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Committed to a New American Theatre realized through Cross-Cultural Casting

A&M team tests hormone to kill household fleas

By Patti Easterling
 Reporter

Two Texas A&M researchers have discovered a product that they hope will make that common household pest, the flea, no longer a bother.

A&M entomologist Roger Meola and his research assistant, Kathleen Palma, are testing a synthetic hormone known as an insect growth regulator that inhibits the fleas' maturation.

Palma said the synthetic hormone was created by a Japanese company and is intended to mimic the natural juvenile hormone the flea produces.

When an insect moves from the larva (childhood) stage to the adult stage, it loses the juvenile hormones it produces, she said.

The insect growth regulator, commonly called an IGR, acts on the insect at the larval stage and blocks further development, causing the flea to remain at the immature stage.

It is not until the adult stage that the fleas become the bothersome creature that creates havoc in pets' and pet owners' lives.

Palma calls the reaction to IGR the "Peter Pan Syndrome," because it actually stops the insect from growing up.

"The synthetic hormone interrupts the normal maturation process before the flea is old enough to bite or reproduce," Palma said.

IGR seems to be most effective on

fleas, but it also is being tested on cockroaches and fire ants.

Meola and Palma have been testing the effects of IGR at A&M since the summer of 1987, but toxicity and safety studies of IGR have been in process for the last 20 years.

Meola said the benefits of IGR should outweigh those of conventional pesticides because of its safety and the amount of time it remains effective.

Palma said the hormone can work only on insects.

Meola said, "It has a very low rate of toxicity, which makes it safe for humans and other animals that conventional pesticides might harm."

In the past, it was impractical to treat outdoor areas with pesticides because they break down and become ineffective when exposed to sunlight, Meola said.

"Testing being done on IGR has shown it to be up to 30 times more effective than conventional pesticides when exposed to sunlight," he said.

Field testing is being conducted in yards of local pet-owners, and Palma has discovered that IGR can reduce the number of adult fleas in a yard by as much as 90 percent.

Palma estimates that it will be at least another year before the product is available for commercial use.

"It will probably be released in a small market area, such as for pest controllers and veterinarians, before it is released for commercial use," she said.

Deer hunters outgun, outman forest officials

Forest service officials in East Texas say law enforcement officers are outmanned, outnumbered and outgunned as they try to cope with problems caused by the annual invasion of deer hunters.

"It's scary as hell," Billy Ball, special agent for the U.S. Forest Service, said Thursday. "These guys are carrying cannons, and we're regulated by policy with six-shooting pop pistols."

"You've got six shots. And some of them have got bandoleers," shoulder belts with ammunition pockets.

Officials point to shrinking availability of public hunting lands and rising prices for deer leases as reasons for increased pressure in the state's four national forests — Sabine, Davy Crockett, Angelina and Sam Houston — all in East Texas.

"I wouldn't go out there myself nor take my family," Carl Gidlund, a U.S. Forest Service public information officer, said. "It's turning into an arsenal out there."

Firearms deer season began last weekend and continues through Jan. 2. Last year, Texas for the first time moved past Pennsylvania to become the nation's leader in the number of hunting licenses issued.

For Forest Service officials, the first weekend included death threats against officers, fights between hunters arguing over a deer, the wounding of a 14-year-boy by a hunter firing at a wounded deer,

discovery of an unconscious hunter who fell 30 feet from an illegal deer blind, investigation of illegal blockades set up by some hunters to keep other hunters off public land, and alcohol and drug use.

"What's changed on the forest is that we're seeing a lot of military weapons," Ball said. "We're seeing people moving away from the traditional weapons to a military look, dress, weapons. We call it 'the Rambo syndrome.' They get their faces painted up and they're wild looking."

On Thursday, officials were investigating incidents of nails spread over some federal forest roads.

"We presume it's people trying to keep other people out of their 'exclusive' hunting areas," Gidlund said. "One witness said he picked up 20 pounds of nails."

On Wednesday night, three hunters told authorities they were ordered — at gunpoint — from national forest land by other hunters.

"It's locals who say 'My daddy and my granddaddy hunted here and you city slickers aren't hunting here,'" according to Ball. "And we have to referee these things."

Ball said he advises his officers, who are equipped with six-shot .357-caliber Magnum pistols, to wear fluorescent orange vests so they will be seen in the woods.

Plan to seal cargo trucks instigates concern

EL PASO (AP) — U.S. Customs will allow trucks sealed in a Mexican factory to zip through inspection in a pilot program that one inspector called ludicrous and an open invitation to smuggling.

In a program similar to one instituted last month in Brownsville, U.S. Customs will allow security personnel employed by a Ciudad Juarez, Mexico wire factory to certify that the plant's trucks are free of drugs.

The trucks' door locks will be sealed and most of the trucks will be waved through Customs without inspections.

Mike Mack, Customs district director, said the idea is to speed up the flow of

trucks across the Rio Grande between Juarez and El Paso, which is the busiest port of entry along the U.S.-Mexican border.

About 650 to 800 trucks leave Juarez maquiladoras, or twin plants, daily to cross the bridge to El Paso.

Trucks have been known to wait more than six hours to clear U.S. Customs.

Customs assistant district director William Nowak said Thursday, "What we're trying to do (with the plan to seal cargo) is identify the safe shipments and expedite them through, which will give us more time to inspect the risky shipments."

During a 90-day pilot program, 15 security employees at the Packard Electric twin plant in Juarez will inspect shipments of wire harnesses leaving the plant for the United States.

"They will seal the doors and the trucks will pass through Customs unopened, subject to spot checks."

"If during the security screening process, if (Packard employees) should find drugs aboard the shipments, they will notify Mexican aduana (Customs) and they have a number to call U.S. Customs," Nowak said.

Packard spokesman Richard Hamilton said the company sends about 15 trucks to the United States daily.

Mack said that if the program deemed successful, it might be expanded to other companies.

Although U.S. and Mexican customs officials and Packard Electric security fident drugs won't be "piggybacked" aboard shipments, Customs inspector Charles Giunta isn't so sure.

"This is about the most ludicrous I've seen," Giunta, head of the El Paso local of the National Treasury Employees Union, said. "This is an open invitation to smuggling."

What's Up

- Friday**
- UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES:** will have a Bible study at 6:15 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church.
 - STUDENTS AGAINST APARTHEID:** will meet at 4 p.m. at Rudder fountain for an anti-apartheid march across campus and to city hall.
 - LATTER-DAY SAINTS STUDENTS ASSOCIATION:** Richard E. Hall, 1st counselor of the Houston Mission will speak during the sandwich seminar at noon in the Institute Building.
 - HILLEL JEWISH STUDENT CENTER:** will have a freshman/newcomer dinner at 6:30 p.m. and service at 8 p.m. at the Hillel Building.
 - ZEN MEDIATION GROUP:** will have a lecture on Buddhism at 4 p.m. at the College Station Community Center.
 - WESLEY FOUNDATION:** will leave for the fall retreat at 5 p.m. from the Wesley Foundation.
 - ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** call the Center for Drug Prevention and Education at 845-0280 for details on today's meeting.
 - INTERVARSITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP:** John Watson will speak at "Finding Peace in a Christian Life" at 8:30 p.m. in 510 Rudder.
 - ET ALIA DANCE SOCIETY:** will meet and practice from 7-9 p.m. in 266 Pavilion.
 - STUDENT ACTIVITIES SEMINAR:** Applications for the 1989 Speakers Series are available through Nov. 22 in 208 Pavilion.
 - STUDENT Y YOUTH FUN DAY:** Applications for counselors and coaches are available through Nov. 18 in 211 Pavilion.
- Saturday**
- SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS:** will have a broadcast workshop from 10 a.m.-noon and from 1-3 p.m. in 214 Reed McDonald.
 - representatives from KBTX-TV will answer questions and look at tapes and summaries.
 - TAMU VOICES OF PRAISE:** will have a musical of gospel choirs from 7 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium.
 - COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE:** will have a chili cook-out and tournament games from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. at Central Park.
 - CHINESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** will have the 1988 Chinese Film Festival in 201 MSC. "Thank You! Sir" will be shown at 7 p.m. and "Rouge of the North" will begin at 9 p.m. Admission is free and the movies are English subtitled.
 - STUDENT Y/AGGIE FRIENDS:** will have an activity for Bryan-College Station children. For more information call the Student Y office at 845-0690.
- Sunday**
- BRAZOS VALLEY ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP:** Claudia DeBauge, a doctoral student from the College of Agriculture, will speak at "Supportive environments for mentally impaired older adults" at 3 p.m. in the Medical Sciences.
 - RIO BRAZOS AUDUBON SOCIETY:** will have a bird walk from 8-10 a.m. in Hensel Park.
 - CHINESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** will have the 1988 Chinese Film Festival in 201 MSC. "Chopper and the Six Friends" will be shown at 1 p.m. and "Peas Between Two Chinas" will begin at 3 p.m.
 - CATHOLIC STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** will have a Bible study at 9:30 a.m. at the St. Mary's student center.
- Monday**
- MSC SCONA:** will have an informational meeting for students applying for on-campus jobs at 8:30 p.m. in 224 MSC.
 - SOCIETY OF MANUFACTURING ENGINEERS:** will meet at 5:30 p.m. in the Thompson.
 - BLACK AWARENESS COMMITTEE:** will have a fashion show rehearsal at 8:30 p.m. in 226 MSC.
 - BRAZOS VALLEY GUITAR SOCIETY:** Gerald Blakeman will play jazz and classical guitar selections at 7:45 p.m. at the Canterbury House, 902 University.
 - ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** call the Center for Drug Prevention and Education at 845-0280 for details on today's meeting.
 - MSC VISUAL ARTS:** will have a reception for artist Alfredo Bustinza at 7 p.m. in the MSC gallery.
 - OCA SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE:** will meet at 6 p.m. in 231 MSC.
 - COLLEGIATE 4-H:** will meet at 8 p.m. in 123 Kleberg.
 - PHI ETA SIGMA:** will meet at 6 p.m. at Mama's Pizza.
 - FISH CAMP:** applications for chairpersons will be accepted through Nov. 18.

In Advance

Christmas workshop registration opens

Registration for Christmas workshop classes sponsored by MSC University Plus begins Monday at 10 a.m. in the University Plus Craft Center, located in the MSC basement.

For an additional \$1 fee, registration by phone is available beginning Nov. 15 at 10 a.m.

Classes will offer instruction in making ornaments, Christmas stockings, potpourri, painted T-shirts, garberbread houses and candy, among other crafts and foods.

Registration is open to anyone 18 years or older.

For more information or to register, call 845-1631.

HEY OFF CAMPUS AGS!
 If your lease ends in December, give your apartment manager a written notice of your intent to vacate the unit 30 days before your lease expires. Do this even if you plan to renew your lease for spring. If you have any questions, visit the Off Campus Center located in Puryear Hall, or call 845-1741.

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DO YOU NEED A ROOMMATE FOR SPRING?

The Off Campus Center will offer three roommate sessions:

Tuesday, November 29
Wednesday, November 7
Tuesday, January 17

All sessions will be held at 5:00 p.m. in the Off Campus Center, Puryear Hall, across from the YMCA Building.

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