

Chilli Thrips TWG Conference Call

Thursday, June 14, 2007 2-4 PM

Overview

Formation of Chilli Thrips task force was requested by the National Plant Board. *Bemisia tabaci*, biotype 'Q' task force was an initial model for this type of activity. Some of the members of the Chilli thrips TWG were also members of the 'Q' task force. Lance Osborne, TWG chair, facilitated the call and distributed several background documents pre-conference. The call officially began with an introduction of members. The main purpose of the TWG is to provide a collaborative basis for research efforts, communication, and networking with industry as well as state/federal regulatory officials. The chilli thrips TWG is functioning within task force (coordinated by USDA-APHIS-PPQ).

Regulatory Issues

The regulatory group is currently in the process of forming. Identification procedures and management strategies will be affected by the status of chilli thrips as an actionable pest. Concerns were also expressed regarding whether growers would be willing to submit a sample if it would cause them to be placed under quarantine. Lance stated that this might be a case that warranted allowing an exception from reporting. Such approval would need to officially come from APHIS (note that state departments of agriculture would also need to be included in this communication). Amanda Hodges noted that this type of exception was not typically a component of NPDPN protocols, but could be an interesting example for labs. Several items regarding regulation were discussed, but overall, a consensus was reached that an expanded knowledge base of chilli thrips biology, management, and systematics is needed in order to provide appropriate feedback to the regulatory committee. The regulatory committee will determine final actions, but it would be appropriate for the TWG to provide all possible scientific base knowledge to this group for their determination.

Diagnostic Issues

The process of how and where to submit samples was discussed. Are there species issues with *Scirtothrips dorsalis*? The possibility does exist that species currently identified as *S. dorsalis* may be multiple species or biotypes. It was determined that there are two main issues: 1) systematic and genetic-based species/biotype research and 2) extension screening/identification. A genetic working group agreed to form (Mark Hoddle, Cindy McKenzie, and ?) to identify research needs and priorities for this work. Amanda Hodges mentioned that the National Plant Diagnostic Network (funded by USDA-CSREES and primarily connecting Land Grant University clinics but also state departments of agriculture in some cases) could be a mechanism for sample submission. Amanda will work on this aspect from the NPDPN perspective. Once specific research needs are identified by the genetic working group, some samples can also be filtered to their efforts from NPDPN labs. Most extension entomology diagnostic labs have basic equipment (microscopes only) and are not equipped with molecular tools. Also, cost can

be a factor in the use of molecular tools, and we need to identify which techniques are needed at this level. Lance Osborne agreed to work with Amanda on the diagnostic coordination, in particular, with also facilitating CAPS communication. Chilli thrips didn't make the CAPS survey list, although it did make the list on the new commodity-based approach (for citrus only). On related items, Matt Ciomperlik asked about further publishing Tom Skarlinksy's key for *S. dorsalis*. Amanda can work with Tom and Joe Funderburk on some of these items in order to enhance available information. The University of Florida (Joe Funderburk instructing) will be hosting a 3-day thrips workshop in the spring of 2008. Also, a 1-day 'landscape thrips workshop' will be held in Apopka, Florida on August 7, 2007. The August training will be very hands-on, targeting landscape managers, county extension faculty, and other field personnel. The March 2008 training will be more taxonomic-based. Other identification-related issues discussed the need to have more pictorial symptom publications for symptoms of chilli thrips damage. It was also mentioned that more host pictures could be used. Lance Osborne will work on this. Lance's thrips page is available at: <http://mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/lso/thripslinks.htm>. Lance, Joe, Scott, and Amanda will work on extension-oriented material for the August thrips training. A national pest alert (one page front and back) authored by Scott Ludwig, Matt Ciomperlik, Lance Osborne, and Greg Hodges will be ready very soon. Pest alerts are a collaborative effort between NPDN, IPM Centers, USDA-APHIS-PPQ, USDA-ARS, and the National Plant Board. There has been a delay in producing the pest alert due to a backlog of projects, but it should be ready to be printed within a week.

Management Information

There are many gaps in our understanding of the pest potential and basic biology (i.e. including by not limited to-what are the reproductively viable hosts and its actual movement strategies). Key-the chilli thrips TWG must immediately begin working to develop plans for discerning and tackling the key questions as well as locating sources for funding. Some preliminary work will need to be done now-without funding. It's possible that funding may come as the pest spreads or becomes problematic, but this may be too late. Strategies need to be developed now, and we also need industry support. The following individuals were identified as leaders of different working groups-

Scott Ludwig-urban landscape

Cristi Palmer-ornamental and greenhouse

Joe Funderburk-vegetables and row crops

Joe Funderburk agreed to lead an effort to synthesize information on Biology/Ecology and he will also be working with Cristi Palmer on this item.

Management groups are charged with developing implementation strategies for chilli thrips in their respective commodities, but there will also be quite a bit of cross-collaboration among the working groups.

Next Call: **Friday, July 13, 2007 from 2-4 PM ET**

Each respective group leader should send Lance Osborne a status update

by **Friday, July 6, 2006** for distribution to the committee with the call reminder.