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**Extension Ag Team - Planning Meeting
Maricopa Agricultural Center
January 17, 2014 * 10:00 am – 1:30 pm**

Attending: Mike Ottman, Bill McCloskey, Peter Ellsworth, Pedro Andrade, Paul Brown, Shawna Loper, Tim Vandervoet, Ayman Mostafa, Lydia Brown, Randy Norton, Al Fournier, Russ Tronstad, Wayne Dixon

I. Programs To Address Current/Near Term Issues (Discussion)

a. Report on late fall stink bug workshops featuring Phillip Roberts, UGA (Peter)

Held workshops in Blythe and at MAC, featuring stink bug expert Phillip Roberts (University of Georgia) and also Jeff Silvertooth. 65 people attended in Blythe because of serious concerns about brown stink bug there. The program was well received. Yields in cotton were good, but quality was poor because of whitefly damage and sticky cotton, resulting from aggressive treatment for stink bugs. Dr. Roberts thought, due to the level of damage sustained, there should be stink bugs still around in the field, but could not find many. **If you see stink bugs in the field, please let Peter know where you are finding them.** We have yet to determine their overwintering habits in AZ. Reporting aflatoxin levels off the charts this year in Western Arizona. Peter thinks it could be related to piercing of bolls by stink bugs combined with higher humidity this year. Shawna has seen aflatoxin in grain corn in central AZ. Peter is seeking funds from Cotton Inc. to conduct stink bug research. We do not have a good handle on why this native insect has risen to such major pest status recently.

b. Natural Enemies Field Guide (Lydia & Peter)

Funded by a Western IPM Center grant and completed over a period of 18 months, this project was a collaboration between multiple colleagues in Southwest states. A goal of the grant was to make sure the guide will remain available after the initial print run is gone. It will be available on demand from Lulu.com. The book was peer reviewed through Extension. We are trying to keep track of who gets a copy of the book, to ensure all PCAs get a copy. **Please coordinate with Lydia if you need to copies to distribute and keep track of who gets book.**

c. Program Personnel (Everett Rhodes, Agent in Pinal County)

Has been a 4H agent and for 16 years was director of Project Central. He is now working with small farms and growers in Pinal County. There is a need and a lot in interest in direct marketing in Pinal County. He needs to get up to speed on production practices. Al sent him contact information for Tess Grasswitz at NMSU, Urban / Small Farm IPM Specialist.

d. Proposed workshop: “New Technologies for Arizona Field Crops” (Ayman)

Ayman did exit surveys at meetings last year. Clientele are highly interested in new information: new technologies, new pesticides, tools or approaches, new seed varieties, new practices, apps, etc. They want more focus on new technologies in our Extension programs. Ayman proposes we develop a meeting or workshop with a focus on technologies this year.

Discussion:

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- This year, he would like to have a dedicated workshop at MAC in addition to his regular early season meetings.
- People liked the idea. New technology, but less production oriented.
- Include demonstrations of in the field equipment, spray nozzles, etc. He heard really good feedback from clients who attend the turf school.
- Could include presentations about non-UA apps that people may be using. Consider having a grower or other peer presenter show such information.
- Paul Brown may present information on how to access ag weather information.
- Will do only plenary program for first year, but if this catches on, could consider general sessions and breakouts in the future.
- High potential for industry participation and sponsorship.
- Potential timeline: Late may or early June. **Tentative date June 5.**
- Planning committee: Ayman will form a small committee including some of his industry contacts. Stokes company is investing in precision ag. Should get someone from that company involved on the committee. **Pedro, Shawna, Paul and Randy** volunteered to help out on planning committee.
- Industry role might be limited to Exhibits or demos.
- Integrate some water technology related topic

e. **Program Content - local needs / statewide common elements**

- i. County Assessments by region: Randy (SE), Shawna & Ayman (Central), Kurt (W)

Randy: Stink bug and water are major issues this year. May not be much related to water education, other than insurance programs, preventative planning. More issues with nematodes on drip irrigation than ever before. Meeting scheduled for Mar 6, early season meeting at Eastern AZ College. Stink bugs (Peter); crop insurance (Russ). Randy will be in touch with specialists to plan topics and finalize agenda. Peter saw a presenter from CAP in Tucson at a turf meeting earlier this week who could cover water issues very well, overview on water supply and competing demands, etc. (Ayman is interested in this topic as well.) Paul: growers are interested in this information as well, except maybe in the Yuma area. Shawna: growers are also looking for solutions in the field: retrofitting, soil moisture probes, water conservation, alternative crops and how to get into those types of markets. Something on the rules and costs of getting water on the field; most growers have no idea how expensive it can be.

Shawna: related to new technology and equipment; her growers are interested in the economics of adopting new technology. Cost-benefit analysis, specifically for precision ag. Ramon Cinco, a Mexican grower is a good example of someone who knows how long it takes a technology to pay off. Growers are interested in diversifying crops. Many are not growing small grains this year because of drop in price. Growers are looking at silages: sorghum, corn, triticale (green chop – She is doing a field trial on this at MAC). Syngenta is funding it. Growers are mainly interested in water issues. In Marana, low cotton yields this year. Problem was root rot. Want an update on Top Guard and availability of a Section 18. (It has already been approved in Texas.) This will be an important pre-season topic – Randy, Ayman and Mary Olsen finished second year of research on this and can present at meetings. Saw 70% reduction in disease this year. Randy can present on this in Pinal, Pima and SE AZ. It could be done as a separate set of Cheminova meetings. Randy is working on a plan to do some large-scale demos this year, once we get the Section 18. There should be willing cooperators in Marana. Cheminova will pursue surface and subsurface drip application on label. Randy will do some trials on it this year.

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Shawna: another issue is pre-emergence herbicide applications – how to retrofit their equipment to soil-incorporate, combine with other applications. Bill could present on this. Grain corn interest is going up, especially in Marana. There is interest in Aflatoxin control, and she may consider research on this. Her growers don't mind long meeting, as long as they get credits.

Ayman: has also seen interest in short season sorghum for silage. Shawna has done some trials.

Paul: had input from LaPaz County: Stink bug a big issue. Cotton yields were down considerably. A lot of unopened bolls. Late August humid and heat spoiled the end of the season. He thought yields were worse in Parker Valley than in Blythe. Aflatoxin is a very big issue (Peter Cotty or Larry Antilla are potential speakers) and stink bug management.

Group Discussion regarding SW AG Summit and Parker Meeting (Feb 27 & Feb 28):

Breakouts for Yuma Ag Summit:

- Based on last year, the session after lunch has a problem where people tend to show up late. Morning sessions were full. Perhaps the planned lunch period should be a bit longer, or some lag-time can be added between lunch and first afternoon session to avoid this problem.
- The team would prefer to do 2 consecutive 2-hour slots in the AM. (Up to 8 speakers, 30 minutes each). Will include topics related to cotton and other field & forage crop topics (topics summarized below).

Parker meeting:

- Plan a similar program and topics for next day in Parker
- Members of the group expressed concerns about cancelations of previously planned Parker meetings. There is a need to plan ahead and ensure that programs will move forward on the date specified.

ii. Updates from Specialists

Mike: Water transfers in Arizona are being looked at by a law professor at UA. He is writing a position paper with policy recommendations that may suggest that water transfers may come from alfalfa. There may be policy changes about this in the future that farmers will need to know about.

Paul: a group on campus has been brought together to draft a NASA proposal. May need buy-in from the Ag industry. Using NASA remote images to determine the sources of dust and models for how dust moves throughout the season. Expect a new Specialist or a committee of experts in the area of dust management. A result to benefit growers would be potentially a dust management model.

iii. Integrating natural enemies into whitefly management (Tim Vandervoet)

Tim Vandervoet, Peter's grad student, recently submitted an outreach grant to the Western IPM Center, committed to doing dedicated workshops (3), present at Extension meetings, and will produce an IPM short on the topic of integrating natural enemies into whitefly management and decision making. The goal is to do 3 dedicated workshops targeting PCAs in April – June.

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Generalist predators are the focus, so it is relevant for all pest control, beyond whiteflies. Randy: Can incorporate something into Safford summer workshop – usually in early July. Dedicated PCA sessions are desirable. Will also be looking for cooperators for field trials. Parker or Blythe area will be important to hit.

Summary of Presenter / Topics Ideas for Preseason Meetings

- **Peter Ellsworth:** Stink bug management and relationship to Whitefly management: planning for a successful season
- **Tim Vandervoet (Peter's student) and Peter Ellsworth:** Integrating information about natural enemies into whitefly management decisions (will plan dedicated PCA workshops April – June, but could also present at pre-season meetings)
- **Paul Brown:** Weather update and good sources of weather information online
- **Russ Tronstad:** Crop insurance, especially as related to water issues
- **Randy Norton:** Update on TopGard for control of Texas Root Rot in cotton – Randy has done field trials with Ayman and Mary Olsen. This product is not registered. They are seeking a section 18 with ADA. (This could be a topic at preseason meetings and / or done as a series of dedicated Cheminova meetings.)
- **Bill McCloskey:** Herbicide Resistant Palmer amaranth Occurrence and Management, (potentially include, retrofitting equipment to soil-incorporate pre-emergence herbicides in combination with other applications, per Shawna's suggestion).
- **Shawna Loper:** Short season sorghum for silage; present data from her variety trials.
- **Ayman Mostafa:** New practices for the management of Egyptian alfalfa weevils (data from trials); also did work on mite management in cotton and corn, including work on new products.
- **Pedro Andrade:** Cotton Management App: Making Planting Decisions for Cotton (relevant to Central and Southeastern AZ)
- **Mike Ottman:** Based on local needs, could present if desired on any of the following topics: Water and nitrogen needs for forage sorghum; wheat crop management / planting dates; alfalfa crop management including water management

Important Topics in Search of presenters:

- **Water Issues. Presenter from CAP** (Mitch Basefsky, External Communications Pima/Pinal, Central Arizona Project): Covers water issues very well, overview on water supply and competing demands, etc.
- (Shawna): Growers are looking for **field solutions to water limitations in the field:** retrofitting, soil moisture probes, water conservation, alternative crops and how to get into those types of markets. Something on the rules and costs of getting water on the field.
- (Shawna): **The economics of adopting new technologies, i.e., precision ag.**
- **Aflatoxin.** A big issue this year. Potential speakers could include Larry Antilla or Leighton Liesner.

II. Update on Budget Situations

- a. College situation and decision package going to legislature
- b. Dollars at counties, research centers, depts., and ext. admin. for programs?

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3.8 million going forward for Extension, plus additional funds for the Vet School. Does this group have suggestions for how to deploy those resources? If we would like to influence the outcome, this group or sub-group should meet to formalize recommendations. **Set up a special Ag Team meeting to discuss Ag Extension Hiring Plan (new funding): May 14, 10 – 12.**

- a. Associate Director position search, half-time

Paul is considering this position and so is Ursula. Paul will interview on Jan 30 and Ursula on Jan 29. Paul says he won't take the job unless he can keep his own Extension program going.

- b. SPI grant(s)

About 50k is currently dedicated annually to Extension intramural grant program. (This is all the discretionary funding Extension has.) Are these SPI grants the best use of these funds? Could they be used to bring in expertise from other institutions that we lack when emergencies occur (e.g., stink bug, Glyphosate resistance)? Other ideas?

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III. Websites

- a. Website Development and Updates (Wayne)

Wayne is chairing a committee that is working with a CALS team on revamping the ACIS and other websites. The Web Development Committee met last September and October and will have a session following this meeting, to finalize initial input to Matt Rarh's development team.

- b. Arizona Agriculture Blog update (Ayman)

This blog is very much an Ag Team website. If anyone has information they want to convey as a blog post, please communicate with Ayman.

Shawna: There is a lot of repetition between her newsletter and Ayman's. Is he interested in trading off with her every other week?

Ayman: Has 500 people on his email list. Only 35% have subscribed to blog. Can / should he auto-subscribe everyone on his list? If so, provide information on how to unsubscribe. He used to mail 400 newsletters, now down to around 100.

Shawna: we had an agronomy work group that no longer meets. Seems to be redundant with this group. It was agreed to eliminate separate meetings of this group.

IV. Next Meeting & Leadership

- a. Special meeting to Ag Extension Hiring Plan (new funding): **May 14, 10 – 12.**
- b. Next planning meeting: **June 6, 9 – 12** at MAC
- c. Agent co-lead: Lydia
- d. Specialist co-lead: Russ

Calendar of Currently Planned Events: Non-Extension

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Monsanto cotton grower meetings:

Jan 21: Tacna (tentative)
Jan 28: Blythe-Elks Lodge (confirmed)
Feb 4: Buckeye-Elks (confirmed)
Feb 5: Casa Grande-The Property (confirmed)
Feb 6: Marana-location TBD
Feb 11: Safford (tentative)

Dow AgroSciences / Phytogen meetings:

Jan 21: Blythe
Jan 28: Buckeye
Jan 29: Casa Grande
Feb 4: Marana
Feb 5: Safford

Other:

Feb 20 Bug Chasers golf tournament in Litchfield Park
May 10: Sante Fe Ranch UA Centennial event

Upcoming Extension Meeting Dates

Early season meetings:

Feb 5: Southeast Ag Day (Randy)
Feb 27 SW Ag Summit Yuma (Includes Ag Team Extension breakout on 2/27)
Feb 28 Parker Extension Meeting (Kurt & Paul)
Mar 3: West Valley Extension meeting, Avondale Raul & Theresa's (Ayman)
Mar 4: Marana meeting, Health Center (Shawna)
Mar 5: Eva's Restaurant, Casa Grande (\$300 food minimum or room fee). Morning meeting until lunch (Shawna)
Mar 6: Early season meeting at Eastern AZ College, Safford (Randy)

Other Extension Meetings:

April – June: Tim Vandervoet, with Peter, will organize 3 dedicated workshops (half-day) targeting PCAs on topic of incorporating natural enemies into whitefly decision making and thresholds in cotton. (Parker or Blythe, central AZ, Safford, Yuma?)

Tentative June 5. New Technology workshop in May or early June at MAC (Ayman).

Summer meetings. Tent talks in the summer (Ayman). Shawna is considering some other approaches: One specialist presenting at breakfast once per week or something like that. People liked the idea. (Tent talks have not been well attended.)