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FAMU Research Center Launches New Identification Tool

TALLAHASSEE, FL — Scientists in the Center for Biological Control (CBC) at Florida A&M University (FAMU) have developed and launched the first weevil identification tool. Drs. Muhammad Haseeb, Charles O'Brien (Emeritus Professor), Wills Flowers and Moses Kairo, Center Director, are members of the research team credited with developing an expert information system designed to assist persons involved in applied biological control programs or in other faunistic surveys to identify beneficial species easily. The team at FAMU is also linking up with several other collaborators to develop similar systems for other taxa and traded commodities. Already systems on economically important weevil species and chrysomelids are at an advanced stage of development and other efforts to develop commodity-based systems have been initiated.


Muhammad Haseeb

The new identification system is considered an invaluable education tool for science and research; and it is available on the Internet at http://www.famu.org/weeviltool, free of charge for persons involved in research, training and extension. Based on LUCID technology (developed by the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia), the system will facilitate the identification of weevil biological control agents, even by non-taxonomists. Currently, the system is composed of 38 beneficial weevil species in 28 genera. Among these species, 36 are exotic and two are endemic in the United States and Canada. The system provides detailed textual information, images of diagnostic characters and dorsal and lateral habitus for each species using recent Auto-Montage imaging technology. The system uses 32 species characters, 145 sub-characters and 144 images.


Charles O'Brien

Dr. Moses Kairo, Director, FAMU Center for Biological Control expressed the identification tool is expected to greatly impact scientific study in this field. He states, "Digital identification tools such as this provides an expert immediate assistance at the click of a button. With the increased need for rapid identification of potentially harmful species for instance at ports of entry, such tools will be indispensable."


Will Flowers

The FAMU Center for Biological Control, a research component of the FAMU College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture, received support for the development of this system from the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES).

To receive the identification system on electronic media (CD-Rom) or for more information, please contact Dr. Moses Kairo, Director, Center for Biological Control; 310 Perry-Paige Building, South; 1740 S. South Martin L. King Boulevard; College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture; Florida A&M University; Tallahassee, Florida. 32307-4100. Telephone: 850-412-7062; Fax: 850-412-7263; Email: Moses.Kairo@famu.edu. Visit online at the following web site: http://www.famu.edu/oldsite/acad/colleges/cesta/bio-control.htm.


Moses Kairo

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