



VALLEY VEGETABLE NOTES

August 15, 1995

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COMING EVENTS:

Starr County Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training

The Texas Agricultural Extension Service is offering a recertification training session worth 6 C.E.U.'s for those needing training hours to maintain their pesticide applicators license. The session will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Rio Grande City, near the County Courthouse on Wednesday August 23, 1995 with registration beginning at 7:30 A.M. In conjunction with the recertification session a one hour pesticide safety training session will be held from 8:00-9:00 A.M. to certify employees for pesticide handling. Both Several excellent speakers are scheduled for the recertification session which will run until 3:00 P.M. with a break for lunch. If you would like further information regarding this training, contact the Starr County Extension office at (210) 487-2306.

Texas Produce Convention & Trade Show

The Texas Produce Convention and Trade Show will be held September 20-23, 1995 at the Holiday Inn Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas. This year's meeting will include sessions on Vegetables, Fruit, Citrus, Apples and Blueberries with a keynote address from Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner Rick Perry. Registration information is available by contacting Pam Plank at (210) 584-

1772 or writing to: Texas Produce Convention, 901 Business Park Drive, Suite 400, Mission, Texas 78572.

New herbicide labels Lynn Brandenberger

In the last few weeks we have received notification of changes on three different herbicides that are labeled for use on vegetable crops.

The first material, Dual 8E, has been given a Section 18 emergency exemption for use as a preemergent herbicide in spinach production. Dual 8E may be applied as one preemergent application for the control of weeds in spinach in the following Texas counties; Andrews, Atascosa, Bailey, Cameron, Castro, Dawson, Dimmitt, Frio, Gaines, Garza, Hale, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kinney, Lamb, La Salle, Lubbock, Lynn, Maverick, Medina, Parmer, Starr, Terry, Uvalde, Webb, Willacy, Yoakum, Zapata and Zavala. For more information regarding Dual 8E use on spinach, contact Ciba-Plant Protection at 1-800-334-9481.

A supplemental label was issued for "Prism" postemergent herbicide for the control of grassy weeds. The supplemental label adds sugar beets, dry bulb onions, garlic and dry bulb shallots to the existing label. For additional information on this material contact Valent USA Corporation at 1-800-682-5368.

The IR-4 program has been able to obtain supplemental labeling for "Poast" on carrot, endive, asparagus, mint and cranberry. This postemergent herbicide can be used for the control of grassy weeds on these additional crops due to the efforts of the IR-4 program. Labeling information is available by contacting BASF Corporation at 1-800-874-0081.

Vegetable Pest Management / Cucurbit Grower Survey Juan Anciso

Questionnaires mailed to cucurbit growers in two Texas counties (Cameron and Hidalgo) were used to assess perceptions and current practices regarding integrated pest management (IPM), including sampling for pests of cucurbit crops. Given a potential infestation, the average time growers were willing to spend inspecting a field was about 35 minutes which was considered ample for a sound pest control decision. The sweetpotato whitefly was considered to be the most serious cucurbit pest and the most difficult to sample and control.

First, given the nature of yields and production costs, quantifying the economic advantage of IPM is difficult for growers, at least in the short run. The majority of the growers agreed and practiced certain IPM tactics but less than half were interested in participating in an IPM program which was probably due to the little economic advantage that would be realized by participating in such a program (possible savings by fewer pesticide applications). The perception of risk was hypothesized to have a negative influence on IPM adoption. In other words, as the cost per acre increased in terms of pest control (\$85 per acre in cucumber/pickles, \$108 per acre in watermelons, and \$221 per acre in muskmelons) the less likely growers were willing to participate in an IPM program (55%, 40%, and 36%), respectively.

Second, unlike traditional agrichemical methods which provide the grower with precise recommendations, IPM is often in conflict with a grower's intuition about pest control. For example, a recommendation to do nothing is inconsistent with the grower's traditional notion of pest control because the grower's quality needs such as the aesthetic or cosmetic criteria placed on these cucurbit crops by consumers and buyers sometimes is a dominating factor depending on the market.

Third, IPM is very complex, information-intensive technology that requires more time and effort in order to be successful. In this regard, the adoption of an IPM program will tend to take place earlier on larger farms (100 acres or more in a single cucurbit crop) than on smaller farms since 44% of the respondents were willing to participate in an IPM program and most of these represented large farms. This is probably due to the fact larger farms have more manpower and resources to make the time and effort to be successful in utilizing complex, information-intensive technology. Although sound research based information may exist it may not be accepted since the primary reason for not currently using economic thresholds was that most growers distrusted current thresholds.

Insect Notes Stormy Sparks

Sweetpotato Whitefly:

The recent heavy rains across the Lower Rio Grande Valley should help reduce the movement of SPWF adults. Rain normally causes heavy mortality of adults but does little to the immatures. The overall movement should be dramatically reduced for the next week or so. However, after that we will have to wait and see. Normally by this time of year cotton has been defoliated which removes the source of the migrating adults. This year we have a lot of cotton which has not been defoliated because of lack of yield, and much of it has not been shredded for a variety of reasons. This standing cotton could serve as a continuing source of adult migrations after the rains stop.

Beet Armyworm:

TDA recently declared a crisis exemption (Section 18) for the use of Confirm on peppers for control of beet armyworm. This product provided good control of this pest in efficacy studies conducted on cotton in the LRGV this summer. However, there have been concerns expressed over its performance in the San Angelo area recently. A number of factors play a likely role in these recent concerns. First of all, Confirm is not a quick knockdown type material. If you evaluate results based on complete mortality at 3 days after application, you will not be happy. The product looks good after 4 or 5 days. The earlier

counts will also look good if evaluated for symptomatic (sick) larvae, it just takes time for them to die. Another key is good spray coverage. The San Angelo area has been wet, and most sprays have been applied by air. Although we had reports of good control with aerial applications on cotton this summer, it is generally recommended to apply this product with a ground rig when possible. This will likely be even more important in vegetables (TDA is also preparing a request for leafy vegetables and cole crops).

A question I have had for some time relating to beet armyworm is 'what will happen when we get some rain?'. Dry weather is known to be a key element in build up of BAW populations. However, based on what has happened in the San Angelo area, it appears that a return to wet conditions does not necessarily mean that BAW populations will decline to the degree we would hope. The combination of wet weather a cooler temperatures should help as we progress into the fall.

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