

APHIS – Plant Protection and Quarantine
Situation Report: Panicle Rice Mite (PRM)
Steneotarsonemus spinki
September 4, 2007

Updates in red

Survey and Diagnostics Information:

• **Survey**

Texas

- A total of 152 sites (13 greenhouses; 51 research fields; 1 compost pile; and 87 commercial production fields), have been surveyed at a rice research facility in Alvin, Brazoria County, Texas. Positive detections have occurred at this site.
- On August 4, approximately 190 acres were sampled from a seed farm in Jackson County, TX. All samples from this facility were negative.
- On August 8, survey methods started at a research station operated by a university in Beaumont, TX. Surveys were concluded the following day. All field samples have tested negative.

Louisiana

- A total of 24 sites (4 greenhouses; 18 research fields; and 2 outside greenhouses), have been surveyed at a rice research facility in Rayne, Acadia Parish, LA to date. This facility, which is used as an experimental research station, is operated by an educational institution to research varietal improvement and agronomic management practices. Positive detections have occurred at this site.

• **Identification and Diagnostics**

- Initial identification is conducted at the PPQ Plant Inspection Station in Huston, TX. Samples are forwarded to the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Systematic Entomology Laboratory (SEL) in Washington, DC, for confirmation.
- Since the initial detection in 1 of the greenhouses at the rice research facility in Alvin, TX on July 13, additional PRM detections have occurred at 3 other greenhouses, 5 research fields, 1 compost pile, and 5 commercial production fields at this site.
- On August 1, a rice field in Puerto Rico, operated by the same research facility in Alvin, TX, was confirmed positive for PRM.
- On August 10, three greenhouses tested positive for *S. spinki* in Beaumont, TX. Movement restrictions have been placed on the greenhouses and employees have been notified. SITC in Houston to work on trace information.

- On August 21, a greenhouse in Rayne, LA was confirmed positive through morphological analysis. Since the initial detection at this site, 2 greenhouses, 9 research fields, and 1 location outside of a greenhouse have been detected for PRM.
- **Technical Working Group (TWG)**
 - APHIS has established a technical working group (TWG) of experts to discuss survey and control strategies in response to PRM. The group will continue to meet on a regular basis to address this developing situation and consider mitigation strategies.
 - Treatment recommendations for PRM by the TWG were issued on August 15.
- **Incident Command**
 - A total of 5 personnel are on-site in LA (4-APHIS and 1-LDAF).
- **Regulatory Actions**
 - APHIS has issued Emergency Action Notifications (EAN) to stop movement of all rice seed, rice plants and plant parts, and farm equipment when positive detections occur.
- **Trace-back and Trace-forward**
 - Trace-back and trace-forward investigations to determine the source and potential distribution of PRM continue at all locations.
- **Treatment**
 - The infested greenhouses were treated by the rice research facility on July 17 with the insecticide dimethoate to suppress the level of PRM in Alvin, TX.
 - The Alvin, TX rice research facility was granted a 15-day crisis exemption label for the insecticide Curacron. Irrigation water must be drained from all rice fields before treatment commences.

Trade Update:

- APHIS is in the process of informing the NAPPO member countries and other trading partners.

Communication and Outreach:

- SPRO letter was issued on July 24 for the Alvin, Texas PRM positive find.
- A meeting with the Texas Rice Industry was held on July 31, to discuss the PRM situation in Brazoria County, Texas. Approximately 20 industry representatives of rice growers in Brazoria County attended an informational meeting hosted by APHIS and TDA. TDA and APHIS personnel gave an overview of survey and regulatory activities, while ARS staff provided a biological overview of the pest. Growers responded positively to a solicitation for volunteer sampling of non research related fields in the county.
- SPRO letter was issued on August 7 for the Lajas, Puerto Rico PRM positive find.

Background:

- On July 13, 2007, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of panicle rice mite (PRM), *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, at a rice research facility in Alvin, Brazoria County, Texas. The research facility is operated by a private entity, where it conducts hybrid rice research.
- The PRM is considered a serious rice pest in China, Philippines, and Taiwan, where it has caused substantial crop losses. Yield losses can range from 30 to 90 percent.
- In 1997, the pest was detected in the Caribbean region where it is now known to affect Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. In 2002, the mite was reported in Costa Rica and Nicaragua and, in 2005, in Colombia. Recent reports also indicate its presence in Mexico.
- Interceptions of this pest have been reported at greenhouses in Ohio and Texas during the last 10 years.
- There are two main reported hosts of RPM, Rice, *Oryza sativa*, and the weedy red rice, *Oryza latifolia*.