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E X T E N S I O N

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SOUTH FLORIDA VEGETABLE PEST AND DISEASE HOTLINE

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Following a cool Christmas weekend, South Florida has enjoyed unseasonably warm temperatures over the past two weeks with many areas seeing several days with temperatures in the low 80's. Daytime highs have been mainly in the 70s and low 80s. Cooler temperatures at night ranged in the 40s 50s and 60s.

Growers and scout in the Glades report two days of frost just after Christmas that did some severe damage to bean plantings planted on outside land (land more than five miles away from the lake). Some lighter damage seen as close to the lake as the Belle Glade municipal area.

Rainfall totals for the period were minimal with most areas receiving a 1/4 inch or less for the period. Although the period has been dry, dense fog and heavy night dews have been present on a number of mornings over the past few weeks, causing growers to increase fungicide applications.

FAWN Weather Summary*

Date	Air Temp (°F)		Rainfall (Inches)	Hours Below Certain Temperature (hours)							
	Min	Max		40°F	45°F	50°F	55°F	60°F	65°F	70°F	75°F
Balm											
12/20/05– 1/6/06	34.7	79.7	0.24	22.4	3.4	1.6	46.1	48.1	8.7	44.5	84.0
Ft Lauderdale											
12/20/05– 1/6/06	46.9	83.4	0.02	0.0	0.0	7.6	15.0	0.2	15.0	11.3	34.9
Fort Pierce											
12/20/05– 1/6/06	38.0	82.0	0.28	2.0	12.1	4.2	42.2	26.7	9.7	22.7	66.2
Homestead											
12/20/05– 1/6/06	41.1	82.3	0.00	0.0	6.2	1.1	4.7	20.9	14.5	6.2	40.3
Immokalee											
12/20/05– 1/6/06	38.0	82.2	0.24	13.3	1.1	13.1	29.1	41.5	10.0	25.0	62.8

Freeze Watch in Effect for Interior Sections of South Florida – see text below.

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Favorable weather conditions allowed planting and harvesting to progress with most growers taking a break to welcome in the New Year. Yields and pack out in planting affected by Wilma are very light with many growers reporting yields of 1/3 to half the norm. Post-Wilma planted fields are looking very good but are still weeks from harvest.

Produce coming to market includes snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, endive, escarole, lettuce, peppers, radishes, squash, specialty crops, strawberries and tomatoes.

The short-term forecast from the National Weather Service in Miami indicates that cold air advection behind the cold front which moved across the state this morning will hold temps in the 60s for daytime highs today and may even struggle to hit 60 across Glades and Hendry Counties.

The center of high pressure will be located across the western Gulf of Mexico tonight and will move east to be situated over the Florida peninsula Saturday night and Sunday morning. The center of the high virtually overhead will allow for optimal radiational cooling Saturday night into Sunday morning with clear skies, calm winds and very dry air in place. Models continue to show near freezing temps across interior areas specifically across Glades, Hendry, Northern Collier County and into Western Palm Beach. Since this guidance has not wavered much over the past few days, confidence is high that temperatures will plummet Sunday morning to the low to mid 30s over interior areas.

The big question is whether temperatures will hit freezing. One negative against a freeze is that the airmass following this cold front is not of Arctic origin, so this will definitely be a borderline event. If a freeze does occur, it will only hit 30-32 degrees for an hour or so...but this is enough to hurt sensitive vegetable crops. For additional information, visit the National Weather Service in Miami website at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mfl/newpage/index.html>

Insects

Leafminers

Growers and scouts in Southwest Florida report that they have been inundated with leafminers especially in fields adjacent to beans being harvested. Pressure is high and most tomato growers have been spraying actively against the pest.

Respondents from the Manatee/Ruskin area indicate that leafminer pressure remains steady across the area.

Reports from the Homestead area report leafminer problems in a range of crops including beans, eggplant and tomato.

East Coast growers also report leaf miner activity on beans, lettuce, tomatoes and eggplant. Pressure is relatively light to moderate in a few locations.

With the on-set of cooler weather across the peninsula, growers across the state can expect to see an increase in leafminer pressure. Leafminers attack many row crops but are particularly damaging on celery, crucifers, cucurbits, okra, potato and tomato. Florida growers report that leafminers are the second most important tomato insect pest especially in south and central production areas. Leafminers are present for much of the year in Florida. In south Florida, populations peak between October and March while in central Florida they are a problem in both spring and fall.

An integrated pest management program that stresses conservation of natural enemies is the primary tactic for the successful control of leafminer. Chemical control is difficult due to the feeding habits inside the

leaf of the host plant. Insecticides that specifically target the leafminer are recommended as use of broad-spectrum materials may decimate beneficial insects including those that attack leafminer. This often results in a larger leafminer problem if the pesticide reduces field densities of leafminer parasites.

Fortunately, populations are usually prevented from reaching truly damaging levels by a number of parasites that attack leafminers. Several parasites for this insect have been recorded in Florida, but parasitic wasps such as *Opius*, *Diglyphus* are most common. Wasp larvae develop on or in the leafminer larva or pupa. The host ceases to feed and the parasitoid egg or larva is visible through the leaf epidermis using a hand lens against strong light. In scouting fields, growers should be careful to note the number of parasitized mines before deciding to apply insecticides.

Due to its feeding habit, this pest is resistant to many insecticides. Cyromazine (Trigard) alternated with abamectin (Agrimek) are effective against leafminer in tomato. Both of these products have limited crop registrations and must not be used on unregistered crops. Spinosad (Spintor) has also given good results and is labeled on a wide range of crops. Some other materials that may be used to conserve beneficials include azadirachtin (Neemix) and insecticidal oils. Both products are approved for use by organic growers.

Field sanitation is an important control tactic that is overlooked. When crops are not present in the fields, leafminers can survive on a variety of broad-leaf weeds. These plants serve as reservoirs for pest.

Whiteflies

Growers and scouts around Homestead indicate that whiteflies are widely present in beans, eggplant, squash and tomato.

Reports from Ruskin indicate that whitefly numbers continue to increase increasing with more tomato yellow leaf curl virus showing up. There is a major concern among vegetable specialists that without a freeze, crops will be nursed along all winter with resultant higher whitefly and virus going into spring. Whiteflies are also building up in squash.

Respondents in Palm Beach indicate that whiteflies are starting to build up in eggplant and tomato in some places and are also present in squash. Reports from the Glades indicate very low whitefly numbers mainly in beans at present.

Around Immokalee, reports indicate whitefly numbers remain below normal levels in most locations although reports indicate that they are beginning to increase in places and scouts report finding higher numbers of adults and nymphs in older fields. Some growers and scouts report seeing some instances of infield transmission even though whitefly numbers have been very low. Dr Jane Polston notes that sometimes, low numbers are worse than high numbers due to whiteflies social behavior. Others have indicated that the virus seems to be coming out of the woods as they are finding the very end plant of each row infected.

As fall crops come off, it is important to practice good sanitation to avoid movement of whiteflies into later plantings and a buildup in populations that carry over to the spring crop.

Growers are urged to continue to practice the following recommendations

Nicotinoid Resistance Management Recommendations

- Reduce overall whitefly populations by strictly adhering to cultural practices including:
 - Plant whitefly-free transplants

- Delay planting new crops as long as possible and destroy old crops immediately after harvest to create or lengthen a tomato free period
 - Do not plant new crops near or adjacent to infested weeds or crops, abandoned fields awaiting destruction or areas with volunteer plants
 - Use UV-reflective (aluminum) plastic soil mulch
 - Control weeds on field edges if scouting indicates whiteflies are present and natural enemies are absent
 - Manage weeds within crops to minimize interference with spraying;
 - Avoid u-pick or pin-hooking operations unless effective control measures are continued
- Do not use a nicotinoid like Admire on transplants or apply only once 7-10 days before transplanting; use other products in other chemical classes, including Fulfill, before this time;
 - Apply a nicotinoid like Admire (16 ozs/acre) or Platinum (8ozs/acre) at transplanting and use products of other chemical classes (such as the insect growth regulators Courier® or Knack® as the control with the nicotinoid diminishes. Note: Courier and Applaud are the same active: buprofezin. Courier is labeled for whitefly on tomato and snap bean. The mode of action is chitinase inhibitor. Dimilin and Knack are juvenile hormone mimics labeled for whitefly control on fruiting vegetables.
 - Never follow an application (soil or foliar) of a nicotinoid with another application (soil or foliar) of the same or different nicotinoid on the same crop or in the same field within the same season (i.e. do not treat a double crop with a nicotinoid if the main crop had been treated previously);

Save applications of nicotinoids for crops threatened by whitefly-transmitted plant viruses or whitefly-inflicted disorders (i.e. tomato, beans or squash) and consider the use of chemicals of other classes for whitefly control on other crops.

Aphids

Reports from the Glades indicate that growers are beginning to find a few green peach aphids migrating into the area, but report that no large colonies are being found at this time.

Respondents in Homestead report a big jump in aphids over the past few weeks on beans, eggplant pepper, strawberries and squash and note a increase in squash mosaic as well.

Growers and scouts around Immokalee report that aphid pressure is low to moderate depending on the location.

Strawberry producers are reporting moderate levels of aphid pressure on strawberries around Hillsborough County.

Worms

Growers and scouts in the Glades indicate that fall armyworm numbers in corn are low but a few new hatches have been noted.

Reports from Manatee County indicate that worms continue to cause some problems in cabbage.

Around southwest Florida, growers and scouts indicate that worm pressure is fairly low with mostly beet and southern armyworms and a few loopers being reported. Melonworms are still present in cucurbits in some locations.

Respondents on the east Coast report that worm pressure is low in most locations.

Pepper Weevils

Pepper weevils are now being reported from several locations around Southwest Florida but overall populations remain very low.

Reports from Manatee County indicate that pepper weevils are still present in peppers.

A few weevils continue to be found around Homestead.

Silk Fly

Reports from the Glades indicate that silk fly populations are higher than normal for this time of the year. In some locations, as many as 1-5 silk fly larvae per plant were reported last week. Rotation between Lorsban 4E (it has a 24c label that allows application up until a week before harvest) and pyrethroids are keeping populations under control in plantings that have already silked. There are high populations in fields that have never been sprayed with either material.

Broad mites

Around Southwest Florida, broad mites have flared up in pepper and to a lesser extent in pepper in several locations.

Growers in Palm Beach report that broad mites are around and can be found in pretty high numbers on peppers and eggplant.

Respondents in the Manatee/Ruskin area indicate that broadmite activity picking up in peppers.

Reports from Homestead indicate that broad mites are present in low numbers in eggplant but expectations are that numbers will begin to increase.

Thrips

Around Southwest Florida, thrips are beginning to be reported in several pepper fields at low levels. In most cases it looks like they are flower thrips (*Frankliniella bispinosa*).

Over the past few weeks, chili thrips have been identified on ornamentals in at least 7 counties ranging from Palm Beach to Marion. At a meeting held this week in Apopka, experts from around the state agreed that it was almost a given that this pest is now (unofficially) established in Florida.

Adult thrips are small about 0.5 – 1.2 mm long. It is difficult to recognize this thrips with the naked eye, and definitive identification is best accomplished at approximately 40 to 80 x magnification. Eggs are about 0.075 mm long and 0.070 mm wide, and are inserted inside plant tissue. The egg stage lasts for 6-8 days, which is followed by has two larval stages (1st and 2nd instars) that last for 6-7 days. The prepupal period is short (~ 24 h) and the pupal period lasts 2-3 days. The larvae are off-white. The adults are pale grayish-white with incomplete dark stripes on the dorsal surface of each abdominal segment. The life cycle is completed in 14-20 days. The chili thrips female oviposits 60 to 200 eggs in her lifetime at the rate of 2-4 eggs per day.

Chili thrips attacks all above ground parts of its host plants, and prefers the young leaves, buds and fruits. It has been reported to attack a wide range of plants with more than 100 recorded hosts from 40 different families including beans, melons, peppers, strawberries, and tomato as well as wide range of ornamentals and fruits including citrus. Heavy feeding damage turns tender leaves, buds, and fruits bronze to black in color. Damage leaves curls upward and appear distorted. Infested plants become stunted or dwarfed, and leaves with

petioles detach from the stem. The abundance of chili thrips is low in the rainy season, but becomes high during the dry season.

It is important to check plants with abnormal growth. At the initial stage of infestation, the underside surfaces of the leaves become shiny. These leaves soon become discolored and curly. Collect 5-20 leaves from the symptomatic plants and place them in a ziplock bag to prevent adults from escaping. Send these samples to an expert for further processing to establish or confirm their identity.

Go to <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/enpp/ento/chillithrips.html> and <http://www.mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/LSO/thripslinks.htm> for more information on this pest.

Diseases

Dr Richard Raid, Plant Pathologist at UF/IFAS EREC reports an upswing in some of the "cool weather" diseases, such as downy mildew and Sclerotinia-related disorders in recent weeks.

Late Blight

Growers and scouts in West Central Florida indicate that late blight has been reported from scattered locations across the area for the last couple of weeks. Respondents note that blight has increased in incidence and occurrence in the last few days, most likely due to the weather which has featured some cool nights and dense fog almost every night the last week.

There have been no reports of late blight from other South Florida growing areas to date but many growers report increasing spray schedules and going into a proactive mode in light of favorable weather conditions over the past few weeks.

Late blight is caused by the fungus *Phytophthora infestans*, which is a pathogen of potato and tomato. Very few vegetable diseases cause more concern to growers. The disease can spread quickly and devastate a tomato or potato field within a few weeks if not properly controlled.

The disease thrives under cool and wet conditions. Temperatures between 50 and 80°F combined with moist conditions such as rain, fog, heavy dews, or relative humidity above 90 percent are conducive for disease development. Night temperatures in the mid-fifties with daytime temperatures from the mid-fifties to mid-seventies are ideal for this disease.

Inoculum of *Phytophthora infestans* can originate from diseased seed tubers; cull piles, and volunteers as well as infected plantings of potatoes or tomatoes. For tomatoes, infected transplants can serve as a source of inoculum.

Since the disease can spread so rapidly, growers should scout their fields thoroughly each day, especially when cool and wet conditions conducive to disease development prevails.

Late blight symptoms on leaves appear as irregularly shaped brown to purplish lesions with indefinite border lesions that can span veins. The lesions may be seen any time of day, on any stage of plant growth and on leaves of any age. Velvety, white fungal growth may appear on the lower surface of affected leaflets early in the morning before leaves dry and/or in the lower canopy.

On stems, purplish lesions may be found anywhere on the stem. Cottony, white growth of fungus on stems with lesions can often be seen early in the morning and/or in the lower canopy. Stems with lesions are brittle

and break easily. Lesions are confined to epidermis and cortex. Leaf rolling and wilting is often associated with stem lesions and purpling of leaflets may occur in some varieties.

Several control measures plus observation are absolute necessities if late blight is to be properly controlled. Potato growers should purchase certified, disease-free seed pieces and store seed in a dry location before planting.

Other important cultural controls include destruction of cull piles and volunteer potato or tomato plants. Plant resistant varieties. Begin a spray program with fungicides if late blight is in your area or weather conditions are suitable for late blight development. After harvest, kill infected foliage to minimize tuber infection.

Tomato growers should purchase disease-free transplants. Observe your fields thoroughly each day, especially when cool and wet weather prevails.

Currently, fungicides are the most effective means of controlling late blight and will remain the primary tool until cultivars with resistance to this disease become available. Fungicides slow the rate at which the disease develops in the field by creating a protective barrier on the foliage. Just applying a chemical, however, does not necessarily equate with effective disease control. Relative effectiveness of a product, coverage, and timing must be factored into the equation for maximum benefit.

Numerous fungicide products are registered for late blight control. Protectants, as the name implies, protect foliage from infection by spores. Protectant chemicals must be well distributed over the leaf surface and must be applied before spores land on leaves. They are ineffective against established infections.

Systemic products become distributed locally within plant tissues and protect foliage from infection by spores. These products possess so-called “kickback” action, which may kill some established infections and can suppress production of new spores. However, even a short break in spray schedules, despite what is said regarding some of the newer fungicides, can result in a dramatic increase in blight under the conditions we have had during the past two weeks.

Bacterial Leaf Spot

Reports from Manatee County indicate that bacteria spot continues to persist in tomatoes and many plantings are in sad shape due to lots of old disease damage as well as seasonal decline and necrosis. Growers are now beginning to report bacterial spot in peppers, as well.

Growers and scouts indicate that bacterial spot has slowed down with no large scale flair-ups reported but growers and scouts around Southwest Florida note that the disease is persistent they continue to find new lesions moving up the canopies of infected plants.

Respondents in Homestead report very active bacterial spot on tomato, especially on low quality transplants that came in with several diseases as well as virus.

Growers and scouts on the East Coast indicate that bacterial spot continues to cause problems although progression has slowed in some places. Foggy weather and wet nights have kept the disease active.

Target Spot

Growers and scouts around Southwest Florida report that target spot has really flared up in number of fields consuming the inner foliage of many mature plantings. Incidence and occurrence is increasing and some fruit lesions have been noted.

Reports from the Bradenton area indicates that target spot is still a problem on tomato around the area.

Remember that tank-mix sprays of copper fungicides and maneb do not provide acceptable levels of target spot control. Recommended fungicides include various chlorothaliniol formulations (Bravo, Echo, Bravo Ultrex, Bravo Weather Stik and Ridomil Gold/Bravo).

Early Blight

Reports from growers indicate that early blight is widely present in Southwest Florida. Incidence is low to moderate depending on the location.

Alternaria

Dr. Ken Pernezny, Plant Pathologist UF/IFAS EREC reports seeing “lots” of Alternaria on snap beans in the Glades. He notes due to replanting, it is primarily on the foliage. However, he expresses concern that once pods form on the plants, the fungus will jump to the pods and produce the unsightly black pimples that throw the pods out of grade. It is important that growers apply effective fungicides when pods are small in order to minimize Alternaria pod spot. Growers and scouts indicate that a single strobilurin spray when pods are about three inches long seem to be providing good control.

Fusarium Crown Rot

Fusarium crown rot is widely present in a number of tomato fields around Southwest Florida where it continues to increase in incidence.

Downy Mildew

Dr Ken Pernezney, Plant Pathologist at UF/IFAS EREC reports an alarming epidemic of downy mildew on cucumber in a number of locations around Palm Beach. Ken notes the lesions on the leaves can be quite similar to the bacterial disease angular leaf spot. Downy mildew lesions are limited by the veins and are quite angular, so we can see why downy mildew and angular leaf spot are being confused.

Growers and scouts should look at the underside of the leaves to help make the right diagnosis. Angular leaf spot will have some water-soaking at the edge of the lesions. The downy mildew lesions look uniformly dry.

However, there is no substitute for having the specimens examined with a microscope in the laboratory. In the laboratory, using a dissecting microscope, we can see the fungal growth of downy mildew emerging from the underside of the lesions. They look like inverted chandeliers with the black-looking spores attached. If some of this growth is scraped off and looked at under the compound microscope, the very characteristic lemon-shaped spores are easily seen. When in doubt, take the samples to a plant disease clinic or plant pathology lab for confirmation.

The chemical control measures for downy mildew and angular leaf spot are different, so it is imperative that a correct diagnosis is made.

Downy mildew is causing on cucumbers and squash in several locations around Immokalee.

Respondents in Homestead report a noticeable increase in downy mildew on squash and cukes in recent days.

Cucumber producers in the Ruskin area report problems with downy mildew and note that it is not responding to traditional controls.

Strains of the cucurbit downy mildew fungus resistant to QoI (also known as strobilurin) fungicides were detected in GA and NC in fall 2004 and in FL in spring 2005. The genetic mutation detected is the same as that in QoI-resistant cucurbit powdery mildew fungal strains. These strains exhibit qualitative resistance, thus resistant strains are highly insensitive to QoIs. It is not possible to re-gain control by increasing the application rate or shortening the interval with this type of resistance.

Development of resistance was not surprising. The cucurbit downy mildew pathogen has developed resistance to other fungicides. Other pathogens have developed resistance to QoIs thus demonstrating that this fungicide group is at high risk for resistance development.

In fungicide efficacy experiments being conducted in Georgia and North Carolina where 2 of the tested pathogen isolates were collected, QoI fungicides were not as effective as expected based on previous results. However, this could have been due to high disease pressure resulting from downy mildew starting to develop earlier than usual, and conditions being very favorable for disease development.

Fortunately, there are additional management practices for cucurbit downy mildew control. These include making adjustments to fungicide and attention to other control methods.

1. Select cucumber and melons varieties with resistance to downy mildew when possible.
2. Minimize leaf wetness by selecting sites with good air movement and without shading.
3. Avoid overhead irrigation during early morning when leaves are wet from dew, and during late evening when leaves will not have an opportunity to dry before dew forms.
4. Non-QoI fungicides labeled for this disease must be combined and alternated with QoI fungicides (a) to reduce selection of resistant strains and (b) to protect against loss if resistance does occur and affect efficacy of the QoI fungicides.

It is critical to know what fungicides contain an active ingredient in the QoI fungicide group, which is Group 11 in the system being used by EPA and the Ag Chemical industry. Some of the products, plus their active ingredient(s) and Group number in parentheses that are registered for use on cucurbits include the following:

Amistar (azoxystrobin; Group 11),
Cabrio (pyraclostrobin; Group 11),
Flint (trifloxystrobin; Group 11),
Reason (fenamidone; Group 11),
Pristine (pyraclostrobin; Group 11 + boscalid; Group 7), and
Tanos (famoxadone; Group 11 + cymoxanil; Group 27).

Non-QoI fungicides that could be tank-mixed with QoI fungicides (Group 11) and applied in alternation with QoI fungicides are:

1. Translaminar fungicides with some ability to enter and/or move in leaves:
Curzate (cymoxanil; Group 27),
Acrobat (dimethomorph; Group 15),
Previcur Flex (propamocarb; Group 28),
Gavel (zoxamide; Group 22, and mancozeb; Group M2),
Phosphorus acid fungicides (Phostrol, ProPhyt, and Fosphite; Group 33),
Ridomil fungicides (mefenoxam; Group 4)

2. Protectant fungicides, which do not enter leaves:

Bravo (chlorothalonil; Group M4),

Maneb (maneb; Group M2),

Dithane (mancozeb; Group M2), and
copper fungicides (Group M1).

Curzate reportedly has good curative activity (about 3 day kickback), thus it is a good choice for the first application after downy mildew is detected. However, it has poor residual activity (only 1-2 days), thus it is critical to tank-mix it with a protectant fungicide and to follow-up with another systemic fungicide when disease pressure is high.

Southern corn leaf blight

Respondents in the Glades indicate that there has been some increase in southern corn leaf blight, due to almost a week of heavy fog that often persists until 10:30 a.m. or later.

Powdery mildew

Growers and scouts around Southwest Florida report increasing incidence of powdery mildew in squash with moderate to high incidence and severity in some places.

Respondents on the East Coast are reporting high incidence of powdery mildew on squash.

Producers in the Bradenton area continue to report problems with powdery mildew on squash.

Powdery mildew is also present on strawberries at moderate levels in Hillsborough County and appears to be increasing by most reports.

Botrytis

Strawberry producers in the Hillsborough County area are reporting some problems with botrytis. This is early in the season and could be a sign of more problems to come.

Phytophthora

Growers and scouts on the East Coast report that phytophthora remains a problem on pepper and cucurbits in a number of locations.

Around Immokalee, reports indicate that phytophthora is still causing problems in some pepper fields.

Phytophthora crown rot as well as Colletotrichum crown rot has been prevalent in strawberries around Plant City this year and is reaching moderate levels in some fields.

Anthracnose

Anthracnose has been reported on peppers in a number of widely scattered places in south Florida. Major problems are in older fields with mature fruit.

Strawberries growers are also reporting increasing problems with anthracnose in Hillsborough County. The disease is mainly confined to foliage at this time and is more prevalent in certain varieties. Little to no fruit infection is reported at this time.

Tomato Yellow Leaf Curl Virus

Reports from the Manatee/Ruskin area indicate that the incidence of TYLCV is up, with new infection showing up in tops of bushes. Based on predicted low volume in Immokalee, growers will probably continue to pick fall crops until February while beginning Spring planting in January. This situation is not good and is a recipe for a bad virus problem later in the season.

Tomato yellow leaf curl virus is present at mostly low levels in most south Florida production areas. Incidence is low but is slowly increasing in a number of areas.

Growers in Homestead report a 1- 3% infection rate in some fields.

Scouts around Immokalee indicate that TYLCV incidence remains fairly low in most fields but note some new infections are showing up.

Growers in several locations around South Florida have expressed complaints about infections on young transplants only in the ground a few days, which seem to be originating in the plant house.

News You Can Use

UF/IFAS SWFREC Plant Disease Clinic

Dr Roberts notes that the SWFREC Plant Disease clinic in Immokalee is equipped and prepared to run late blight race characterization testing and invites growers and scouts to submit samples if the disease shows up.

As of January 01, 2006, in accordance with University guidelines, an invoice will be attached to the completed reports you receive from the Plant Disease Clinic-SWFREC. The charge for each sample submitted is \$20.00. The Florida Extension Plant Disease Clinic (FEPDC) is a fee-based service provided by the University of Florida and SWFREC Plant Pathology program. Please see UF-IFAS publication RF-SR007 for more information regarding the fees. These funds are used to support the clinic operations. Your help is appreciated with this matter.

Critics challenge group that wants to certify farm labor practices in Florida

A new statewide group that certifies farm labor practices wants to keep Florida attractive to big buyers and concerned consumers by staving off the slavery stigma that has been associated with farmwork.

But Socially Accountable Farm Employers has come with its own controversy. Critics say the group is a virtual shield meant to head off real negotiations with farmworker advocates.

To a certain degree, the group was formed as a preemptive strike against those who categorize all farmers as bad employers, founders say. Farmworkers in Palm Beach County cultivate almost 54,000 acres of produce, including bell peppers, tomatoes, eggplant and sweet corn. There are bad growers and good growers," said Barbara Mainster, executive director of the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, a social services group that works with farmworkers and their families. "There's a concern that everyone gets tarred with the same brush, that everyone's guilty."

The migrant association and the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, which represents about 500 farms, are collaborating on SAFE. Mainster, one of two board members so far, said SAFE will provide something of a "Good Housekeeping Seal of approval" so corporate buyers and consumers can know their produce was picked under fair working conditions.

The issues, to be audited by an outside firm, include forced labor, child labor, discrimination, safety, housing and wages.

But how effective the oversight will be is another question with critics. Greg Schell, managing attorney with the Migrant Farmworker Justice Project in Lake Worth, said periodic checks don't work, especially "if they give the farms notice, and they probably will."

Schell said the migrant justice project didn't sign off on SAFE but was informed about it before its recent launch. He suggested that the group was formed to head off complaints by the vocal Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which early last year secured a penny-per-pound increase for farmworkers who pick tomatoes for Taco Bell. The coalition likewise pressured McDonald's.

Though McDonald's turned to SAFE instead of negotiating with farmworkers, Mainster said the fast-food giant didn't create the group.

"This started long before that," she said. "It's clouded it because now people are making a connection between McDonald's and SAFE."

The need for such a group, according to Ray Gilmer of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, comes in an increasingly demanding marketplace. Major retailers, food service chains and restaurants want to pick growers that would be viewed as the responsible choice, without stories of unscrupulous labor practices.

"We're hopeful this turns into something that becomes a standard for performance in terms of how you treat your workers and train them," Gilmer said. "For businesses making decisions, we don't want Florida farms left out because of labor practices."

Audits will be voluntary and farms would pay a fee to SAFE for them. Farms that don't participate will suffer in the marketplace, said Jay Taylor, president of Taylor & Fulton Tomatoes, which has farms throughout the state.

"We need to take our head out of the sand and be proactive and assure our customers that what we do is right," he said.

Orlando Sun-Sentinel, Jan 2006

Local beekeepers looking to provide pollination services to watermelon producers. Contact Heidi or Steve Eisele, PO Box 610, Felda, phone 941-661-5038.

Job Opportunities

Southwest Florida packer/shipper has immediate openings for the following positions:

Sales Assistant – Entry sales assistant needed. At least one year of industry related experience preferred. Responsibilities include assisting current sales staff with workload, servicing current accounts and establishing new accounts.

Shipping Supervisor – must have knowledge of computers and produce business. Industry related experience required.

Truck driver – fulltime truck driver needed. Class A CDL drivers license is required. Must be willing to travel to Georgia for six weeks in spring and fall, remainder of the year is local driving in southwest Florida. **For inquiries, contact Rita at 239-657-2227 or fax resume to 239-657-6037.**

Extension Manpower Development Agent

Palm Beach County is looking for a Manpower Development Agent to develop and present educational materials and conduct workshops for agricultural employers and their staff. Educational efforts will address restricted use pesticides, farm machinery safety, agriculture regulatory information and other priority needs of targeted clientele. A bachelor's degree in Agriculture and Extension Education, Farm Management, agricultural subject matter area, general education, or closely related field is required. Excellent benefits through the University of Florida and Palm Beach County. For more information please contact Darrin Parmenter, Agricultural Program Leader, at 561-233-1725 or email: dmparmenter@ifas.ufl.edu

Up Coming Meetings

Hillsborough County

January 25, 2005 **Frost/freeze Protection Workshop** 11:00 AM

Hillsborough County Extension Service
5339 S. CR 579
Seffner, FL 33584

This workshop is applicable to nursery, blueberry and some vegetable crops.
Lunch provided - RSVP requested. For more information, contact Alicia Whidden at 813-744-5519 x134.

Palm Beach County

January 9, 2006 **General Standards/CORE Training and Test Review** 8 AM – 12 PM

Clayton E. Hutchinson Agricultural Center
559 N Military Trail
West Palm Beach

Contact 561-233-1700

January 10, 2006 **Summary of Bacterial Spot Management Programs & DuPont Crop Protection and Helena Chemical Updates** 11 AM - 1:30 pm

Richard's Steakhouse
6545 Boynton Beach Blvd.
Boynton Beach

Contact Darrin Parmenter 561-233-1725

January 11, 2006 **General Standards/CORE Training and Test Review** 8 AM – 12 PM
Private Applicator Test Review 1 PM – 3 PM

Belle Glade Extension Office
2976 State Road 15
Belle Glade

Contact 561-996-1655

Other Meetings

February 4-8, 2006

**American Society of Horticultural Science
Southern Region Annual Meeting**

Wyndham Orlando Resort
Orlando, Florida

For more information, go to <http://ashs.org/regional/index.html>

May 21-23, 2006

18th International Pepper Conference

Palm Springs, California

Go to <http://www.internationalpepper.com/> for details

September 17- 21 2006

Cucurbitaceae 2006

Asheville, North Carolina

For more information visit <http://www.ncsu.edu/cucurbit2006>

Websites

Syngenta Crop Protection University Information Bank – this site contains an index of articles, links and information related to controlling weeds, insects and disease in agricultural crops – the site has links to Syngenta product labels and MSDS as well. – go to <http://www.syngentacropprotection-us.com/infobank/>.

Web Soil Survey - Official USDA soil information is now available online as viewable maps and tables for more than 2300 soil surveys – check it out at <http://soils.usda.gov/survey/>

Quotable Quotes

If you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.

The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.

To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.

If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.

We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.

On the Lighter Side

12 Things You Didn't Know You Didn't Know

Did you know?

- It is impossible to lick your elbow.
- A crocodile can't stick its tongue out.

- A shrimp's heart is in its head.
- In a study of 200,000 ostriches, over a period of 80 years, no one reported a single case where an ostrich buried its head in the sand.
- It is physically impossible for pigs to look up into the sky.
- A pregnant goldfish is called a twit.
- More than 50% of the people in the world have never made or received a telephone call.
- Horses can't vomit.
- The "sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick" is said to be the toughest tongue twister in the English language.
- If you sneeze too hard, you can fracture a rib. If you try to suppress a sneeze, you can rupture a blood vessel in your head or neck and die. And, if you keep your eyes open by force, they can pop out.
- Rats multiply so quickly that in 18 months, two rats could have over a million descendants.
- Wearing headphones for just an hour will increase the bacteria in your ear by 700 times.

Now you do!

Old Farmers Advice

Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.

Keep skunks and bankers and lawyers at a distance.

Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.

A bumblebee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.

Words that soak into your ears are whispered...not yelled.

Meanness don't jes' happen overnight.

Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.

Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.

It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.

You cannot unsay a cruel word.

Every path has a few puddles.

When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.

The best sermons are lived, not preached.

Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.

Don't judge folks by their relatives.

Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.

Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.

Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't botherin' you none.

Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.

If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.

Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.

The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'.

Always drink upstream from the herd.

Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.

Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.

If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God...

Contributors include: Joel Allingham/AgriCare, Inc, Karen Armbrester/SWFREC, Kathy Smith/Agricultural Pest Management, , Bruce Corbitt/West Coast Tomato Growers, Dr. Kent Cushman/SWFREC, Dr. Phyllis Gilreath/Manatee County Extension, Michael Hare/Drip Tape Solutions, Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, Sarah Hornsby/AgCropCon, Cecil Howell/Taylor &Fulton, Loren Horsman/Glades Crop Care, Keith Jackson/SWFREC, Bruce Johnson/General Crop Management, Dr. Mary Lamberts/Miami-Dade County Extension, Leon Lucas/Glades Crop Care, Bob Mathews, Glades Crop Care, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Jimmy Morales/Pro Source One, Tim Nychk/Nychk Bros. Farm, Chuck Obern/C&B Farm, Teresa Olczyk/ Miami-Dade County Extension, Darrin Parmenter/Palm Beach County Extension, Dr. Ken Pernezny/EREC, Dr. Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Dr. Nancy Roe/Farming Systems Research, Wes Roan/6 L's, Kevin Seitzinger/Gargiulo, Jay Shivler/ C&B Farm, Ken Shuler/Stephen's Produce, Ed Skvarch/St Lucie County Extension, John Stanford/Thomas Produce, Mike Stanford/MED Farms, Dr. Phil Stansly/SWFREC, Eugene Tolar/Red Star Farms, Mark Verbeck/GulfCoast Ag, and Alicia Whidden/Hillsborough County Extension.

The **South Florida Pest and Disease Hotline** is compiled by **Gene McAvoy** and is issued on a biweekly basis by the **Hendry County Cooperative Extension Office** as a service to the vegetable industry.

Gene McAvoy

County Extension Director / Extension Agent III

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