

PINK HIBISCUS MEALYBUG QUARTERLY REPORT

Period 10/1/07 - 12/31/07

The Pink Hibiscus Mealybug (PHM) Biological Control Program has produced 694,998 biological control agents during this reporting period; 351,600 *Anagyrus kamali*, 321,300 *Gyransuoidea indica*, and 22,098 *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*. The numbers shipped and released around the state include; 237,800 *A. kamali* (avg. 18,292/wk), 199,500 *G. indica* (avg. 15,346/wk) and 13,150 *C. montrouzieri* (avg. 1,011/wk). The combined parasitoid production continues to exceed the targeted goal of 10,000/wk. The numbers of requests for parasitoids from field personnel has decreased from the last reporting period due to the colder months but are expected to increase by the beginning of March and continue to increase into the warmer months.

The Japanese pumpkin crops (the preferred host for PHM) in both Hastings and Citra have been harvested. An experimental summer crop was planted in Hastings and was harvested in early October. This crop produced 471 pumpkins and weighed 1,190lbs. The fall crop in Citra was harvested in mid-December resulting in 1,183 pumpkins and weighed 5,000lbs. There were two other experimental crops in Hastings that failed due to potential ground chemical toxicity combined with excess ground water saturating the roots. A recent freeze finally destroyed the crops. Plans to test the success of growing Japanese pumpkins in 20 gallon pots during the winter months are underway. The crop was direct seeded in early November in Ft. Pierce and is expected to be harvested in the spring of 2008.

There will be a decision reached by the end of January to determine if purchasing Mealybug Destroyer beetles, *C. montrouzieri*, will be more cost efficient than rearing them at the Gainesville Insectary. The final draft of the *C. montrouzieri* Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is still in progress. The SOP will be completed by mid to late January. It has been discussed whether to reduce the frequency of cage set up from once a week to once every six weeks in an attempt to decrease the amount of time personnel spend on maintaining the *C. montrouzieri* colony as well as the amount of resources required to sustain the colony.

There are currently 25 counties receiving parasitoids and predators from the Gainesville rearing facilities. These counties are; Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lee, Manatee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Lucie and Volusia.

The Texas Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture have asked for assistance in controlling recent PHM outbreaks in Texas. An initial parasitoid shipment was sent to the Texas Department of Agriculture in early October, however due to cold weather no additional shipments have been sent. The goal is to resume shipping parasitoids to Texas in early March.

The PHM project currently has one OPS supervisor, three full-time OPS Lab Technicians and one part-time OPS Lab Technician.

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