The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with current updates on fruit fly populations in the Kamuela & Kula area. We hope this information will be useful to you.

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Green Vegetation Overwhelms Kula

Heavy rains, increased vegetation, and a reduction in sanitation practices over the holiday season are all contributing factors to the build up of melon fly populations in the lower Kula region of the grid. Based on historical HAW-FLYPM data, trap catches are at there highest during the months of January-March. While monitoring data collected from male lure traps throughout Kula indicate melon flies are present throughout the grid, data appears to reveal that majority of the melon flies are found on or surrounding farming areas.

What is HAW-FLYPM doing to help suppress this problem?

Currently, two of four potential melon fly suppression technologies are in effect in Kula. They are: 1) field sanitation and 2) GF-120 protein bait applications. The two outstanding fruit fly suppression technologies include, male annihilation and sterile and parasitoid insect releases. During the week of February 4, 2002, UH entomologist, Ronald Mau and extension agent, Robin Shimabuku will be visiting several farms within Kula to assess the grower’s utilization and commitment to implementing sanitation and GF-120 recommendations.

While some growers persist to keep their fields clean from culled fruit and are diligent with their GF-120 applications, they are still noticing an increase in fruit fly damage. Due to the close proximity of farms in Kula, fruit fly suppression in one location will not have a sustainable impact, without an area wide or collaborative effort. Therefore, HAW-FLYPM crewmembers will begin to employ male annihilation techniques in the lower Kula region to safeguard active HAW-FLYPM cooperators.

We need everyone’s help!

Please help your neighbors and yourselves. A focused effort by everyone is required to reduce the melon fly numbers. First on the list is to properly dispose of culled fruits. Do not leave the fruits in the field. Remember four buckets of fruit can produce more than 4,000 flies. Melon flies can live for several months so we need to be on top of this. GF-120 bait is NOT magic. You must use the product according to HAW-FLYPM recommendations.