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Florida Biological Control Team Receives Friends of IPM Award on 10th Anniversary

When Moses Kairo and his team were making the plans for the Center for Biological Control's 10th anniversary symposium, they didn't realize that the group would have another reason to celebrate—they would receive a regional award for their excellence in integrated pest management.



Front, L-R: Dean Abdullah, USDA ARS Administrator, Dr. Edward Knipping, Dr. Moses Kairo, Drs. Lambert Kanga, Jesusa Legaspi and Muhammad Haseeb. Back: Drs. Kenneth Bloem, Stuart Reitz and Stephen Hight

With university and political leaders cheering them on at the 10th Anniversary Symposium on April 9, the Center for Biological Control (CBC) received the Southern Region IPM Center's Friends of IPM Pulling Together Award.

Comprised of experts from Florida A&M University's College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture (CESTA); USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the team received the award during its 10-year Symposium and Open House on April 9.

"When I found out that we had won the award, I was very surprised," Kairo said just before the award was presented. "But we very much appreciate this honor."

The CBC won the award for outstanding integrated pest management research, education and outreach.

During its ten years of service, the CBC has analyzed and implemented ecologically-sound pest management solutions for several exotic invasive insects and weeds, including cactus moth, varroa mite and cogongrass. CBC researchers not only investigate invasive pests in the US, but they also are studying pests in The Caribbean and South America that are considered high risk for entry into the US.

In addition to publishing their research in journal articles and presentations, they also share their knowledge with students. The CBC is at the core of the cooperative Ph.D. program in entomology which is managed jointly by Florida A&M University and the University of Florida.

CBC researchers and graduate students have developed several IPM tactics to manage western flower thrips, a pest devastating to Florida's tomato industry. Both conventional and organic vegetable growers in Florida are now using the tactics.

The CBC formally began in 1998, when leaders from USDA APHIS chose

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Friends of IPM Award: Center for BioControl (continued from previous page)



CBC faculty member Dr. Wills Flowers teaches students in Ecuador.

Florida A&M University as the site to build a Center that would take a biological approach to pest management. CBC team member Kenneth Bloem was the first APHIS researcher to join the CBC in 1998. In 1999, USDA-ARS agreed to support the CBC as well with funding and personnel. The CBC is now a recognized Research Center within

the Florida State University System.

In its third year, the Friends of IPM Award recognizes individuals and groups who have demonstrated outstanding service in IPM. The Pulling Together award is one of six categories of awards in the program.

“Based on the nomination, the CBC is clearly deserving of the Friends of IPM Award,” said Steve Toth, associate director of the Southern Region IPM Center.

The 10-year Symposium, where Toth presented the award, gathered supporters from universities, USDA, private consulting companies and the state legislature. Staff from the offices of Congressman Allen Boyd and Senator Bill Nelson were among those who witnessed the award presentation.

“We really appreciate the recognition, especially during these tough times,” said Dr. Makola Abdullah, Dean of CESTA.

Crop Profiles and PMSPs

Since the beginning of 2010, the following crop profiles and PMSPs have been added to the system:

Crop Profiles:

Florida eggplant (revised)
 Florida muskmelons (revised)
 Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee Nursery Crops (new)
 Kentucky canola (new)
 Kentucky wheat (revised)
 Tennessee apples (revised)
 Tennessee peaches (revised)
 Virginia grapes (revised)

Pest Management Strategic Plans:

Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee Nursery Crops (new)

To learn more about the Southern region's Crop Profiles and PMSPs, go to http://www.sripmc.org/rese_profiles.cfm.

Director's Notes: IPM Center Funding

Many of you are already aware that the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2011 does not include funds for Regional IPM Centers or any of the other programs in a USDA line known as the 406 Integrated Programs. As of now, unless plans are changed, the future of the Southern Region IPM Center does not stretch out much longer.

As you may know, we have been federally funded for nearly a decade through a competitive USDA grant.

At present we see three possible outcomes:

- If the FY 2011 budget passes as is, without any provision to restore Section 406 funding, then we expect SRIPMC and other important programs to quickly expire. We are currently applying for, and expect to receive, funding for our final year under the current grant cycle, sufficient to get us through to September 2011. Extensions would likely allow us to continue using any unspent funds as long as we can make them last, up to another year.
- If Congress (House and/or Senate) restores funding and language placing 406 programs back where they were in the USDA/NIFA budget, and if that restoration survives in the final budget approved by both House and Senate and signed by the President, then the 406 IPM programs including IPM Centers will continue to provide the important research and education that has led to so many economic, environmental, and human health benefits. At this point in the budget process the Executive Branch (President, USDA) are unable to implement such a restoration. Rather, Congress must initiate the budget change. This is the option preferred by many stakeholders.
- The President's proposed budget calls for moving the *funds* that support section 406 but unfortunately not the *406 programs* into the Agriculture and

Food Research Initiative (AFRI). This year's version of the AFRI request for applications (RFAs) appear to contain no "home" for these programs. If next year's AFRI RFAs include language setting aside funds specifically for the programs formerly managed under section 406, then the valuable IPM work could continue.

Keep in mind that section 406 entails important IPM grant programs beyond just IPM Centers including:

Crops at Risk (CAR) <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/cropsatrisk.cfm>

- **Purpose:** The Crops at Risk (CAR) program was developed to support IPM research and implementation programs for crops that were dependent upon certain pesticides scheduled for phase-out as a result of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 (FQPA). The focus of the CAR Program is on integrated activities for individual crops and was designed to support multidisciplinary research and extension efforts within a single crop.

Example impact: One project doubled the number of pest management tools available to cherry growers for plum curculio control. Instead of relying solely on organophosphate insecticides, cherry growers can now confidently integrate reduced-risk pesticides and insect growth regulators into their IPM programs, saving up to 2-3 cover sprays per season.

Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program (RAMP)

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/riskavoidancemitigationicgp.cfm>

- **Purpose:** RAMP was designed to support integrated research and implementation activities for multiple crop systems within a region. The focus is on cropping systems with elevated pest risk resulting from FQPA regulatory activities. Emphasis is on multi-pest, multi-crop, and multi-state programs.

IPM Center Funding (continued from previous page)

Example impact: A fruit IPM project in Pennsylvania identified replacement chemicals for those lost to registration and pest resistance. Scientists implemented mating disruption, resulting in decreased fruit damage and use of broad-spectrum pesticides. By using beneficial mite predators, each year participating growers reduced miticide active ingredients by one ton and avoided 45,000 gallons of insecticidal oil, saving \$700,000 and lowering the Environmental Impact Quotient 10- to 15-fold.

Methyl Bromide Transitions (MBT)

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/methylbromidetransitions.cfm>

- **Purpose:** The goal of this program is to minimize methyl bromide emissions in situations of critical use exemptions or to support alternatives.

Example impact: A single project in California reported that methyl bromide was the basis for control of soil-borne diseases, nematodes, and weeds in the \$1.3 billion strawberry and \$316 million flower industries. They recently controlled these pests with steam and solarization technology, eliminating fumigant emissions into the atmosphere and the need for buffer zones.

Beyond the "IPM portfolio," this important funding line also includes USDA's Water Quality, Food Safety and the Conservation Enhancement and Assessment Project.

What has been done?

We are aware of several efforts to bring this situation to light and correct it. For instance, Land Grant Universities have communicated their concern about loss of all 406 programs to USDA/NIFA through the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU). Many other organizations and individuals have likewise communicated with USDA. A new organization called IPM Voice has recently sent out e-mails informing stakeholders around the country about this issue.

Until and unless support for these programs is reinserted into the Federal budget (an action only Congress can initiate now) and survives in a bill signed into law, we cannot know the outcome of these efforts.

What can you do?

If you believe that this pending change should be corrected, there are steps you can take.

- Inform yourself and your peers about this situation. Please feel free to pass on the information in this letter to whomever you think should know about it. Those of us employed by public universities may be constrained in how we can communicate with elected representatives, but none are constrained from educating our peers about the situation.
- Many believe that restoration of 406 programs and funding within the USDA budget as previously funded is the preferred solution. Legislators on the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittees of both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate are the people who are best able to initiate restoration of section 406 programs in the FY 2011 budget. Those committees include the following legislators from states covered by SRIPMC:

House Agriculture Appropriations Committee members from the South:

Allen Boyd (FL): <http://boyd.house.gov/>

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA): <http://bishop.house.gov/>

Lincoln Davis (TN): <http://www.house.gov/lincolndavis/>

Jack Kingston (GA): <http://kingston.house.gov/>

Rodney Alexander (LA): <http://kingston.house.gov/>

IPM Center Funding (continued from previous page)

Senate Agriculture Appropriations Committee members from the South:

Senator Mark Pryor (AR): <http://pryor.senate.gov/public/>

Senator Thad Cochran (MS): <http://cochran.senate.gov/>

Senator Mitch McConnell (KY): <http://mccconnell.senate.gov/public/>

- Legislators often respond to the concerns of their own constituents.

Whether or not your Congressperson or Senators are on the Appropriations committee, contacting them about issues that concern you should be beneficial.

- Another potential solution would be inclusion of language within the FY 2011 AFRI Requests for Applications to cover important IPM programs including Regional IPM Centers, CAR, RAMP, MBT and ORG.

TALKING POINTS

Southern Region IPM Center: Small Investment, Big Impacts

WHAT IPM CENTERS DO

Protect food supplies and communities. Most important, we fund, support, facilitate and sometimes even initiate research and educational programs to improve pest management across the region so that risk is managed better, profitability is protected, environmental stewardship is enhanced, and human health is improved.

Involve stakeholders in setting and addressing priorities: More than many public programs, Regional IPM Centers actively involve the people who will be affected *by* public decisions *in* public decisions. Stakeholders from across the board (public and private, university and business, rural and urban, agribusiness and environmental, grower organizations and school districts) help determine priorities for our own programs and suggest priorities for public IPM programs in general.

Assist regulatory agencies to make practical decisions: We respond directly to EPA and state agency requests for information, and we produce and maintain a library of documents describing crop and pest situations (Crop Profiles and Pest Management Strategic Plans) that inform policy makers and others about real issues “in the field.” These functions are critical to their ability to make regulatory decisions that protect our health and the environment while preserving the practical ability to avoid the damage caused by pests.

Respond quickly to critical issues: With a stable infrastructure of staff and a small but flexible pool of funding, SRIPMC is able to quickly respond to important issues as they arise. In a funding environment of large and complicated competitions, waiting for the next funding cycle to come around can cause critical loss of time while a problem festers. SRIPMC can and does quickly support and facilitate urgent efforts, using slight resources (staff time, funds) that can pay off in a big way.

Make the most of public resources: We help organizations to build on each others' success. An independent review team found that IPM Centers show an *impressive use of limited resources to maximize output* of projects. In 2006, that review team advised USDA to use IPM Centers as a model for future programs.

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IPM Center Funding (continued from previous page)

Catalyze and facilitate productive partnerships: We serve as a hub where growers, scientists, consumers, government personnel, businesses, and environmental organizations can work together for practices that reduce risks to the environment and human health. IPM Centers provide a striking model of successfully bring people initially perceived as being on opposite sides of an issue – for instance, agribusiness and environmentalists – together to find common ground and to achieve mutual goals.

SRIPMC Awards the 2010 IPM Enhancement Grants

Again in 2010, the Southern Region IPM Center IPM Enhancement Grants Program was split into two parts. Part 1 included the Regulatory Information Network project (formerly state contact projects), IPM documents (crop profiles, pest management strategic plans, IPM priorities and IPM elements), and IPM working group projects. Part 2 included seed and capstone projects.

Separate Requests for Applications (RFAs) for Parts 1 and 2 of the IPM Enhancement Grants Program were released on December 14, 2009 with a deadline of February 15, 2010 for submitting proposals to the Center. Seven proposals (with 8 separate projects) requesting \$268,666 and 12 proposals requesting \$280,461 were submitted for Parts 1 and 2, respectively.

Grant Review Panels for Parts 1 and 2 of the IPM Enhancement Grants Program reviewed the proposals and met separately on April 6 and April 5, 2010, respectively, to evaluate proposals and make recommendations for funding to Center staff. For Part 1, 5 proposals (5 projects) totaling \$224,482 were approved for funding. Five proposals totaling \$114,623 were approved for funding under Part 2. A list of projects (and project directors) selected for funding for 2010, totaling \$339,105, is provided below.

PART 1:

Regulatory Information Network Project:

- Southern Region IPM Center Regulatory Information Network and Related IPM Documents (Mark Mossler, Fred Fishel, Mark Matocha, Darrell Hensley, Henry Fadamiro, Mike Weaver and Charles Luper)

IPM Documents Projects:

- Development of a Pest Management Strategic Plan for the Oklahoma Winter Wheat Industry (Tom Royer)
- IPM Documents for Texas (Mark Matocha)
- Virginia Specialty Crops At Risk Program - IPM Documents Development Project (Mike Weaver)
- Identification and Management Guide for Ticks of the Southern Region (Pete Teel and Janet Hurley)

2010 IPM Enhancement Grants (continued from previous page)

PART 2:

IPM Seed Projects:

- Workshop for Developing a Cost-effective Rational Strategy to Detect Soybean Rust in the United States (Don Hershman)
- Tomato yellow leaf curl virus: A Rising Concern in Southeastern U.S. and Management Options (Rajagopalbabu Srinivasan)
- Developing an imported fire ant IPM module for the IPM3 Training Consortium (Kelly Loftin, Robert Wiedenmann, and Kathy Flanders)

- Exploring calendar sprays and spatial distribution of cereal leaf beetle to improve IPM in wheat (Dominic Reisig, Jack Bacheler, Randy Weisz, Ames Herbert, and Francis Reay-Jones)

IPM Capstone Projects:

- Development, Production and Distribution of a Pocket-sized Field Instrument to Improve Stink Bug Management on Cotton (Jack Bacheler, Ames Herbert, Phillip Roberts, Jeremy Greene, and Michael Toews)



Publications and Events

June 8-9, 2010: IPM Center Directors meeting, Washington, DC

June 14-15, 2010: SRIPMC Advisory Council / Steering Committee meeting, Raleigh, NC.

June 22-23, 2010: Ecologically-Based Pest Management for Sustainable / Organic Vegetable Production, Clemson, SC. Contact Kelly Gilkerson (kgilker@clemson.edu) or Geoff Zehnder (zehnder@clemson.edu).

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