

## **'Urban Legends in Pest Control' at the Southeast Pest Management Conference**

by Philip G. Koehler & Roberto Pereira

**T**he 13th Annual Southeast Pest Management Conference will be held on May 5, 6, and 7, 2008, at the Physics Building on the University of Florida Campus. The theme for this year's conference will be "Urban Legends in Pest Control." This year we are really highlighting the activities of our students and faculty — even more than in the past. Our University of Florida students compete with graduates of other universities every year for jobs. Companies and other universities want to hire the best, and they search the world for the best. Every year, our students win these highly coveted jobs. When you come to the meeting, you will see our winners talk about their research and accomplishments. When you attend this meeting you are watching the competition for the game of life and the busting of myths about "Urban Legends in Pest Control."

Think about some of the Urban Legends that your customers believe. Wouldn't you like to know more about these myths? The biggest "urban legend" is about love bugs and that researchers at the University of Florida introduced these pests as part of a research project. Don't believe it. Another "urban legend" is that earwigs crawl into your ears and eat out your brain. (It may help your business if your customers believe THAT.)

Have you heard that cockroaches can cause diarrhea in cats? Well cat diarrhea may be beneficial to flush their system and rejuvenate them. I can see them running to the kitty litter tray now! Not all urban legends are so easily debunked. We will take them on as part of our program.

On Monday, we will address some of the most important issues facing the pest management industry. We will present the latest information on ants, especially taking some time to present recent findings on the super colony ants like Caribbean crazy ants, bigheaded ants, ghost ants, and others. These ants give new meaning to the term "Super Size Me."

One of the fastest growing segments of pest control is generic pesticides. Do you know what our findings are with generic pesticides compared with the branded ones? We will tell you how you can tell a generic from a branded product.

Cockroaches are on the rebound; they are refusing to eat bait. We will be presenting research comparing the newest baits that have been formulated to overcome cockroach bait aversion and insecticide resistance. Bedbugs are a growing problem, and we will present the newest research on their behavior and control. As a result of the public's fear of mosquito-borne disease (West Nile Virus), we have been conducting research to develop new methods of flying insect control. We will present the latest information on fly and mosquito control products for the pest control industry.

On Tuesday, we will cover termite control issues. Where have all the termites gone? We will be presenting the latest research results on the ways termites enter and damage houses. We will emphasize termite effects on efficiency of building construction materials. You need to pass this information along to your customers so they understand the importance of having a current termite contract. FDACS will present the latest information about regulation of the pest control industry in Florida.

Borate treatment of structural wood probably now accounts for more than 80 percent of new construction treatment of houses for termite control. We are going to present some of the problems with borate treatment and solutions for doing the job better. Other topics include how we collect termites for research and our observations on how well field colonies are faring. We will also cover how termites damage insulation and their effect on thermal properties. You can't afford to miss these topics!

In the afternoon we will have presentations on fumigation. CORE training will emphasize complying with DACS regulations with emphasis on termiticides.

On Wednesday, we will have the annual canine termite detection course set up to evaluate dog/handler teams for detecting termites. At the same time we will have a session on lawn and ornamental pest control. CORE instruction for the lawn and ornamental industry will be presented. You won't want to miss these presentations.

Industry exhibitors will bring their newest materials and equipment. At every break and during lunch, you will have the opportunity to meet with knowledgeable representatives of the companies that supply your pest management needs.

Except for Monday when we have the barbeque, evenings are free so you can visit with friends and meet friends to discuss "Urban Legends in Pest Control."

Remember, the conference is designed to fit your needs — you can attend all 3 days of the conference, you can attend 2 days, or you can attend one day. The best part of the program is interacting with people who are interested, involved, and dedicated to improving the pest management industry. We are looking forward to seeing you here at the University of Florida for the biggest and best Southeast Pest Management Conference yet.

Look for the brochure in your mailbox or contact **Glinda Burnett** at Southeast Pest Management Conference, PO Box 110620, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611 or phone 352-392-1901 ext 142 to register for the conference.

*Contact Philip G Koehler, PhD, FPMA Endowed Professor at the University of Florida, Department of Entomology at (352) 392-2484; [pgk@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:pgk@ifas.ufl.edu). Roberto Pereira, PhD, is an Associate Research Scientist at the Dept. of Entomology, University of Florida; (352) 392-2326; [rpereira@ufl.edu](mailto:rpereira@ufl.edu)*