

Chilli Thrips
Inter-Agency Working Group
Conference Call #5
May 16, 2008 (1300-1345 hrs; ET)

Participants:

Eduardo Varona (Chair, I-AWG, FL, APHIS - PPQ)
Tad Hardy (LA-SPRO)
Shashank Nilakhe (TX-SPRO)
Stuart Kuehn (TX- SPHD)
Jerry Levitt (AZ-SPHD)
Kevin Hoffman (CA-SPRO)
Barb Maehler (CA-SPHD)
Gray Haun (TN-SPRO)
Don Givens (APHIS- PPQ-WRO)
Richard Conant (APHIS-PPQ- ER)
Lin Schmale (Chair, IWG)
Lance Osborne (Tri-Chair, TWG)
Alan Dowdy (APHIS-PPQ-EDP)
Diane Schuble (APHIS –PPQ; Chilli Thrips Task Force Coordinator)

Important Discussions:

Eduardo asked Lance to present a status report from the last TWG call (5-15-08). Lance began by explaining that the field is not reporting much on Chilli Thrips at this time. On the call, the committees were solidified. Diagnostics will emphasize education and training. Genetics is examining if we are primarily dealing with one species, and setting long and short term objectives. Chemical Control has posted info on the website, identifying chemical tools for greenhouses and outdoors. Biocontrol is working with a few predators, with most testing in greenhouse environments. Practical Biology and Ecology is initiated. The newest group is Virology.

Diane asked Lance to review the information Scott presented to the regulators on the I-AWG call last month. Lance explained that the TWG concluded it was more effective to have the cooperators of the growers to identify where the Chilli Thrips are occurring. We have not been successful in finding it in traditional surveys. In order to secure the highest level of cooperation, it was recommended to have fewer ramifications for the reporting parties.

For California and Texas, it was asked, in order to slow the introduction to those States, is treatment prior to shipment a viable option? The TWG can help develop compliance agreements for this approach, but Lance cautioned that some growers will spray in order to avoid the need. Over-application will result. Lance emphasized that serious resistance problems with Western Flower Thrips are now being noted.

Alan clarified the question if Chilli Thrips is still actionable at the Ports. It remains so as of now, but because of its current occurrence, the United States is dealing with some trade issues from South Korea.

Shashank asked if regulatory treatment was viable. Lance said yes, but it is not recommended. Shashank reported that he is receiving concern from the Rose Industry. Lin responded that increasing education and outreach so the growers know what to expect and how to deal with it would be effective. She made a comparison to the Q biotype whitefly management program.

Lin stated she heard Chilli Thrips were present in the landscape in part of Texas. Shashank explained the regulatory process if Chilli thrips is found. It goes through the regulatory process, with Stop Sale, etc. Lance said he heard two landscapes have been affected in Texas, but hasn't heard if they are positive or negative. Shashank asked, how can we slow down the introduction and what level of control is available? Lance responded that the data shows control can be achieved at the moment. If plants are treated and shipped, they will be clear. But continuous treatments will affect the population and put the efficacy of Western Flower thrips treatments at risk. In addition, there are only 3 or 4 classes of chemicals that can be used. Lance reports that he hears caution that chemical companies may remove or limit use of some of their products due to overuse.

Lin asked Shashank and Kevin if they are comfortable treated Chilli Thrips the same way Florida does, taking action only for heavy infestations, as opposed to a zero tolerance approach. Shashank emphasized that he wanted to address the industry concerns in his State. He asked about Best Management Practices and Lance said they are available.

Kevin, Tad and Gray each stated that they appreciated Shashank's concerns and agreed. They agreed to follow the approach Florida uses, employing regulatory strategy for heavy infestations.

Next Call: Pending, and to be set by Eduardo, after the June TWG call.