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INSECTICIDES PLAY ROLE IN GREATLY REDUCING CALIFORNIA CROP LOSSES
New National Study Previewed at California Plant and Soil Conference

FRESNO, CA – “California crops, such as artichokes, asparagus, avocados, dates, nectarines, olives, peaches, pears, pistachios, and walnuts, benefit from the application of insecticides which protect crop yields,” says Leonard Gianessi, director of CropLife Foundation’s Crop Protection Research Institute (CPRI). “Without the use of insecticides, many California crops would suffer large losses from insect pests.”

Previewing the results of a new national insecticide benefit study for California crops at the American Society of Agronomy’s (ASA) Plant and Soil Conference Tuesday, February 3, Gianessi cites the \$300 million California farmers spend annually on insecticides, accounting for 20 percent of the US total, to prevent damage from crop-feeding insects. The resulting increase in crop production, a total of 28 billion pounds, means an advantage to food consumers of 474 million pounds of almonds, 569 million pounds of peaches, 163 million pounds of onions and 42 million pounds of asparagus – a direct benefit of insecticide use on California farms.

Gianessi reports that 60 to 99 percent of most fruit, nut and vegetable crops in California are sprayed with insecticides annually, a regular practice for nearly 100 years. Gianessi notes that the historical record is clear: “Before the widespread use of insecticides, yield losses were significant, often rendering 50 percent of the crop unmarketable.”

In summarizing the study, Gianessi pointed out that, “Insects are a relentless foe. Insecticides protect plants from insects that feed on them preventing the huge losses in yield that were common before insecticides were developed.”

The ASA conference is being held at the Piccadilly Inn University in Fresno. The website for the conference is: <http://calasa.ucdavis.edu>. A summary of Leonard Gianessi’s presentation and his slide show are available at:

http://www.croplifefoundation.org/cpri_articles.htm.

The complete national insecticide benefit study covering 50 crops nationally will be released by the Crop Protection Research Institute in early March, 2009. The Study is funded by CropLife America and its member companies.

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The Crop Protection Research Institute (CPRI) is a non-advocacy research and educational unit of the CropLife Foundation. Established in January 2004, CPRI focuses on documenting the reasons why US farmers use pesticides. CPRI's studies are regularly endorsed by numerous crop commodity organizations.
<http://www.croplifefoundation.org>