
Spotlight on the IR-4 Commodity Liaison Committee

IR-4's Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC) was formed in 1991. The CLC provides guidance on how to best serve minor crop producers. Most importantly, the CLC works tirelessly to keep their Congressional representatives informed about the valuable work being done by IR-4 and the need for increased federal funding to continue that work. We are spotlighting individual members of the CLC on a regular basis to provide a better understanding of the work they do for minor crop agriculture.

Washington Hop Commission/U.S. Hop Industry Plant Protection Committee

The cone-shaped flowers of the hop plant are used in the brewing of beer. Hops have no equal for adding bitterness, aroma and flavor to all beers and are particularly noticeable in ales and microbrews. There are over 20 specific varieties of hop produced in the U.S., each having its own characteristic aroma and essential oil profile. Hops are grown commercially in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Washington is the top producer, growing 75% of the U.S. supply and 20% of the world's supply on 27,000 acres in the Yakima Valley. Nearly 50 million pounds of hops are produced annually in Washington with a farm-gate value of \$100 million. This is enough hops to brew 266 million barrels (31 gallon per barrel) of beer or 8.25 billion gallons.

Ann E. George serves as Administrator of the Washington Hop Commission and U.S. Hop Industry Plant Protection Committee (USHIPPC), which represents the U.S. hop industry on all issues pertaining to plant protection and pesticides. Ann has served as a member of the IR-4 Commodity Liaison Committee since its inception in 1991, and is a charter member of the Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration, which was established in 1995.

The grower-funded Washington Hop Commission responds to the needs of the hop industry through proactive programs that promote sustainable, profitable and efficient production of a quality product. The Commission partners with Washington State University, Oregon State University, the University of Idaho and USDA on research projects to improve hop production and plant protection. High priority issues include coordination of research and IR-4 programs, pesticide registration and reregistration, and international harmonization of pest control and pesticide residue standards. Hops are a perennial crop with a limited number of chemical tools registered for use. In order to improve resistance management, the hop industry's goal is to obtain registration of at least three effective compounds of different chemistry groups for the control of each of the crop's major pests and diseases.

The worst fear of Northwest hop growers was realized in 1997 when hop powdery mildew was first reported in commercial hop fields. A quarantine on the importation of hops to the Northwest has been in place for two decades to keep powdery mildew and other diseases out of the region. Powdery mildew has been a problem for many years in European hop producing areas, but European producers have developed cultural practices to manage the disease, and several fungicides are registered for the control of hop powdery mildew. Powdery mildew devastated several thousand acres of the Washington crop in 1997 and spread to Oregon and Idaho by 1998. Emergency exemption applications were submitted to allow the use of fungicides and several fungicide projects were submitted to IR-4. However, the necessary fungicide treatments caused a major increase in the cost of production as well as detrimental effects to the crop. Ann George and the U.S. Hop Industry Plant Protection Committee teamed with EPA's Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program to fund a survey of pesticide use and timing with respect to varieties, row spacing and other cultural practices. The survey, conducted for the 1998 and 1999 growing seasons, gave baseline information on pesticide use patterns as well as how integrated control strategies affect pesticide use. Training was provided for scouting hop powdery mildew in order to increase awareness and use of IPM practices, and ensure that pesticide applications were timely and precise. Educational materials were developed and distributed to hop producers and scouts. Quick action on the part of the Hop Commission, the USHIPPC, Washington State University, and state and federal agencies averted an agricultural disaster.

Current hop research efforts seek to develop cultural practices and weather-based prediction systems to improve powdery mildew control and decrease the costs associated with managing this disease. The second major plant protection challenge for hops is spider mite control. An aggressive entomology research program seeks to develop a cost-effective IPM program for the control of two-spotted spider mite on hops, and to insure that this program works in concert with control efforts for hop diseases and other pests.

The state of Washington, with 23 separate agricultural commodity commissions, remains very aware of the problems faced by minor crop agriculture. In October, 1997 "Agrichemical and Environmental News", a publication of the University of Washington, printed their list of the 10 most influential people on Washington agchem issues. Ann George (number 2) of the Washington Hop Commission was acknowledged for developing the most effective commodity-

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based pesticide registration effort in the country. Jerry Baron (number 7), Assistant to the Director of IR-4, was recognized for his behind-the-scenes influence on many of the IR-4 clearances that have become pesticide registrations in the state of Washington. Rick Melnicoe (number 8), former IR-4 Western Region Field Coordinator, was recognized for his influence in determining which IR-4 projects would be conducted in Washington each year.

In 1999, the Governor increased the budget of the Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration to \$1 million per year. Ann George is enthusiastic about what this

means for hops and other minor crops in the state. "This is a tremendous opportunity for assistance in developing more effective and environmentally sound IPM systems that would otherwise not have been feasible due to economic constraints."

According to Ann George, "The IR-4 Project and EPA Section 18 approvals are largely responsible for the fact that the U.S. hop industry exists today. Our foreign colleagues are quite envious of the support and assistance provided to minor crops by IR-4 in this country."

Article by Sandy Perry

Commodity Liaison Committee (CLC) News

The Commodity Liaison Committee met February 26th at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Crystal City, Virginia. Agenda items included the appointment/reappointment of CLC members and Chairman. The CLC voted to re-elect Rocky Lundy of the Mint Industry Research Council to serve another term as Chairman. The CLC met with the Project Management Committee following adjournment. Following the joint meeting both the CLC and PMC traveled to the Hill to attend a CLC Congressional Luncheon and Briefing. The luncheon/briefing took place in the Rayburn Building and was coordinated through the office of Congressman Doc Hastings (R. WA). There were approximately 50 people in attendance representing a good cross section of geographical areas. Neal Thompson and Bob Holm spoke on the IR-4 Program

and several CLC members gave personal testimonies on the importance of IR-4 to their commodity/minor crop. At the invitation of the CLC, Lucy Ament, a reporter from the Pesticide and Toxic Chemical News, attended both the CLC meeting and Congressional Luncheon. Her articles are included in both the February 26th and March 5th issues. Bob Holm (IR-4 Headquarters) and Rocky Lundy (CLC Chairman) are planning to follow up the House briefing with an IR-4 Briefing for the Senate sometime in late April or early May. All readers of this newsletter are encouraged to educate and solicit all members of Congress as to the importance of the IR-4 Program and Budget and its impact on American Agriculture.

Article by Rocky Lundy

2001 IR-4 Newsletter Schedule

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Call for Articles</u>	<u>Articles Due COB*</u>
32:2	1 JUN 01 (Friday)	8 JUN 01 (Friday)
32:3	5 SEP 01 (Wednesday)	12 SEP 01 (Wednesday)
32:4	3 DEC 01 (Monday)	7 DEC 01 (Friday)

* COB = Close of business day on East Coast (1630)