
Blueberry Pest Management Strategic Plan Meeting



The pest management strategic plan (PMSP) meeting for the Michigan blueberry industry was conducted in Kalamazoo, Michigan on June 6-7, 2001. Since Michigan is ranked first nationally in cultivated blueberry production (40% of the U.S. total), this meeting was very important to develop such a plan. Wilfred F. Burr, Office of Pest Management Policy, USDA, presided over the meeting. About 20 people participated. They were Michigan blueberry growers, Michigan State University researchers, extension specialists, and representatives from IR-4, the Environmental Protection Agency (Region V), Michigan Department of Agriculture, food industry, Michigan Farm Bureau and consultants.

The initial process was to identify efficacy of control measures for blueberry pests in Michigan. Since real world information is needed, the participation of the growers was very helpful to improve efficacy ratings. Insect control is a primary issue followed by diseases, nematodes and weeds. Based on evaluations of the currently available pest control measures, top priorities of Michigan blueberry production were discussed. There are many priority issues on research, regulatory and education aspects. However, the following are the most pressing issues for the Michigan blueberry growers.

Ever since Japanese beetles infested Michigan blueberries five years ago, this pest has threatened the Michigan blueberry industry. Thus, the first priority concern is the need for effective control measures for the adult beetles at harvest time. Growers expressed a need for shortened PHI on some products. The second priority concern is the loss of Benlate® that controls Phomopsis, Botrytis and mummy berry. They need replacement fungicides urgently. There is a zero tolerance for the presence of beetles or beetle parts, or mummy berries in the harvested product. The product contamination issue is very serious. Effective post harvest sorting to remove MOB (materials other than blueberries) is a key. IR-4 is using the information gathered at this meeting to help identify solutions to blueberry growers' most critical pest management needs.

Article by Satoru Miyazaki/Editor

Welcome!

Two new individuals have brought their field and administrative expertise to the ranks of IR-4.

North Central Region

Dr. Gary Lemme, Associate Director of the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station, is the new IR-4 North Central Region Administrative Adviser. He replaces Dr. Eldon Ortman who recently retired from Purdue University after a long and distinguished academic and administrative career. Dr. Lemme began his professional career as Assistant Professor of Crop and Soil Science at Michigan State University, moved on to become Professor of Plant Science at South Dakota State University, assistant dean of academic affairs in the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawaii, and from 1992-1999, head of the West Central Research and Outreach Center at the University of Minnesota. IR-4 is pleased to welcome Dr. Lemme and the experience he brings to the administrative adviser role.

Western Region

Rebecca (Becky) Sisco has been hired as the new Western Region Field Coordinator. Rebecca comes to IR-4 after 16 years with BASF (formerly Cyanamid). During her career there, she served as Coordinator for field and laboratory research programs, study director for regulatory studies including RAC (raw agricultural commodities), soil ROD (rate of dissipation) and worker exposure, group leader for field residue studies, Senior Product Development Manager and, most recently, Senior Global Regulatory Manager - coordinating global regulatory activities for pyrethroid insecticides. Rebecca's background in field residue work, pesticide development and registration makes her a valuable asset to the IR-4 program and will serve her well as Field Coordinator.

Article by Sandy Perry