



Fire Ant Trails:

News from the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research & Management Plan

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NEW FACT SHEETS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Red imported fire ants are not found throughout Texas. They occur only in the eastern two-thirds of the state and in restricted areas of several west Texas counties. People living in non-infested areas sometimes assume that any ant is a fire ant and should, therefore, be eliminated.

One of the educational efforts undertaken recently is to develop educational materials for people living outside of infested areas, or in areas where infestations occur but imported fire ants are for some reason not present, and people visiting infested areas from non-infested areas for the first time.

Two fact sheets are now available on the project's web site, <http://fireant.tamu.edu>:

- ◆ [FAPFS040](#) - "Living on the edge: Management considerations for imported fire ants in Western Texas, near or in recently infested area"
- ◆ [FAPFS041](#) - "Welcome to Texas: Avoiding the sting of fire ants"

Also, [FAPFS039](#), "An organic Two-Step Method for imported fire ant control," has been revised to include recently released products.

NEW VIDEOTAPE AND DVD: "THE TEAM APPROACH: FIGHTING TEXAS' FIRE ANTS" (VHS 2664, CD#19)

The community-wide fire ant control program conducted at Lago Santa Fe in Galveston County is highlighted in this 7-minute program (see [Fire Ant Trails Vol. VI No. 1](#)). It is idea for use in fire ant control educational programs. Copies are available to Extension faculty and staff from the Audio Visual library (contact Edna Eisfeldt,

<http://av-library.tamu.edu>). Copies will also be available through the Texas Cooperative Extension Bookstore, <http://tcebookstore.org>.

The Lago Santa Fe Community-Wide Fire Ant Management Program was initiated in April 2002. Homes in this 100-acre private ski community are constructed around lakes. Residents hosted the 2002 National Ski Championships in August. The program, coordinated by Dr. Paul Nester and Corrie Bowen, demonstrated:

- ◆ Community-wide fire ant management
- ◆ Use of the "hopper-blend" treatment (see below)
- ◆ Use of all application methods, including an industrial "bait-blower" prototype developed for TxDOT
- ◆ Application of ant bait insecticides near bodies of water
- ◆ Implementation of a program with maximum suppression scheduled to occur for an athletic event

"HOPPER BLEND" FIRE ANT BAIT REGISTRATIONS AND LABEL ADDITIONS

The FIFRA section 24(c) label Special Local Need (SLN) registration for hydramethylnon (AmdroPro® or SiegePro®) plus s-methoprene (Extinguish®) label has been approved by the Texas Department of Agriculture ([SLN TX - 010016](#), April 3, 2003 memorandum from Terry Mitchell, Director of Pesticide Registration Programs). This labeling extends the expiration date of the SLN registration to December 31, 2003. The new product labels for AmdroPro and SiegePro (BASF Corp.), once approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are expected to have these label additions included.

Wellmark International has released a [Supplemental Label](#) for Extinguish®

Professional Fire Ant Bait (EPA Reg. No. 2724-475, March 2003) expanding use of s-methoprene to include indoor uses and supporting the "hopper blend" treatment using 0.75 lb. Of Extinguish plus 0.75 of "other" (non-Insect Growth Regulator or IGR) conventionally-formulated bait products. Broadcast treatment instructions state: "Mix bait products together thoroughly prior to application; distribute bait uniformly with ground (granular spreaders) or aerial equipment."

See [Fire Ant Trails 5\(2\)](#) for a discussion of the advantages of using "hopper blend" treatments.

FIRE ANTS IN THE NEWS

- ◆ "Fire Ants Spring Back Into Central Texas" - <http://www.kxan.com/Global/story.asp?s=%20%201224681> (4/10/03)
- ◆ "Fire ants: Terrorists of Springtime" - http://news24houston.com/content/top_stories/?SecID=1&ArID=5919 (4/9/2003)
- ◆ "Company Controls Fire Ant Problem at Space Shuttle Recovery Site" - <http://www.pctonline.com/News/news.asp?id=1777> (4/22/03)
- ◆ "A Harris County jury awarded \$1.5 million to the family of an elderly man who died after being bitten more than 2,000 times by fire ants in a nursing home" - <http://www.pctonline.com/News/news.asp?id=1772> (April 22, 2003)
- ◆ "Neighborhood Control of Fire Ants Working in San Antonio" - <http://agnews.tamu.edu>
- ◆ "Protect Against Potentially Deadly Fire Ant Stings" - <http://agnews.tamu.edu> (4/23/03)

WEB SITE DEVELOPMENTS

Neal Lee, Extension Assistant has been revising, updating and developing the Fire Ant Project web site. This web site has been re-designed for easier navigation. A new section has been developed providing expanded contact information to Extension agents, Extension fire ant faculty and staff and fire ant project research leaders: <http://fireant.tamu.edu/contacts/mgmt.html>.

USDA-ARS AREA-WIDE FIRE ANT SUPPRESSION PROJECT NEWSLETTER

The first issue (March 2003) of this [USDA-ARS newsletter](#) is currently available, describing progress being made to demonstrate the integration of chemical and biological control approaches for imported fire ant problems in improved pastures. This is a collaborative project involving Florida, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas. The USDA phorid fly release program was highlighted in a column by Dave Barry, Sunday, May 4, 2003: http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/living/columnists/dave_barry/5776275.htm. USDA-ARS has also released "[Areawide Suppression of Fire Ants using Baits and Biological Control](#)".

TEXAS FIRE ANT PROJECT FUNDING UNCERTAIN FOR FY2004-2005

The Texas Legislature is currently in session considering the recommendation by Carole Keeton Strayhorn, Texas Comptroller of Public Accountants to "Eliminate Duplicative Funding for the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Plan" (<http://www.window.state.tx.us/specialrpt/etxaddnl/gg42.html>).

The current situation is described in the [Legislative and Budget Update](#) (May 5, 2003).

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