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A combined environmental assessment and final impact statement concerning 1980 Amdro treatments in the six treated states is now available. According to B. Glen Lee, staff officer for USDA-APHIS, "An environmental assessment was completed at the time the conditionally registered material, Amdro, was being tested and we found that the material would not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment." He continues, "Analysis of the environmental components collected from areas treated with Amdro during two years of field testing as reported in the environmental assessment indicates no residue in soil or vegetation because of the application of Amdro."

According to Lee, plans for another program this year are yet to be determined. ■

Fire Ant Pheromone Found

Identification of the pheromone that red imported fire ants lay down for trail identification may enable scientists to devise more practical controls for this pest. Scientists at Texas A&M University first identified the pheromone, called alloxanthrene, and then succeeded in duplicating it in the laboratory.

"Use of a species-specific attractant with a bait has been shown to increase the effectiveness of the bait in controlling a target species," says entomologist S. Bradleigh Vinson, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. "We are studying control methods for *Solenopsis invicta* using this pheromone as the attractant so only this particular ant will take the bait," Vinson says. "Non-species-specific baits using chlorinated hydrocarbons have proven ineffective in controlling the spread of this species," he says, adding that "there is some evidence that such baits have even hastened the spread of this species of ant by eliminating competing species."

It was in Vinson's experiment station laboratory that Howard J. Williams, research chemist, succeeded in identifying and duplicating the pheromone. Vinson says previous research has shown that fire ants are so sensitive to the chemical scent of their pheromone that they can follow it even when it intersects other fire ant trails.

The secret to this ability is that each trail is laid down in a different concentration. While most of these fall in at about a 500 picogram (a picogram is one trillionth of a gram) per centimeter level, Vinson says that the ants can detect the chemical at even lower levels.

"This sensitivity to the trail pheromone should enable us to devise a bait that will attract this species of ant, and only this species," Vinson says.

The researchers have also identified the brood pheromone (triolein) of the fire ant and hope to devise a control that will attract the ants to the bait, which they will carry back to the nest. It will kill the ants there as well as those bringing the bait in. ■

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