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## BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF WEEVILS AND WHITEGRUBS ON BANANAS AND SUGARCANE IN THE CARIBBEAN

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### ABSTRACT

This review examines the major weevil and whitegrub pests on bananas and sugarcane of present economic concern in the Caribbean, as well as the various categories of biocontrol agents. It discusses their roles in reducing populations of these pest. Several successful biocontrol agents are presented together with recently obtained information that may affect practical biocontrol. Some directions of future research in this field are predicted. Emphasis will be made on *Cosmopolites sordidus* on banana and *Diaprepes abbreviatus* on sugarcane, targets of the main biological control attempts.

### RESUMEN

Se revisan las mayores plagas coleopteras del suelo en banano y caña de azucar. Estas plagas representan un problema de tipo economico, y se consideran aqui varias categorias de control biologico. Se discute su importancia en la reduccion de las poblaciones de estas plagas. Se presenta informacion reciente la cual puede afectar el uso practico de varios agentes de control biologico. Se dan sugerencias y predicciones sobre la futura investigacion en esta area. El mayor enfasis de la investigacion en control biologico debe ser en las plagas mas importantes, *Cosmopolites sordidus* en banano y *Diaprepes abbreviatus* en caña de azucar.

Banana and sugarcane are traditional cash crops in the Caribbean and generate substantial foreign revenue from their export. The increasing pressure felt by developing countries to expand local production has forced adoption of plant production technologies from industrialized countries, such as intensive chemical control. Unfortunately, the short term benefits derived from the increased use of pesticides are given priority over the long term benefits of alternative methods of plant protection. The negative effects of pesticides are well documented and include induced resistance, emergence of secondary pests, reduced populations of beneficial insects, as well as increased human and environmental health hazards. With the increasing costs of developing new pesticides, countries are researching alternatives to chemicals. Future crop protection in the tropics must now concentrate on biological control.

Weevils and whitegrub pests of sugarcane and bananas (Table 1) are well known to cause extensive damages in the Caribbean. Many weevils and grubs, although maintained at economically acceptable levels by chemicals in some regions, have populations levels which cause serious damage (Gruner 1975, Alam et al. 1991). Several review articles with extensive literature citations published during the past three to four decades demonstrate the dramatic increase of research efforts, and awareness of the impor-

TABLE 1. WEEVIL AND WHITEGRUB PESTS OF BANANAS AND SUGARCANE IN THE CARIBBEAN.

Pest	Country
<b>SUGARCANE</b>	
<u>Major Pests</u>	
<b>Curculionidae</b>	
<i>Anacentrinus insularis</i>	Cuba
<i>Diaprepes abbreviatus</i>	Antilles (except Jamaica), Florida, Puerto Rico
<i>Dyscinetus picipis</i>	Cuba
<i>Metamasius sericeus</i>	Cuba
<i>Metamasius</i> sp.	Puerto Rico
<b>Scarabaeidae</b>	
<i>Ligyryus subtropicus</i>	Florida
<i>Phyllophaga smithi</i>	Barbados
<i>Phyllophaga portoricensis</i>	Puerto Rico
<u>Minor Pests</u>	
<b>Scarabaeidae</b>	
<i>Anomala</i> sp.	French Antilles, Florida
<i>Cyclocephala</i> spp.	French Antilles
<i>Cyclocephala parallela</i>	Florida
<i>Ligyryus cuniculus</i>	French Antilles
<i>Phyllophaga patrueloides</i>	French Antilles
<b>BANANAS</b>	
<u>Major Pests</u>	
<b>Curculionidae</b>	
<i>Cosmopolites sordidus</i>	Pantropical
<u>Minor Pests</u>	
<b>Curculionidae</b>	
<i>Metamasius hemipterus</i>	Antilles
<b>Scarabaeidae</b>	
<i>Phyllophaga pleei</i>	French Antilles

TABLE 2. NATURAL ENEMIES OF *COSMOPOLITES SORDIDUS* AND THEIR BIOLOGICAL CONTROL POTENTIAL IN THE CARIBBEAN. (NA-NOT YET ASSESSED)

Natural Enemies	Country	Potential
FUNGI (Delattre & Jean-Bart 1978, Castiñeiras et al. 1990)		
<i>Beauveria bassiana</i> and <i>Metarhizium anisopliae</i>	French Antilles and Florida, Cuba, Brazil	Very Good
HELMINTHS		
Entomopathogenic Nematodes (Kermarrec & Mauléon 1975, Peña & Duncan 1990, Sirjusingh et al. 1990, Figueroa & Roman 1990)		
<i>Heterorhabditis</i> sp.	Guadeloupe, Florida	Good
<i>H. bacteriophora</i>	Guadeloupe, Florida	Results variable
<i>H. heliothidis</i>	Guadeloupe, Florida	Results variable
<i>Steinernema bibionis</i>	Guadeloupe, Florida, P. Rico	None
<i>S. feltiae</i> (= <i>S. carpocapsae</i> )	Guadeloupe, Florida, P. Rico	Good
<i>S. glaseri</i>	Guadeloupe, Florida, P. Rico	None
Plathyhelminths (Becarri 1967)		
Turbellaria		
<i>Geoplana coerulea</i>	Brazil	NA
INSECTS		
Coleoptera (Neuenschwander 1988, Becarri 1967, Peña & Duncan 1990)		
Carabidae		
<i>Propagalarita bicolor</i>	Florida	NA
<i>Scarites</i> sp.	Florida	NA
<i>Plæsius javanus</i>	Trinidad, Jamaica, Cuba	Not established
<i>Hyposolenus lævigatus</i>	Trinidad	NA
<i>Hololepta quadridentata</i>	Trinidad	Established
<i>Hololepta</i> spp.	St. Vincent	NA
<i>Lioderma</i> sp.	Brazil	NA
<i>Platysoma abruptum</i>	Brazil	NA
Dactylosternum		
<i>hydrophiloides</i>	Trinidad	NA
<i>D. abdominalis</i>	Trinidad	NA
<i>D. profundum</i>	Trinidad	NA
<i>D. intermedium</i>	Trinidad	NA
<i>Omicrogiton insularis</i>	Brazil	NA

Silvanidae	<i>Cathartus</i> sp.	Brazil	Not established
Staphylinidae	<i>Belonuchius ferrugatus</i>	Brazil	Not established
	<i>B. quadratus</i>	Brazil	NA
	<i>Leptochirus unicolor</i>	Brazil	Not established
<u>Dermoptera</u>			
Labiduridae	<i>Anisolabis annulipes</i>	Brazil	NA
	<i>Psalis americanum</i>	Brazil	NA
<u>Diptera</u>			
Rhagionidae	<i>Chrysopilus</i> sp.	Brazil	Not established
<u>Hemiptera</u>			
Cydnidae	<i>Geotomus pygmaeus</i>	Brazil	NA
Miridae	<i>Fulvius nigricornis</i>	Brazil	NA
Nabidae	<i>Phorticus pygmaeus</i>	Brazil	NA
Reduviidae	<i>Physoderes curculionis</i>	Brazil	NA
<u>Hymenoptera</u>			
Formicidae	<i>Pheidole megacephala</i>	Cuba	Good (Castiñeiras et al. 1990)
	<i>Tetramorium guineense</i>	Cuba	Very Good (Roche & Abreu 1983)
VERTEBRATES			
Amphibia	<i>Bufo marinus</i>	S. America	NA (Becarri 1967)

tance of biological control of insect pests (Neuenschwander 1988, Alam et al. 1991, Rajabalee 1991, Peña 1991). Several of the early attempts at biological control of these pests failed due to the inadequacy of an information resource base. However, present knowledge on the natural enemies of weevil and whitegrub pests provides valuable information on potential of biocontrol agents in the fields.

#### BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF BANANA PESTS

##### *Cosmopolites sordidus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)

Banana and plantain in the tropical and subtropical regions have been adversely affected by infestations of *Cosmopolites sordidus*. Serious outbreaks have been reported in the last five years in Africa, Australia, Brazil, the Caribbean and S.E. Asia (Arleu & Neto 1984, Prasad & Singh 1987, Neuenschwander 1988). There have also been reports of resistance to the organochlorines (aldrin and dieldrin) which initially offered good control (Wright 1977). Research on the natural enemies of this pest has generated an inventory of natural parasitoids, parasites, predators and pathogens collected from all over the world (Table 2). However, the importance of many of the predators as biocontrol agents remains uncertain and warrants future study. Several early introductions of insects predators such as *Plaesius javanus* (Histeridae) from Fiji, *Dactylosternum hydrophiloides* and *D. abdominalis* (Hydrophilidae) from Malasia into Cuba and Jamaica did not become established (Neuenschwander 1988). Many of these initial introductions were unsuccessful because they were generalist predators, poorly studied before being introduced, and often failed to become acclimatized.

The predaceous ants, *Pheidole megacephala* and *Tetramorium guineense*, are reported to give good levels of control of this pest in Cuba (Castiñeiras et al. 1991, Roche & Abreu 1983). Treatments of nine colonies of *P. megacephala* per hectare (Castiñeiras et al. 1991), resulted in a 55% reduction of the *C. sordidus* population, 65% reduction in banana corn damage and an overall 25% increase in crop yield. This result was comparable to the control achieved by chemical control (59-64%). The high capacity of *T. guineense* for *C. sordidus* larvae as prey results in rapid colonization of banana fields with 83% mortality of larvae in low infestations and 67% in highly infested fields (Roche & Abreu 1983). In Guadeloupe (Jaffé et al. 1990), several species of predaceous ants, such as *Azteca antillana*, which are highly territorial have a negative association with other ant species, and apparently preventing other effective ant species, such as *Tetramorium* spp., from becoming established in banana fields. However, several generalist predator species, such as *Azteca* spp., *Solenopsis geminata*, *Wasmannia auropunctata* and *Pheidole fallax* (Table 3), are present and may already be contributing to some natural control of *C. sordidus* in Guadeloupe.

Local and exotic strains of entomopathogenic nematodes of the Heterorhabditidae and Steinernematidae have been tried against *C. sordidus* adults and larvae (Figueroa 1990, Kermarrec & Mauleon 1975, Peña & Duncan 1991, Sirjusingh et al. 1991). These nematodes are very effective against the larval stages but less effective against the adults, which unfortunately are the soil target (Fig. 1). Kermarrec and Mauléon (1975) demonstrated a significant positive relationship between the dose of *Steinernema carpocapsae* (Agriotos strain) applied and mortality of the adult weevil (Fig. 2). Figueroa (1990) obtained up to 50% mortality of 6-7th instar larvae in infected corms using *S. carpocapsae*, *S. bibionis* and *S. glaseri*. Other trials using these nematodes have produced inconsistent results. Peña & Duncan (1991) reported wide fluctuations in larval mortality (45-89%) using the nematodes. However, more recently Peña (1991, unpublished) has reported a mortality level of up to 80% of *C. sordidus* larvae in banana corms by a strain of *Heterorhabditis* sp. from Florida. From over 17 strains of en-

tomopathogenic nematodes bioassayed against *C. sordidus* adults and larvae, *Heterorhabditis* sp. (HT2-Trinidad strain) and the commercial strain of *S. carpocapsae* (All-Biosafe®) (Sirjusingh et al. 1991) gave the most promising results against both adults and larvae (Fig. 1). Combination of these two strains with a  $10^{-2}$  dilution of the insecticide, aldicarb (Temik®) produced results (Fig. 3) with up to 100% adult mortality in 8 days compared with 60% using aldicarb, 35% and 50% using HT2 or All alone, respectively. Similar results were found by Kermarrec & Mauléon (1989) using *S. carpocapsae* (Agriotos strain) combined with a reduced concentration of chlordecone (Fig. 4), reported more effective mortality of adult weevils than with other treatments. However, chlordecone is now prohibited from use in several countries. Nevertheless, these experiments have been valuable for illustrating the compatibility between entomopathogenic nematodes and pesticides for control of the banana weevil borer. Sikora (pers. communication, 1990), suggests on the base of a work in Tonga, that the pathogenicity of one nematode strain may vary because of the existence of different levels of susceptibility or resistance of geographically different populations of *C. sordidus*. This interesting point of view is yet to be verified, but stresses the importance of preliminary screening of the nematodes against the specific *C. sordidus* populations before field trials. Kermarrec & Mauléon (1975) have shown that (Fig. 5) nematode parasitism of the weevil is attained primarily via the buccal cavity, through the digestive tract, and into the hemocoel where they can successfully resume their development from infective to parasitic stages. When the rostrum of the weevil is experimentally obstructed the nematodes can still penetrate the weevil to reach the hemocoel. The alternative modes of entry may be the spiracles, body articulations or anus. This experiment shows that weevil morphology directly influences its affinity to be parasitized by the nematode. This affinity would be expected to vary among different biotypes of *C. sordidus* populations due to their possible inherent morphological differences.

At present, the most promising biological control agents tested are the classical entomopathogenic fungi (Fungi imperfecti) *Beauveria bassiana* and *Metarhizium anisopliae* against the larvae and adults of *C. sordidus*. In Cuba, (Castiñeiras et al. 1991) 17 strains of *B. bassiana* and 11 strains of *M. anisopliae* were screened against *C. sordidus*. The best results (61% and 85% mortality) were obtained from a dose of  $10^5$  conidiospores per  $\text{cm}^2$  of soil with local strains of *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae*, respectively. In Brazil, Batista Filho et al. (1989) obtained mortality rates of 85% and 97% of *C. sordidus* using cultures of *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae* prepared on soaked rice or beans, by allowing the insects to walk on the fungal cultures, or by directly treating banana pseudostem pieces so that the weevils became infected during colonization. In Cuba, Calderón et al. (1991) have achieved efficient and economical mass-production of various strains of these two fungi species against *C. sordidus* using bagasse or other agro-industrial by-products. Two virulent strains of *B. bassiana* (Bb32) and *M. anisopliae* (Bio-1020), entomopathogenic for *C. sordidus* and *Metamasius hemipterus*, are now being used in field trials in Martinique by the authors. The pathogenicity of strains, isolated from parasitized coleopteran larvae in Guadeloupe, have been compared with exotic strains of these fungi (Delattre & Jean-Bart 1978). The latter also reported that, in general, higher levels of mortality were achieved by local strains of *B. bassiana* isolated from *C. sordidus* than exotic strains from the Colorado potato beetle, *Leptinotarsa decemlineata*. However, imported strains may also show equal pathogenicity to *C. sordidus*. In preliminary field experiments (op. cit.), the disease rarely developed in the treated population. Nevertheless, adult weevils collected from one treated site and observed in laboratory developed symptoms of *B. bassiana* mycosis after one month, resulting in up to 80% mortality. This suggests that inhibitory mechanisms may be operating in the weevil population, resulting in a latent manifestation of the disease. In Taiwan (Yu-Chen 1964), spores suspensions of *M. anisopliae*

TABLE 3. NATURAL ENEMIES OF *DIAPREPES ABBREVIATUS* AND THEIR BIOLOGICAL CONTROL POTENTIAL IN THE CARIBBEAN (NA-NOT YET ASSESSED).

Natural Enemies	Country	Potential Control
<b>FUNGI</b> (Beavers et al. 1983, Cruz & Segarra 1990, Mauléon et al. 1987)		
<i>Beauveria bassiana</i> (A, La)	Antilles, Florida, P. Rico	Good
<i>Cordiceps</i> sp. (La)	French Antilles	Some
<i>Fusarium</i> (La)	P. Rico	Very good
<i>Geotrichum</i> (La)	P. Rico	42% mortality
<i>Gliocladium</i> (La)	P. Rico	Very good
<i>Gongronella</i> (La)	P. Rico	17% mortality
<i>Metarhizium anisopliae</i> (A, La)	P. Rico, French Antilles	Good
<i>Mucor</i> (La)	P. Rico	42% mortality
<i>Nomuraea rileyi</i> (La)	French Antilles	Some
<i>Paecilomyces lilacinus</i> (La)	Florida	Some
<i>P. fumoso-roseus</i> (La)	French Antilles	Some
<b>ENTOMOPATHOGENIC NEMATODES</b> (Alam et al. 1990, Bonifassi et al. 1988, Schroöder 1987)		
<i>Heterorhabditis</i> sp. (Guadeloupe strain)	Guadeloupe	Very good
<i>Heterorhabditis bacteriophora</i> (La)	French Antilles	Good
<i>Heterorhabditis heliothidis</i> (La)	Florida, P. Rico	Good
<i>Steinernema bibionis</i> (La)	P. Rico	Good
<i>Steinernema carpocapsae</i> (La)	Florida, P. Rico, Barbados	Good
<i>Steinernemaglaserei</i> (La)	P. Rico	Very good
<b>INSECTS HYMENOPTERA</b>		
<b>Predator</b> <i>Ants</i> (Alam, pers comm., Cruz & Segarra 1990, Jaffé et al. 1990)		
<i>Azteca delpini</i> (All stages)	French Antilles	Good but aboreal
<i>Azteca antillana</i> (A)	French Antilles	Very good
<i>Brachymyrmex obscurior</i> (La)	Puerto Rico, Barbados	Good
<i>Camponotus</i> spp. (A, La)	French Antilles, Barbados	Good, terrestrial
<i>Cardiocondyla emeryi</i> (La)	P. Rico	Some
<i>Conomyrma insana</i> (La)	P. Rico	Some
<i>Crematogaster</i> sp. (La, egg)	French Antilles	Good but aboreal
<i>Ectatomma ruidum</i> (La, egg)	French Antilles	Good, terrestrial

<i>Monomorium floricola</i> , <i>M. destructor</i> (Egg)	French Antilles	Good but aboreal
<i>Odontomachus brunneus</i> (La)	P. Rico	Good
<i>Parathrechina longicornis</i> (La, egg)	French Antilles, Barbados	Good, terrestrial
<i>P. bourbonica</i> (A, La)	Florida	Good (Whitcomb et al. 1982)
<i>Pheidole fallax</i> (All stages)	P. Rico, French Antilles, Barbados	Very good
<i>P. subarmata borinquensis</i> (La)	P. Rico	Very good
<i>Solenopsis geminata</i> (A, La)	P. Rico, Barbados	Very good, terrestrial
<i>Tetramorium simillimum</i> (A, La)	Florida	Good (Whitcomb et al. 1982)
<i>Tapinoma littorale</i> (La)	French Antilles	Good, terrestrial
<i>Wasmannia auropunctata</i> (La)	Antilles	Good, terrestrial
<u>Egg Parasites</u> (Fennah 1947, Etienne et al. 1990a, 1990b)		
<u>Eulopidae</u>		
<i>Aprostocetus</i> sp.	Guadeloupe	Good
<i>Aprostocetus gala</i>	Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Cuba	Good
<i>A. haitiensis</i>	Guadeloupe, Florida	
<i>Eutetrastichus fennahi</i>	Dominican Rep., Haiti	Good
<i>Pediobius irregularis</i>	Barbados, St. Lucia,	NA
<i>Cleruchus</i> sp.	Dominica, Jamaica, Martinique	NA
<i>Fidiobia citri</i>	Honduras	NA
<i>Cenosoma</i> spp.	Florida	Good
<i>Brachyngfens osborni</i>	Jamaica, Florida, Martinique	Good
<i>Ceratogramma etiennei</i>	Cuba	Good
<i>Trichogramma</i> n. sp.	Cuba, Florida, Monsterrat, P. Rico	Good
	Guadeloupe	Good
	Florida	NA
<u>VERTEBRATES</u> (Mauléon et al. 1987)		
<u>Amphibia</u>		
<i>Bufo marinus</i>	Guadeloupe, Barbados	Some
<u>Reptilia</u>		
<i>Anolis marmoratus</i>	Guadeloupe	NA
<u>Aves</u>		
<i>Quiscalus lugubris</i>	Guadeloupe	NA
<u>Mammalia</u>		
<i>Herpestes javanicus auropunctatus</i>	Guadeloupe	NA



injected directly into the pseudostem of the banana plant were more effective against larvae than adults of the banana weevil *Odoiporus longicollis* (with a very similar life-cycle to *C. sordidus*). Peña (pers. comm.) stresses the technical difficulty of the injection and also the migration of the fungal inoculum injected into the pseudostem.

*Metamasius hemipterus sericeus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)

Population resurgences of *M. hemipterus* are often recorded in the West Indies both on banana and sugarcane (Delattre & Jean-Bart 1977). Because of their high mobility and ability to detect food and substrates, together with a patchy distribution. Therefore it is difficult to detect, monitor the size, follow the population growth, and estimate the damages caused by this weevil. Trials with the tachinid, *Microceromasia sphenophori* failed (Simmonds 1969, in op. cit.). *Metarhizium anisopliae* seems to offer active control in nature (Delattre & Jean-Bart 1977). The latter have reported that *M. hemipterus* larvae are highly sensitive to *B. bassiana* and *M. anisopliae*, but so far trials have not been very conclusive due to high mortality recorded in the control. In Cuba, where this weevil is important on sugarcane (Estrada 1991), Diaz Sanchez & Grillo Ravelo (1986) have isolated a strain of *B. bassiana* from the sweet potato weevil, *Cylas formicarius elegantulus* (Curculionidae) which is reported to be highly pathogenic to *C. sordidus* and *M. hemipterus sericeus*.

#### BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF SUGARCANE PESTS

*Diaprepes abbreviatus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae)

*Diaprepes abbreviatus* is a major weevil pest in Florida, Puerto Rico, and the West Indies (Beavers et al. 1983, Figueroa & Román 1990), and has been the target of numerous biological control attempts (Table 3) due in part to the fact that there are no chemicals with an EPA use permit available for larval control of this pest (op cit.). During the 1975 decade, hymenopterous egg parasites, *Aprostocetus* (= *Tetrastichus*) sp., *A. gala* and *A. haitiensis* (Jamaica, St. Vincent and Monsterrat), *Brachyufens osborni* (Florida) and *Fidiobia citri* (Jamaica) were introduced into Barbados (op. cit.). These parasites did not attack eggs on sugarcane. Cruz & Segarra (1991) suggest that they do not become significantly established on this crop due to the difficulty in parasitizing eggs of *D. abbreviatus* through the sugarcane leaves. However, the extent to which these organisms can be efficient on sugarcane is not clear and warrants further investigation.

In the French West Indies (Guadeloupe and Martinique) the egg parasites of *D. abbreviatus* have been studied (Etienne et al. 1991): 6 hymenopteran species have been found (Eulophidae: *Aprostocetus gala*, *A. haitiensis*, *Aprostocetus* sp. and *Eutetrastichus fennahi*. Trichogrammatidae: *Ceratogramma etiennei*, Platygasteridae: *Fidiobia citri*). The biology and the dynamics of the new species of Trichogrammatidae, *C. etiennei*, have been studied (Etienne et al. 1991) for its use in integrated control programs against *D. abbreviatus* in the Caribbean.

Ants (Table 3) are the most common predators of *D. abbreviatus* in Martinique and Guadeloupe (Jaffé et al. 1991) with *Pheidole fallax* as the most effective. These authors have proposed for the French Antilles, the use of *Azteca antillana* alone (because they exclude all other species from the zone they inhabit), or a combination of *P. fallax* and/or *Solenopsis geminata* in the soil plus *Monomorium* sp. (egg predator) and/or *Tetramorium* sp. on the trees. In Puerto Rico, (Cruz & Segarra 1991) *P. fallax* and *P. subarmata borinquensis* already offer effective control. The difficulty with ants as biological control agents is that many are generalist predators and aggressive competitors. There is significant interspecific competition. In addition, some species, such

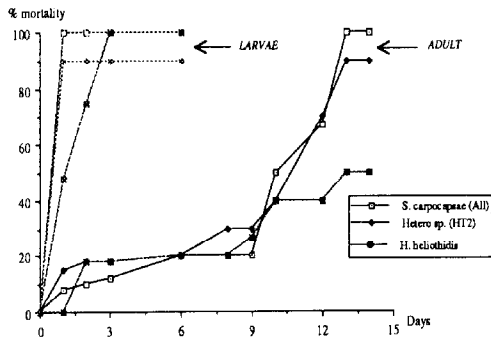


Fig. 1

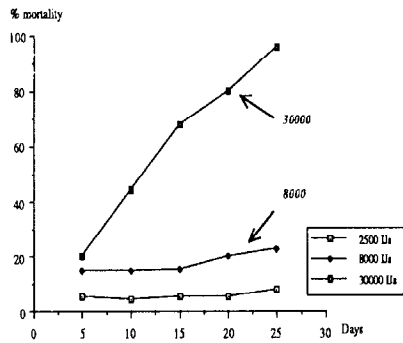


Fig. 2

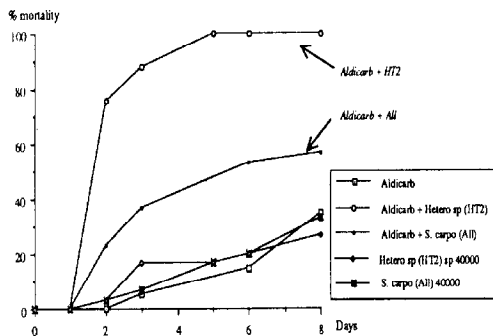


Fig. 3

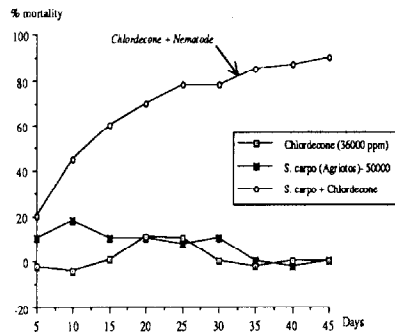


Fig. 4

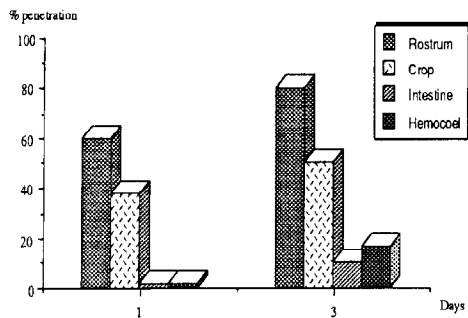


Fig. 5

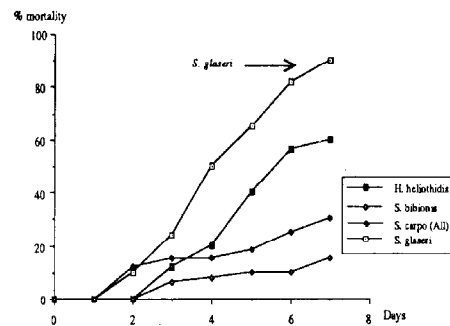


Fig. 6

\* All graphs show Abbott Mortality: (Treated - Control / 100 - Control) x 100

Fig. 1. Susceptibility of *C. sordidus* adults and larvae to nematodes (1000 IJs/larva, 4000 IJs/adult, on wetted blotting paper in Petri dishes, 10 targets per dish, 10 replicates).

Fig. 2. Effect of nematode dose (*S. carpocapsae* - Agriotos) on mortality of *Cosmopolites sordidus* adults (see legend of Fig. 1).

Fig. 3. Synergy between nematodes (IJs) and Aldicarb at 400 ppm (Sirjusingh et al. 1990).

Fig. 4. Synergy between nematodes (50000 IJs) and Chlordecone (36000 ppm) (Kermarrec & Mauléon 1989).

Fig. 5. Penetration of *C. sordidus* adults by *Steinernema carpocapsae* (Agriotos) (20000 IJs/adult, see legend Fig. 1).

Fig. 6. Effect of nematodes on larvae of *Phyllophaga pleei* (200 IJs/larva, see legend Fig. 1).

as *Solenopsis geminata* and *Wasmannia auropunctata*, have severe stings, and *W. auropunctata* also readily invades human habitats. Because of these reasons, manipulation of ant colonies for biological control is not easy and often not feasible when there are a wide variety of species. However, they should be regarded as an important part of the natural enemy complex or predaceous community of the sugarcane agroecosystem.

Entomopathogenic fungi and nematodes have also been tested for control of *D. abbreviatus* on sugarcane. Of the numerous strains (Table 2), *M. anisopliae* and *B. bassiana* are considered promising because of their superior pathogenicity and effectiveness for controlling both adults and larvae. In Puerto Rico, Cruz & Segarra (1991) reported that fungi of the genera *Gliocladium*, *Gongronella*, and *Fusarium* are the most pathogenic, resulting in significant control of the weevil under field conditions. The feasibility and efficacy of these strains of potential plant pathogenic fungi as invertebrate biocontrol agents need to be ascertained.

In laboratory bioassays, Schroöder (1987) achieved 35% and 65% mortality of *D. abbreviatus* larvae with *Steinernema carpocapse* and *S. glaseri*, respectively. Alam et al. (1990) indicates that *S. glaseri* is slowly becoming established in Barbados on sugarcane with 21% to 33% incidence of the nematode in treated fields from 1984 to 1987. Figueroa and Román (1990) reported the effectivity of *S. bibionis*, *S. carpocapsae*, and *S. glaseri* on 12-14 weeks old larvae of *D. abbreviatus* in potted soil treatments. Bonifassi et al. (1988) compared in greenhouse studies, different application techniques for *Heterorhabditis* sp. (Guadeloupe strain), *S. bibionis* and *S. glaseri*, and showed that the former species was the most pathogenic to *D. abbreviatus* (94% mortality) when applied directly to the soil suspended in water.

#### *Phyllophaga* spp. (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae)

*Phyllophaga smithi* is a serious pest of sugarcane in the Eastern Caribbean (Alam et al. 1991). In Barbados there have been several introductions of natural enemies for *P. smithi*. The beetle, *Pyrophorus luminosus*, and the toad, *Bufo marinus*, were established according to the latter authors. They also reported the slow field establishment of *S. glaseri*, with almost 13% and 17% control achieved in 1984 and 1987, respectively. *Phyllophaga smithi* was accidentally introduced into Mauritius from Barbados in 1907, attained major pest status by 1935 (Rajablee 1991). An unexplained rapid decline in the population of this whitegrub has been recently observed. Investigations have shown that over 95% of all *P. smithi* larvae collected in Mauritius are infected by an undescribed eucephaline gregarine in the anterior coelom (op. cit.). Vercambre et al. (1991) reports that this organism retards the growth of young larvae, reduces the fecundity of females, and weakens all stages, making them more susceptible to other diseases. The result is that almost half of the whitegrub population fails to complete their life cycle. Insufficient knowledge of the biology of these protozoans prevents their integration into biological control programs. The latter authors have reported that inoculation of this organism into populations of the melolonthid, *Hoplochelus marginalis*, on sugarcane in Reunion, has failed due to the specificity of the protozoan to *P. smithi*. However, the potential of this protozoan for control of *P. smithi* in the Caribbean needs to be assessed.

In the Antilles, larvae of various *Phyllophaga* spp. are occasionally found at sufficient levels to be considered important secondary pests of banana and sugarcane plantations. *Phyllophaga portoricensis* (sugarcane) in Puerto Rico, *P. pleei* (borders of banana plantations) and *P. patrueloides* (sugarcane) in the French Antilles, have been the targets for entomopathogens (Wolcott 1955, Gruner 1973). The latter reports that these whitegrubs appear to be very resistant to *Metarhizium anisopliae* (7 strains) with

the most virulent strains having been isolated from the same insect. Very high doses are required for good results (up to  $10^7$  spores per gram of peat). Reduced doses of insecticides combined with fungal spores resulted in a higher mortality, but not a better development of the mycosis. However (op. cit.), forced ingestion of *Bacillus popilliae* one month before cryptogamic treatment renders the insect more susceptible to the disease. The same is true for intrahemocoelic injection of the virus, *Vagoiavirus melolonthae* (strain 'Melolontha') 40 days after applying spores of *M. anisopliae* to the substratum. In the field the larvae develop *B. popilliae* bacteriosis and *M. anisopliae* mycosis simultaneously. This synergy between fungi and bacteria or viruses is promising and presents interesting possibilities for the control of *Phyllophaga* spp.

Kermarrec & Mauléon (1975) found that the entomopathogenic nematode *S. carpocapsae* (Agriotos strain) did not penetrate adults or larvae of *P. pleei*. From a more recent study (Mauléon & Tormin 1990), *S. glaseri* produced the best results (of up to 90% larval mortality within 7 days) from the 15 strains of heterorhabditids and steiner-nematids tested (Fig. 6).

#### *Ligyryus subtropicus* (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae)

*Ligyryus subtropicus* is the most destructive whitegrub to sugarcane production in Florida with no widespread practical method of control available. Five species of entomopathogenic nematodes have been tried against this pest (Sosa & Beavers 1985, Sosa 1990). *Steinernema glaseri* seems to be the most promising nematode, resulting in up to 100% mortality in laboratory bioassays and up to 50% whitegrub infection in treated plots. The advantage of using these nematodes on sugarcane in Florida is that the target would be major whitegrub pest complex consisting of *L. subtropicus* as the most important together with *Cyclocephala parallela* and *Anomala* sp. as secondary whitegrub pests, all of which are susceptible to entomopathogenic nematodes (Laumond et al. 1979). Potential entomopathogenous micro-organisms are *Bacillus popilliae*, *Metarhizium anisopliae* var. *major*, *Beauveria bassiana* and *Verticillium lecontei*, which were isolated from third instar *C. parallela* and *L. subtropicus* grubs in Florida (Boucias et al. 1986). *B. popilliae* was the most prevalent pathogen in these whitegrub populations in Florida sugarcane fields with an incidence of over 90% of all fields sampled (op. cit.).

#### CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Assessments of the outcome of many previous biological control attempts in the Caribbean are poorly documented. Extensive programs and control methods for weevils and whitegrubs have been elaborated upon but their implementation remains unsatisfactory. It is necessary to standardize the scientific methodologies applied in biological control, as well as to design universally accepted protocols and techniques recognized by international research world, so as to generate more comparative results from biocontrol attempts. The application and management of biocontrol agents should be developed case by case, taking into consideration the prevailing socioeconomical, cultural, and environmental conditions.

Some areas of immediate investigation, which may be potentially beneficial are (1) to assess the approach of direct inoculation of entomopathogenic fungi into the pseudostem of the banana plant against *C. sordidus* larvae according to Yu-Chen (1964); (2) to exploit the effectiveness of hymenopteran egg parasites of *D. abbreviatus* (Etienne et al. 1991) for sugarcane, and (3) to elucidate the pathogenicity of the maurician eucephaline protozoan (Rajabalee 1991) on *Phyllophaga* populations and its potential for application in the Caribbean. Another important area of further research concerns

the entomopathogenic - nematodes and fungi, a common parameter linking the biological control of these particular weevils and whitegrubs. These biocontrol agents are generally cosmopolitan, with some exceptions, therefore the universal applicability is an inherent advantage. But the interactions between these entomopathogens and the insect pests are complex. The soil, although the principal natural reservoir of entomopathogenic nematodes and fungi, represents numerous constraints to their successful establishment and regulating activity. Soil type, soil particle size, pF (soil moisture potential) and temperature (Hominick 1991), mineral, organic and microbial composition (Riba et al. 1991) influence the persistence, biological activity, and epizootiological behavior of these entomopathogens. Lack of ecological knowledge is evident and understanding of the biological efficacy of these organisms and their role in controlling weevils and whitegrubs will remain academic until future studies provide us with information for their successful implementation as biocontrol candidates. Recent research emphasizing these aspects has been initiated with assessments of the soil environment on entomopathogenic fungi and nematodes (Hominick 1990, Mauléon et al. 1991, Riba et al. 1991). Continued research in this area is important as it is generally agreed that the elucidation of limiting abiotic and biotic factors will contribute significantly to more efficient use of entomopathogens.

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