



News Release

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USApple Leads Meeting Between USDA Researchers, Regulatory Officials and Major Produce Groups to Address Growing Stink Bug Problem

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Devastating Orchards and Multiple Agricultural Segments

Washington, DC — United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Research Service (ARS) Administrator Ed Knipping and other agency experts today met with concerned representatives from the apple and other agricultural industries to address the impact of a rapidly emerging orchard pest – the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB). The discussion was organized by the U.S. Apple Association (USApple) and hosted by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Originating from Asia in the late 1990s, the BMSB made a dramatic appearance during the 2010 harvest, wreaking significant damage and losses in as many as 30 states. Thus far, the BMSB has proven difficult to control and capable of impacting a broad spectrum of agriculture, from apples and peaches to tomatoes, peppers and corn.

USDA researchers at the meeting presented alarming facts:

- The BMSB is extremely mobile, with the adult populations demonstrating rapid movement from crop to crop in mere hours.
- It has shown itself to be widely adaptable in the U.S., with economically significant damage caused in states from north to south.
- It feeds on (and causes damage to) an exceptional number of crops.
- It has apparent resistance to the most commonly used pesticides and pesticides must directly contact the pest (no residual effectiveness).
- The fact that feeding and damage occurs from all five growth stages of the insect (instars) in addition to the damage caused by adults greatly magnifies its destructive potential.

USApple Director of Industry and Regulatory Affairs Mark Seetin opened the conference with a brief overview of how the BMSB has impacted U.S. apple growers since early harvest began in mid-August. “This stink bug is one of the worst pests to ever appear in America’s

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apple orchards and other agricultural segments,” stated Seetin. “The immense crop devastation combined with the bug’s remarkable resilience could present a significant challenge for years to come.”

USDA researcher Dr. Tracy Leskey then elaborated on BMSB characteristics and the potential extent of the threat. She presented the latest results of research being conducted to determine which existing pesticides are most effective in combating the BMSB.

Dr. Knipling explained the steps USDA is taking to address the situation and assured discussion participants that the agency is committed to finding a solution to the BMSB problem.

In addition to Dr. Leskey and Administrator Knipling, other experts participating in the session included USDA-ARS’s Dr. Kevin Hackett and Dr. Michael Glenn; and Dr. Sheryl Kunickis and Dr. Kent Smith from USDA’s Office of Pest Management Policy.

In September, the House Agriculture Committee held a briefing on the BMSB for Congressional staff and members. USApple is urging policymakers in Congress and at USDA and EPA to act quickly, including providing adequate funding for an expanded emergency research effort on the BMSB threat.

To view an informational video about the BMSB, visit USApple’s [YouTube](#) website.

-30-

The U.S. Apple Association (USApple) is the national trade association representing the apple industry. Members include 36 state and regional apple associations representing the 7,500 apple growers throughout the country, as well as more than 300 individual firms involved in the apple business. USApple’s mission is to help facilitate the profitable production and marketing of apples and apple products through advocacy efforts, crisis issues management, and nutrition research and promotion.