

U.S. nearly free from weevil threat

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There is finally a light at the end of the tunnel for a \$2.4 billion program aimed at eradicating weevils throughout the United States, it was reported.

The Memphis Commercial-Appeal said Sunday that the National Cotton Council-proposed program has made great strides -- and if all goes as planned, the last weevil in the United States should be dead by 2010.

The recent success comes after U.S. residents have spent more than a century battling the pesky insects, which have caused more than \$100 billion in damage to the agricultural economy.

Auburn University professor Ron Smith said the weevil's impact on the United States has been astronomical in a historical context.

"The coming of the weevil, as far as the influence on the economy and society, was probably second in relation to the Civil War (in shaping the South)," he said.

The Commercial-Appeal said the turning point in the battle against weevils came when officials began to take into account the insects' increased sex drive in relation to timed chemical sprayings.

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