

**Alabama Field Operations to Eradicate  
*C. cactorum* Populations on Leading Edge**

Joel Floyd, Team Leader, Emergency Planning

USDA, APHIS, PPQ

4700 River Road, Unit 137, Riverdale, MD 20782

The control program for *C. cactorum* in the Southeastern United States consists of creating a barrier to prevent the westward movement of *C. cactorum* along the US Gulf Coast. The tactics up to now have included sanitation, host removal, and sterile release. Sanitation is the physical removal of infected plant parts. This contrasts with the complete removal of the entire plant, which is host removal. These practices reduce the population of *C. cactorum* and eliminate the availability of host plants for oviposition by native mated females. Reducing the native populations of insects by sanitation and host removal helps create conditions that result in a greater over-flooding ratio of released sterile moths to native moths, thus increasing the chances of success at that the sterile insect technique will reduce the native population and result in eradication over time. The Alabama field operations have been a joint effort between the USDA Agriculture Research Service (ARS) and USDA, APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ). ARS has handled sanitation, host removal, and sterile release on Dauphin Island and Little Dauphin Island. PPQ has been involved in host removal at Ft. Morgan, Alabama and ARS has released some steriles there. All steriles released are reared at the ARS laboratory in Tifton, GA. Host removal has been by hand in most locations, but because of large quantities of *Opuntia stricta* around Ft. Morgan and the adjacent Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, mechanized removal using a front end loader has occurred. These areas are critical habitat for the Alabama beach mouse, *Peromyscus polionotus ammobates* and consultation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service.