



Southern Region IPM Information Exchange Group

This group's research and outreach have helped residential, community, and agricultural areas manage pest problems quickly and effectively. These efforts have reduced the costs and health hazards related to pest damage and poor pest control.

Who cares and why?

Damage caused by pests and efforts to control them are costly. Farmers, homeowners, landscape professionals, and pest control specialists often depend on chemical pesticides more than necessary, wasting time and money, polluting the environment, and risking harm to human health. The number and scale of pest problems—along with the range of fields and groups that study and manage them—makes coordinating pest control complicated, but critical nonetheless. Without collaboration, pest control lacks the leadership and partnerships that can expand funding, knowledge, and resources. By working together and sharing the latest research developments, scientists, policymakers, businesses, and communities can set up effective integrated pest management (IPM) programs that protect property, economic returns, and environmental and human health.

Farmers have many choices to make when it comes to controlling pests in their fields. Chemical pesticide spraying (top right, photo by Jay Oliver, UGA College of Ag) is one option; using a device, like a boll-weevil trap to keep pests from damaging cotton, is another alternative (bottom right, photo by Robert Burns, Texas AgriLife Extension Service). Researchers hope to help farmers find the most effective pest control products and practices that provide the best economic return with the least social and environmental impact.



What has the project done so far?

Representatives from all Southern Region states have joined forces to provide information and support for IPM programs. They have exchanged knowledge and ideas, designed programs to manage a wide array of pests, and trained farmers, homeowners, landscape and pest control professionals, and school systems to properly use IPM programs. Researchers have shared findings and new technology with stakeholders via multimedia materials, including videos, photo guides, handouts, and flashcards for household pest identification. In addition, SERA-003 scientists have tracked the progress of IPM programs and demonstrated what types of programs have been successful. The group has collaborated with the Southern Region IPM Center and helped direct funding to deserving projects.

Impact Statements

Enhanced communication and pooled resources, creating opportunities for well-coordinated, high-profile projects that have significantly raised awareness.

Developed computer and cell phone technology for sending pest detection information to and from farmers in real time. Timely pest alerts have made it easier to diagnose pest problems and get them under control before they cause widespread crop losses.

Helped farmers choose more pest-tolerant crop varieties and the most appropriate ways to manage pests, resulting in cost savings from reduced crop damage and less expensive and more efficient pest control methods. For example, vegetable farmers who adopted the recommended IPM strategies saved an average of \$5,680 per farm. During 2009, Tennessee cotton growers saved an estimated \$80 million. Peanut growers who used SERA-003 information about weather-based peanut diseases saved \$1.1 million.

Developed guidelines for organic farmers and limited resource farmers, giving these often neglected groups more pest control options.

Saved homeowners time and money by training them to properly manage pests in lawns and gardens.

Showed schools how to implement SIPM, increasing the number of schools with effective pest control programs and reducing pesticide use in school districts. Safer, cleaner educational environments have resulted in better school air quality and fewer student and teacher absences due to illnesses caused by pest-related allergies.

Lowered the risk of groundwater contamination and human health hazards caused by inappropriate pesticide use.



In Texas, soil testing and workshops helped cotton growers save \$1.8 million by cutting back on pesticide and fertilizer use, and new technology is expected to save \$24-30 million per year by providing root rot control. Photo by Blair Fannin, Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

What research is needed?

Scientists from all disciplines and states need to find ways to improve collaboration so that they can keep track of the success of IPM programs and work on more high-profile, high-impact projects.

Want to know more?

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