

TAKING THE STING OUT OF IMPORTED FIRE ANTS: Application for Renewing the Funding for Developing the eXtension Program on Imported Fire Ant Management

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PROGRESS REPORT

I. Status of Year 1 Deliverables

- *Functioning CoP:* We began to engage the CoP (62 members, 38 with user identifications; http://cop.extension.org/wiki/membership:_Imported_Fire_Ant_Community_of_Practice) via the fire ant listserv (October 2005). Ideas for projects, as well as frequently asked questions, were solicited via the fire ant list serv, FIREANTS@tifon.uga.edu. A web conference was conducted in March 2006 to explain more about eXtension and to present a proposed plan of work to the CoP. By the first eXtension Work Days (March 28 and 31, 2006), our CoP was engaged and ready to develop a strategic plan.
- *Face-to-face meeting of the fire ant CoP, including eXtension staff:* March 28 and 31, 2006 (prior to and following the Annual Imported Fire Ant Conference in Mobile, AL) were the first two official Work Days for our CoP. We developed a strategic plan for future years at that time, which has been posted on the eXtension Imported Fire Ants Community Home. Potential projects were ranked by the members of the CoP, and leaders, content providers, and reviewers have volunteered to implement each project.
- *A minimum of 50 questions in the FAQ:* compiled from existing fire ant FAQ publications, members of the CoP, and eXtension's FAQ database, 96 FAQs have been reviewed by the CoP, copy edited, and locked to prevent further editing, because they are ready to publish. They are available at faq.extension.org. The current FAQ's are being translated into Spanish. Translation should be complete by the end of November 2006. We need eXtension to develop a Spanish platform for the FAQs.

- *Targeted date for the public launch* of the Taking the Sting Out of Imported Fire Ants eXtension materials is anticipated to be on or before April, 2007. The Imported Fire Ant Conference, to be held in Gainesville, FL, April 23-25, 2007, will be the appropriate location for the public launch. A soft launch to Extension agents is proposed for April 2, 2007.
- *On-line chat sessions:* At least 3 in 2006, with a targeted audience of Extension agents and other interested parties. Extension agents, the target audience for 2006, indicated their preferences for training (see IFA Community Home). Chats will occur in the last quarter of 2006.
- *Delivery of the decision modules on fire ant management for homeowners and cattlemen:* Personnel changes have caused a delay in designing these modules, but they will be ready by March 2007. The two publications (see below) on which these modules will be based have been completed and electronic files are available for uploading. We need help from eXtension staff in developing a decision module tool. We need eXtension to develop a Spanish platform for the decision modules, basic information, publications, etc.
- *Delivery of a minimum of two basic information publications:* English versions of “Managing Imported Fire Ants in Urban Areas”, and “Managing Imported Fire Ants In Cattle Operations” have been posted on the CoP WIKI. Spanish versions will be available by Dec. 2006. The CoP developed a fire ant video a few years ago, which is being revised and will be available in English and Spanish by Dec. 2006. The video will be available on the Basic Information wiki in its entirety and as smaller "sound bytes." A Bait Basics page to support the FAQ's will be available by March 2007.
- *Delivery of basic information:* Basic information is currently being added, and should be completed well in advance of the launch.
- *Delivery of a procedure for Ask the Expert:* Extension agents at the CoP workdays requested that Ask-the-Experts and Find-An-Expert be directed at the county and/or regional agent level (see Plan for Ask the Experts on our Community Home WIKI).. We are working with land-grant IT staff and Kevin Gamble to determine how to develop and maintain the database needed for this geographic approach to Ask-the-Experts. Our goal is that questions Ask-the-Expert question will be directed to the appropriate County or Regional Agent. In Nov.-Dec. 2006, Kathy Flanders will be working with CoP members to determine how best to direct the Ask-the-Experts in each fire ant infested state.
- In addition to these planned deliverables, a symposium highlighting eXtension has been developed by these principal investigators to be held at the Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America in Indianapolis, IN, Dec. 10-14, 2006 entitled, “Tapping the Power of the Land-Grant System Through Cooperative Extension: eXtension”.

II. Status of year 1 budget:

	Request Carry Over to Year 2	Budgeted for Year 1	Spent as of 10/8/06	Projected Expenditures Through 12/31
Salaries+fringe benefits	133	13,500	4,367	9,000
Travel	3,782	20,030	11,148	5,100
Supplies ⁵	225	1,000	427	348
Other:				
Translation services ⁶	1,500	3,000	0	1,500
Conference call charges ⁷	33	385	52	300
Subcontract, Texas Coop. Ext.	16,436	28,000	2,382	9,182
Total	22,109	65,915	18,376	25,430

Alabama portion: We are requesting a no-cost extension to carry over the remaining funds, estimated to be \$5673 into 2007. The travel surplus resulted because we received \$3600 from an internal grant from the Alabama Cooperative Extension System IPM Program, and because five members of our Community of Practice paid all or part of their expenses to the 2006 Imported Fire Ant Conference. This money will be used to pay for CoP members to travel to the fire ant meeting in 2007. An error in bookkeeping, undetected because of our new financial and human resources software, kept the computer technician salary from being deducted from the budget each month. That will be corrected in the coming months. The budget for translation fees needs to be carried over, because the decision modules have been delayed (see below).

Texas Portion: We are requesting a no-cost extension to carry over the remaining funds in the Texas subcontract, estimated to be \$16,436 that will be left in our Year 1 budget as of Dec. 31. The conceptual design for decision modules have been completed and presented at the 2006 Imported Fire Ant Conference. Delays in establishing a subcontract between the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service and Texas Cooperative Extension, personnel changes (i.e., Dr. Charles Barr resigned from Texas Cooperative Extension in late April), and delays in obtaining approval to hire a half time Extension Assistant position, have resulted in limited progress in developing decision modules. The new position was filled on October 9. We are asking for a no-cost extension for 2006 funds to continue to support this position, in part, in 2007. The person in this position will upload publications and work to help post the decision module, serve to troubleshoot the WIKI site after launch, and help post youth module information in 2007.

The Texas Cooperative Extension Budget for the carry over is as follows:

Request Carry Over
to Year 2:

Salaries+fringe benefits	15,140
Supplies ⁵	1,296

III. Marketing Plan for Public Launch

We are requesting a soft launch of Imported Fire Ant eXtension the first week of April 2007. The first week, members of the CoP will be asked to test the site. The following two weeks, text chats and web conferences will be used to engage county Extension agents within the imported fire ant infested area. The media cover the Annual Imported Fire Ant Conference, so this will be the venue for our public launch during this event scheduled for April 23-35, 2007. A 24/7 display at this conference will allow the CoP and others to explore IFA eXtension. The workday at the conference will be April 26, 2007. We request the presence of as many of the eXtension staff as possible at that meeting, in order to work on sustainability, marketing, and content development. Our marketing plan will be directed to the existing well-defined stakeholder/community of interest (CoI) groups. We will make these groups aware of Imported Fire Ant eXtension and ask them and the Fire Ant CoP to help promote the eXtension concept (examples: AL Turgrass Asso, ALFA, Alabama Farmers Coop, Southeastern Farm Press. Links to Imported Fire Ant eXtension placed on the web pages of CoP members and their Land Grant Institutions within the fire ant infested area will be requested. Symposia and talks, such as that scheduled for the Entomological Society of America in December 2006, delivered by the Fire Ant CoP, will help promote this effort.

Market size: 85,000,000 people in continental U.S. (14 states and territories); an annual economic impact estimated to be about \$6 billion. Parts of Mexico and the Caribbean Islands are also recently infested.

Described customer: Community of interest (CoI) include homeowners, cattle producers, commodity groups including turf and ornamental plant producers, professional pest control providers (pest control operators, landscapers), golf course supervisors, hospital and school ground maintenance personnel, park managers, international scientific community and particularly people living in areas to be or recently invaded by imported fire ants. About 14% of CoI speak Spanish, 6.9% are bi-lingual.

Competitors: Personnel and marketing staff of retail stores (Home Depot, Lowe's, Wal-Mart, nurseries, farmer's co-ops, etc.), companies manufacturing and marketing fire ant control products and services, professional pest control service providers or those marketing or promoting their services, state and regional educational websites (Extension Services, USDA-ARS and APHIS, etc. not participating fully in eXtension), "organic" method promoters and marketers.

How do we reach them?: Advertise in trade magazines, through CoP team members, e-mail to web masters of organizations and competitors, news releases about Imported Fire Ant eXtension.

IV. CoP Sustainability plan:

Continued Funding: In FY2006 and FY2007, the Alabama Imported Fire Ant Management Plan has supported our eXtension project. In 2007, we will explore the possibility of other states

contributing to the project, beginning in 2008, for continued and expanded voluntary participation by CoP members. There may be opportunities to involve private entities such as insecticide manufacturers and distributors, but the role of these "sponsors" will have to be clearly and carefully defined. Several aspects and policy issues related to the marketing and promotion of Imported Fire Ant eXtension will need to be addressed by eXtension administration to better develop this sustainability plan.

Composition of the work team: The proposed CoP work team includes academic and Extension employees from 1862- and 1890- Land-Grant Universities, and representatives from the USDA APHIS PPQ Soil Inhabiting Pests Section. The work team will evolve over time, depending on the goals and objectives set by the CoP. The subject matter component of our CoP has been in existence for at least 25 years. The Imported Fire Ant eXtension CoP is a sustainable group with participants from every affected state and efforts are being made to expand this group to include representatives from other infested areas (e.g., Caribbean islands, Mexico).

Each year, these experts meet to exchange ideas and information at the Imported Fire Ant Conference. A listserv, FIREANTS@tifon.uga.edu, links the community throughout the rest of the year. The fire ant expert community has a long history of sharing material, while respecting the need for individual recognition. This team of cooperators and collaborators has been maintained Imported Fire Ant eXtension was developed, according to the Guiding Principles of eXtension and Philosophy of Communities of Practice. Our NPL and Administrative Advisers are helping make Imported Fire Ant eXtension a success by providing insight on how this project can fit in with other national projects and agencies. Extension agents are an integral part of our Community of Practice. They want to be involved in Ask-The-Experts, so we will be working with eXtension to create an Ask-the-Expert system tied to geographic location of the Expert. The operation of our CoP has been based around the existing interactions of the subject matter specialists in the CoP, the Annual Imported Fire Ant Conference, and the Fire Ant Listserv. The first work team was assembled by the co-leaders, in order to provide representative leadership from the start of the project through the 2006 Imported Fire Ant Conference. A second meeting of the CoP is scheduled for the 2007 meeting in Gainesville, April 2007, when Imported Fire Ant eXtension will be launched. Those in attendance at Work Day will constitute the revised work team. During Work Day, we will review progress that has been made thus far, develop new content, review existing educational materials on fire ants. These Work Days at will allow the project to be inclusive, not exclusive.

The half-time Extension Assistant at Texas Cooperative Extension will become dedicated to maintenance and updating of the content of the wiki based Imported Fire Ant eXtension, notifying contributors of deadlines, keeping material current, and assisting contributors in posting new information.

V. Link to current CoP leadership and Membership list:

Current Membership is on the community home,

http://cop.extension.org/wiki/membership:_Imported_Fire_Ant_Community_of_Practice.

At the 2006 Work days, teams for each potential eXtension project were identified.

These teams, including leaders, contributors, and reviewers, are listed on the Imported Fire Ant Community Home wiki. The original 2006 work team is also on the Community home, at : http://cop.extension.org/wiki/The_Imported_Fire_Ant_Work_Team.

VI. Request for Year 2 Funding, Part 1

Support for leader of the Imported Fire Ant eXtension CoP to Offset Time and Travel Expenses

Lead author(s), home institution(s) and contact information:

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Bastiaan "Bart" M. Drees, Professor/Extension Entomologist, and Regents Fellow, Texas Cooperative Extension, Department of Entomology, 412 Heep Center, 2475 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-2475, b-drees@tamu.edu, tel. 979-845-5895.

Scope of Work

Kathy Flanders and Bart Drees are the co-leaders of the eXtension project. Both represent, and will continue to represent, the Imported Fire Ant CoP as members of the overall CoP Leadership Team to professional organizations, at professional development meetings and at other events and activities to further promote eXtension. For example, in December 2006 there will be a symposium highlighting eXtension that was developed by these principal investigators. This symposium will be held at the Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of America in Indianapolis, IN, Dec. 10-14, 2006 entitled, "Tapping the Power of the Land-Grant System Through Cooperative Extension: eXtension."

Coordination of CoP activities, engaging community of practice. Kathy Flanders will serve as an overall coordinator of the activities within the CoP (see Progress Report, Year 1, and Scope of Work, Part 2). She will ensure that the Community stays engaged with the project, and that the project is marketed and that it is sustainable. She will represent and promote eXtension at professional meetings, media events, and via other information delivery methods (see below). Kathy Flanders will serve on eXtension's Content Management Board. \$15,000 is requested to buy out a portion of her time.

Promoting eXtension to professional organizations, at professional development meetings and at other events. Co-leader Flanders will present a talk or poster on eXtension at the SE branch of the Entomological Society of America in March 2007, the Annual Red Imported Fire Ant Conference in April 2007, the Alabama Association of County Agricultural Agents and Specialists in June 2007, and at the National Meeting of the Association of County Agricultural Agents in summer 2007. She will write a press release on Imported Fire Ant eXtension that will be distributed to appropriate trade magazines, stakeholder groups, and broadcast and print media. Some of these activities will be funded by a grant from the Alabama Fire Ant Management Program. Funds are requested for Kathy Flanders to attend two meetings of the eXtension content review board.

Co-leader Drees will present a talk or poster on eXtension at the SW branch of the Entomological Society of America in February 2007, the Annual Red Imported Fire Ant Conference in April 2007, and the national meeting of the Entomological Society of America in December 2007.

Budget, Part 1. \$19,932 is requested for the CoP leaders.

**Budget for: (Imported Fire Ant eXtension)
eXtension Community of Practice**

A. Salaries and Wages:	
1. a. Project Director:	11,946
b. Co-PD:	
B. Fringe Benefits:	
Flanders	2986
C. Total Salaries, Wages, & Fringe Benefits: (A plus B)	14,932
D. Travel:	5,000
E. Subcontracts with other institutions	0
F. Total Direct Costs (C+D+E):	19,932

Budget Narrative

A. Salaries and Wages: 15% salary for PD Flanders, \$11,946

B. Fringe Benefits: 25% Flanders salary, \$2,986

C. Total Salaries, Wages, & Fringe Benefits: \$14,932

D. Travel: \$5,000
 Travel to SW Branch Ent. Soc. Amer. (Drees): \$1057: Airfare \$450, Hotel 95.00 per night (3 nights), registration \$150, meals (4 days@34 per day), parking \$36
 Travel to National Meeting Ent. Soc. Amer. (Drees): \$1345, Airfare \$430, Hotel 85.00 per night (5 nights), registration \$300, meals (6 days@34 per day), parking \$54
 Travel to National Meeting County Agricultural Agents and Specialists (Flanders): \$1050, Airfare \$319, Hotel 75.00 per night (4 nights), travel to airport flat rate \$100, registration \$150, meals (5 days@34 per day), parking 45
 Travel to 2 eXtension leadership meetings/content editorial board meetings (Flanders): \$774 per trip, \$1548 total: airfare \$170, hotel \$105 (3 nights), meals (4 days @34 per day), flat rate to airport \$125, parking \$28

E. Subcontracts: none

F. Total Direct Costs (C-E) \$19,932

Duration: January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007

VII. Request for Funding for Imported Fire Ant eXtension, Part II.

TAKING THE STING OUT OF IMPORTED FIRE ANTS: Developing the eXtension Program on Imported Fire Ant Management – renewal

Lead author(s), home institution(s) and contact information:

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Patricia Beckley, Instructor, Red Imported Fire Ant Program, LSU AgCenter Entomology Department, 470 Life Science Bldg, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, pbeckley@agctr.lsu.edu, tel. 225-388-2180.

Scope of Work:

Action Plan for Year 2 deliverables, including timeline: As the launch date for fire ant eXtension is April 2007, all deliverables from the Year 1 proposal will be completed prior to that date (see Progress Report).

New Deliverables in Year 2: The Strategic Plan for our Community was developed at the 2006 Work Days by the CoP (fireant-cop@aces.edu). New modules for development were identified and rated, and teams were developed to support each potential new module. These rankings were used to identify deliverables for Year 2 and Year 3. The highest rated were the basic information section (9.5), the Master Gardener Learning Module (9.4), and the Community-Wide decision module (9.2), the Intranet (9.0), followed by the school module (8.7), the regulatory module (8.6), and the youth module (8.5). These rankings are at:

http://cop.extension.org/wiki/CoP_Ratings_of_Future_Imported_Fire_Ant_eXtension_Projects

In Year 2, we request funding to develop the youth module of Imported Fire Ant eXtension in 2007 under the direction of Dr. Paul Nester and Patty Beckley. The CoP has access to several quality, youth-oriented products about imported fire ants and will review and adapt the best of the best for eXtension. This module would make available elements from KIDzANTS developed initially by the Texas Imported Fire Ant Research and Management Plan, a coloring book (“The Hidden Truth About Fire Ants”) and a CD-ROM (“Ants Underground”) developed earlier by the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. New youth products such as close-up ant anatomy, a new ant model and other educational materials developed by the team of CoP content providers will be developed and added. Ultimately, this module can include computer games, flash videos, and instructions for fire ant related activities such as constructing models of fire ants and fire ant mounds, making fire ant mound casts, and ideas for science projects. More information on participants in this project can be found at:

http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Learning_Modules_on_Imported_Fire_Ants_for_Youth

Other Deliverables in Year 2: Co-Leaders Flanders and Drees will work with eXtension staff, members of the Imported Fire Ant CoP, and leaders within the CoI to market Imported Fire Ant eXtension and to continue developing our sustainability plan.

Members of the Imported Fire Ant CoP will work with the Urban IPM CoP to launch the Fire Ant Management in Schools decision module, with anticipated delivery at the time of public launch of the Urban IPM eXtension site (Sept. 2007?). More information on the School IPM decision module:

[http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Imported Fire Ant Management for Schools](http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Imported_Fire_Ant_Management_for_Schools)

At least two publications will be added to the site in 2007. The CoP has been asked to submit materials for consideration to be the "best of the best." As these materials are identified, they will be added to Imported Fire Ant eXtension.

Timeline: The following will be implemented in 2007 as follows:

January-December 2007: Work on Sustainability of the CoP

April 2007: Urban and Cattle Decision Modules and Publications, Bait Basics Publication

April 23-25, Official Launch of Imported Fire Ant eXtension

April 26, 2007: eXtension work day

April-December 2006: Marketing of the Imported Fire ANt eXtension Site

September 2007: Delivery of the School IPM decision module

Dec. 2007: Delivery of the Youth Module, Co-Leaders P. Nester and P. Beckley

Dec. 2007: Delivery of two more fire ant "Publications"

Deliverables in Year 2 or Year 3:

We propose to commit to developing the Master Gardener Learning Module and the Regulatory Module beginning in 2007 with completion no later than 2008. No added funding is requested for these two team efforts. Two work teams have volunteered to produce these modules for eXtension, but because no funding from eXtension was requested, we will "take delivery" of these modules whenever they are ready.

Information on the Master Gardener Team:

[http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Master Gardener Learning Module: Imported Fire Ant Biology and Management](http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Master_Gardener_Learning_Module:_Imported_Fire_Ant_Biology_and_Management)

Information on the Regulatory Team:

[http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Regulatory Decision Module](http://cop.extension.org/wiki/Regulatory_Decision_Module)

Deliverables in Year 3: More decision modules, which may include school IPM, public use turf, and community-wide fire ant management are anticipated. An assessment of Imported Fire Ant eXtension should also be warranted to document impact and identify areas for improvement. In Year 3, we hope to expand our eXtension intranet resources. We anticipate these materials would be available to trainers for use as reference materials, lesson plans, slide sets, and other resources to help teach others about fire ant biology and management.

Duration: January 1, 2007 through December 31, 2007

Main Budget for: Imported Fire Ants eXtension Community of Practice

A. Salaries and Wages:		
1. a. Project Director:	0	
b. Co-PD:	0	
c. Other Senior-Associates:	0	
2. a. Other Professionals:	0	
b. Secretarial-Clerical:	0	
c. Other:	0	
B. Fringe Benefits: (for each position as applicable)		0 0
C. Total Salaries, Wages, & Fringe Benefits: (A plus B)		0
D. Non-expendable equipment:		
E. Materials and Supplies:		
F. Travel:		2,808
G. Publication costs/Page Charges:		
H. Computer (APDE) Costs:		
I. All Other Direct Costs:		27,192
translation services	3,800	
Texas Cooperative Extension	20,545	
Louisiana subcontract	2,847	
J. Total Direct Costs (C-I):		30,000

Budget Narrative

F. Travel:	2,808
travel for three people to attend the Imported Fire Ant Conference in Gainesville, FL (registration fee \$150, hotel 3 nights @ \$85 per night, meals \$34 per day, average plane fare 395)	
I. All Other Direct Costs:	
translation services, 38,000 words @\$0.10 per word	3,800
Texas Cooperative Extension subcontract (see TCE budget)	20,545
Louisiana subcontract (see Louisiana budget)	2847
J. Total Direct Costs (C-I):	30,000

Texas Cooperative Extension Subcontract for: Imported Fire Ants eXtension Community of Practice

A. Salaries and Wages:	
1. a. Project Director:	
b. Co-PD:	
c. Other Senior-Associates:	
2. a. Other Professionals in part \$17,000/year:	15,300
b. Secretarial-Clerical:	
c. Other:	
 B. Fringe Benefits:	 4942
(for each position as applicable: 16.1% plus insurance \$459 per month times 50%)	
 C. Total Salaries, Wages, & Fringe Benefits:	 20,242
(A plus B)	
 D. Non-expendable equipment:	
 E. Materials and Supplies:	 303
 F. Travel:	
 G. Publication costs/Page Charges:	
 H. Computer (APDE) Costs:	
 I. All Other Direct Costs:	
 J. Total Direct Costs (C-I):	 20,545

Budget Narrative

A. Salaries and Wages in part:	
Extension assistant, 45% time for 12 months @ \$17,000 per year	15,300
 B. Fringe Benefits:	
16.1% of salary plus \$459 per month for health insurance	4942
 C. Total Salaries, Wages, & Fringe Benefits:	 20,242
 E. Materials and Supplies:	
3 web cams at \$101 each	303
 J. Total Direct Costs (C-I):	 20,545

Louisiana Subcontract for: Imported Fire Ants eXtension Community of Practice

A. Salaries and Wages:	
1. a. Project Director:	
b. Co-PD:	
c. Other Senior-Associates:	
2. a. Other Professionals:	0
b. Secretarial-Clerical:	
c. Other:	
 B. Fringe Benefits:	 0
(for each position as applicable)	
 C. Total Salaries, Wages, & Fringe Benefits:	 0
(A plus B)	
 D. Non-expendable equipment:	 0
 E. Materials and Supplies:	 1500
 F. Travel:	 1347
 G. Publication costs/Page Charges:	
 H. Computer (APDE) Costs:	
 I. All Other Direct Costs:	
 J. Total Direct Costs (C-I):	 2847

Budget Narrative

A. Wages: Fire ant youth education team members' institutions will be asked to provide in-kind support for the time needed for their active participation in the CoP.	0
E. Supplies: Supplies will be in the form of printed materials, graphics and artwork, cd/dvd copies, video and appropriate software for development of youth module.	1500
Travel by P. Beckley and other LSU AgCenter team members to work with other team members or with eXtension staff, approximately two 3-day trips at \$673.50 per trip (ave. air fare 321.50, average vehicle mileage \$82, average meals \$40 per day, average lodging \$75 per night)	1347