

May 24, 12

The Overall Florida Avocado Industry Strategy

Continually and consistently depress the RAB population in the avocado production area through industry-wide scouting, elimination of infested limbs and/or trees, and limited area insecticidal applications.

Reasoning

As the RAB spreads and eliminates the native swampbay in the natural areas and the dooryard avocado and neighborhood swampbay trees they may no longer act (or be capable of acting) as a host for generating more RAB. Since the RAB introduction was just to the north of the avocado production area, the RAB-LW spread in the natural areas in the west, north, and eventually to the southern natural areas may eventually create a zone of ever expanding non-host trees away from the agricultural area. Since the beetle prefers swampbay trees to avocado the attacks to avocado may be sporadic and concentrated. If the industry can act in concert to continually and consistently depress any RAB population build up within the avocado production area, over time the RAB outbreak may be manageable.

This strategy is part of the RAB-LW control solution but may also provide time for additional short-term chemical control tactics for RAB and LW, fungicide treatments, trap and kill systems, and repellent work to come on-line. Furthermore, it may provide time to determine if natural control (predators, parasitoids or pathogens) of RAB can be identified, evaluated and eventually released.

Procedures and activities

1. Periodic aerial survey for potential LW infested trees, ground truthing LW suspect trees, and sapwood sampling.
2. Lab identification for LW (TREC, Homestead).
3. Willingness on the part of the growers to quickly sample trees, wait for identification, and then taking appropriate action.

Steps being taken by FDACS-DPI and UF Research and UF Extension

DPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor RAB traps and sentinel trees throughout south Miami-Dade County. • Continue to sample suspect trees.
Plant Pathology group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue fungicide infusion investigation with mature trees in Martin and Brevard Counties. • Continue epidemiology investigations in native and grove situations. • Co-lead research FDACS Block Grant to investigate LW detection and eradication efforts.
Entomology group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue insecticidal control work (i.e., chemical control, repellents, attractants, and trap and kill). • Continue epizootic investigations in native and grove situations. • Reduce foci of RAB by development of 'environmentally friendly' RAB management tactics to use with native <i>Persea</i>.
Economics group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to refine the cost of treatments and prevention strategies.
Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue aerial LW survey of northern ½ of industry. • Encourage the industry to continue the Early Detection and Suppression Strategy to keep RAB populations low in the agricultural area. • Assist with the Plant Pathology (R. Ploetz) and Entomology (J. Peña) and Economic (E. Evans) groups' research effort. • Continue to provide information and advice to the industry. • Applied for research-extension FDACS Block Grant with group (Ploetz, Peña, Evans, etc.) to investigate the effect of aerial surveying on RAB-LW suppression.

(c://ext/handouts/2012RAB-LW/the overall industry strategy 5-34-12.docx)