Mighty predatory mite and oil sprays may save eggplant production in Micronesia

August 24 2010

Guam has been an important military, communication, aviation, and shipping hub of Micronesia for many years. The importation of vegetables from Korea and the Philippines has resulted in the arrival of several invasive mite species.

Dr. Reddy and his team will develop, demonstrate and facilitate the adoption of farm pest management practices in eggplant farming that will enable growers to transition away from the use of high-risk pesticides including Dicofol and Carbaryl. An Integrated Pest Management system (IPM) will be developed and tested through the introduction of a predatory mite, *Neoseiulus californicus* and the use of petroleum spray oils. The expected results of implementing the IPM will be a measured reduction in the rate of pesticide usage by eggplant farmers in the region.

"This research is the second phase of the eggplant/mite/insect pests study. The first phase was funded by US EPA which allowed us to look at the effects of petroleum sprays on the predatory mite and now we can apply what we learned to developing a successful IPM," says Reddy. The research results will be shared with other Pacific island farmers and places where tropical agriculture is practiced.

The study will examine economic comparison for growers using conventional practices and suggested IPM systems. Growers will be educated in the use of IPM practices as a way to assure improved eggplant production resulting in higher income for farmers. Consumers,

farmers, and the environment benefit from Dr. Reddy's work.

Provided by University of Guam