



Southern Plant Board

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May 19, 2009

Ms. Cindy J. Smith, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for
Marketing and Regulatory Programs
United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue SW, Room 312-E
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Cindy:

On behalf of the membership of the Southern Plant Board (SPB), I am following up with you to encourage the USDA, APHIS to move forward with an initiative to increase the funding for monitoring and control of Benghal dayflower, *Commelina benghalensis*. Please be assured the work associated with the continued eradication and monitoring for this weed remains a high priority for all the Southern Plant Board member states.

Benghal Dayflower or tropical spiderwort, a federally-listed noxious weed, continues to be an increasing problem in glyphosate-resistant varieties of crops across the southeast region due to its relative tolerance to glyphosate. It is a fast-spreading weed that is native to Africa and south Asia and is currently the most troublesome weed in Georgia cotton, with annual control costs now exceeding \$1.2 million. Benghal Dayflower can also reproduce vegetatively from cut stems leading to movement from field to field through contaminated farm equipment and hay. In addition to extensive problems in Georgia, this weed has more recently been reported from Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, North Carolina, Hawaii, and California. In North Carolina, we continue to remain involved in an active eradication program for an infestation discovered on a state agricultural research station. Throughout the Southern region, monitoring and control activities are currently underway in several of the states listed above.

The SPB member states remain willing to work cooperatively with the USDA, APHIS, PPQ to take appropriate steps to effectively address Benghal dayflower. I respectfully request that a funding increase for this weed be strongly considered as your agency's budget preparations proceed. It is our hope that USDA, APHIS, PPQ and the SPB member states can work cooperatively to move forward with monitoring, control and eradication of this noxious weed.

Sincerely,

Gene Cross
President

c: Rebecca Bech
Vic Harabin
Phil Garcia
Gray Haun

Member States

Alabama – Arkansas – Florida – Georgia – Kentucky – Louisiana – Mississippi
North Carolina – Oklahoma – Puerto Rico – South Carolina – Tennessee – Texas – Virginia