THE CONTROL OF *SIREX NOCTILIO* IN THE *PINUS* PLANTATIONS OF THE ARAUCO COMPANIES

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Sirex noctilio was detected at the beginning of 2001 in the central part of Chile. Its high potential to damage pine plantations is due to its capacity to attack and spread very rapidly. At present this pest is monitored under a quarantine control system regulated by the government plant health agency (SAG). The government sector and private companies have already implemented a strategy for *Sirex* control, based on early detection, biological control (nematode and parasitoids) and improvement of plantation management.

Arauco is the largest private forestry company in Chile, with more than 500.000 ha of Radiata pine, distributed along 800 km in the south of Chile. About 370,000 ha are considered to be at risk to *Sirex* attack. These Radiata pine stands are classified in different levels of risk that was supported by GIS and included various factors important for *Sirex* establishment. The main factors considered important for stand susceptibility for *Sirex* were silvicultural management, site index, age, average diameter, density, and distance of declared focus. The information generated by the GIS analysis was used to direct the monitoring and trap tree plots placement in Arauco plantations. A total of 674 plots of trap trees (6.740 trees) were established in the last season. Those plots also included trials with different herbicides in order to optimize the trap tree system.

Rodrigo Ahumada is currently the head of the Protection and Phytosanitary Division of Bioforest S.A., the research company of the ARAUCO Group. This Division includes programs of Pathology, Entomology, Forest Products, and Biological Control. Rodrigo has worked on a wide range of forestry pest and pathology problems. He also implemented and supervised the strategic planning and biological control for *Sirex* in Arauco plantations in Chile and Uruguay. Rodrigo also represents the company in the government working group on *Sirex*. Rodrigo has a Forest Engineering degree from the University of Chile and obtained an MSc in Plant Pathology from the University of Pretoria, (FABI).

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