

Title: Establishment of a Comprehensive Small Fruits Pest Management Guide for the Southeast

Principal Investigator(s):

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Objectives: Establishment of a pest management guide for small fruits which are managed in the Southeast.

Justification: Previously, each southeastern state established its own pest management guide for small fruits on a yearly basis. While this accomplished the mission, it resulted in vast duplication of effort, and it did not capitalize on the expertise of all parties involved. Both apple and peach IPM efforts had already been regionalized, and the southeastern region produces comprehensive guides for these commodities – guides that are arguably much better than previous, individual state efforts. While this grant proposal does not fall in the traditional category of research, it does address a need for regional IPM efforts. While a lone PI is listed, multiple participants in the region have agreed that this is a critical need, and it should be addressed.

Progress: Substantial progress has been made in this effort to date. Funding has been utilized for two planning meetings (6-7 July 2004 and 28-29 June 2005; both at the Madren Conference Center in Clemson, SC). Production guides have been established for each of the five major small fruit commodities, and these have been posted on the web. We have expanded the key extension and research personnel from the original list, and the total effort can be observed for each guide. Additional information will be posted as it is readied for the site, and updates will be conducted on an annual basis and as needed. This aspect of the project has been very productive. **In order for the commodity guides to be more readily discernable on the web site, it is desirable to have a direct link to the guide on the main page; perhaps the comments area can be replaced with a link to the guides, while also maintaining a link through the individual commodity sections.**

Issues: The guides have grown in scope and size to the point that this becomes a hard-copy publication issue. At the last meeting in June, we discussed future hard-copy publication of the guide, and there are several issues. First, there is the issue of cost; due to the size of the anticipated single guide (~150 pages), each guide will have to be spiral-bound – making a minimum cost of \$ 4.00/guide. If all goes well, the anticipated costs for publication of the guide will be \$14,000 for the current number of covers printed. Second, most producers do not need information on all these different commodities, and it is a waste of paper/resources to give them more than they need. Therefore, we will develop individual guides for each commodity in 2006 – hopefully with corporate sponsorship that will fit the guide. **However, if we are to do this in a timely manner, we will need both financial support for these guides, and we will need secretarial help to format and develop the guide.** These issues have yet to be resolved, but all will be doable in time.

It is currently planned that we will continue to meet formally at least once per year to review the guides, update them, and discuss additional efforts. The plan is to “piggy-back” this planning/update meeting on the regional vegetable meetings that are generally held in August of each year at Fletcher, NC. If this does not work, we will continue to meet in some formal fashion each year.

Plans for 2006:

Publish and distribute full guide for all small fruit commodities (once).

Develop individual guides for individual commodities.

Obtain funding and support for distribution of hard copy regional guides for individual commodities.

Further development of web posting for horticultural management, etc. Expansion of regional information as appropriate.

Impact Statement: Regional guides have now been developed for each major small fruit commodity. These guides have been posted on the web, and they provide highly professional sources of information relative to IPM practices in these commodities – the goal of this effort. This effort can now provide for additional regional interaction and development of additional regional tools for the web.