said Secretary Kawamura. "Marilyn and Jim share the board's aim to improve and accelerate research efforts toward a solution to the complex challenges posed by this pest and disease." Marilyn Wolf has been appointed to the vacancy created by the resignation of Jim Unti. Wolf specializes in grower relations for Constellation Wines US/Robert Mondavi Woodbridge and will represent producer/processors in the Central Valley wine grape growing region. She has been active in the wine industry for close to 25 years. Jim Ledbetter has been appointed to the vacancy created by the resignation of Frank Leeds. Ledbetter is president and partner of Vino Farms and will represent producers in the North Coast wine grape growing region. The Ledbetter family has been farming in California since the 1930s and has a legacy of leadership in agriculture with their involvement in a number of wine grape associations and initiatives in the state. The Pierce's Disease/Glassy-winged Sharpshooter Board was established in July 2001 to support scientific research to find a cure for Pierce's disease. An annual assessment paid by winegrape growers supports its research efforts. The board also advises the California Department of Food and Agriculture on a variety of issues pertaining to Pierce's disease and the glassy-winged sharpshooter. While Pierce's disease has been in California for a century or more, the establishment of the glassy-winged sharpshooter infestation in Southern California in the late 1990s suddenly thrust the disease to the top of the list of threats to crops ranging from grapes to alfalfa to stone fruits. Because of its biology and its broad range of hosts for feeding, the pest is particularly well-suited for spreading the bacteria that cause Pierce's disease.

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