

Arizona Crop Information Site Technical Support

2007 IPM Grant Report

Project Leader: Al Fournier

Project Objective: The purpose of this proposal was to provide continued financial support for maintenance and expansion of the Arizona Crop Information Site (ACIS), which provides independent, research-based desert crop production and protection information to a wide range of agricultural clientele in Arizona, the desert Southwest, and beyond.

Summary and Current Status

The funds provided through this grant provided partial support to a part-time student worker (Theresa Smith) who began work on March 7, 2007. By working regular hours since her hire date and maintaining a high level of productivity, Theresa has posted regular updates to ACIS, including posting of new events, presentations, commodity reports, pesticide updates, cotton insect losses and other research data and publications. In addition, she has systematically checked and revised hundreds of ACIS pages on an ongoing basis, many of which had not been updated since Jenny Jones left UA in 2004. In addition to her work on ACIS, Theresa has helped us maintain and expand the APMC website and the Arid Southwest IPM Network site. Some highlights of our 2007 ACIS activities are presented below.

Participation

All UA faculty involved in agriculture are invited to contribute to ACIS. Primary participants during this grant period included: Peter Ellsworth, John Palumbo, Theresa Smith, Becky Papp, Jon Dinsmore, Mary Olsen, Mike Matheron, Jeff Silvertooth, Russ Tronstad, Trent Teegerstrom, Kurt Nolte, Eric Norton, Erin Taylor, Randy Norton, Kai Umeda, James Walworth, Barry Pryor, Glenn Wright, Mike Ottman, Jon Reding (Arizona Crop Protection Association), AnnaMarie Knorr (Arizona Crop Protection Association), Jack Peterson & Gary Christian (Arizona Department of Agriculture),

Activities (Highlights, Jan 2007 – Dec 2007)

- Posted over 60 new educational events and opportunities (nearly double what we reported last year), covering a range of commodities and topics, including cotton, vegetables, melons, citrus, rangelands, turf, landscape/nurseries, pesticide safety, crop insect losses and IPM.
- Maintained ACIS email list (currently 203 recipients) and sent out occasional email updates and alerts (seven in 2007).
- Posted Extension presentations and publications including:
 - Plant Bug Thresholds in Arizona, Sustained Insecticide Performance Against Whiteflies in Multi-cropping Systems, Building Capacity &

- Integration in Whitefly Management, Head Lettuce Insect Losses Workshop and other presentations.
 - Commodity Reports (2006 Vegetable Report, 2007 Cotton Report, 2007 Forage and Grain Report, 2006 Citrus Report, Turf & Landscape Reports from 1997, 2001, 2004 and 2006)
 - Arizona Climate Briefings: posted links to archived web conferences
 - Other publications: “Biosolids Land Use in Arizona,” “Making Replant Decisions in Cotton” (Texas Cooperative Extension)
- Posted 2006 Cotton Variety Trial data.
- Provided updates to growers, stakeholders and end-users on important topics such as biosecurity policies, the 2007 Farm Bill, Arizona Pink Bollworm Eradication Program, comment requests on pesticide label changes, Round-Up Ready alfalfa, ADA pesticide disposal program
- Made major revisions to the Cotton Insect Losses section of the website (<http://ag.arizona.edu/crops/cotton/insects/cil/cil.html>), developing, formatting, and posting complete data and charts for 2004-2006 data.
- Developed a new “AZSCHED” page on the irrigation section of ACIS (<http://ag.arizona.edu/crops/irrigation/azsched/azsched.html>)
- Made revisions to several sections of ACIS, including irrigation section and pesticides section.
- Posted 45 updates to the “Pest Alerts” page to provide new information about potential invasive insects, weeds, diseases and nematodes in Arizona and the US. Worked with partners in the Arizona Plant Diagnostics Network, ADA, and USDA APHIS to edit and further improve format and content of this area of the site. (This work is ongoing.)
- The Pest Alerts page was presented to the Arizona Invasive Species Advisory Council on Dec 4, 2007 as a possible template for a statewide invasive species website.
- Dedicated 40+ man-hours to a complete page-by-page site review and many appropriate updates and revisions to numerous pages.
- Performed routine maintenance tasks.
- Created new links to relevant information and partner sites including the APMC website, Cooperative Extension Turf website, The Arizona Plant Diagnostics Network website, UA Soil and Nutrient Management website,

Leveraged Resources

- Partial funds to support web development and maintenance (including but not limited to ACIS) were written into a Western IPM Center grant (Arid Southwest IPM Network) and a USDA Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program (RAMP) proposal focused on area-wide suppression of Lygus bugs. For calendar year 2007, these funds total about \$8,700. It is important to note that these funds are tied to specific project objectives and outcomes, beyond routine maintenance of ACIS.
- Jon Dinsmore was hired as Yuma County Instructional Specialist in early September 2006, funded 100% through Yuma County. Jon held this position until

early May 2007. Until that time, Jon worked intermittently on ACIS, primarily handling updates to the New Events page.

- Becky Papp was hired as a part time Research Technician in August 2006, primarily to work on the Arizona Pest Management Center and the Arid Southwest IPM Network websites (funded separately), but she contributed some time to ACIS as well.
- Faculty members and non-UA partners contribute significant time, energy and information to help us maintain and update various sections of ACIS, and occasionally review past and current information on the site. These reviews are critical to maintaining a high quality standard for the information provided by ACIS.

Outcomes / Current Status / Continuing Need

The ACIS homepage received over 13,044 page views during the 2007 calendar year, according to the Urchin 5 database. This number excludes data from about 3 weeks in the spring when the system was down. Statistics on web activity and ongoing feedback from clientele continue to support the reality that a well maintained website gets more visitors and has more potential impact on clientele than a static site. Since June 2005, with the exception of a few months in the summer of 2006, we have been able to maintain and expand ACIS to meet the changing needs of clientele. Our stakeholders have come to rely on the “one-stop-shopping” convenience of ACIS as a single source for reliable, unbiased research information and current events related to Southwest desert agriculture.

The funds provided through the APMC IPM grant have been critical to the ongoing maintenance and modest expansion of ACIS during this timeframe. For a relatively small investment, we were able to maintain critical communication with agricultural stakeholders, including growers, pest control advisors, extension personnel and other agricultural clientele. While we continue to seek additional resources for ACIS in nearly every extra-mural grant we submit, it is important to demonstrate UA’s ongoing commitment of internal resources to maintain the site. The scope and depth of information on ACIS that make it an invaluable resource to a broad range of faculty and clientele, but also require that the site is vigilantly reviewed and maintained on a continual basis. Since pest management is a primary focus of the ACIS site, IPM 3(d) monies are an appropriate resource to commit to this ongoing need.

A major goal of the APMC is to secure funding to support an ongoing Information Technology position. This person would be responsible for continued development, expansion and maintenance of the 1080 pesticide use reporting database and maintenance and expansion of our three websites: The Arizona Crop Information Site (ACIS), the Arizona Pest Management Center website, and the Arid Southwest IPM Network website, and would work closely with the IPM Program Manager to achieve all IT goals. We have accomplished a great deal employing part-time help on a project-by-project basis. This additional investment of resources to support a full-time IT positions for the APMC would yield exponential benefits to our faculty and partner organizations.