



Director's Notes

As we prepare for the new year, numerous events have occurred in December that will affect Center activities in the coming months. Perhaps most important were the bi-annual meetings of the Advisory Council and the Steering Committee held in early December.

Preceded by a day spent with the Center's State Contacts, these meetings provided a great opportunity for me to get acquainted with many of you who have taken an active interest in regional IPM activities. The agenda was a mix of updates from the staff, comments and suggestions from the membership, and open discussion. The discussion was sometimes contentious but always respectful and usually productive. One of the primary roles of IPM Centers is to engage stakeholders in planning and decision-making, and I believe these meetings were an excellent example of catalyzing that kind of engagement.

One of the steps we took to improve the Center's effectiveness was to initiate a strategic planning process to more clearly focus our work. This should prove helpful not only to Center staff in daily work but also in explaining our role and how we operate to others. With that in mind we undertook a SWOT exercise. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Members of the Advisory Council developed a list for each of these headings - strengths of the Center, weaknesses of the Center, etc. - and later rated items on the list. We will use this as an initial step in the strategic planning process. The Advisory Committee also appointed a working group to recommend a process for setting priorities in our work.

There are some other important issues we will be tackling soon. Proposals for the Regional IPM Grants Program have arrived, and I am recruiting relevance and technical panel members to review and rate these. We will be developing the Request for Proposals for the Center's internal grants program soon after the holiday. Based on input from the Steering Committee this program will likely get a new and distinctive name, and the RFA will be somewhat revised from last year's RFA. We are working with USDA/CSREES to sponsor participation of a few Extension Specialists and one agricultural consultant on a trip to Brazil to learn more about management of soybean rust. Jeanne Bacheler is continuing to make great progress on our web site revision, due to be unveiled early in the year.

As my first calendar year here draws to a close, I remain very optimistic about the direction of the Southern Region IPM Center, and I hope you do too.

Director, Jim VanKirk



Grants Update

The deadline for RFAs for the Regional Integrated Pest Management Competitive Grants Program Southern Region (S-RIPM) was December 15, 2004. The Center received 47 proposals from across the southern region. Jim VanKirk is currently assembling the technical and relevance review panels, and these panels will meet during the first week of February to discuss proposals and recommend projects that should be funded.

The Southern Region IPM Center Grants RFA will be released sometime within the next few months. The Steering Committee voted to rename this grant program to more clearly distinguish it from other programs. For its upcoming release, the IPM Center Grants will be renamed the IPM Enhancement Program. Funds will be divided into four categories, Crop Profiles and PMSF, State Contacts, Special Projects and Critical and Emerging Issues. More information about this program will be posted on www.sripmc.org once available.

Other current RFAs include the Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program (RAMP), Methyl Bromide Transitions Program (MBT), Crops at Risk Program (CAR), and the Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP).

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For more information, visit our website at www.sripmc.org or contact us:

Director:

*Jim VanKirk
919-513-8179
Jim_vankirk@ncsu.edu*

Associate Director (Information Technology):

*Ron Stinner
919-513-1648
Ron_stinner@ncsu.edu*

Associate Director (Regulatory Issues):

*Steve Toth
919-515-8879
Steve_toth@ncsu.edu*

Communication and Information Specialist:

*Jennifer Hodorowicz
919-513-8182
jmhodoro@ncsu.edu*

If you would like to be added to our monthly distribution list please contact Jennifer Hodorowicz.



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The goal of the Risk Avoidance and Mitigation (RAMP) program is to enhance the development and implementation of innovative integrated pest management (IPM) strategies for (a) multi-crop food and fiber production systems; or (b) production systems on an area-wide or landscape scale. The primary emphasis of RAMP applications should be crop productivity and profitability while addressing critical environmental quality and human health issues. The deadline for proposals is March 7, 2005. Visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonom=1125> for more information.

The goal of the Methyl Bromide Transitions (MBT) program is to support the discovery and implementation of practical IPM alternatives for managing (a) soil borne pathogens and weeds; (b) post harvest pests; or (c) storage and packing material sanitation affected by the phase-out of methyl bromide. The deadline for proposals is March 7, 2005. Visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonom=1107> for more information.

The goal of the Crops at Risk (CAR) program is to create or enhance integrated pest management (IPM) practices for individual food or fiber crops grown for commercial purposes. The CAR program will fund integrated multifunctional/multidisciplinary research, education, and extension projects for crops with high priority IPM needs as identified by stakeholders. The deadline for proposals is March 7, 2005. Visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonom=1081> for more information.

The Pest Management Alternatives Program (PMAP) supports projects that develop and implement integrated pest management practices, tactics and systems for specific pest problems while reducing human and environmental risks. The deadline for proposals is February 28, 2005. Visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/fundview.cfm?fonom=1114> for more information.

Profile: Bob Bellinger, Ph.D

An associate professor and the Extension Pesticide Coordinator for Clemson University, Bob Bellinger started his career in IPM and entomology when he was an undergrad at the University of Maryland.

“At the time I was looking for a job that would provide some experience in entomology,” said Bellinger. “The University of Maryland had just hired a new IPM faculty member, Galen Dively, to work under the USDA IPM pilot program. He hired me and I continued working with him through my master’s, which was in soybean IPM.”

Starting with the Maryland IPM program, Bellinger was in charge of the insect backlight trapping program and compiled information from Virginia, Maryland and Delaware for the twice weekly IPM newsletter they produced. Bellinger later worked in the fields as an IPM scout supervisor working with commercial vegetable processors, specifically canners, in sweet corn, peas, green beans and lima beans. After the program’s initial success, Bellinger and the University of Maryland became involved with other field crop programs where Bellinger took on the role of scouting program supervisor for the soybean and small grain program.

Bellinger worked with numerous other programs and projects while working on his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in entomology. In addition to the IPM program in Maryland, Bellinger worked with a National Park Service lab that evaluated pest problems in ornamentals and turf. He also worked with what is now APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) working to detect problem pests such as gypsy moth.

After receiving his MS, Bellinger attended Virginia Tech University where he worked on a Ph.D. in entomology in grasshopper ecology while he simultaneously worked with the IPM program, Forest Service and the National Park Service surveying gypsy moth. After receiving his Ph.D. he worked on a post-doc in conjunction with Shenandoah National Park, examining pheromone traps in low density populations. Bellinger used this data and compared it to the populations on the edge of gypsy moth invasions.

Now, as the Extension Pesticide Coordinator at Clemson University, Bellinger’s main concern is safety. “As the pesticide coordinator at Clemson my emphasis is on the safe and judicious use of pesticides when they are necessary,” said Bellinger. “I work a lot on the safety aspects; once you make an intelligent decision to use pesticides then you need to do it safely.”

In addition, Bellinger believes in the practices of IPM to make informed decisions.

“When we talk about IPM and the definition of IPM many people look at the I or Integrated aspect; what is included, what does it mean? For me, in IPM the most important part of it is the M or the Management aspect. Management implies that you have a plan, and if you have a plan then you have thought things out ahead of time. You’ve thought about your crop and your commodity and how you are going to grow it, how you will manage it and how you will manage any pest problems that you might encounter. You are making informed decisions ahead of time and not last minute, knee jerk reach-for-the-sprayer decisions.”

Bob can be reached at bbllngr@clemson.edu or 864-656-5042.



Bob Bellinger, Pesticide Coordinator with Clemson University

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“Integrated Pest Management requires people to think ahead and consider all their options so that they are prepared if faced with a pest problem.”

-Bob Bellinger

Advisory Council and Steering Committee Meetings

The Southern Region IPM Center Advisory Council met on December 8th and the Steering Committee met on December 9th at SRIPMC's new facilities in Raleigh, North Carolina. The meetings were a success, producing numerous subcommittees and suggestions to continue improving Center functions. Starting the day on December 8, Center staff provided updates on the newsletter and other publications, Center grants programs, crop profiles and PMSPs, the information request website and project collaboration with IRAC (Insecticide Resistance Action Committee). Carrie Harmon provided an update on the SPDN (Southern Plant Diagnostic Network) and discussed ways to continually improve on their working relationship. Future projects discussed for the Center include a possible partnership with the IPM CRSP (IPM Collaborative Research Support Program) working together to move US IPM knowledge and technology to developing nations. The Center is in the process of applying for a planning grant to develop proposals for RFAs for IPM CRSP.

Other collaborative efforts throughout the region

include working with states to develop a fire ant publication. The Center is working with Tom Fuchs with Texas A&M University building on his expertise to create this publication.

Later in the afternoon, the groups participated in a SWOT analysis of the Center. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, and is a simple framework for generating strategic alternatives from a situation analysis. The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the Centers' resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which we operate. The SWOT analysis was very produc-

tive with numerous strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities presented to Center staff. After each individual was given the opportunity to suggest items, members were given stars to rate the items they felt had the most importance to continued Center success. To view the full SWOT analysis as well as the votes click [here](#).

Other updates from throughout the region included a brief discussion of the opportunities available with ChemSearch. Norm Leppla, Advisory Council co-chair, discussed the success of ChemSearch, a searchable database of available pesticides, and discussed opportunities for IPM coordinators across the Southern Region to gain access to the database. Contact your local IPM Coordinator for more information about ChemSearch opportunities in your area.

Three subcommittees were formed to help the Center set processes and provide input and feedback. A subcommittee to write Advisory Council and Steering Committee bylaws was formed to set guidelines for rotation of leaders and members as well as outline the responsibilities of the chair and co-chair. Ames Herbert, John Anderson, Norm Leppla, Steve Hopkins, and Jim VanKirk form the subcommittee and will draft a document and circulate to members by March 8, 2005.

A website subcommittee was formed to review the test site and provide feedback to Jeanne Bachelor before the new site goes live. Carrie Harmon, Amy Rhodes, Doug Johnson and Debby Weschler form this committee and can expect to receive the test link within the next few weeks.



Ron Stinner and Doug Johnson at the evening reception.

A third subcommittee was formed to help the Center establish the process of setting priorities. A lack of clearly defined priorities was identified in the SWOT analysis as a weakness of the Center, and this subcommittee will determine a process to develop these priorities. Larry Elsworth, Geoff Zehnder, Jennifer Curtis, Tom Fuchs, Jonathan Edelson, John Anderson and Jimo Ibrahim make up the subcommittee and will come up with recommendations by April 1.

After the Advisory Council meetings, the Steering Committee met on December 9 to review suggestions made the day before and move forward with proposed plans. The priorities subcommittee was approved and set with Center staff responsible for providing the current mission statement and "meat" of the RFAs to the committee. A motion was approved to move forward with production of the IRAC (Insecticide Resistance Action Committee) mode of action initiative and to explore using this approach with HRAC (Herbicide Resistance Action Committee) and FRAC (Fungicide Resistance Action Committee). Discussion of the next Center RFA included renaming the RFA and formally including the critical and emerging issues as part of the RFA. In addition, the Steering Committee passed a motion to support the National IPM Symposium through the Center at \$4,999.



Clayton Hollier, Ames Herbert and Jim VanKirk at the evening reception.

To view meeting reports from both meetings click [here](#). The next Advisory Council and Steering Committee meetings will be held April 20-21, 2005.



Steering Committee and Advisory Council members enjoy an evening reception.



Advisory Council members participate in the SWOT analysis.

