

FOR INFORMATION
DA-2007-55
November 2, 2007

SUBJECT: Panicle Rice Mite, *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, Eradication Strategy

TO: STATE AND TERRITORY AGRICULTURAL REGULATORY OFFICIALS

Since the first confirmation of panicle rice mite (PRM), *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, in Alvin, Texas, (refer to SPRO letter DA-2007-25, July 24, 2007) USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has continued to work with State regulatory officials and stakeholders to examine the best course of action to take regarding this pest.

APHIS has determined that the best course of action is to pursue eradication within PRM infested greenhouses as we continue to assess the pest distribution in the adjacent areas. This course of action is based on pest mitigation and treatment measures recommended by the PRM Technical Working Group (TWG). Greenhouses can be treated using one of three recommended options: a one month host free period, steam treatment, or methyl bromide treatment. Monitoring of the greenhouses will take place to validate the efficacy of treatment. The TWG will continue to examine other treatment options based on available treatment technology and mite biology.

APHIS has determined that rice fields, whether for commercial production or research, shall be monitored until the end of the 2007 harvest season. APHIS also encourages that the cultural practices recommended by the TWG be implemented in fields that are confirmed positive for PRM. Positive fields will be under the issuance of an Emergency Action Notification until a final determination is made during surveying efforts next year.

Beginning in Spring of 2008, APHIS and State cooperators plan to implement a national PRM survey in rice producing States, as well as in rice research facilities. APHIS anticipates that the 2008 survey will verify PRM mortality resulting from climatic conditions during the winter months. Based on the survey results, APHIS and cooperators will then make a final determination on the type of program to be implemented in 2008 for PRM. Until the final decision is made about the 2008 program, the TWG recommendations will be implemented for both the remaining 2007 harvest season and 2008 Spring survey.

For additional details on the PRM eradication strategy, you may contact Valerie DeFeo, National PRM Coordinator, at (301) 734-4387.

/s/ John Payne /for

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