**Fall Fire Ant Control with Extension Entomologists Kelly Loftin and John Hopkins**

“My name is Kelly Loftin and I’m an Extension Entomologist. We’re going to talk a little bit about fire ant control in the fall.

Fall is still a good time to treat fire ants. We just want to make sure the ants are still actively foraging and to do that, we will put down little pieces of hot dog or even potato chips to see if they’re actively gathering food. A good rule of thumb is, once the ground temperature gets below 60F, there’s going to be less foraging. If there’s less foraging, the chances of getting a good bait application decline so that’s kind of what we’re going to show here is some fire ants foraging here in a few minutes. Generally, we will put the bait out which in this case we put some hot dogs out and some potato chips, see what in terms of fire ants you see in about 15-30 minutes.

As far as some of the bait options that folks use around here and across the state, you’ve got fire ant baits that are actual toxins. Some of them are fast acting and some of them are slower acting. For example, Amdro. It’ll take about three weeks to get control but it’s an actual toxin. Advion is one of the faster acting baits and you can get control in a matter of days with it. On the other hand, you have products that are insect growth regulators and what they will do, once it gets into the colony and the queen gets a dose of it, she no longer lays viable eggs, so it’s an insect growth regulator. They last about the same amount of time, and it’s good control, but you’ve got to be patient. They may take six weeks to get good control. There’s also a product that is a combination of an insect growth regulator and a toxin and it’s called Extinguish Plus. So, we’ve got several products that are available to homeowners and producers that they can buy and put out. One advantage to a fall application, especially if you’re doing some you-pick-it type operations, things like that, for produce that is going to be harvested in the spring, you can do a fall application to reduce your numbers for that following spring. It helps a lot. Most of those types of products would be like Extinguish which is an insect growth regulator, and it’s labeled across many crops. There’s another one that can be used called Esteem. That would be kind of what someone doing some gardening or maybe a small truck patch (would use), something like that, where they want control the next spring.”

“Hi, I’m John Hopkins, I’m the Extension Urban Entomologist.

This is an Earthway seeder, small seed seeder for spreading very small seed, but it also works very well for fire ant bait. And if you’ll look inside, if you can see, there’s a gate. Can you see that gate opening and closing? You close it down so that you put the right amount of material out. You’ll fill the bag with fire ant bait. And you’ve got it closed, when you get ready to start, you’ll be going down a row, you’ll open the gate and you’ll start spreading. You can see the twirler that would be slinging the bait out. And basically, that’s all there is to applying a bait.”

(Return to Kelly Loftin)

“We put these baits (hot dogs) out probably ten minutes ago and you can see they’re already covered in fire ants. This would indicate that it’s still a good time to treat. They’re actively foraging. There is a difference between actively foraging and knocking the top off a mound and seeing ants come up. You want them to be actively foraging. Even in the middle of winter on a warm day, you can disturb a colony and hundreds of ants will come out. That doesn’t mean they’re gathering food though. You want to see them gathering this food; you want to see them on the hot dog, and that will tell you it’s a good time to treat.”