

FOR INFORMATION

DA-2007-35

August 31, 2007

SUBJECT: Detections of Panicle Rice Mite, *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, in Rayne, Acadia Parish, Louisiana

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

On August 21, 2007, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of panicle rice mite (PRM), *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, at a rice research facility in Rayne, Acadia Parish, Louisiana. This facility, which is used as an experimental research station, is operated by an educational institution to research varietal improvement and agronomic management practices. PRM detections occurred within greenhouses and rice fields at this research facility.

This outbreak is considered to be transient, actionable, and under surveillance. APHIS has notified the Louisiana Department of Agriculture of this confirmed detection and is currently conducting surveys to delimit this infestation on the grounds of the facility, where less than fifty acres of rice was affected. In addition, APHIS' PRM technical working group, which was established in response to the PRM detection in Texas, is considering survey and control strategies in response to the detection of PRM in Louisiana.

APHIS has issued Emergency Action Notifications to stop movement of all rice seed, rice plants, and plant parts and farm equipment from the affected greenhouses and fields. A trace-back and trace-forward investigation is underway to determine the means of this pest's introduction at this research facility. Managers of the research facility are being fully cooperative in this investigation.

PRM is considered a serious rice pest in China, Philippines, and Taiwan, where it has caused substantial crop losses. Yield losses can range from 30 to 90 percent. PRM was detected at a commercial rice research facility in Texas in July 2007, and at an associated research facility in Puerto Rico on August 1, 2007. There are two main reported hosts of RPM, rice, *Oryza sativa*, and the weedy red rice, *Oryza latifolia*.

For additional details on the Federal response to the detection of PRM, you may contact Phil Mason, Regional Program Manager, at (970) 494-7565 or Valerie DeFeo, Staff Officer, at (301) 734- 4387.

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