Laurel Wilt / Redbay Ambrosia Beetle Working Group Update

July-August 2010

The working group was formed to assemble research, regulatory, outreach/extension and industry expertise to review the current status and chart effective management strategies to mitigate the potential impact of the beetle and disease on the Florida avocado industry.

Recent survey information

- **February 2010** – one redbay ambrosia beetle (RAB) trapped in a residential area adjacent to Everglades National Park, west-central Miami-Dade County
- **February/May 2010** – RAB detection survey intensified; 111 manuka oil-baited Lindgren traps arrayed in west-central Miami-Dade County south to northern edge of avocado production area, checked every two-weeks
    - To date, no more RAB have been detected and no avocado or native trees have been positive for the laurel wilt pathogen
- **May 2010** – sixty-five RAB detection survey traps employed, half with manuka oil and half with phoebe oil attractant; checked every 30 days
    - To date, no RAB has been detected
- **July 2010** – with over 6 months of intensive trapping, 12 trap inspections, 10 survey transects of the initial RAB trap area and 5 grove trap inspections, no new RAB have been detected and no LW confirmed
- FDACS-DPI and USDA-CAPS to hire staff to continue surveys and monitor traps into the foreseeable future

On-going research

<u>Entomology</u>

- Continued evaluation of insecticides for efficacious and residual control of RAB, some products look promising
- Continued evaluation of available beetle repellents, and effort to develop a specific RAB repellent
- Further refinement of the biology (life cycle) of the RAB
- Further understanding of the competition among ambrosia beetles and effect on RAB biology
- Ongoing population dynamics studies (fluctuations in RAB populations throughout the year in SE and Central Florida)

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Plant Pathology

- Continued grove evaluation of propiconazole application methods and efficacy in several locations
- Work to begin immediately on alternative fungicides for control of LW
- Ongoing evaluation of additional strategies to contain LW such as sanitation (e.g., removing infected portions of canopy, removing infected trees), use of disease-resistant cultivars, severing roots among adjacent trees
- Ongoing research on LW survival and potential for mechanical transmission through mechanical pruning, LW survival in mulch, and improved LW identification techniques

Regulatory Efforts

- FDACS regulations on the movement of wood products promulgated August 10, 2010
- Impending agreement among FDACS-DPI and USDA-APHIS-PPQ on continued RAB surveying in South Florida near high-risk avocado production areas

Outreach/Extension Efforts

- Posters, tweets, press releases and additions to LW-RAB websites are ongoing
- Educational outreach to county governments, county regulatory agencies, plant societies and citizens are ongoing
- "Save the Guac" campaign efforts continue

Next Steps

- Continued RAB-LW surveying throughout Florida and intensively in Miami-Dade County
- Continued research into short-, mid- and long-term control measures for RAB and LW
- Continued extension activities to update the agricultural community, county governments, regulatory agencies and citizens

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