

Mark Allen:

Promoting the Professionalism of the PCA

“I have had the greatest pleasure meeting and knowing the men and women who comprise the agricultural industry.”



by Mindy DeRohan, CAPCA ED Manager

Mark Allen has been involved in production agriculture for more than 11 years. He received his PCA license in 2009 and specializes in pollination management and plant pathology. The major crops that he consults in are walnuts, almonds, grapes and small grains. Mark earned his B.S. degree in Horticulture from Cal Poly, Pomona with a minor in Pest Management. In addition to his PCA license, Mark also holds a QAL and is a past board member of the California State Beekeepers Association.

A territory manager with Nufarm, Americas for three years, Mark is responsible for technical sales and support of Nufarm Americas' large product portfolio in Northern California and Oregon. He works with PCAs, crop consultants and farmers to assist in improving harvestable yields. Nufarm Americas is consistently developing new products and new labeled uses for existing materials. Part of Mark's job is listening to the needs of clients, matching the best tools, and educating clients on the labeled uses and timing.

Before joining the Nufarm Americas team, Mark worked for Marrone Bio Innovations as the regional sales manager for Northern California and the greater Pacific Northwest. Mark also worked for 16 years in pollination and beekeeping throughout Northern and Southern California.

To keep improving his own professionalism, Mark participates in education and training. He believes that self-improvement is a never-ending process and taking an active role in the industry, in addition to his day job, is the best way to grow as a professional. Mark also relies on the UC Extension, UC IPM, or the Oregon State Extension for reliable information. His favorite part about being a PCA is working with the variety of crops, cropping systems, landscapes and finished products. Mark said, “no other profession allows for such vast and eclectic working environments.”

Not coming from a strong agricultural background, Mark was motivated to become a PCA from the hands-on education that he received at Cal Poly, Pomona. “Learn by doing is the Cal Poly way and my professors allowed this system of structured information and trial-and-error in the field. The practical field instruction seemed to lead directly into the practical field approach of a PCA.”

Mark said the biggest highlight of his career has been working with the people. “I have had the greatest pleasure meeting and knowing the men and women who comprise the agricultural industry.”

When asked about his most challenging pest management experience, Mark replied it is working to educate the public about the true use of pest management.

Mark Allen

CAPCA Chapter:

Woodland

Education: Cal Poly, Pomona

Family: wife, Katie, daughter Chloe and son Mark

Interests:

Beekeeping, freshwater fishing, skiing

Residential and commercial areas are ever expanding and encroaching into all production areas throughout the state. "Our greatest challenge is the same need for communication of the facts and public relations to media sources and local events outside of our direct industry."

Mark believes that resistant weeds, both ALS resistance and other direct target site resistance, pose the most problems to clients and growers. Resistant weeds affect both agricultural and professional industries that PCAs manage day to day. "Many optional chemistries are developed for our staple crops within the heartland of the nation, but virtually all of those resistant weed varieties are found and confirmed here in California. Weed management does not always get the same attention as insect management, but the effect these resistant weeds play on yields is significant. Best management practices are in place to assist in battling these weed problems. New materials and more affordable options continue to replace

older chemistries and practices."

Huang-Long Bing (HLB), also known as citrus greening, is a bacterial disease vectored by the citrus psyllid that is currently destroying much of the citrus industry in Florida and has been detected in sections throughout southern California. Mark believes this is the pest of greatest concern for the industry. "CDFA has done a good job of managing and excluding this psyllid from our main citrus production areas. However, there have been new finds reported closer to production areas periodically and with the extensive amount of backyard citrus in the greater Los Angeles area, eradication programs are hard to facilitate, if not impossible. In Florida, eradication of the citrus psyllid is still the most important management practice, but new tools are now targeting protection of the tree from bacterial infection in addition to psyllid eradication programs. Within the last few years in California there has been confirmation of HLB infected trees in two different areas of Los Angeles County. All known traces of infected material has been quickly removed, but the necessity for continued vigilance is critical."

Mark believes that IPM is considering all technologies available to target and control specific pests with the least negative effects on the people and the environment. "IPM is the implementation of common sense into the control products and practices for a given situation," Mark said.

When asked if his clients are using genetically altered crops or cutting-edge technologies, Mark replied, "Most of the tree nut, vegetable, and vine crops in the California area are not directly affected by genetically modified technologies, outside of marketing concerns. However, our diverse state includes virtually all important crops grown in the United States, including

genetically developed varieties. New technologies are on the horizon and are currently being approved that includes many different tools for growers to move away from just over-the-top glyphosate use and into a diversity of options that promise less intensive spray applications. These genetic technologies could be a strong partner in IPM programs we are all seeking in the field."

Mark is working diligently to get more CAPCA members involved in local activities. "As the Woodland Chapter president, I am working with our fellow chapter members to invite new and existing CAPCA members to join in the chapter discussions and activities. One of those activities this summer is a tour of our local brewery in Woodland who source ingredients from local farms. These networking activities allow for a meet and greet opportunity outside of our label update and organic production meetings held at other times of the year."

Mark encourages all PCAs to be involved in CAPCA because of the wide range of work that CAPCA does to ensure the professionalism of the PCA: "CAPCA works to support the industry and interests of the licensed California Pest Control Adviser in preparation for issues that negatively affect farmers and the ability to protect their crops. Whether this is from proposed/pending Federal and State programs or from education needs for the public and interest groups, CAPCA helps to provide knowledge and communication between different interest groups to the practical challenges and needs of production agriculture. I would like CAPCA to continue playing an active role in the next issue, regulatory or pest challenge, and communicate to our PCAs the additional resources that are put toward their interests." 🐝