Anti-microbials: The Cure for HLB (Greening Disease) in Citrus?

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The citrus industry is in danger of being completely wiped out by a disease called HLB (Huong Long Bing) or citrus greening disease, which is which is a bacterial infection spread by the infamous Asian citrus psyllid (Diaphorina citri.) A possible solution to this problem may be killing the bacteria. Anti-microbials may be the answer to citrus greening disease. A substance called silver phosphite was developed and sprayed on mature Valencia orange trees. The hope was that the silver, which has anti-microbial qualities, would kill the bacteria and the phosphite would inhibit fungal growth. Three different application methods were tested: a foliar spray, a drench of the trunk and a foliar spray with the addition of a soil drench, against untreated control plots (a total of 72 trees in 12 plots). The soil drench and foliar application produced a huge jump in CT values (indicating lowered bacteria levels). 10 of the trees that previously indicated high levels of greening disease, now showed that greening disease had been eradicated, based on the PCR test! All of the trees that were sprayed and drenched showed at least some improvement by the 30-day PCR test. At the 90-day PCR test, all of the treated trees showed significant improvement! This could be the answer that the citrus industry demands.

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