



Boll Weevil Bugle

A Newsletter for the Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Program

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July 2003

Program Update:

Northeast Delta Program Now Underway

Activities are underway for the eradication program in the Northeast Delta Region and are progressing on schedule. District Supervisors (DS) and Assistant District Supervisors (ADS) have been hired, office space identified and preliminary work begun.

ABWEP has completed forms for the FSA loans and a tentative date of July 11 has been set for distribution of those funds. We have also received grants from USDA-APHIS. A special thanks goes to the National Cotton Council and USDA-APHIS for their support and help with funding for this program and to FSA for responding so quickly to the loan application.

Field Unit Supervisors (FUS) and Environmental Monitoring Specialists (EMS) are being hired. These employees are actively contacting growers and beginning the process of mapping fields. At the same time, the EMSs are mapping bee yards and identifying sensitive sites near each field. The mapping process is one of the most important tools of the program and allows the FUS to work with the grower to locate all cotton fields and to locate the optimal trap positions. Growers will be contacted by their FUS as mapping and trapping operations are carried out.

We are in the final process of acquiring office space in the region and purchasing supplies (traps, lure, office supplies, etc.). Purchase and transfer of office and field equipment, including vehicles, is currently underway. ABWEP has received and opened proposals for aerial

application contracts and will be awarding the contracts in the very near future. The next step will be certifying airports and pilots, and ordering the appropriate chemicals.

If you have any questions about these procedures, please contact your FUS or DS for more information (see the back page of this newsletter for information.)

Diapause Field Spraying to Begin in August

Field applications will begin in August in the Northeast Delta Zone, depending upon the date recommended by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Mist blower trucks will begin spraying several days prior to the aerial applications. Please contact your FUS with any questions.

The goal of boll weevil eradication in the diapause phase of the program (first year fall treatments) is to significantly reduce over-wintering populations that would survive to the next season, thus reducing boll weevil populations the following spring.

Weevil damage will be reduced during the diapause phase of the program but some damage may still occur. Growers should continue to manage fields for boll weevil damage while cotton squares and bolls are susceptible to boll weevil damage.

From the Foundation Chairman

Working Together for the Future of Cotton Growers

On May 22, the Arkansas State Plant Board met in Blytheville and voted to implement a mandatory eradication program in the North East Delta zone for the 2003 crop season. The Board's vote followed a public hearing attended by about 100 people. At the hearing, 10 people spoke against the mandatory program. The Plant Board members also received 468 written comments. Of those, 304

How Growers Can Help Cut Their Program Costs

As ABWEP starts the program in the Northeast Delta Zone, it's important that growers know there are ways they can assist the program and cut down on their costs as well. All of this information will be covered when ABWEP conducts grower meetings later this summer. These include:

- Advise your Field Unit Supervisor (FUS) of all cotton acreage planted.
- Advise the FUS of all field information.
- Provide access to all sides of the cotton fields.
- Work with the program staff on best trap placement so that traps will be out of the way of equipment.
- Report any problems you encounter to program personnel.
- Scout fields for secondary pests on a regular basis.
- Defoliate cotton as early as possible.
- Harvest and destroy cotton crop as soon as possible.
- Pay assessments on a timely basis.

supported the proposal and 152 were opposed.

Following that meeting, on May 27, your Foundation Board members discussed the Plant Board's decision and considered what we must do to implement that eradication program. At this meeting, Foundation Board members agreed that while we prepared for mandatory eradication, we could still consider a proposal for a 2003 referendum if the proposal was submitted by June 30. The board met again on June 20 and approved an agreement between your Foundation and the state Plant Board.

Following that, at the June 30 Board meeting, no proposals were received for a 2003 referendum.

Your Foundation Board members strongly prefer a grower-approved program in every zone. That is why we previously offered financial support to the Northeast Delta program and we continue to look for new eradication funds. Although the deadline has passed for a 2003 referendum, we would welcome a workable referendum proposal for the 2004 crop year. However, in the meantime, we must get ready to carry out the mandatory 2003 program adopted by the Plant Board.

We all share a vital interest in eradication of the boll weevil. Now is the time for all of us to work together towards a common future for cotton growers.

Sincerely,



Perry Stratton, Chairman

Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation

Bee Yards are High Priority for Program

Minimizing the impact of boll weevil eradication on area bee yards is a high priority for everyone involved with the program in all regions served. This will be the case in the program implementation in the Northeast Delta region also.

Working with area beekeepers, representatives of the Arkansas State Plant Board and ABWEP will use strategies that have proven effective in other areas of the state. Here is a recap of this joint approach:

At the beginning of the program, ABWEP will:

- Contact each registered beekeeper, advise them of the Program activities, and locate bee yards.
- Provide beekeepers with a contact name and number in case they need to contact the Program.
- Map the locations of all registered yards that have been given to the Program's Environmental Monitoring Specialist (EMS) by the Plant Board or beekeepers.
- Monitor each yard within one-quarter mile of a cotton field each time the field is treated by the Program.
- Ensure that the EMS personnel are trained in the basics of the apiary industry.
- Be available to meet with apiary groups and respond to any inquiries relating to the ABWEP Program.
- Work closely with the Plant Board's Apiary Division to

provide Program information to the apiary industry.

Beekeepers should:

- Minimize potential loss by placing bee yards a safe distance away from cotton fields in active eradication areas, until the Program has completed its most intensive treatment phases.
- Work with the Program's EMS to ensure the accuracy of information and location of all their bee yards.
- Notify EMS personnel when bee yards are relocated.
- Register all bee yards with the State Plant Board.

Plant Board Plans include:

- Allowing beekeepers in active eradication areas to move their yards out of the eradication area until the most intensive treatment phases of the program are completed, without losing their registered apiary sites.

Grower Meetings To be Held In Northeast Delta Zone

ABWEP will be holding a series of grower meetings in the Northeast Delta Zone within the near future. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss Program operations in detail and allow for questions and answers.

Growers and owners will be notified as soon as information is available on meeting locations and schedules. We encourage all growers to attend and participate in these very important meetings.

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FUS and EMS Positions are in the process of being filled. Details will be announced when available. Please call the contacts listed here with any questions or concerns.

Spring Trapping Report

Boll weevil trappings in the Northeast Delta Zone as of June 15, 2003 showed increased boll weevil populations as compared to the same time period in 2002. These counts are 3-4 times higher than June of 2002.

In the Northeast Ridge Zone, numbers continue to show elevated boll weevil counts on the eastward boundary along the St. Francis River while other areas of the state are showing significant reductions in boll weevil populations.

No weevils have been trapped in the Southwest Zone this year—making this a 100% reduction in weevil trap captures. The Southeast and Central Zones have reduced their weevil counts by 97%-98% when compared to the same time period in 2002, as of the June 15 readings. An overall reduction of 99.97% has been achieved in these zones since the beginning of the program.

Arkansas Boll Weevil Eradication Program is an Equal Opportunity Employer