December 19, 1999

With the exception of the past few days, weather conditions across SW Florida remain seasonably cool and dry. A slow moving frontal system moving across the peninsula since mid week has yielded some light misty rain over most of the area for the last two days. Total accumulation has been light with the FAWN weather station recording only 0.10 inches of rain. Growers reported similar rainfall amounts across the region.

Daytime temperatures, recorded at the FAWN weather station in Immokalee, have mainly fluctuated between the upper 70’s to low 80’s, while nighttime readings have varied between the low 50’s to the mid 60’s. Over all growing conditions have been good over the past two weeks. The five-day forecast calls for the cold front to pass through the area today and tomorrow with accompanying showers through early tomorrow bringing between 0.5 and 0.75 inches of rain. This will be followed by cooler dryer conditions for the next several days.

Growers are advised to apply protective fungicides in advance and monitor fields for the development of diseases following the last few days of breezy damp conditions.

Harvest of most crops is in full swing at this time with beans, cucumbers, eggplants, melons, peppers, pickles, squash, sweet corn and tomatoes now moving to market. Crops are looking good. Almost all of the crops affected by Hurricane Irene have been picked off. Fruit set and sizing is good. Continued cool dry conditions have kept pest and disease pressure light.

Leafminers are widely present at medium to high levels across the area. Most growers are using alternate applications of AgriMek, Spintor and TriGuard for leafminer control. Several respondents have reported having to move to the higher labeled rates of AgriMek to achieve satisfactory control. Note: use of a sticker may reduce the efficacy of products like AgriMek and Spintor. Growers report better results when AgriMek is applied in combination with oil.

Light armyworm pressure continues to be reported widely across the area. Most growers are reporting fairly low numbers of armyworms, including beet, southern, and fall armyworms depending on the site. Some respondents however indicated high numbers of armyworms causing significant crop damage in scattered locations.
Reports indicate that silver leaf whitefly populations remain low for the most part, although some respondents have indicated that whitefly numbers are coming up fast in some areas. Counts as high as 10 per plant have been reported. The appearance of high whitefly numbers along with the presence of scattered tomato yellow leaf curl infected plants is cause for concern. Growers are advised to monitor this situation carefully and initiate appropriate control methods as necessary. Several respondents have observed the buildup of whitefly populations on pepper.

Moderate levels of winged aphids are being observed in some areas. Several reports have indicated that pressure has been constant over the past few weeks and that numbers appear to be higher than they have been in the past few years. Some growers have detected the formation of colonies in pepper. Aphids are also widely present in squash where they have been contributing to widespread problems with mosaic.

Broad mites are still around on pepper and eggplant in widely scattered locations. Numbers have been declining but there are continuing reports of persistent new flare-ups here and there.

Pepper weevils are widely present at low levels, some reports are indicating that populations are beginning to increase especially in older fields. A few respondents have found some infested fruit in the field with exit holes being observed.

Bacterial leaf spot is widely present in tomato and pepper. Most reports indicate that the bacteria situation has been fairly quiet over the last two weeks. There have been some reports of renewed bacterial leaf spot activity following periods of fog or heavy dews.

The incidence of tomato yellow leaf curl remains fairly low. Most growers are seeing only isolated occurrences of single infected plants here and there, although each week brings reports of a few more infected plants. We have seen a number of TYLCV infected plants that have been present in fields over several weeks. These should be destroyed upon identification to help potential eliminate sources of inoculum. Older plants can easily be destroyed in place by cutting them off at ground level. Growers are advised to monitor whitefly populations, especially on older plantings where the efficacy of Admire applications may being to wear off. IGR’s and/or chemicals other than imidacloprid based compounds may be needed to ensure continued whitefly suppression as the season progresses.

Several respondents are reporting low to moderate incidence of target spot especially in older plantings of tomato and where the crop is being picked as vine-ripe.

Downy mildew as well as powdery mildew is being reported primarily on squash and cucumber from several locations. Incidence is low to moderate and crop damage varies accordingly.

Gummy stem blight has caused significant losses in some plantings of fall watermelon. It has also been reported in cucumber and cantaloupe where the incidence is generally low and crop damage has been minimal.

Isolated cases of fusarium crown rot on tomato have been reported from several sites.

A number of growers have reported fairly widespread incidence of mosaic in squash. Incidence and severity ranges from low to moderate. Samples have not been submitted to determine the specific mosaic virus present.

Powdery mildew has been reported in beans. Incidence is low and occurrence sporadic.

Given the fact that the early tomato crop is nearly finished and reports indicate the number of whiteflies and the incidence of TYLCV are on the rise across the area, growers are again reminded of the importance of sanitation and prompt destruction of crop residues in an IPM program.
Field sanitation is one of the most important tactics in vegetable pest and disease management. The best thing that growers can do for themselves and their neighbors is to clean up crop residues promptly after harvest. Sanitation is an important IPM technique that should not be overlooked as an effective, preventative tool against many vegetable pest and disease problems. Sanitation includes any practice that eradicates or reduces the amount of pathogen inoculum, pests, or weed seeds present and thus helps reduce or eliminate subsequent pest and disease problems.

The prompt destruction of a crop at the end of the season will immediately end the production of disease inoculum and insects and eliminate the spread of diseases and pests to any other host plants in the vicinity. Downy and powdery mildew on melons can spread via wind from older, diseased plants to plants in surrounding fields that are still maturing. These diseases are obligate parasites. This means that they can only grow and multiply on living host tissue. Some plant pathogens, such as the bacterium that causes bacterial spot of tomato and pepper, are unable to survive for extended periods of time outside of the host tissue. Plowing or disk under infected plant debris helps not only by covering up the inoculum but also speeds up the disintegration of plant tissue and kills the pathogen.

Prompt destruction of tomato vines will kill off white fly populations and eliminate transmission of the tomato yellow leaf curl virus to subsequent crops and also eliminate inoculum from late blight and other fungal diseases. This is particularly important in the case of TYLCV, as sanitation and whitefly control, are the only tools currently available for the management of this disease. If high populations of whiteflies are present it is advisable to treat the crop to kill the whiteflies before destruction.

Timely destruction of residues is also an important management tool in combating pepper weevils, leaf miner, broad mite, aphids and other insect pests. Field sanitation will be come an increasingly important tool to growers in face of the impending loss of methyl bromide – whose ease of use and effectiveness in controlling a wide range of problems allowed us to neglect some of these practical common sense pest management techniques.

Pest Management Report - The USDA Economic Research Service's report entitled Pest Management in U.S. Agriculture is now available. This report presents results on the extent of adoption of individual pest management practices and techniques for field crops and select fruit and vegetable crops. The report also summarizes the major issues and discussed unresolved questions related to the development of pest management strategies, including IPM, in U.S. commodity production.

The report's findings include:

- **Scouting** was the pest management practice used most extensively by producers. **Crop rotation** was the top cultural practice used to manage pests.
- Weeds are the biggest pest problem in most field crops and, consequently, more herbicide is used than insecticides or fungicides.
- Cotton and potato producers use IPM practices more than do other field producers.
- Future progress in IPM adoption will depend on weed management efforts for corn and soybeans, given the large acreage in these crops.
- Among producers of fruits and vegetables, **scouting for pests** was as high as 98 percent of the planted acreage for strawberries, with an overall **average of about 80 percent**.
- Pheromones for both management and monitoring were more often used on fruit and vegetable acreage compared with field crops.
- **Pest-resistant varieties** were used at relatively high rates for tomatoes (37 percent), strawberries (37 percent), and peaches (44 percent).
- A common pest management practice among producers of fruits and vegetables was **alternating pesticides to reduce pest resistance**.
Websites:

The Hunger Site – [http://www.thehungrersite.com](http://www.thehungrersite.com) - Help fight hunger on the Internet. At the Hunger Site, one click sends a serving of food to a starving person, at no cost to you. Corporate sponsors provide the food in exchange for free advertisement and links. Since its June 1 start-up, the site has sent enough money to the United Nations World Food Program to purchase more than 4 million servings of dietary staples.

**DOCUMENTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WITH PHOTOGRAPHS** - The USDA has an online archive of its dietary education materials from 1894 to the present. You can view century-old Food Guides, WWII Victory garden and canning posters and brochures, turn-of-the-century nutrition educational photographs and other materials. There are some real gems here: [http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/history/index.html](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/history/index.html)

Click on Agriculture. Here you’ll find from over 50,000 images collection of the Depression and Dust Bowl era Farm Security Administration photographs including some from Belle Glade, Clewiston and Homestead (Search key word = Florida). Includes voice and music clips from the farm workers of the period. Isn't the Internet amazing?

**SW Florida Vegetable Research Investment Fund Launched**

Vegetable farming has never been an easy proposition and in recent years survival in this dynamic environment has not been easy. The Southwest Florida Vegetable Advisory Committee has been pondering this situation for the past few months and has considered ways to alleviate the plight of area growers and help shift the competitive balance in their favor.

With this goal in mind, the committee has decided to launch the **“SW Florida Vegetable Research Investment Fund.”** The fund is envisioned as a strategic partnership of growers and others in the vegetable industry who come together to pool their resources to address research needs of common concern.

The SW Florida Vegetable Research Investment Fund is set up to be managed by the contributor-members who will prioritize and fund research projects through a democratically elected advisory committee. Membership will be based on contributions of one dollar per cropped acre per year or flat fee for non-growers. Growers will hold the purse strings and will be free to choose from public or private research groups and hold researchers accountable for performance. An organizational meeting will be held in Immokalee in early January 2000. Details will be forthcoming soon.

You are strongly urged to consider this proposal favorably. Government support for agricultural research is waning and often devoted to projects of little immediate importance to commercial growers. By participating in the SW Florida Vegetable Research Investment Fund, you will be helping to ensure the future of practical research that addresses the needs of local vegetable growers will be supported. The strength and ultimately the future survival of not only the vegetable industry in southwest Florida but also every vegetable grower will depend on cooperation and unity within the industry.

**Product Update:**

- Dow AgroSciences’ **SpinTor 2SC** insecticide has received a **Section 3 supplemental label** from the EPA on stone fruits, **cucurbits and legumes.** **SpinTor** controls cabbage looper, armyworms, melon worm,
pickleworm, rindworm, leafminers and thrips in cucurbits. It also controls European corn borer, armyworms, corn earworm, loopers, leafminers and thrips in legumes.

**FQPA Update: Sim Nifong** of Dow AgroSciences reports that **chlorpyrifos (Dusban and Lorsban)** is currently under review by the EPA under the **Food Quality Protection Act.** The EPA is re-reviewing all pesticides under new, more stringent standards! EPA is beginning its review with the organophosphate insecticides, which includes chlorpyrifos, the active ingredient in Lorsban insecticide.

If you value this product - **act now,** don't let the EPA limit your pest control options! During the preliminary review, the **EPA is accepting expert and public comment until December 27, 1999.**

**Do you need Lorsban insecticide?** If so, relate your experience to EPA! Your message to EPA can be brief and it's best if you write it in your own words.

There are several ways to make your feelings known.

You can send your message directly to EPA or through the Lorsban.com web site.

**Sending e-mail directly to EPA:**

1. Compose your message to EPA.
2. Send EPA e-mail at oop-docket@epa.gov
3. In the subject line of your message, type "chlorpyrifos POP-34203", this will ensure your comments won't get lost at EPA!
4. Your comments must be submitted to EPA by December 27, 1999. Time is short! Send your message today!

**Sending e-mail through Lorsban.com:**

2. Click on Compose E-mail.
3. Compose your message to EPA (see guidance above).
4. Click on the "Send" button to submit your message.
5. When you send your message through Lorsban.com, "chlorpyrifos POP-34203", will automatically appear in the subject line. This is the "docket number" that ensures your comments won't get lost at EPA!
6. Your comments must be submitted to EPA by December 27, 1999.

**To respond by U.S. mail:**

If you prefer, you can respond by U.S. mail. Be sure to include the docket control number OPP-34203 on your letter. Comments must be submitted by December 27, 1999. Mail your written comments to:

Public Information and Records Integrity Branch  
Information Resources and Services Division (7502C)  
Office of Pesticide Programs  
Environmental Protection Agency  
401 M Street SW  
Washington, DC 20460

**Tips on Sending a Message to EPA:**

- Be clear and concise.
- Include specific examples of how the product has helped you.
- Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number.
- Submit your comments by the deadline.
1. Tell EPA what you do (i.e., grower, dealer, applicator etc...)
2. Tell EPA why you recommend Lorsban insecticide.
3. Tell the EPA you support the continued availability of Lorsban insecticide to meet you or your customers' needs. Check the Lorsban web site - http://www.Lorsban.com for suggestions.
4. When stating your position avoid using inflammatory language or a harsh tone.
5. Time is short! Send your message today!

Upcoming Meetings

January 13, 2000  Growers Meeting, SWFREC, Immokalee – 12 Noon to 2 PM
Research into KeyPlex DP – Dr Richard Mayer/USDA-ARS
Contact Mike Seese at 800-433-7017

March 6, 2000  2000 POST HARVEST INSTITUTE -This years’ topic is “Innovations in Fresh Produce Transportation” – the conference will be held at the University of Florida in Gainesville as well as the Tropical Research & Education Center (Homestead), Southwest Florida Research & Education Center (Immokalee) and Indian River Research & Education Center (Ft. Pierce) via live, video-conferencing. For more information, contact Ms. Abbie Fox, at 352-392-1928, ext. 235 or Gene McAvoy at 941-674-4092 for information about the Immokalee site.

Contributors include: Karen Armbrester/SWFREC, Jim Connor/SWFREC, Bruce Corbitt/West Coast Tomato Growers, Marty Gross/SWFREC, David Harlof/Pacific Tomato Growers, Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, Sarah Hornsby/AgCropCon, Cecil Howell/H&R Farm, Leon Lucas/Glades Crop Care, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Andy Nychk/Nychk Bros. Farm, Chuck 0bern/C+B Farm, Dr. Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Wes Roan/6 L's, Kevin Seitzinger/Gargiulo, Jay Shivler/ F & F Farm, Mike Stanford/MED Farms, Dr. Phil Stansly/SWFREC, Eugene Tolar/Red Star Farms, and Dr. Charlie Vavrina/SWFREC.

Wishing you all a Blessed and Merry Christmas and all the best in the New Year

The SW 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.

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