

Cotton IPM/ICM Working Group
Maricopa Ag Center
Monday, January 29, 2005

Attended:

Russ Tronstad	Bill McCloskey	Kurt Nolte
Trent Teegerstrom	Ed Martin	Paul Brown
Jay Subramani	Erin Taylor	Al Fournier
Randy Norton	Peter Ellsworth	
Eric Norton	Bob Roth	

I. Review of the 2006 cotton season across the state (all)

Reports from all areas of the state indicate a good year for cotton, with high yields (up to 4 bales/acre) in many areas and relatively low insect pressure. Peter had untreated checks at MAC yielding 3.5 bales. Eric says Mohave valley (3000 A) didn't yield well—less than 2.5 bales—not sure why. Yuma valley averaged around 3 bales: cold weather in spring made some growers replant, so they got a late start and then got hit with heat stress, resulting in low yields. Some areas in Central AZ also had issues with heat stress. Acreage is expected to decline in most regions of the state next year: 25,000 acres expected in SE AZ in 2007 (~100% Bt, maybe a bit of Pima). Eric, Erin and Kurt expect cotton acreage to decline in Western and Central AZ. In Yuma, some growers are going into small grains instead of cotton. Sorghum production should increase, related to new ethanol plant. Big hog farm coming in East of Dateland, also will be supported by sorghum and grain.

Cold winter may have a major impact on WF populations this year: Peter expects lower numbers, although it is hard to predict.

II. Cotton Advisories

Eric provided a summary of data from a survey sent to his mailing list regarding the usefulness of cotton advisories. 30% response rate. (1) Are advisories useful? (95% yes); (2) Do you use some information from advisories to make management decisions or recommendations (71% yes); (3) what info is most useful? 57% - weather forecasts; 57% - heat unit crop development info; 71% - crop management recommendations; 81% - upcoming events.

Cotton Advisories have not been posted on ACIS as consistently as they were in the past, although, when active, this is one of the most accessed areas of the site. Al asked county agents if they have staff members who can post advisories on a routine basis; he can make sure they have the proper permissions to post. Al will email all agents and ask them to review a list of ACIS permissions to make sure their staff members are listed. (Email sent 1/30/07). If this cannot be handled locally let Al know.

Paul is working with Mike Ottman to provide “real time” grain advisories. Problem: it's the grower's responsibility to enter their planting dates. They are working with ECAT to do a

pilot test for next year. Many weather stations are on thin ice financially in central AZ because of urban expansion and loss of traditional funding base. Marana station was uprooted and the weather station that used to be there has been moved. In Western AZ there are still plenty of active stations.

Following the meeting, Paul provided the following updated statistics on advisory access: Advisories (across all locations) were accessed 18,961 times in 2006 (up from 13,004 in 2005). The advisories accessed most often were Yuma Valley, Safford, Parker and Roll. The advisories accessed the least were Queen Creek, Aguila, Harquahala and Mohave Valley. If one divides the total number of accesses by 26 (weeks during advisory season) to obtain a use rate, the numbers range from 35-55/week for each location. The heat stress reports we generate from June through September were accessed 1966 times (compared to 1,444 in 2,005).

III. Pink Bollworm Eradication Program

The program last year was successful in central AZ. Currently, 94% bt cotton is planted throughout the PBW eradication program area. EPA will likely approve 100% bt cotton in the near future. Program resulted in an impressive reduction in PBW populations (Peter estimates about 90%), although some individual fields got sprayed up to 20 times. Compliance with plow-down requirements is not universal. Funding is not definite for expansion into LaPaz, Mohave, Blythe and Imperial next year, although they expect it, and hope in 2008 to include Yuma and Mexican border area. Feasibility for eradication looks good in AZ; Mexico is a wildcard. Government approval is required to plant Bt cotton in MX, and it comes slowly.

IV. Update on New Hire(s): County agents & positions at MAC

Agent Positions

- **2 Area Agent Positions (Community Resource Development)** located in Sierra Vista and Yavapai Co. Primary purposes of these agents are to 1) understand and ultimately model the regional environmental, economic and social changes that will accompany rural transformation in Arizona, 2) design programs that explain the outcomes of alternative models of transformation so that stakeholders can understand the likely outcome of policy alternatives, and 3) work with stakeholders and U of Az faculty to develop research programs that address unresolved high-priority issues. A search committee has just been formed for these two Area Agent positions and is scheduled to meet this Friday for the first time.
- **Vice-Clay and Vice-Husman positions** are moving forward. Rick Gibson heads a single committee that includes Kai Umeda, Randy, Jeff Sivertooth and Mary O. One position is targeted for an agronomist, the other for IPM. Positions were re-advertised recently and are available online here:
Maricopa http://jobs.joe.org/search_detail.php?id=1850
Pinal http://jobs.joe.org/search_detail.php?id=1813
- **Graham County ANR Agent** (Randy's replacement) will be focused on watershed management; part of Extension packet. There is an active search and they have 5 or 6

- candidates. [**Randy Norton, and others ??**]
- **Urban Horticulture Agent, Yuma County.** (Job posted online at http://jobs.joe.org/search_detail.php?id=1809.) Now have 5 applicants. [**Who is on committee? What is current status of search?**]

Specialist Positions

- **Cropping Systems Agronomist** (75% Extension, 25% Research), Plant Sciences position based at MAC. Bill provided position announcement that recently went out and will be submitted to Agronomy; Weed Science; AAAS; Al suggested Chronicle of Higher Ed & National Job Bank websites. This position won't be targeted to a specific commodity. Bill noted that there are some competing positions out there; could be tough to fill. Peter suggests sending announcement to cotton agronomists beltwide. Committee: Bill McCloskey, Bob Roth, Mary Olsen, Mike Ottman, Richard Percy [**others?**].
- **Water Quality Specialist**, focused on urban interface, based at MAC. Has been up since first of the year. Will advertise in Journal for Biological Engineers that comes out in Feb. Will review candidates in March. Committee includes: Kevin Fitzsimmons, Ed Martin, Paul Brown [**Others?**]
- **Assistant / Associate Specialist - Precision Agriculture**, based at MAC (70% Extension, 30% Research). Won't be targeted to a specific commodity. Committee consists of Randy Norton, Tom Clark (ARS), Pete Waller (ARS), Barron Orr, Ed Martin, Bob Roth. [**Current status of search?**]
- **Yuma position: Mechanized Ag**, targeting vegetables / engineering. Committee headed by Kitt Farrel Poe includes Bob Roth, Steve Poe, Charles Sanchez(?) [**Others? What is current status of search?**]
- In addition, David Kerns will be leaving UA Mar 1. Met with Colin recently and he indicated that Kerns position will not be filled (at least not in the short term).

Peter suggested the idea of advertising their position would be part of a cluster hire and would be potentially more attractive to applicants. Is there a way to integrate and cross-reference the various position descriptions so that candidates know they will part of a group hire? It would be fair to reference the decision package, indicate that each position is part of an organized recruitment effort.

V. Dates, Content, and Locations for 2007 early season Cotton Programs

What are pressing issues?

- Randy: concern about the Farm Bill. Update on progress;
- Crop mix issues: economic discussion; forecasting and decision-making;
- Greenhouse and controlled environment agriculture
- Sustainability as a possible theme for spring programs. Could show Cotton Incorporated DVD (~8 minutes) about sustainability in cotton; It could stimulate some discussion at meetings.

Parker meeting agenda (Mar 1):

- Irrigation scheduling

- Pre-emergent herbicides
- Peter topic?
- Paul topic?

Tentative Meeting Dates:

- Mar 1- Parker meeting planned
- Feb 21 – Tentative date for Safford. Randy will meet with his advisory committee next week to plan program.
- Mar 30 (tentative) for Central AZ:. Erin will coordinate with specialists to plan meeting and finalize date.
- Feb 28 – Tentative Yuma date.

VI. Cotton Report/Abstracts

CALS does not plan to produce hard copies of the full Cotton Report this year; cost prohibitive in part due to funds paid to students to format report. The cost of printing the full Cotton Report version last year was about \$8.40/copy for 100 copies. Russ estimates we could probably print 50 for about \$500 -- we could use working group funds if other funds are not available. Change this year is that authors will have to submit their articles as PDFs. If authors can submit PDFs that are uniformly formatted, we should find out if Colin will pay printing costs for a limited number of copies. These hard copy reports are still very useful for a subset of clientele. **The Deadline for cotton report articles is March 19, 2007. Please submit your articles to Russ Tronstad.**

VII. Brief Updates:

- **Update on e-Extension.** Randy is working with a national group to develop a cotton “community of practice” for e-Extension. Southern Region extension directors will fund it (no \$ from AZ). Randy is working on soil fertility and irrigation portion of the project. They will be looking for feedback from the Cotton Team. His group will be meeting again in March. Goal: soft launch in September, unveil the final website at Beltwides in 2008.
- **RAMP Grant: Regional Lygus Research.** Peter is involved in a Regional collaboration to develop field-level and area-wide Lygus management strategies. This \$2.5 million 4-year project involves 13 PIs and many collaborators in 4 states (UA, USDA, NMSU, UC and Texas A&M). Goal: information that spans from Lygus biology to management at field and landscape levels, across multiple crops. Crops involved include upland and Pima cotton, seed vegetables, dry beans, lesquerella, guayule, chiles. This project will include a significant Extension effort. Peter will be emphasizing lygus in local programming and will be looking for local research cooperators: new chemistry, thresholds, biology, etc. Peter will work with agents to develop a list of potential collaborators.
- **Arizona Cotton Pest Management Strategic Plan (PMSP).** Pest Management Strategic Plans (PMSPs) engage growers, pest control advisors, researchers and

industry and regulatory personnel in a formal dialog to document current pest management practices and priority needs for a particular crop. The resulting document or “Pest Management Strategic Plan,” gives a realistic view of pest management issues and strategies and provides a forum for agricultural producers and allied professionals to set meaningful research, regulatory, and educational priorities. PMSPs are widely recognized as a conduit for communication from growers and other IPM practitioners to regulators and granting agencies. We are in the planning stages for a Cotton PMSP in Arizona. We have a tentative date of May 24 in mind, but this could change. We will look for participation from county agents at the meeting and also to help us identify potential key participants from your part of the state.

- **Arizona CAPS Committee (Cooperative Agricultural Pest Surveys).** The CAPS Committee is chaired by Mike Wallace of ADA and its primary function is to organize surveys for potential pest threats: species not yet detected that could pose risks to agricultural or urban horticulture industries. The committee identifies priority pest issues, submits proposals for funding to USDA, and Mike coordinates the surveys. Ongoing UA participation on the committee includes Al Fournier and Barry Prior, with as-needed participation from specialists (e.g., Mary Olsen, Peter Ellsworth, Glen Wright and Patricia Stock in the past). Mike is looking for more input from UA faculty to help identify new potential pest threats and potentially to collaborate on proposals and survey work, and invites your participation. These proposals are very specifically targeted to potential pest threats (primarily insects, plant pathogens and nematodes) that are *not yet present* in Arizona but that have a high potential to arrive. The goal is to facilitate a rapid response and potentially an eradication plan when pests are detected.
- **Cotton Field Budgets.** These reports haven’t been done regularly since 1999. Trent recently hired a student and hopes to get these documents updated. His goal is to finish the cotton field budgets this fall.
- **Status of working group for 2007-08.** Al asked if anyone in the group is willing to serve as co_PI on the Extension Cotton Working Group proposal this coming year. Al was discouraged by Extension Administration’s criticisms of the outcomes of this group last year. We listed 6 or 7 important “products” of our interactions and got nothing but negative feedback and reduced funding for this year (\$1,500 down from \$2,500). Is there a value in continuing to request funding for these efforts? Randy and Bill offered to help out on next year’s proposal.
- **Cotton Team budget report.** Current balance is \$1,381.07. Please submit any travel expenses from this meeting to Patti B. ASAP. Funds need to be expended by 6/30/07 and can be used for meetings, travel, other group activities.

VIII. Next Meeting / Leadership:

June 29, 10:30 – 1:30 at MAC. Kurt will Co-chair with Trent.