According to a 1998 study conducted by Dr. Curtis Lard et al., from the Department of Agricultural Economics, TX A&M University, of red imported fire ant (Solenopsis invicta) related costs in Galax, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston, red imported fire ants have serious economic effects for these metro areas of Texas. Households experienced the largest costs among sectors examined with a average of $151 per households spent annually which included repairs to property and equipment, first-aid, pesticides, baits, and professional services. A full damage assessment for Texas must include additional sectors and the estimated costs of $381 million per year for the selected sectors underscores the impact of this pest. Treatment costs accounted for over 50% of this total cost. In Houston the average medical treatment costs per household of $24.46. The duration of injury for children and adults was 6.6 days and 5.6 days, respectively. Education of the general public about health and safety issues concerning fire ants is important. Understanding fire ant biology is essential before the public can understand the specifics of how baiting products work, and the concepts that make up the baiting program that the Texas Cooperative Extension recommends for the control of the fire ant. Innovative methods for the presentation of concepts are always needed so teachers/volunteers can accurately present information on fire ants in a method that is both appealing to the respective audience and satisfying to the teacher/volunteer. Focusing on elementary students can be an excellent avenue for getting a message concerning fire ants and fire ant safety home to parents. The KIDzANTS curriculum with educational CD and website (http://kidzants.tamu.edu) was developed, containing six ‘learning experiences’ to educate young children about the fire ant. This curriculum includes 6 lessons covering the introduction of the fire ant to the United States, morphology, life cycle (queen, workers, brood, and mating flight), mound development (single vs multiple queen and structure), identification versus other ant species, impact on wildlife, health and safety issues, and the diet of the fire ant. Activities requiring total class involvement have been included. Students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade science classes are targeted.

Why

Develop

KIDzANTS

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