Cucumber Growers Gain Control over Melon Fly
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Cucumber is one of the important melon fly host crops on the island of Oahu. Oahu farmers report that the cucumber production loss due to melon fly could be as high as 60% if intensive crop protection measures are not taken. HAW-FLYPM cooperators are currently utilizing male melon fly trapping with cuelure, field sanitation (in this case, either plowing the field soon after the final harvest or burning the crop residue) and application of GF-120 on the border plants during the crop production period.

Despite all the above protective efforts, fly numbers were not reduced as expected. In fact, the trap catches were higher in areas with most recent crop harvest. We reported in the previous newsletter that melon fly populations are showing an interesting pattern: the number of flies caught in the monitoring traps increases dramatically following crop harvest and then declines to a very low level within two months. Based on this information, we suggested that farmers continue weekly GF-120 border crop applications for about 8 weeks after the completion of harvest and/or plow the harvested fields. This new practice was first implemented in early June 2003. Within three weeks a cooperating farmer realized that the fly catch was reduced to one-third of the catches before this practice was adopted (Figure 1). The cooperating farmer is convinced that continuation of spraying GF-120 for at least six weeks after final crop harvest was the key technique to reducing melon fly populations.

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Figure 1

Fruit Fly Infestation in Cucumber at a Kunia Farm

Figure 2