



Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association TURNROW TALK

Volume 4, Winter Issue

December, 2005

President's Column

The 2005 year has been one to remember, or for many, to hopefully forget. The hurricanes along with devastating droughts and high fuel/fertilizer prices are taking its toll on all ag business professionals. Regardless of all of the setbacks our membership has faced alongside our clients, LACA has had a productive year.

In the spring, several LACA members and the Executive Board met with the LSU Agronomy Department, soil science researchers, LSU administrators, and NRCS representatives regarding soil testing at the state laboratory. In the past seasons, compliance with NRCS CRP programs required that the testing method for nutrients such as phosphorous be the same method used by that state's land grant university. As LSU has been using the strong bray method for phosphorous, and most other private labs and many other universities have switched to the Mehlich III method, there were some problems for growers trying to comply with NRCS rules and regulations if their samples were sent to another soil testing laboratory. Discussions were held and all were in agreement that switching to Mehlich III testing would not only solve this problem, but would make the LSU laboratory more efficient as Mehlich III can be used to test for most all nutrients using a single, universal extractant. The soil scientists at the Ag Center came up with a temporary "calibration" formula to convert recommendations made in the past by the strong bray method. Further research is being conducted by the soil scientists to calibrate the new extraction method to the Ag Center's recommendations. The meetings were very productive and I believe all parties involved benefited greatly from the discussions. LACA members present also were treated to a tour of the soil laboratory.

In the fall, the LACA Executive Board and the LATMC Program Planning Committee met in St. Francisville for our 3rd annual researcher retreat. It was well attended, despite the fact that many of the attendees had not yet sorted through the damage from hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We started by having a small mixer with the LACA consultants and researchers from LSU and the USDA. The following morning, the group broke off into separate discussions by crop to examine research topics and priorities. We all

Calendar of Events

NCC's Beltwide Cotton Conference—Jan. 3-6, 2006
Marriott Rivercenter Hotel, San Antonio, TX

NAICC Annual Meeting—Jan. 18-21, 2006
Marriott Starr Pass Resort, Tucson, AZ

SWSS Annual Meeting—Jan. 23-26, 2006
Omni Hotel, San Antonio, TX

Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management
Conference—February 15-17, 2006
Best Western Conference Center, Alexandria, LA

convened together to discuss soybeans and grain crops, as well as to recap what we discussed at the individual tables.

This past month, several LACA members met with Dr. Ray Schneider for a first hand viewing of asian soybean rust in his test plots at the Ben Hur Research Farm in Baton Rouge. We got to see as much soybean rust up close and personal as I ever want to see. Later that afternoon, Harold Lambert led a group of consultants on the certification exam committee to Baton Rouge to meet at the Louisiana Department of Ag and Forestry regarding updating our consultant certification exams. There was much discussion and reviewing of the exams to update them to current issues and topics. Harold and his committee are helping draft new questions for the exams.

I'd like to thank all of the Executive Board and the committees for their outstanding service this year. It is this kind of service that makes our membership so well respected by our clients and the industry. Our organization would not be as strong without active participation from you. If you are not currently on a committee, but would like to serve, please feel free to contact any of the Executive Board members to get on board. *By Blaine Viator, Ph.D.*

LACA Certification Exam Committee at Work

The Certification Exam Committee met on November 9, 2005 with representatives of the Louisiana Dept of Agriculture & Forestry, Bobby Simoneaux and Marty Pousson, and members of the LSU AgCenter, Roger Leonard, Boyd Padgett, Sonny Viator, and Mary Grodner. The purpose of the meeting was to review the "Application for Testing" for agricultural consultants.

The CEC made several suggestions regarding the area relating to education and experience. The possible addition of one or more categories/sub-categories relating to precision ag/site specific management, and GPS/GIS technologies, as well as the pros and cons to changing certification categories to be crop specific were discussed. Under current La. Pesticide Law, "the commissioner by rule may establish such other categories as he deems necessary."

Continuing discussion focused on the four primary exams that ag consultant applicants most frequently take: ag entomology, ag plant pathology, ag weed control, and ag field soil management.

Remaining discussion centered around the review of the actual exams (four categories) with everyone making corrections or deletions of specific exam questions. These were turned back into Dr. Grodner's associates for editing. It was agreed that committee members will submit new exam questions for consideration no later than December 20, 2005. As a reminder, CEC members should email these to Dr. Mary Grodner at mgrodner@agcenter.lsu.edu.

LACA New Members in 2005

A new Sustaining Member joining LACA in 2005 is Beltwide Cotton Genetics.

Accepted as new Affiliate Members are John Bordlee, Jeff Flynn, Bob Hutchinson, David Lanclos, Toby McCown, Connie Ware, Thomas Terral, and Maurice Wolcott.

Managing the Red-Banded, Shouldered, Striped, or Cajun-Stink Bug in Louisiana in 2005

By Matt Baur, Ph.D.

Jeremy Greene (Univ. of S. Carolina) has submitted red banded stink bug' as the official common name for *Piezodorus guildinii*, the stink bug that has caused many problems these past several years in Louisiana soybeans.

In February of 2005, overwintering red banded stink bug adults moved out of wood lots and onto spring hosts plants (primarily black medic) along field margins, right-of-ways, and ditches. These spring populations completed up to two generations before moving to soybean in June. Two distinct peaks of adults were seen invading soybean fields in June and July. However, by August and September, overlapping generations (eggs, nymphs, and adults) were observed in latter maturing soybean fields. At least 6 generations completed development in Louisiana in 2005.

Not surprisingly, the red banded stink bug has spread throughout most of the soybean growing area in Louisiana. This stink bug also continues to plague soybean producers in Texas.

In the 2005 soybean insect control guide for Louisiana (available at www.lsuagcenter.com/en/crops_livestock/crops/soybeans/Insects) the threshold listed for red banded stink bug was set at 24 insects per 100 sweeps (for all other species of brown or green stink bug the threshold is set at 36 insects per 100 sweeps). The threshold was lowered to trigger an early application of insecticide against immigrating adults to limit reproduction. In fields with early maturing soybeans, applications were made in June (before soybeans had set pods), July, and August. In the first two applications (usually 0.5-1.0 lb of acephate), most reports indicated excellent control extending out for 30-40 d (roughly the generational cycle of this stink bug). The lower threshold was an effective change.

The most effective chemical controls against red banded stink bug in our studies included acephate, Baythroid®, and Furadan®. Acephate (3/4 lb/acre; \$4.50/acre) killed 81% of the red banded stink bug for up to 8 days after treatment (DAT). Furadan® (8 oz/acre; \$5.25/acre) killed 79% for up to 8 DAT. Furadan® is highly toxic to mammals and must be handled carefully. The combination of acephate (1/3 lb/acre) and Baythroid® (2 oz/acre) gave 95% control for up to 8 DAT for a price of \$7.10/acre.

Several chemicals offer possible control options for the future. Syngenta's thiomethoxam (a neonicotinoid insecticide known as Cruiser® or Centric® may have a label in soybeans as early as 2007. The product Engeo® labeled for use in soybeans in Brazil is a combination of thiomethoxam and lambda-cyhalothrin (Karate® and when tested in Louisiana against red banded stink bug provided 99% control.

More information about this pest is also available in the May issue of the Soybean and Feedgrain Review produced by David Y. Lanclos or at the LSU Ag Center web site: www.lsuagcenter.com/en/crops_livestock/crops/soybeans/red_shouldered_stink_bug

Nominations for LCES County Agent Award

If you are a Voting member of LACA, included in your preliminary program packet is a nomination form for Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service County Agent Award. Please take a moment to nominate one or more county agents who are deserving of being recognized as those who work diligently with independent consultants and other agricultural professionals for the good of producers in their parishes. The recipient(s) of the award will be honored at the '06 Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference.

Asian Soybean Rust: Past and Present

By Boyd Padgett, Ph.D.

Louisiana soybean producers dodged the soybean rust bullet in 2005; however, the recent Louisiana find in November reminds us the potential still exists for 2006. It will be important to remain alert to this threat in 2006. The Boy Scout motto "Be prepared" is fitting for managing this disease. Before we leave our 2005 soybean season for deer stands, duck holes, holiday parties, or just a little rest and relaxation, I think it is wise to keep the following in mind for Asian soybean rust (ASR) management in 2006.

The first step toward effective ASR management is early detection. This will be accomplished, in part, by using sentinel plots. Plots will be planted earlier than commercial fields at strategic locations throughout the state. Plots will be monitored frequently (daily to weekly) for signs or symptoms of ASR. Spore traps will also be utilized to complement sentinel plots.

When scouting for ASR remember the following. Soybean at growth stages R1 to R6 are thought to be most susceptible. The disease begins in the **LOWER CANOPY**; therefore, plants will need to be examined from the ground up. Symptoms begin as small brown specks or spots on the upper surface of the leaflet (usually no yellow halo). The lesions will enlarge and pustules will form on the **UNDERSIDE** of the leaflet during favorable conditions. Examination with a hand lens (at least 20X) may reveal sand colored (tan) spores. Symptoms are most prevalent on the leaflets, but can be present on petioles and pods. As the disease develops defoliation begins in the lower canopy and progresses upward. This disease can be confused with many diseases, being most like bacterial pustule.

Conditions favoring ASR development are temperatures between 68-77 (°F) and leaf wetness periods of 6-10 hours. Realize these conditions are most likely to occur during the evening, night, and early morning.

If ASR is detected in soybean during the late vegetative to R6 growth stage, a fungicide application may be in order. There are numerous fungicides available, but triazoles or triazoles/strobilurin pre-mixes are usually more effective than the other chemistries (strobilurins or chlorothalonil). Triazole fungicides have curative and preventative activity, but strobilurin and chlorothalonil chemistries only provide preventative activity. There are differences in efficacy against ASR within the triazoles; however, more research is needed in the U.S. Based on research in other countries, Folicur®, Laredo®, and Domark® probably offer the best activity of currently-labeled products. Hopefully, the pressure from ASR in the U.S. will not be as intense as

blight. This may also be the case for our pod and stem diseases. Therefore until more research is generated in the U.S., the triazoles should only be used for managing rust. Labels for currently labeled products can be found on the following websites:

http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/cb/csb_page/updates/soybean_rust.htm

http://www.stopsoybeanrust.com/mc_Control.asp

An efficacious fungicide application involves much more than a good fungicide. A good fungicide applied in the wrong manner can produce less than desirable results. When applying a fungicide the applicator should consider the following if rust is reported in the area (state).

Application timing is crucial for effective control.

An application to soybean when epidemics are not at detectable levels is better than an application when epidemics are easy to detect as experienced in Brazil. An important point to remember is that **In general** the triazole class doesn't have appreciable activity against cercospora diseases and aerial blight. The more time an epidemic is allowed to develop the less effective the fungicide application will be.

Coverage is equally important. Configure spray equipment to deliver the product as low in the plant canopy as possible. **Avoid nozzles and pressure that produce large droplets.** Two important factors affecting coverage are droplet size and carrier volume. Medium to medium-small droplets (200-300 microns) and volumes of 15 to 20 gallons per acre will help ensure good coverage. Other factors affecting coverage are plant architecture (varies with variety) and environmental conditions at application (relative humidity and temperature). Dense canopies (as you would expect) are harder to penetrate. Low relative humidity (< 50%) and high temperatures (> 90F) will increase evaporation potential and negatively affect coverage.

Hopefully the 2006 season will be 'rust free', but we need to remain vigilant in our fight against this disease.

Appreciation for Our Sustaining Members

I'm only in my second year as LACA Executive Director, but I am increasingly overwhelmed at the willingness of our sustaining members to support our independence and their generosity in sponsoring educational opportunities for current and future consultants/re-

**NAICC Members Formally Named "Experts"
for Crop Insurance Claims**

by Allison Jones, NAICC Executive President

The Alliance's certified crop consultants are officially listed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Risk Management Agency as agricultural experts! This title applies to recommendations made for Good Farming Practices (GFP) in the documentation of growers' Federal Crop Insurance Claims. USDA-RMA also listed NAICC members as agricultural experts in claims specifically related to Asian soybean rust.

The listing, released in June, was designed to help ensure growers know who to use as experts in making Federal Crop Insurance Claims, as must show they've worked with approved professionals when filing these crop loss claims. (Those who haven't worked with a qualified adviser may be disqualified from the claims process. As well, producers who have familial or existing business relationships with current experts are required to obtain an opinion from at least one other approved professional.)

While NAICC members have served as GFP experts in the insurance claim process in the past, NAICC president Tim Case said he expects the recent announcement to further enhance the role independent crop consultants play in helping growers.

"With this formal listing, I anticipate more producers will turn to us for aid in implementing and documenting Good Farming Practices," said Case. He added that being listed by the USDA-RMA as such experts makes sense given the level of training Alliance members have, along with the "in-depth working relationships" they form with their clients.

With USDA-RMA's recent announcement of agricultural experts for Federal Crop Insurance Claims, the Agency released a bulletin guiding insurance providers in making GFP decisions and seeking RMA review of such decisions. This bulletin, available at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/>, also sets forth due process by which producers may appeal adverse GFP decisions made by insurance providers.

For information on membership in the NAICC or registration for the 2006 NAICC Annual Meeting in Tucson, AZ, go to www.naicc.org or contact Allison Jones at JonesNAICC@aol.com

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Member of**



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Appreciation...cont'd from page 3...

searchers. These companies see the absolute need for crop professionals such as the LACA is made up of, and seek, without being sought after, to help in what ever way they can to further the awareness of technology which can help us to serve our clients better.

I believe I speak on behalf of the Executive Board and also want to relay my personal "THANKS" to each one of you who have gone above and beyond in helping to sponsor the Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference over the years. Several of you have indicated that you would like to continue a particular sponsorship from year to year and to me this shows genuine loyalty to the association. A lot of you have not only secured funding for the annual meeting, but have also served on committees and helped to shape the program agenda. For all of your support, we are wholeheartedly grateful and look forward to this cooperative relationship for many years to come. A BIG "THANK YOU" from all of us and may you and your families be blessed abundantly this Christmas and throughout the coming New Year!!! *Denise Wright, LACA Executive Director*

**Wishing you a joyous
holiday season...
Merry Christmas and Happy New
Year 2006!!!**

LSU AgCenter Soil Testing and Plant Analysis Laboratory Changes Soil Test Methods
By Jim Wang, Ph.D. and Freddie Martin, Ph.D.

A change in soil test methods for phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) has been implemented at the LSU AgCenter Soil Testing and Plant Analysis Laboratory (STPAL). On September 1, 2005, the STPAL switched to the Mehlich III soil test for P, K and other nutrient elements including calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), sulfur (S), copper (Cu), and zinc (Zn).

Before the change, the STPAL used the Strong Bray test for soil available P and the ammonium acetate soil test for exchangeable K and other base cations. Several other methods were used for S and micronutrients. While these methods had served the purpose of indexing soil available nutrients; using various laboratory procedures for different nutrients made the analytical process inefficient and costly. There has been nation-wide interest in standardizing soil testing to promote broader regional coordination to standardize soil-testing interpretations and recommendations based on soil types and crops for nutrient management. This standardization has been primarily based on improving soil test efficiency for multi-element extraction. Nutrient management initiatives sponsored by NRCS have also facilitated such standardization. Of various soil test methods, Mehlich III, originally developed for North Carolina coastal plain soils, has received particular attention for its use not only in extracting P but also extracting K, Ca, Mg and possibly micronutrients. Because the Mehlich III extraction replaces several other extraction procedures, a laboratory employing this method can control cost and increase efficiency.

The LSU AgCenter STPAL and scientists had been evaluating the feasibility of switching its tests to Mehlich III by correlating the lab-used tests with the Mehlich III. They found that while K, Ca, Mg and other elements determined by different methods correlated well with Mehlich III, the P by Strong Bray and Mehlich III did not exhibit acceptable correlations for direct conversation. Considering that almost all calibration data gathered by LSU AgCenter agronomists over the last four decades had been based on Strong Bray test, the direct conversation would be preferred so that the current database of recommendations could be used. Further study by the AgCenter scientists showed that soil Ca strongly influences the correlation between P values determined by the two methods. For this reason, the lab proposed the use of a multi-variate regression equation to account for Ca impact on the relationship between soil test P determinations by Strong Bray and Mehlich III while other nutrient elements were based on direct conversions. The proposal was approved for adoption by the STPAL Advisory Group that consists of LSU AgCenter faculty, specialists, agents as well as producers and representatives of Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association and NRCS.

The change is expected to positively impact the service of the STPAL to Louisiana producers and the general public. It is expected that implementation of the new soil test method will further improve the Lab's analytical efficiency and help control costs due to reduced steps in sample extractions. The change will also promote broader regional coordination across state lines on standardization of soil-testing interpretations and recommendations based on soil types and crops for nutrient management.