

**Diagnostics Leadership Team
Maricopa Agricultural Center
April 3, 2015 – 10:00 am to 1:00 pm**

Membership:

Peter Ellsworth, Wendy Moore, Dawn Gouge, John Palumbo, Al Fournier, Gene Hall
Guest: Dr. Shaku Nair, Assistant in Extension, Community IPM

MEETING NOTES

I. Diagnostics Leadership Team Opening Discussions

a. Organization of the APMC

Peter reviewed the APMC organizational chart (handout) and relationship to the Arizona Plant Diagnostics Network (AZ PDN), a parallel organization. Judy Brown and Barry Pryor are coordinators of this network, which brings together UA CE faculty with Arizona Dept of Ag and USDA APHIS personnel to focus on regulatory issues of pest detection and quarantine. They have in place procedures for responding to new invasive pest detections. Gene will want to interact with the AZ PDN, in particular with any new detections or quarantine issues that may arise. The next AZ PDN meeting is scheduled for May 1 at MAC, 9am – noon.

b. Leadership Team member's current involvement in insect diagnostics (Roundtable)

Dawn – A large number of faculty are involved in diagnostics. Efforts are not currently well organized or coordinated. Dawn gets many requests for identification, including delusory parasitosis cases.

Al - Does not play any role in providing diagnostic services, but needs to have access to the numbers we track for diagnostic services for IPM reporting, grant proposals, etc. In addition, he serves as liaison of the APMC to the AZ PDN group.

Wendy – Coordinator of the insect collection, the best resource in the state to support diagnostic activities. She supervises Gene. She interacts with students who might interface with Gene and support development of diagnostic related outputs.

Shaku – AiE for Community IPM. Does a lot of ID for school personnel and other stakeholders, both indoor and outdoor pests.

Peter – Mainly involved in diagnostics for commercial agriculture interests. Oversees the APMC and helps to develop resources for this function. Coordinates evaluations of all Assistants in Extension and Dr. Al Fournier funded through the APMC.

John – His role is similar to Peter's, in connection with mainly the vegetable industry. Has had contact with APHIS personnel at ports of entry, but not recently. Sometimes they can hold trucks with perishable produce awaiting an ID.

II. Diagnostic needs and procedures

a. Diagnostic operations at the UA Insect Collection

Everyone who walks in has to fill out the ID form at the main desk. Many people mail in the form from the website when they mail in specimens. For walk-ins, Gene will do IDs right away, if he can, when people are anxious about it. He encourages people to send photos or mail stuff in. The website indicates they accept drop offs between 8am – 4am. Gene’s time is dedicated 50% to diagnostic efforts, but does not maintain a specific set of hours for diagnostic activities. Timing depends on other activities and urgency of ID needs. Currently, there is no point in the year when he cannot manage the workflow coming in. The slowest turn-around for non-urgent samples is about 3 days.

Gene keeps the insect ID forms that people submit (since he started last summer) and enters data into the File Maker Pro database. Eventually, he would like to build a collection of specimens that people have submitted. He does not track how much time he spends working on each sample, but does track turn-around time. Currently, there is no one to back him up if he is out of town (which is very rare). He posts information on the website when he is out. Gene should let Al know if he is out of the office so Al can get word out to APMC personnel.

The Insect ID form and submission instructions should be posted on the AZ PDN website. Gene should interact with Matt Rahr to get this done. Al will post the same information on APMC site and ACIS.

We should plan an organized announcement of Gene’s “new” function in Cooperative Extension before its activation date of 1 July 2015. Al can initiate a draft that Gene, Wendy and Peter will edit, a short communication for appearance in TMN, CALS Newsletter, and Patti B. email blast.

b. What media are acceptable?

Specimens or good photos can be used for identification. Chris Bibbs developed some guidelines for taking good diagnostic photos. These are included as bullet points on the submission instructions form. Descriptions over the phone or email are not acceptable.

c. Fee for service?

Currently not charging for services. Gene has been contacted by a pest management company (NW Exterminating) that wants to pay him to put him on retainer for insect ID. He gets a lot of commercial inquiries. He has been discussing with Bruce Tabashnik the idea of charging for commercial requests but not for inquiries from the public. Peter suggests Gene make an estimate of his time and accept the company’s offer, but configure these relationships through the gift process (see below). Gene thinks some other companies are bringing a lot of repeat diagnostics. Maybe some of them would be willing to pay as well. Gene should communicate with us who he has paid arrangements with as he progresses. Ask the people who are willing to pay to provide a letter indicating the funds are an “unrestricted gift” to the program. John: we don’t charge for diagnostic services at YAC, but don’t do a lot of ID. But last winter he had to out-source an ID to a different university. John “paid” for the service by buying certain supplies for their program.

Wendy can set up a gift account for diagnostics. This will be an easier approach, rather than charging and processing any per-sample fee.

We should be doing some kind of evaluation of our diagnostic services that includes responses on their learning and intended practices. Also, ask people did they value the service, how much is it worth to you, would you consider making a donation? We would have to make it easy for people to pay. This would be something to look into.

d. Beyond ID: providing information on pest management

Currently, he does not dispense pest management advice, but he does provide them with PDFs of specific Extension bulletins and publications that are appropriate. Peter advises against Master Gardeners, for example, dispensing advice on pest management. For Gene, we need to identify key contacts for each IPM team to respond with pest management advice. It is fine to refer people out to MGs or others as appropriate. Peter Warren, Stacey Bealmear, Ayman Mostafa, as well as Team AiEs and Specialists. AI will provide appropriate contact information. Need to follow up with a network diagram.

e. Database and reporting

Gene has been carefully maintaining the database, recording emails, phone calls, drop-offs and diagnostic requests by mail. This is important because we previously did not have a good handle on the level of effort. It is important to document this for federal grants. Another reason for documentation is to track commercial requests, where often people are waiting on an ID to make an IPM decision. Two major master gardener programs are a major source of diagnostic requests (Maricopa and Pima counties). There could be a need for Gene to make presentations once a year to MGs to make them aware of his role and to provide professional development for them. It would be great if we could capture data on how many requests the county MG programs handle. Wendy suggested that they might be able to make their FileMaker Pro database available online for MGs around the state to use. The APMC has virtual servers space with CALS and could host the database online.

Gene will need to track all face-to-face interactions for Cooperative Extension. The number of contacts and ethnicity and gender. Patti B will ask for this information annually.

III. Educational Outputs

- a. How are they identified?
- b. How are they funded?
- c. How are they evaluated?

Are there diagnostic outputs that could help to reduce the diagnostic burden on insect ID moving forward? Peter shared some recent outputs: Community IPM Handbook, Natural Enemies of the Southwest, and a Stinkbug pocket guide produced by Virginia Tech that Peter and Lydia Brown contributed to. Gene and Wendy are excited to be involved in these kinds of activities. Gene is interested in updating the “Meloids of Arizona” publication. We can write grants to support

some of these efforts, for example, Western IPM Center grants supported both the Natural Enemies pocket guide and Community IPM Handbook. Also, Gene sees a need to update many of the Extension bulletins he has been sharing with the public. There is a lot he could do, so there is a need to prioritize. Peter suggested if possible Gene should interact with IPM Teams to help identify needs and priorities, most likely via the Assistants in Extension that coordinate each Leadership Team. Not all outputs need to be large documents. We should create a top 10 list of the major kinds of insect submissions Gene gets. Seasonal lists of pests and when they are common is another idea; a “pest calendar”. It would be great to put these resources online and reduce the traffic coming into diagnostics. As a start, we should identify priority projects along with a budget of what it would take. There is a need to document stakeholder input for each need, which can be cited in a grant.

Shaku shared the Community IPM Handbook at the 8th International IPM symposium recently, and people wanted to add additional pests, and another suggestion was adding rudimentary keys and management information. Gene of course has experience in developing keys.

For all outputs there is a need to evaluate outcomes and impacts. We use something called the Logic Model to outline our program, starting with identifying the desired outcomes, then working backwards to what we need to do to achieve them. Outcomes are broken down into (a) changes in knowledge, (b) changes in behavior, and (c) impacts in communities and society (changes in condition). We need to discuss and identify ways to document these outcomes, beyond just tallying the number of IDs handled.

Most inquiries are emails, then walk-ins, then mailed stuff, and only relative few phone calls. We could set up an online survey to measure aspects of customer satisfaction, changes in knowledge, etc. Exit survey. Are you going to do something different as a result of the information provided? Would you be willing to pay for these services? A good goal may be to have a survey in place by July 1. Al can work with Gene to develop the questionnaire and post online.

Wendy: Could this leadership team identify one or two of the highest priority outputs we could develop? We will have to discuss some ideas over email, and should pause to consider the most important needs of each of the other IPM teams.

Another type of educational output is to deliver presentations to Master Gardeners, a diagnostic in-service to inform people how to submit samples, how to ID certain insects, etc. Gene can coordinate with Al to get on these programs and the APMC can support travel expenses. There are at least two large Master Gardener conferences each year; Gene should see about getting on to one or both of these programs to discuss diagnostics.

d. Talking to the media

Gene sticks to responding on what he knows (ID, life history, etc.) and refers reporters out for other questions. Gene should track contacts with the media. We have an outputs database, which Al can make available to gene to track any outputs, publications, presentations, etc.

IV. Other Issues

a. Dealing with delusory parasitosis

Gene has dealt with these inquiries from time to time. A recent article that was published, Shaku will share.

b. Interfacing with e-Extension “ask the expert” system

e-Extension is a website that includes “communities of practice” that deliver online resources on a national basis. Some people get inquiries via an “ask the expert” feature.

c. Developing a Logic Model for Insect Diagnostics in the APMC

Peter shared an example of a Logic Model from one of our Extension IPM Proposals. The purpose of sharing this is to get Gene and Wendy thinking in terms of what outputs we want to achieve and how to measure them.

d. Personnel Evaluations

Evaluations for Assistants in Extension: All are reviewed by their Leadership Teams in a process coordinated by Peter. This year, all AiEs completed a UAVitae. Peter gets input from team members via email. We need to sign Gene up for UAVitae, so that he can at least view other people’s CVs. Gene should contact Cathy Snider to get access to UAVitae. Al can then Contact Robert Armstrong to provide Gene access to other AiE’s CVs.

Action Items

- Al to provide Gene with key contact information for APMC faculty.
- The Insect ID form and submission instructions should be posted on the AZ PDN website. Gene should interact with Matt Rahr to get this done.
- Al will post the same information on APMC site and ACIS.
- Al will work with Gene to develop an “exit survey” for people who use diagnostic services, and post online.
- Shaku will distribute article on DP.
- Al will work with Wayne to provide Gene with access to the APMC Outputs database.
- Gene will contact Cathy Snider to get access to UAVitae. Al then will contact Robert Armstrong to provide Gene access to other AiE’s CVs.
- Gene should plan to present at Master Gardener events to provide in-service training on how to submit samples for ID and other diagnostic topics; can coordinate with Al to determine how to get on these programs.
- Al will develop an APMC webpage for the Diagnostics Leadership Team.