

# Whole-farm Organic Management of BMSB and Endemic Pentatomids through Behavior-based Habitat Manipulation



A multi-state project funded by the  
Organic Research and Extension Initiative

# Principal Investigators

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## **West Virginia University**

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## **eOrganic**



# Project Objectives



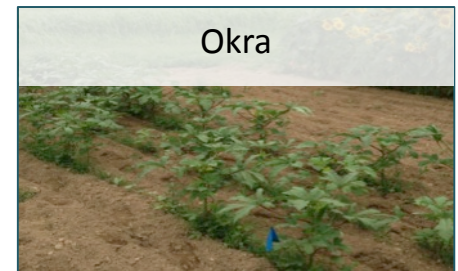
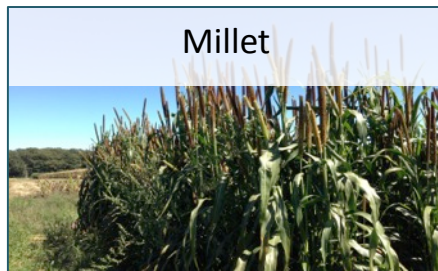
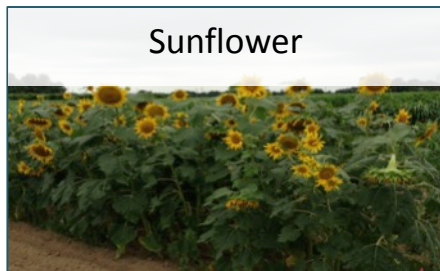
1. Habitat manipulation – identify and evaluate trap crops
2. Identify whole-farm movement patterns and behaviors.
3. Natural enemy identity and impact in organic systems.
4. Evaluate organic management tactics
5. Develop extension materials.



# Objective 1: Trap Crops

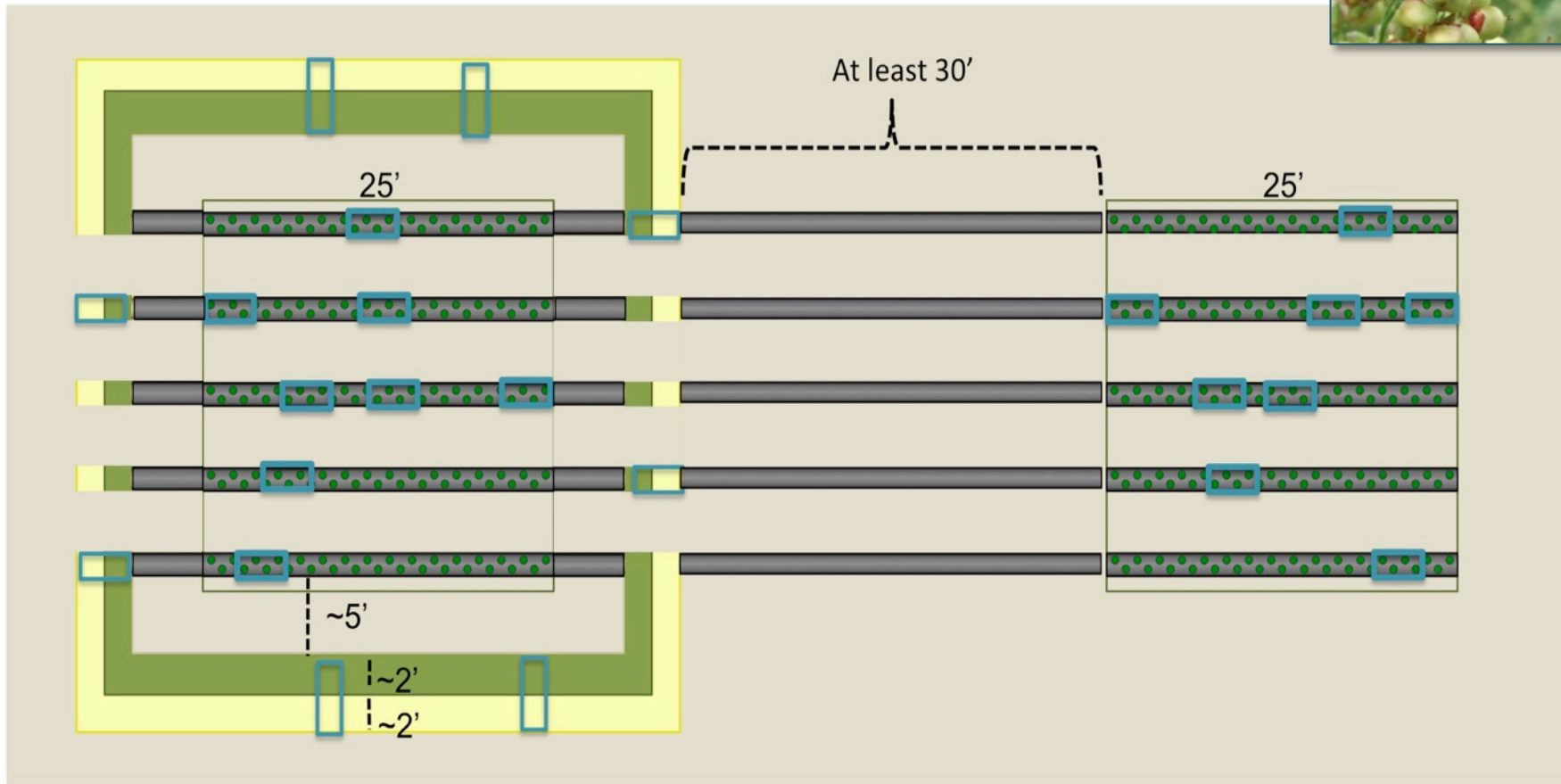
**2013:**

- Evaluated 4 potential organic trap crops: sunflower, millet, sorghum, and okra
- Tested across 4 states: MD, NJ, PA, and WV
- Sunflower and sorghum were the most attractive to BMSB
- Sunflower most attractive to native stink bugs
- Attraction varied throughout the season



Nielsen et al. *Env. Entomol.* *accepted*

# 2014 & 2015 Trap Crop



- Cash crop – Aristotle Bell Peppers
- Trap crop - Sunflower
- Trap crop - Sorghum
- Sampling area

Clarissa Mathews – Redbud Farms  
 Brett Blaauw and Anne Nielsen - Rutgers

# 2014 Multi-State Trap Crop Study

Evaluate sunflower and sorghum trap for bell peppers, 8 states:



PI/Site	State	# Sites	# Reps
Nielsen/RAREC	NJ	1	4
Nielsen/Muth	NJ	1	1
Mathews/Redbud	WV	1	4
Dively/UMD	MD	1	4
Pfeiffer/VATech	VA	1	1
Moore/OCU	TN	1	3
Kotcon/WVU	WV	1	4
Welty/Stratford	OH	1	1
Welty/Bridgeman	OH	1	1
Walgenbach/Sizemore	NC	1	1
Zinati/Rodale	PA	1	4
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>28</b>

# Plot Exterior



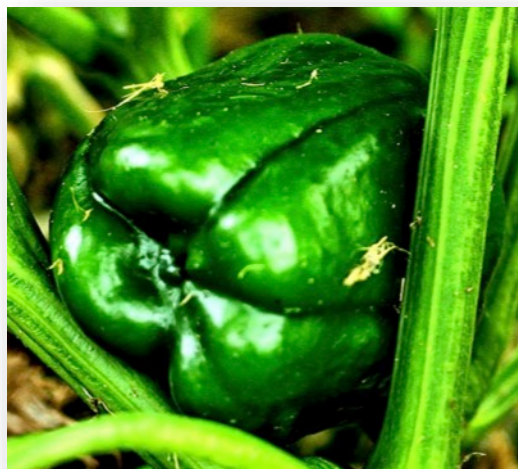
# Plot Interior





# 2014 Pepper Damage Assessment

All mature fruit harvested weekly (100 plants/plot),  
7 weeks (Jul – Sept)



**Rating Class 0 –**  
Undamaged

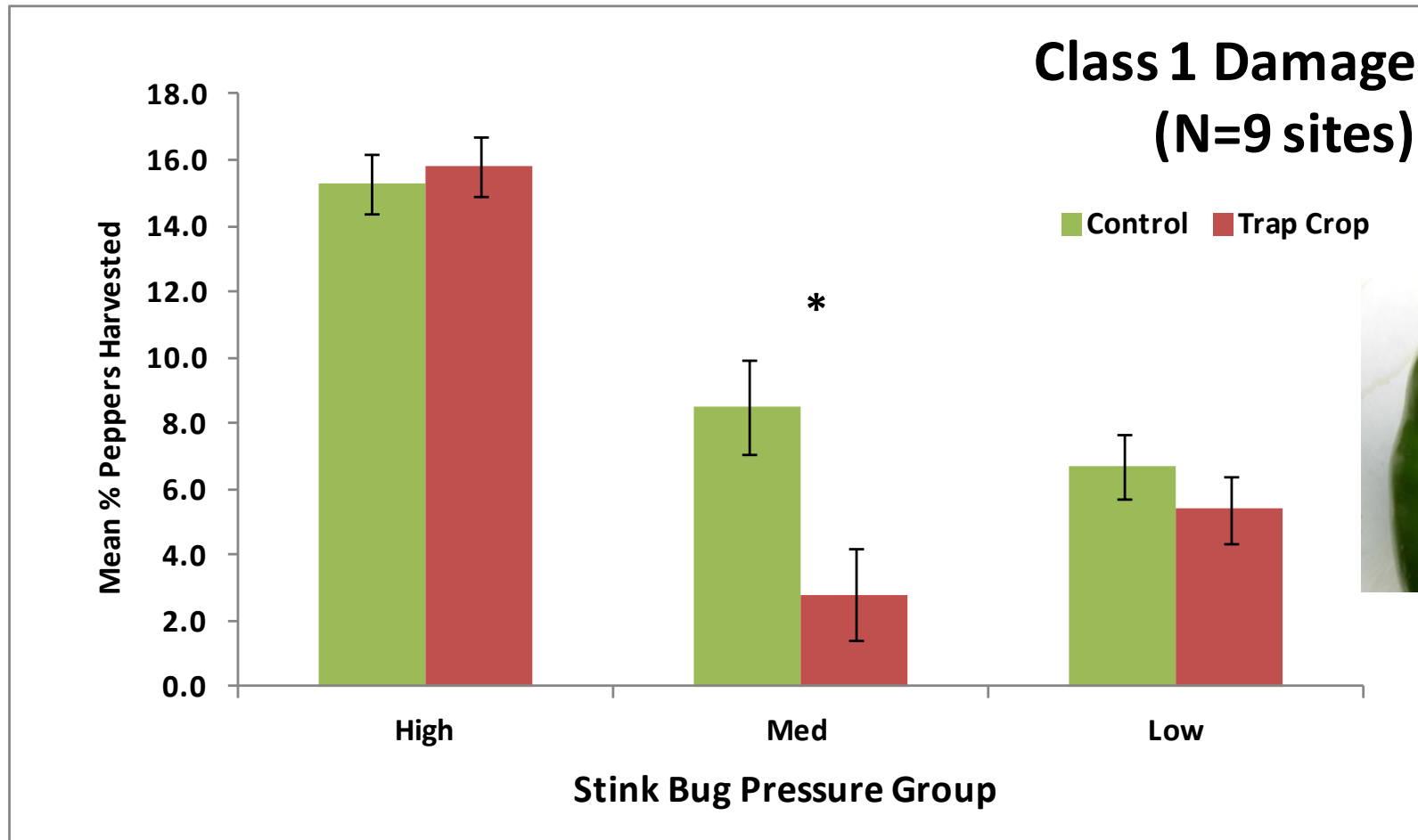


**Rating Class 1 –**  
Minor Injury

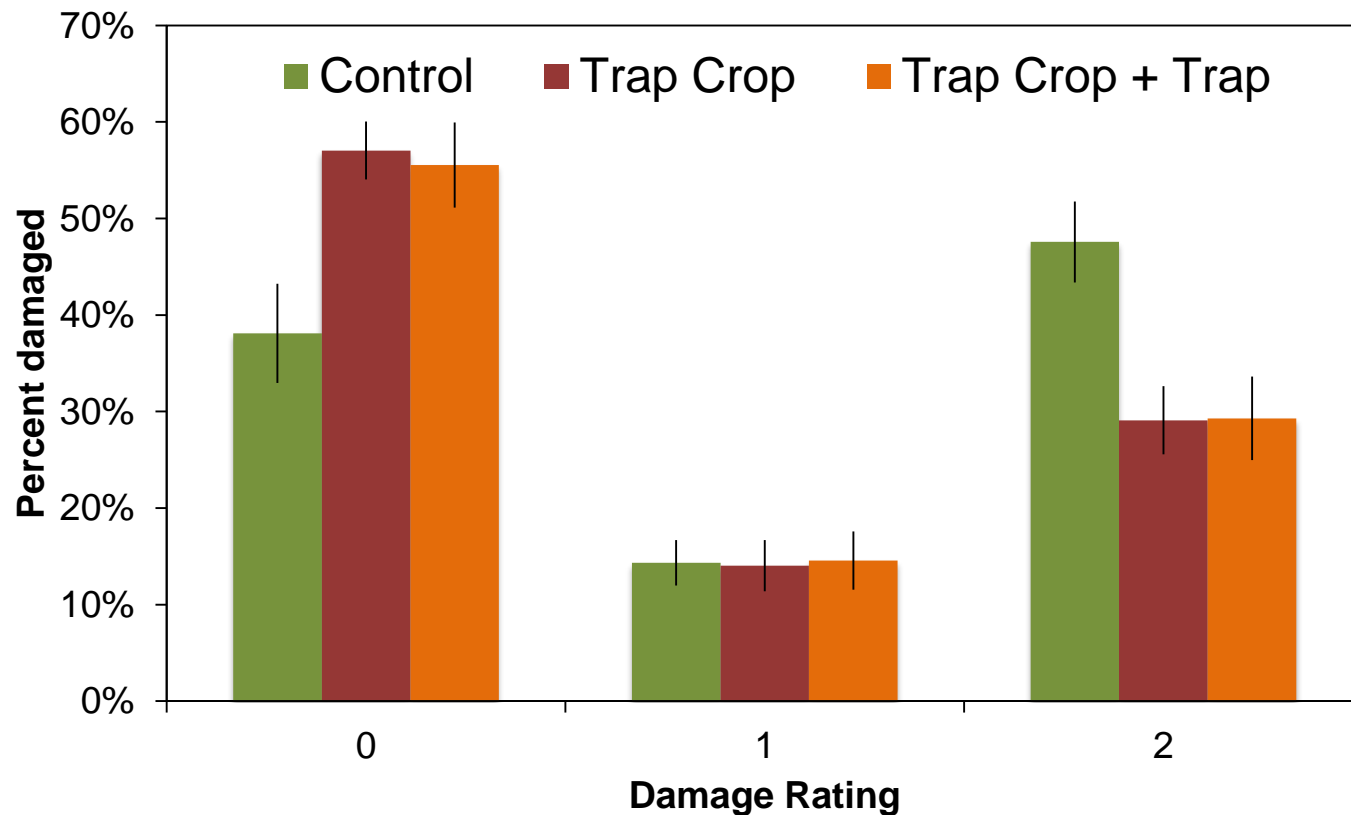


**Rating Class 2 –**  
Major Injury

# 2014 Trap Crop Results



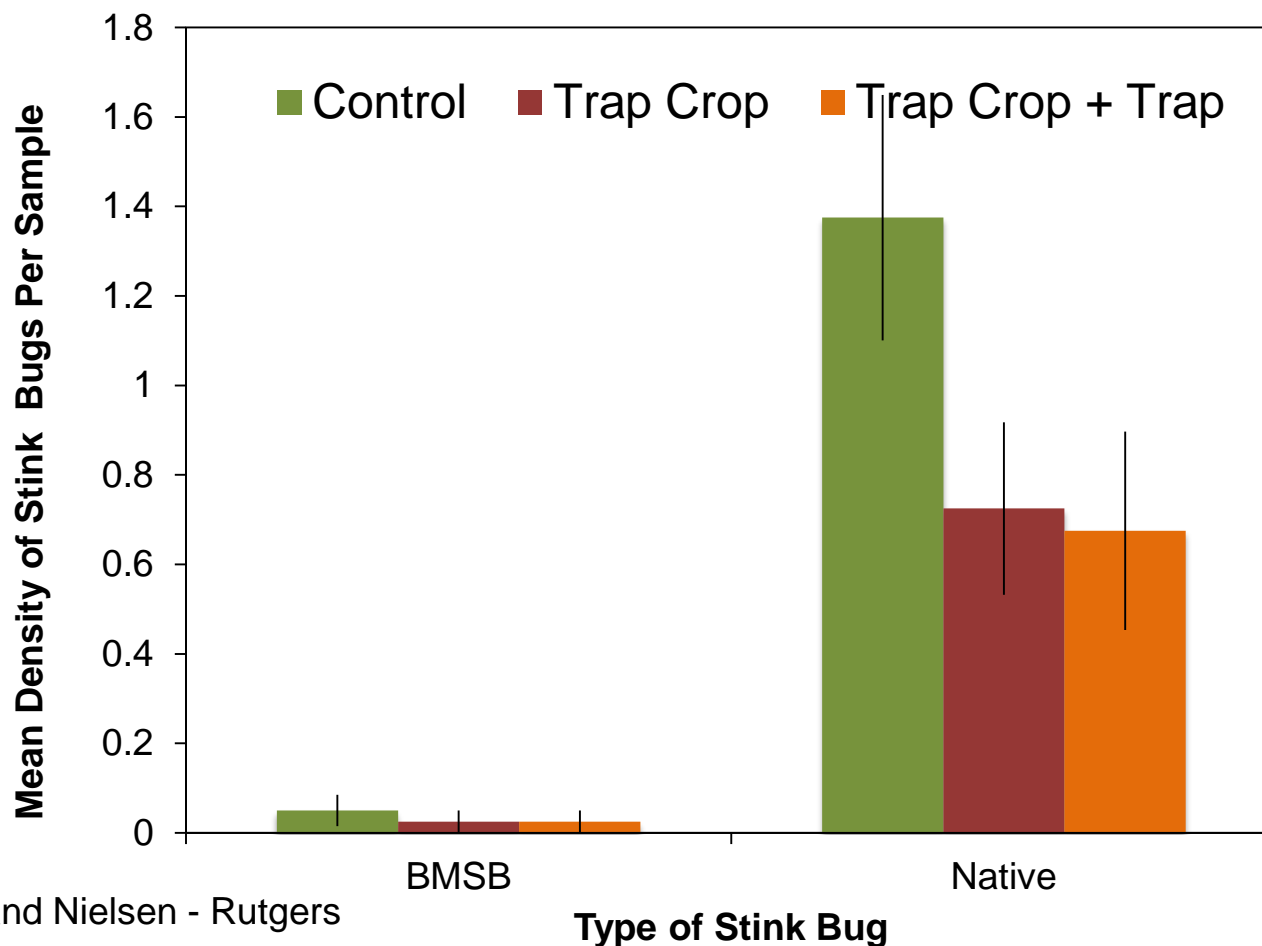
# 2015 NJ Trap Crop Pepper Damage



Blaauw and Nielsen - Rutgers



# 2015 NJ Stink Bug Densities on Pepper



Blaauw and Nielsen - Rutgers



# Trap Crop Findings



- Sorghum was generally the most attractive trap crop tested for BMSB
  - Sunflower was more attractive earlier in the season with sorghum becoming more attractive in August
- Sunflower is attractive to natural enemies
- Colonization of cash crop was delayed
- Higher damage in peppers occurred under ‘high’ pressure
- Also attractive to native stink bugs

# Obj 2: Whole Farm Movement

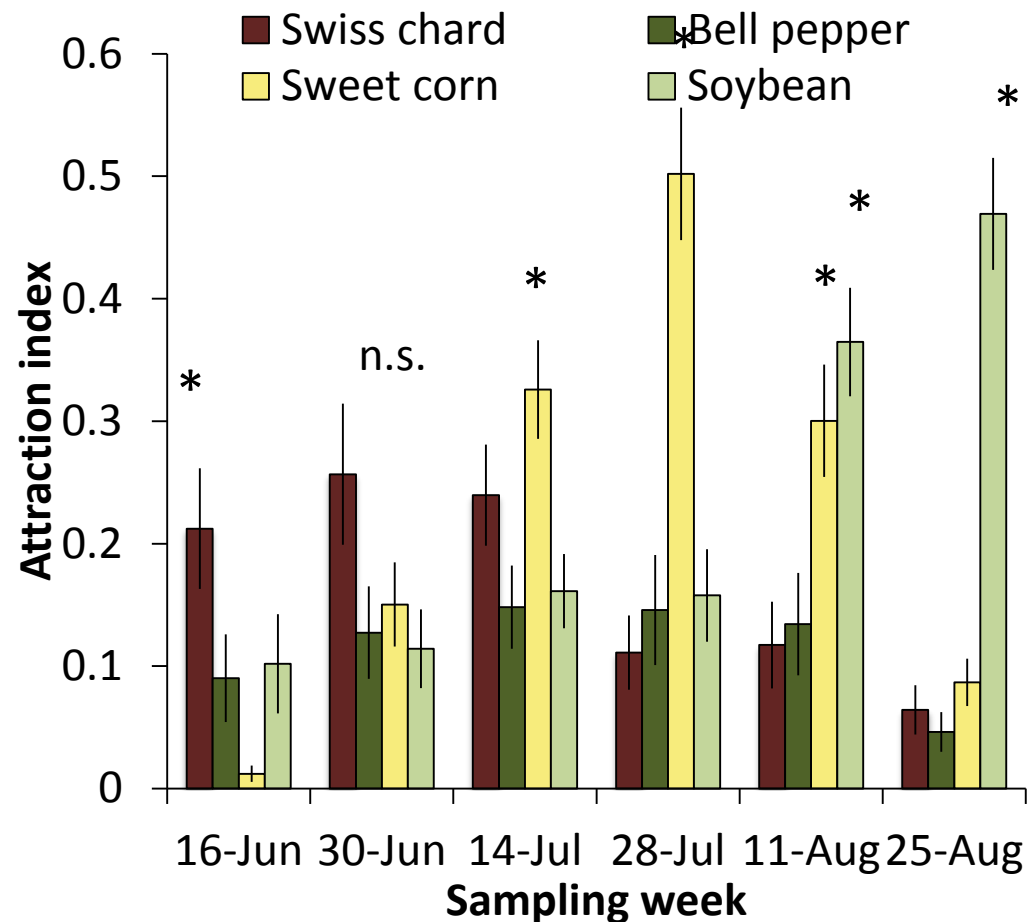
- Nymphal dispersal behavior
  - Capacity
  - Dispersal between host plants
- Whole-farm sampling
  - Tracking population hot spots
- Overwintering behavior
  - Trapping experiment
  - Citizen Science

Park, Mizell, Leskey, Nielsen, Hamilton, and Matthews



# Nymphal Dispersal Capacity

- Nymphs have a strong walking capacity.
- Can disperse 10m in 3 hours
- Nymphs show strong response to the olfactory attractant and traverse large distances to reach source
- Nymphs select host plants
- Based off of phenology
  - Preference for fruiting bodies
  - Identified common odors correlated with attraction



Doo-Hyung Lee and Tracy Leskey – USDA  
Blaauw and Nielsen - Rutgers



# Whole-Farm Movement

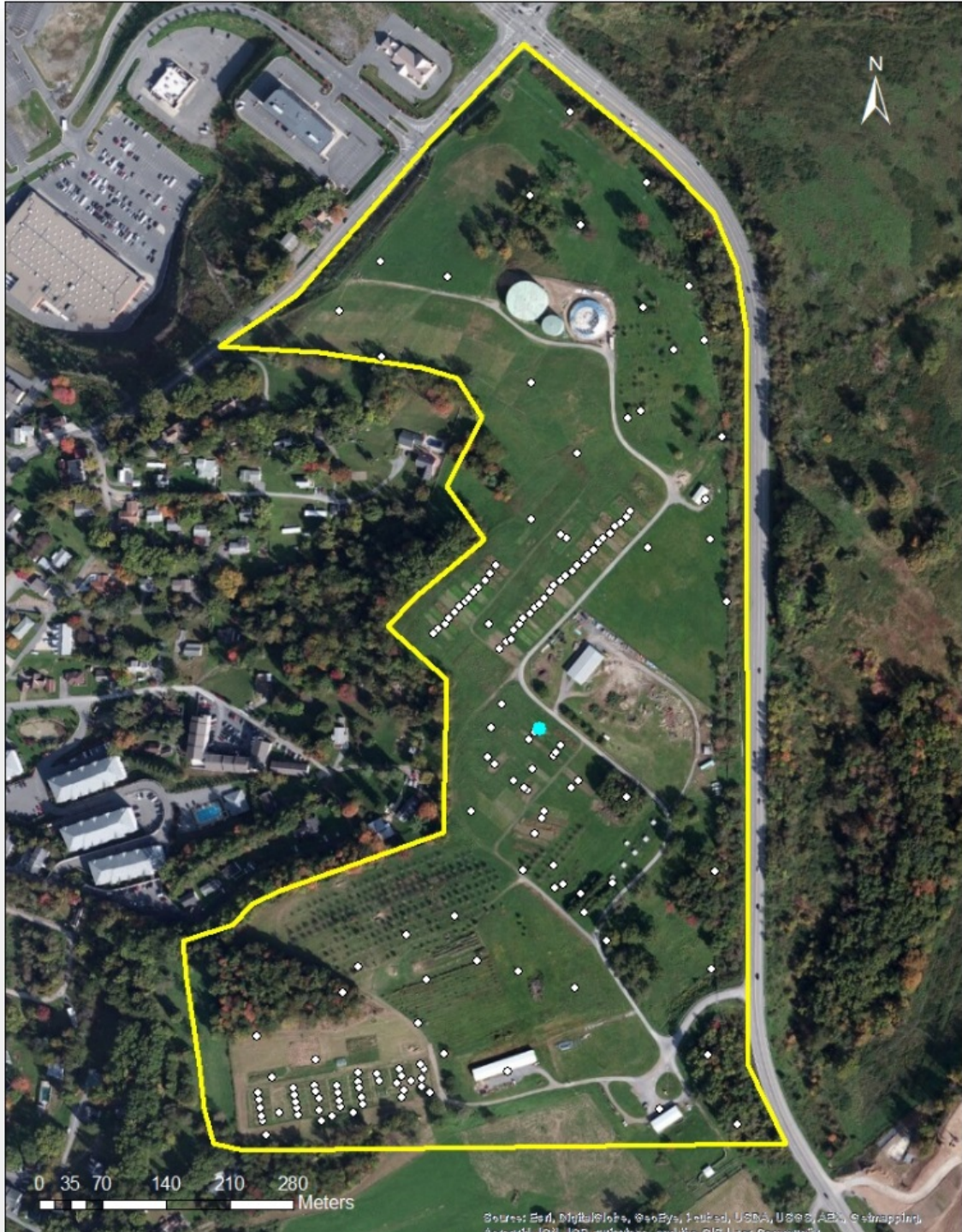
- WVU Organic Farm, Morgantown WV (77 acres)
- Redbud Organic Farm, Inwood WV (11 acres)
- Muth Family Farm, Williamstown NJ (108 acres)

Jake Goldner and Yong-Lak Park - WVU

WVU Organic Farm



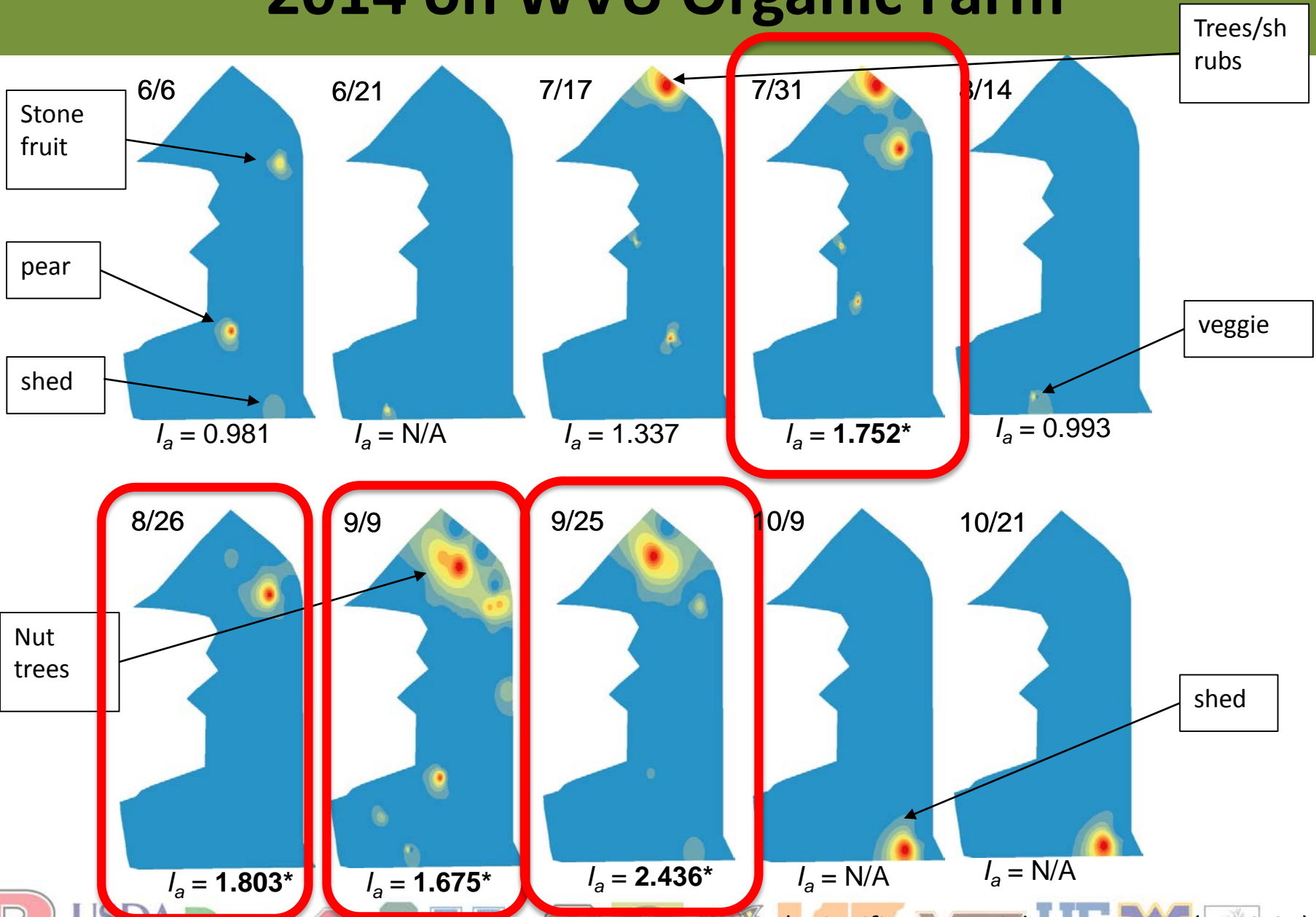




0 35 70 140 210 280 Meters

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, United, USA, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

# 2014 on WVU Organic Farm

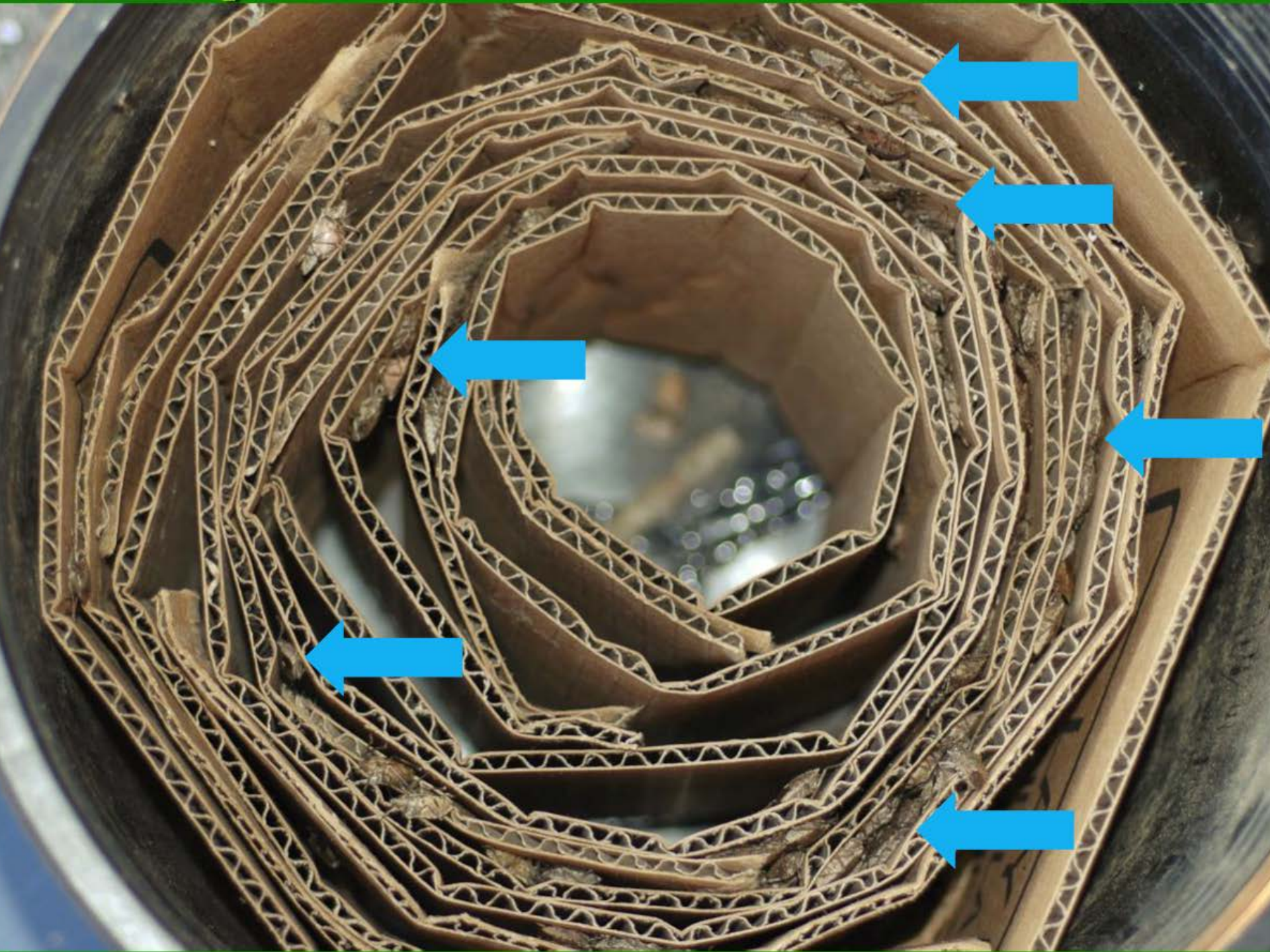


\*, significant spatial aggregation (P < 0.05)

# Traps RCBlocked Around Silo Cardinal Directions $n = 5 \times 4$ 2 Souths = 2 silos



Russ Mizell - UFL



# Traps Blocked Around Silo

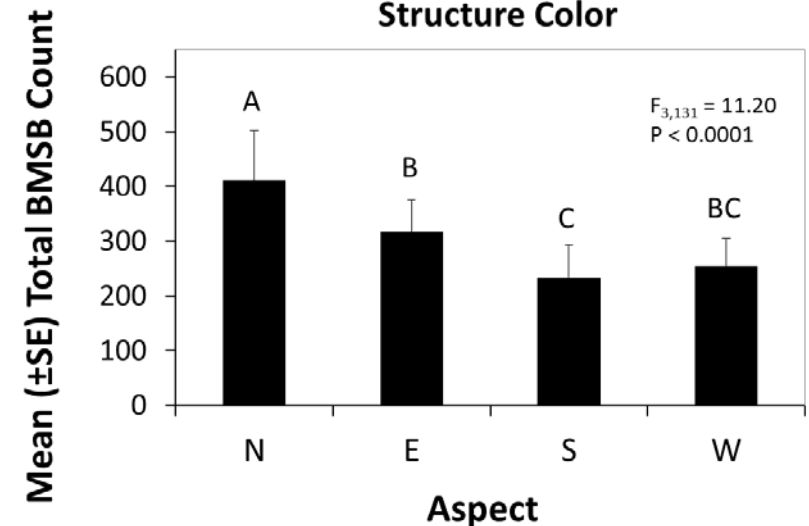
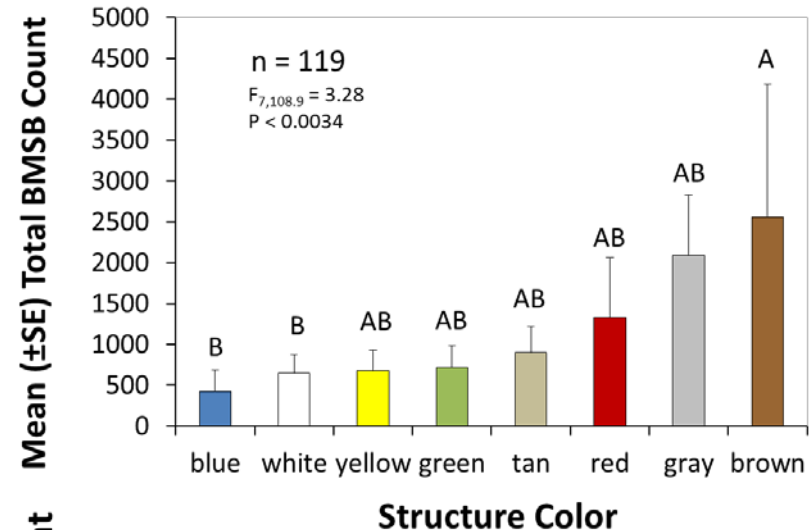
## BMSB Counts in 2014, Stat. NS

Color/	Direction					Totals
	North	East	West	South (E)	South (W)	
<b>White</b>	93	65	68	43	258	527
<b>Black</b>	51	162	66	66	374	719
<b>Yellow</b>	24	44	31	39	215	353
<b>Silver</b>	125	130	103	8	142	508
<b>Totals</b>	193	301	208	156	989	1846



# Great Stink Bug Count

- Crowd-sourcing data collection from volunteers
  - 2013: 162 datasets
  - 2014: 134 datasets
- September 15 – October 15
- Rural or rural-forest landscapes had highest counts

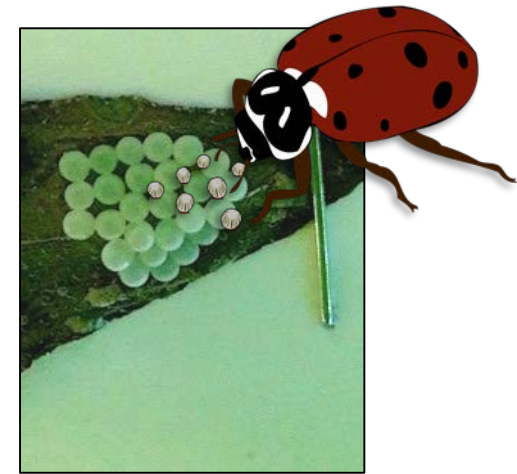


Torri Hancock and Tracy Leskey - USDA



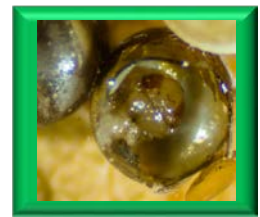
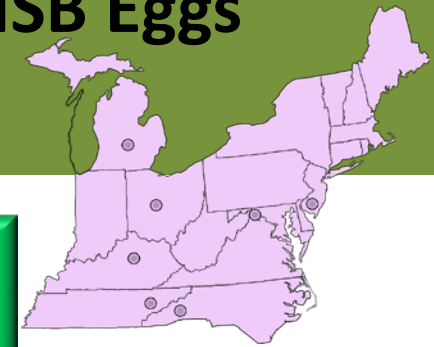
# Objective 3: Natural Enemies

- 8 states observed fate of sentinel BMSB eggs
  - Two sites per state
  - Two week intervals from June through August
- Selected egg masses under video surveillance
- Laboratory trials
  - Identify stage-specific predation
  - Identify type of damage caused
- Gut content analysis
- Supporting natural enemy populations

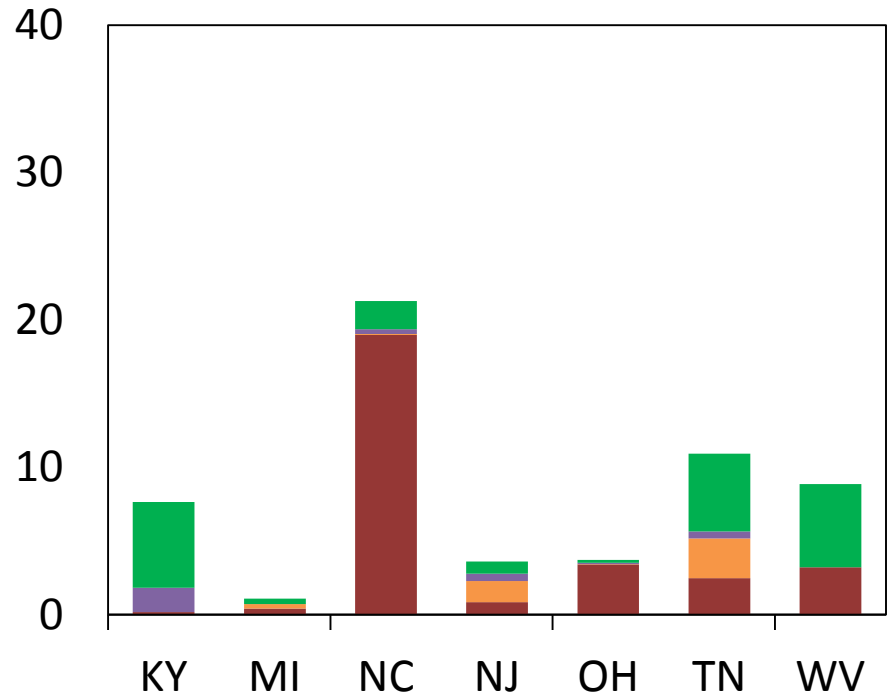
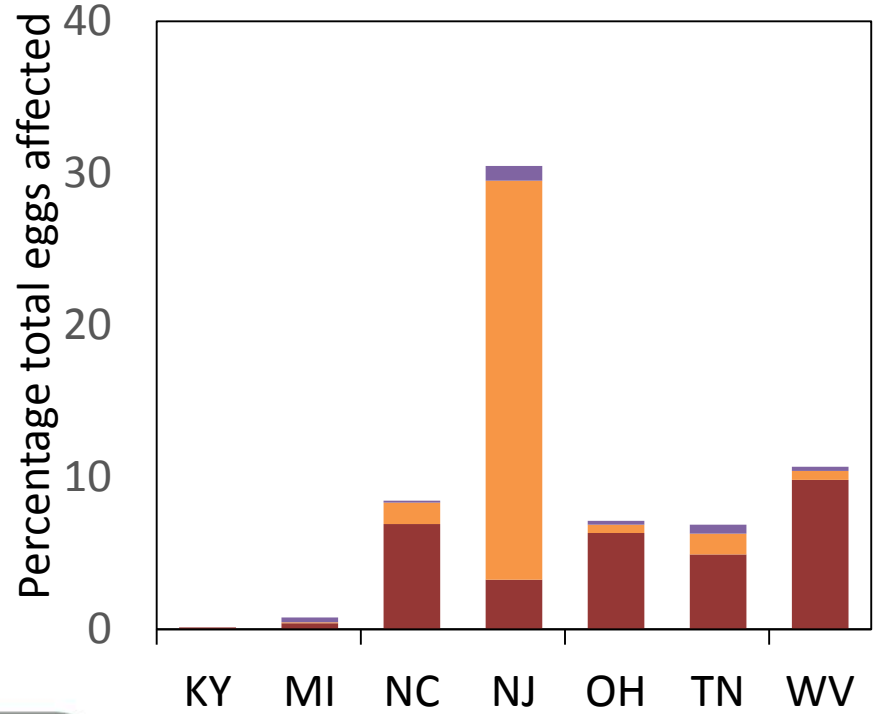


Nielsen, Pote, Park, Pfeiffer, Hooks, Hoelmer, Bessin, Walgenbach, Welty, Rogers, and Grieshop

# Predation and Parasitism of Sentinel BMSB Eggs in Seven States



■ Chewing predation 
 ■ Sucking predation 
 ■ Parasitoid emerged 
 ■ Un-emerged parasitoid



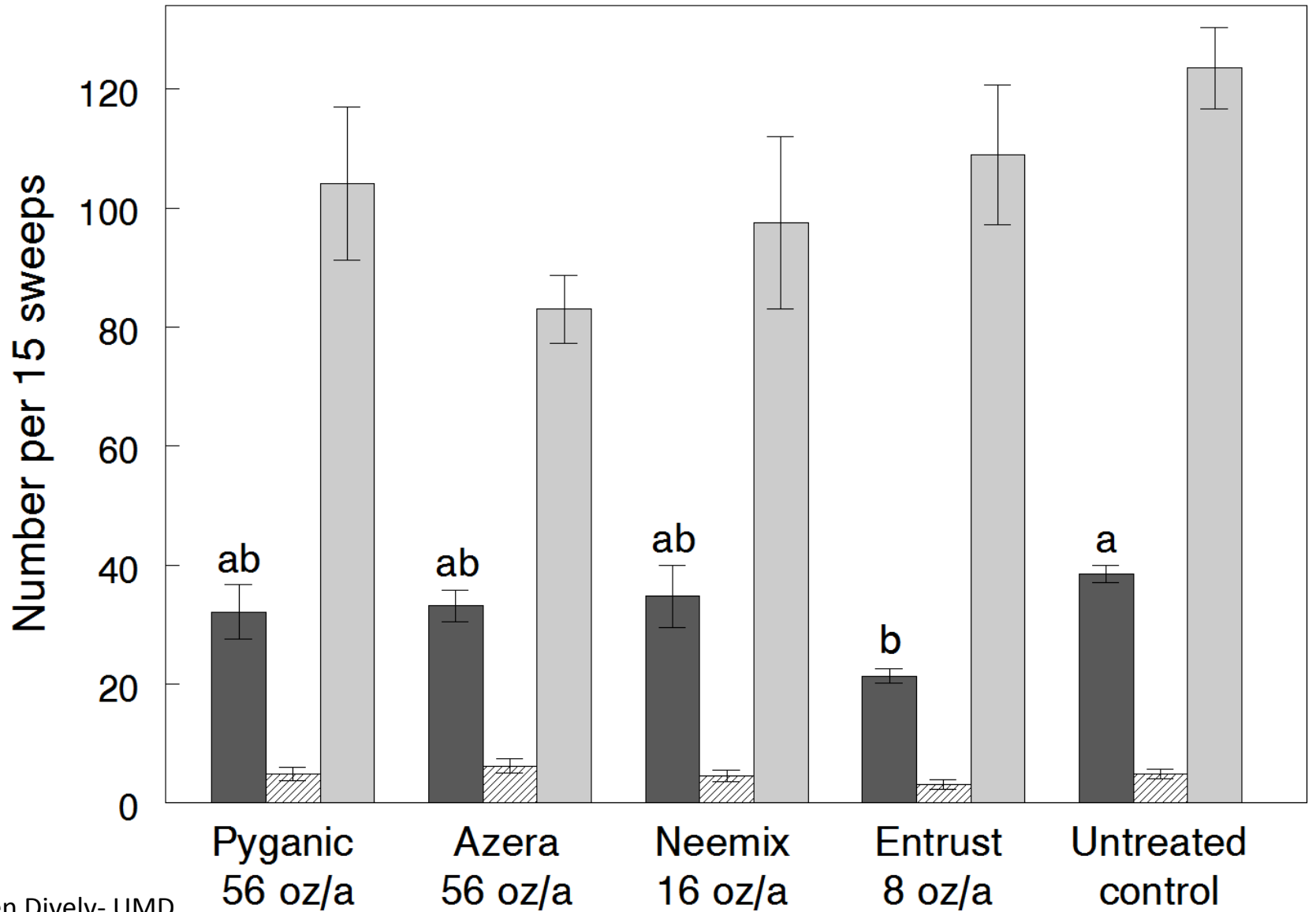


# Who Are the Predators?

- Activity is largely at night
- Orthopterans caused high predation and spent a lot of time on the egg masses
- In cages, damsel bugs, wheel bugs, *Orius* sp. cause high predation of multiple life stages
- Minimal predation in the field by lady beetles



Predators
  Parasitoids
  Herbivores



Galen Dively- UMD



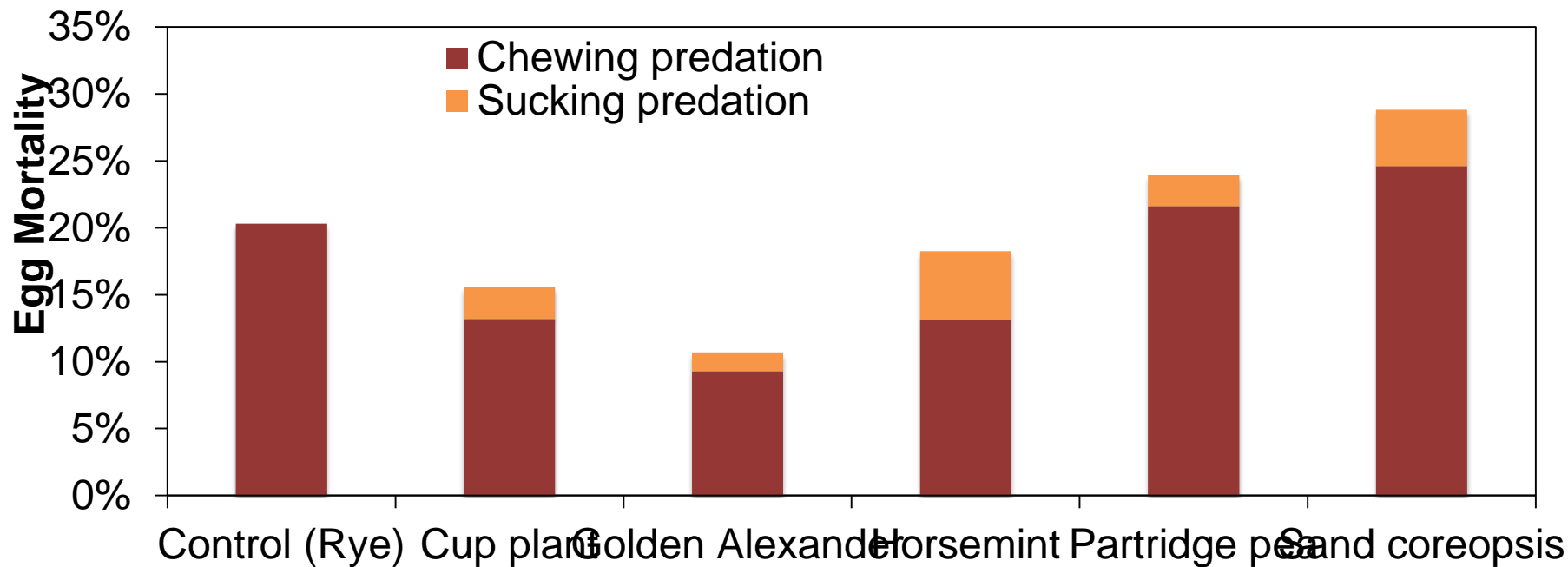
# Insectary Plantings

- Identify natural enemies and impact
  - Cup plant, *Silphium perfoliatum*
  - Golden Alexanders, *Zizia aurea*
  - Horsemint, *Monarda punctata*
  - Sand coreopsis, *Coreopsis lanceolata*
  - Partridge pea, *Chamaecrista fasciculata*
- Determine biological control with partridge pea companion plantings in corn

Brett Blaauw – Rutgers  
Cerruti Hooks and Lauren Hunt - UMD



# Wildflowers to Support Natural Enemies of BMSB



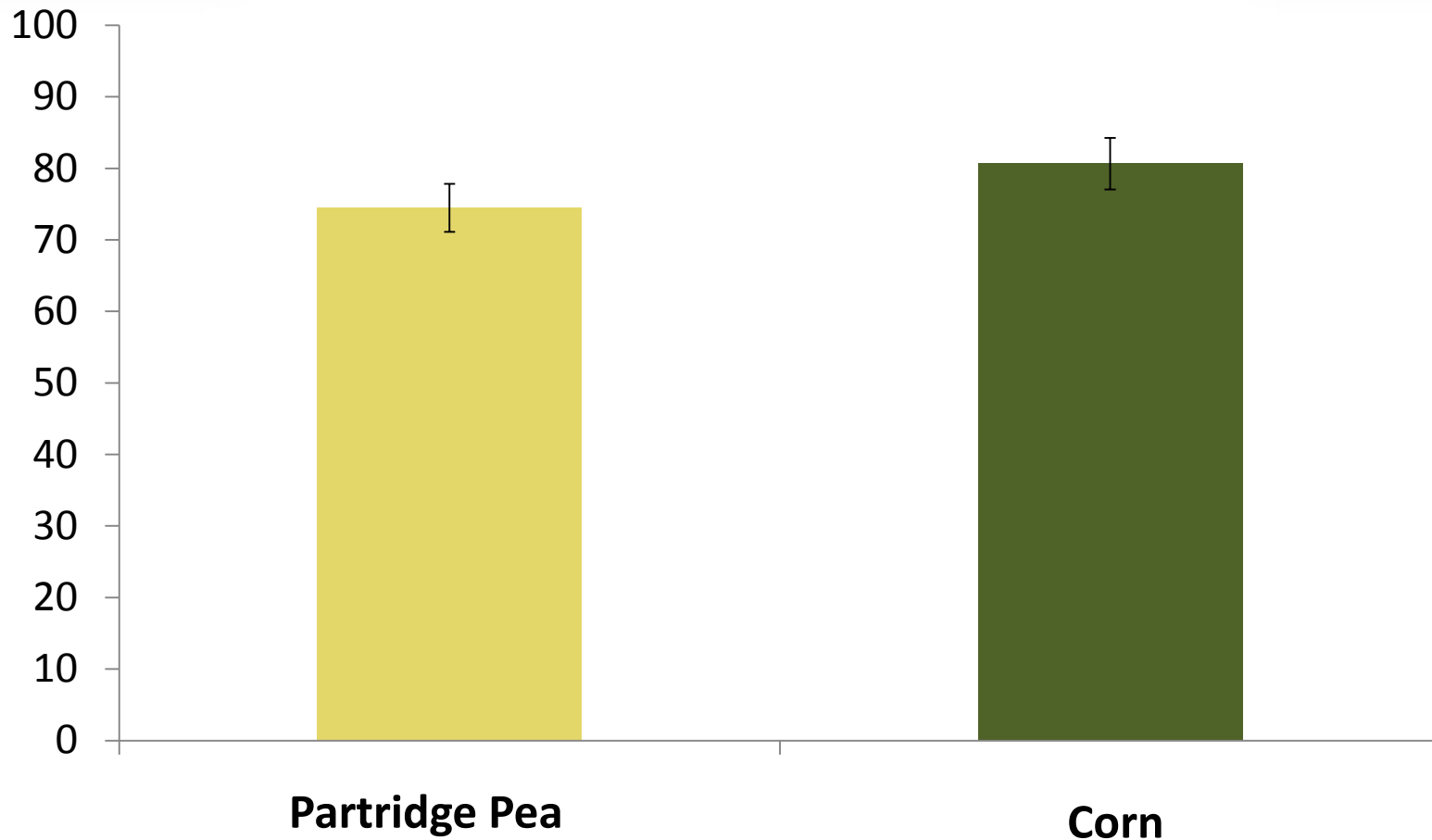
- Flowers support higher numbers of natural enemies
  - No difference in chewing predation of egg masses
  - Higher sucking predation
  - Most egg removal likely due to opportunistic orthopterans



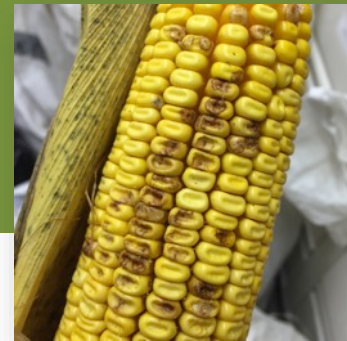
# Target Pest Control



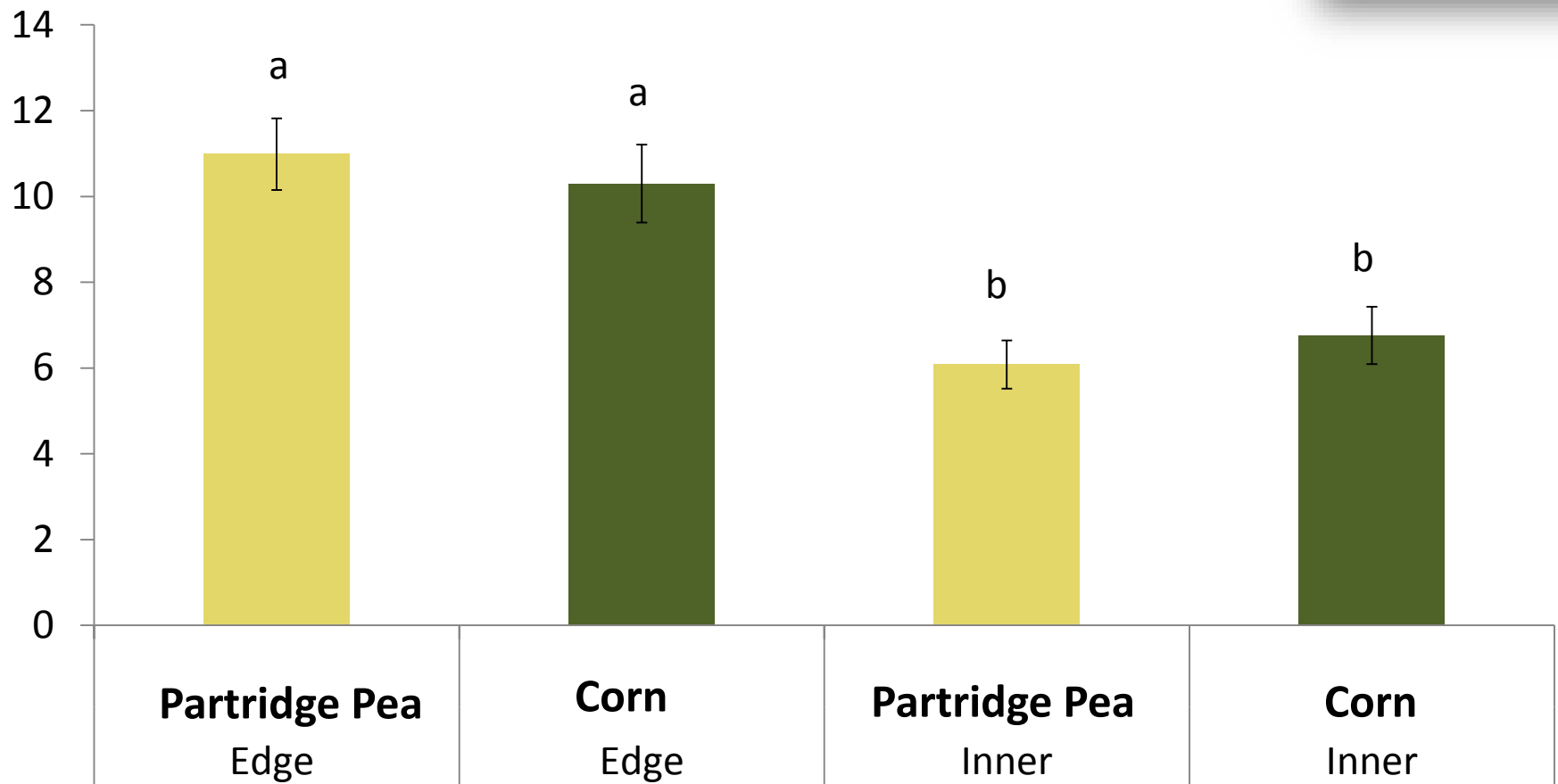
Mean % parasitism of stink bug egg masses



# Corn Ear Damage



Mean ear damage by stink bugs (kernels/ear)



# Biological Control Summary

- Egg mass predation is higher in organic systems than conventional
- Most predators are generalists or opportunists
  - Sucking predators, orthopterans
- Can be increased through habitat manipulation
  - Until *T. japaonicus* is widespread, focus should be on plants that increase predator community
    - Horsemint (*Monarda* sp) and Coreopsis
  - Insecticides like Entrust decrease NE populations
- Parasitism is increasing



# Objective 4: Evaluate Barrier Fabrics for BMSB and Endemic Stink Bug Management

- Investigated efficacy of barrier fabrics
- Treatments:
  - Fine mesh
  - 1/8" mesh
  - 1/6" mesh
  - No screen
- Scouted pepper plants weekly for:
  - BMSB and native stink bugs
  - Natural enemies
- Peppers were harvested and assessed for damage
  - TN (high pressure)
  - KY ( low pressure)

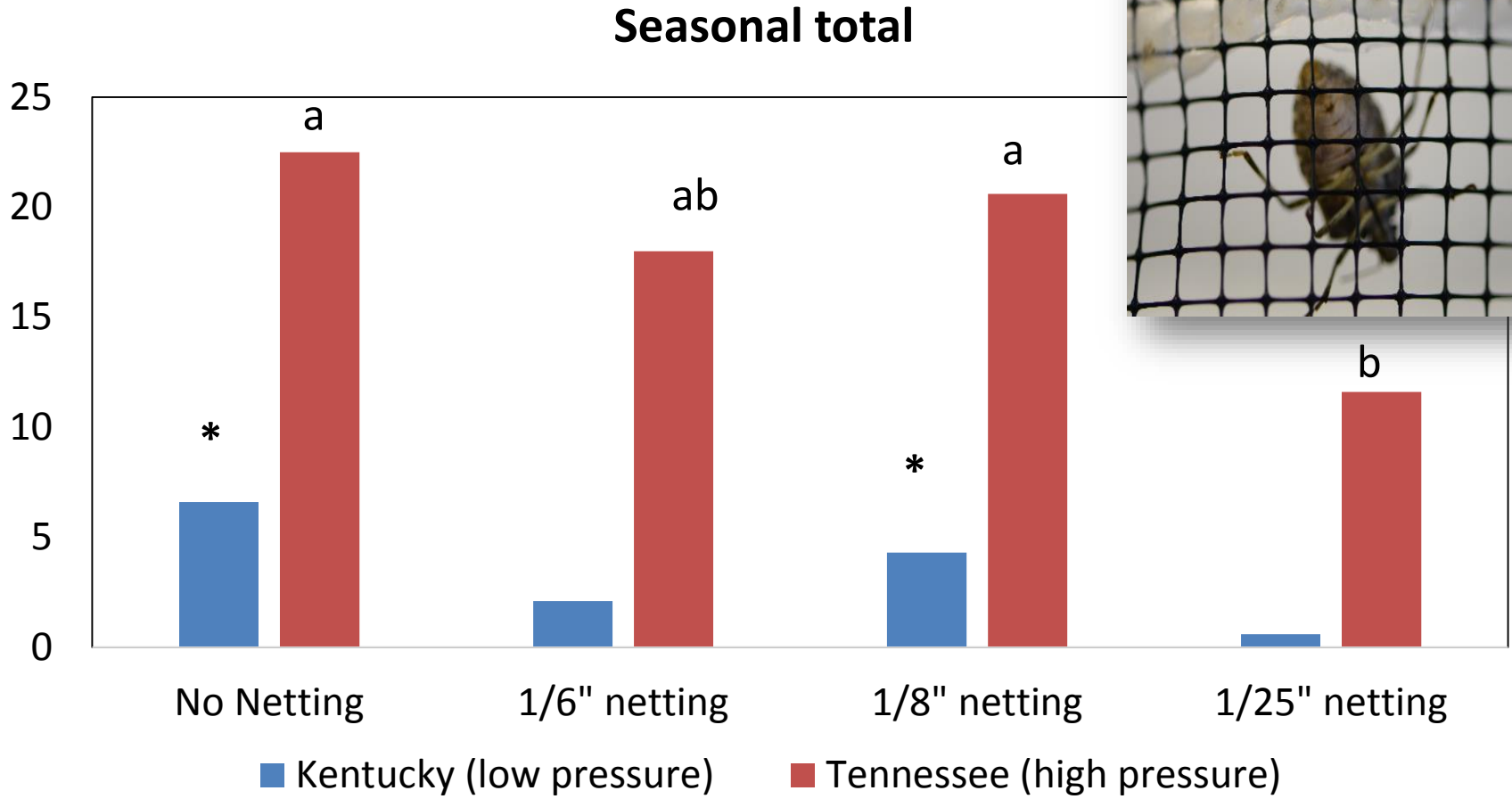


Rogers, Moore, and Bessin





# Percentage Stink Bug Damage to Peppers in Screened and Unscreened Plots



# Is Organic Management Feasible?

- Yes, *under moderate pressure!*
- Understand hot spots on the farm
  - Key early season host plants
  - Crops that are preferred hosts by all life stages
- Manipulate the habitat surrounding these areas
  - Support natural enemies
  - Trap crop using sunflower and sorghum
  - Re-design trap crop layout
- Under intense BMSB pressure the finest mesh netting provides protection from stink bug injury
- Remove overwintering populations on-farm



For more information, please visit our project website:

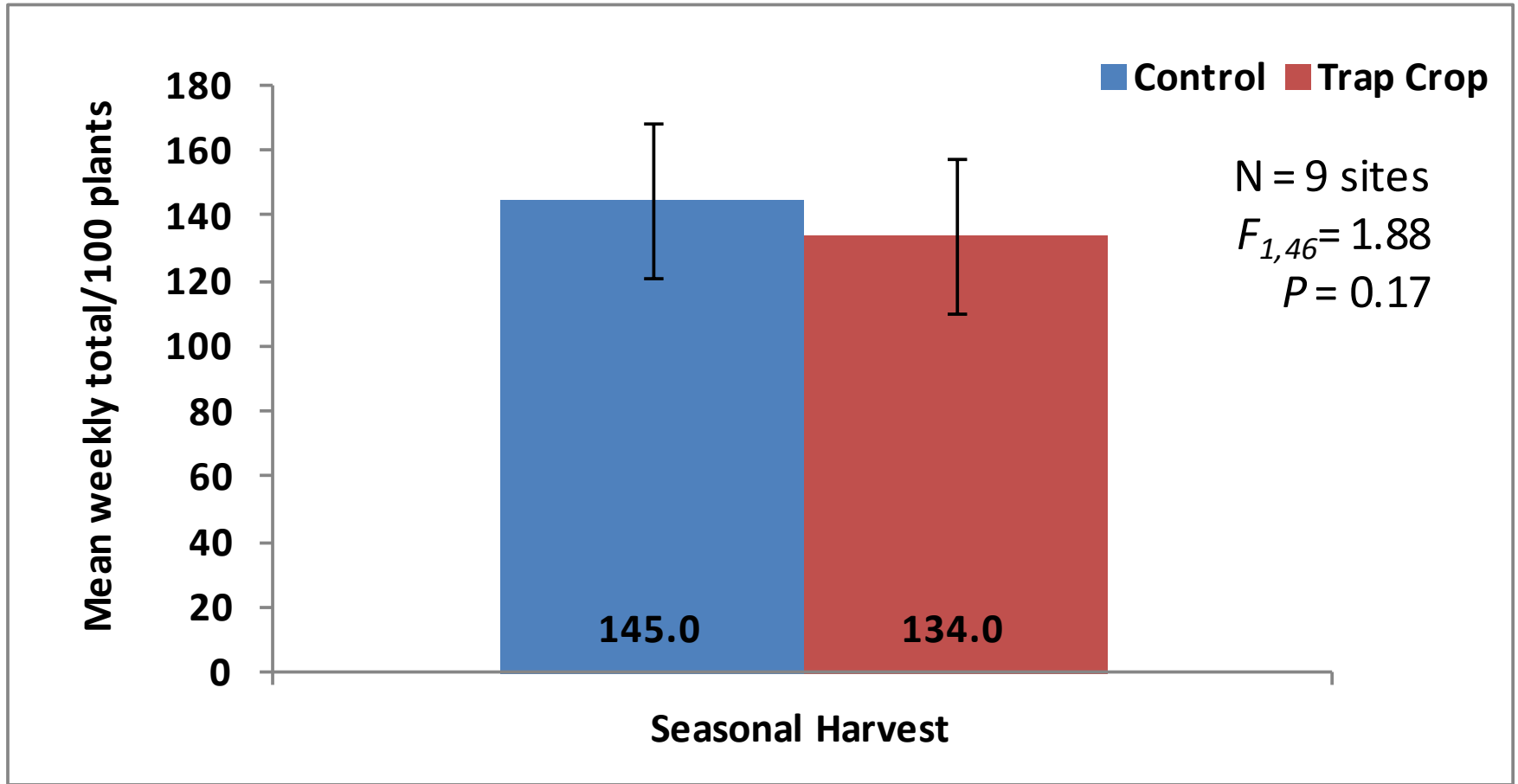
<http://eorganic.info/brown-marmorated-stink-bug-organic>

The image shows two overlapping screenshots. The top one is a Facebook page for the project, titled "Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in Organic Farming Systems". It features a cover photo of a field of sunflowers and a profile picture of a stink bug on a green plant. The page includes a search bar, a "Create Post" button, and navigation options like "Edit Page", "Build Audience", "Help", and "Show". The bottom screenshot is the project's website, which has a green header with the "eOrganic" logo and navigation links for "HOME", "GROUPS", "ARTICLES", "ABOUT US", and "HELP". The main content area is titled "Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in Organic Farming Systems" and includes a "Home" button and a "Project Updates" dropdown menu. A paragraph of text describes the project's goal: "Brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) poses a significant threat to organic production, and farmers have expressed an urgent need for effective organic pest management strategies. We have assembled a transdisciplinary team of organic researchers, farmers and extension educators that will coordinate the development and delivery of whole-farm organic management practices for BMSB and endemic stink bugs... Read more". Below this text are three image-based links: "About" (showing a cluster of stink bug eggs), "Resources" (showing a stink bug on a leaf), and "Program staff and key personnel" (showing two people in a field). A "News" section at the bottom left features a headline "Successful Project Funding" with the subtext "Our project was successful in obtaining OREI funding in 2012". On the right side of the website, there is a "Project Funding" section with the USDA logo and text: "United States Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture. This project was funded in 2012 by the Organic Research and Extension Initiative grant, part of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Grant number 2012-51300-20097." Below that is a "Who's online" section stating "There are currently 1 user and 16 guests".





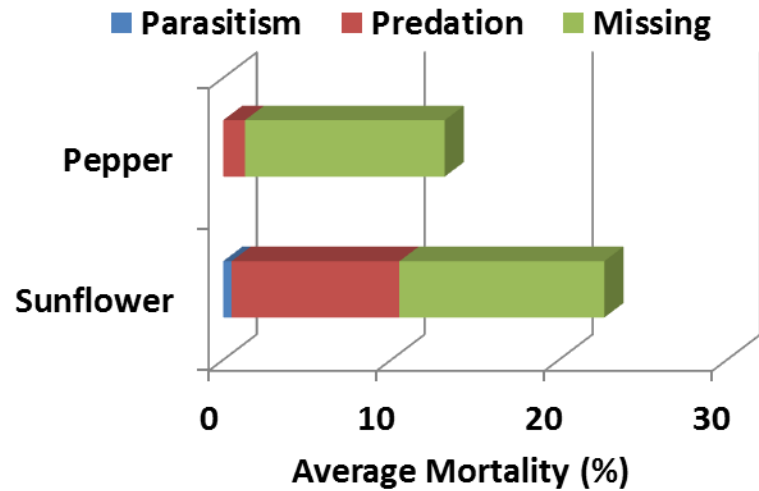
# 2014 Pepper Yields



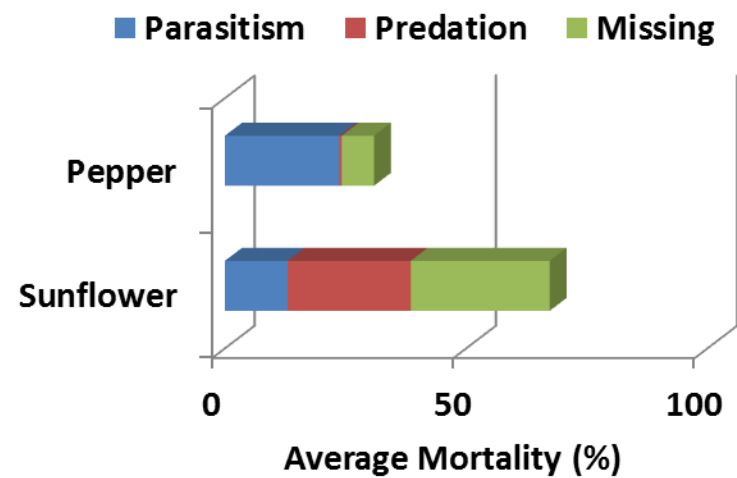
# Biological Control: Stink Bug Eggs



2013 (N=73)



2014 (N=37)



C. Matthews and R. Morrison



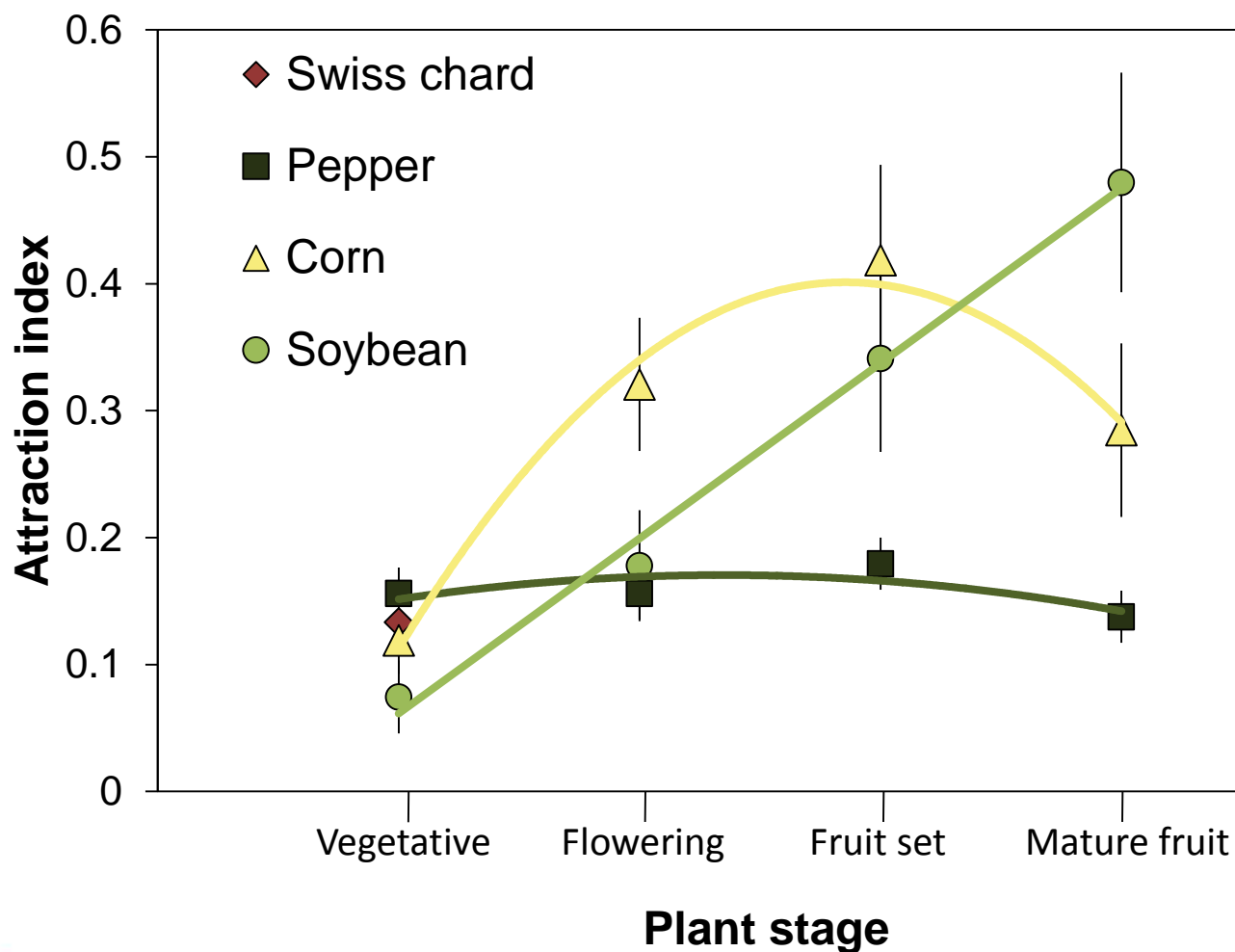
# Spatial Analysis: SADIE

- **Spatial Analysis by Distance Indices** (Perry et al. 1999).
- Calculates effort to make all values uniform
- Yields aggregation index ( $I_a$ )
  - $I_a < 1$  → Uniform
  - $I_a > 1$  → Aggregated
  - $I_a = 1$  → Random
- Associated  $P$ -value for  $I_a$





# Host Attractiveness may be Dependent on Plant Phenology



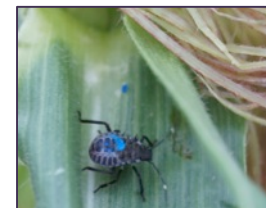
$r^2 = 0.29$   
 $P = 0.001$



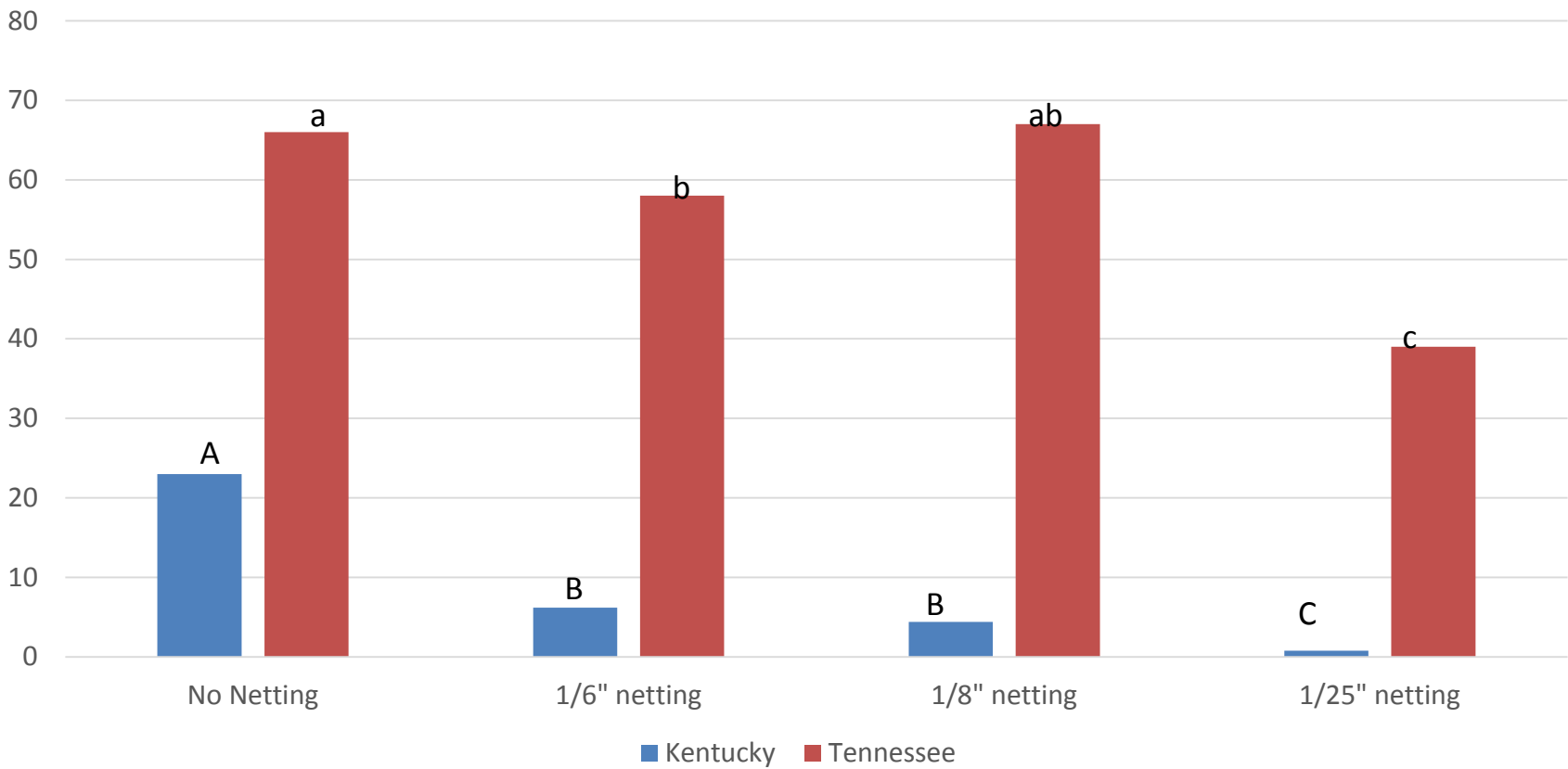
$r^2 = 0.32$   
 $P = 0.001$



$r^2 = 0.04$   
 $P = 0.21$



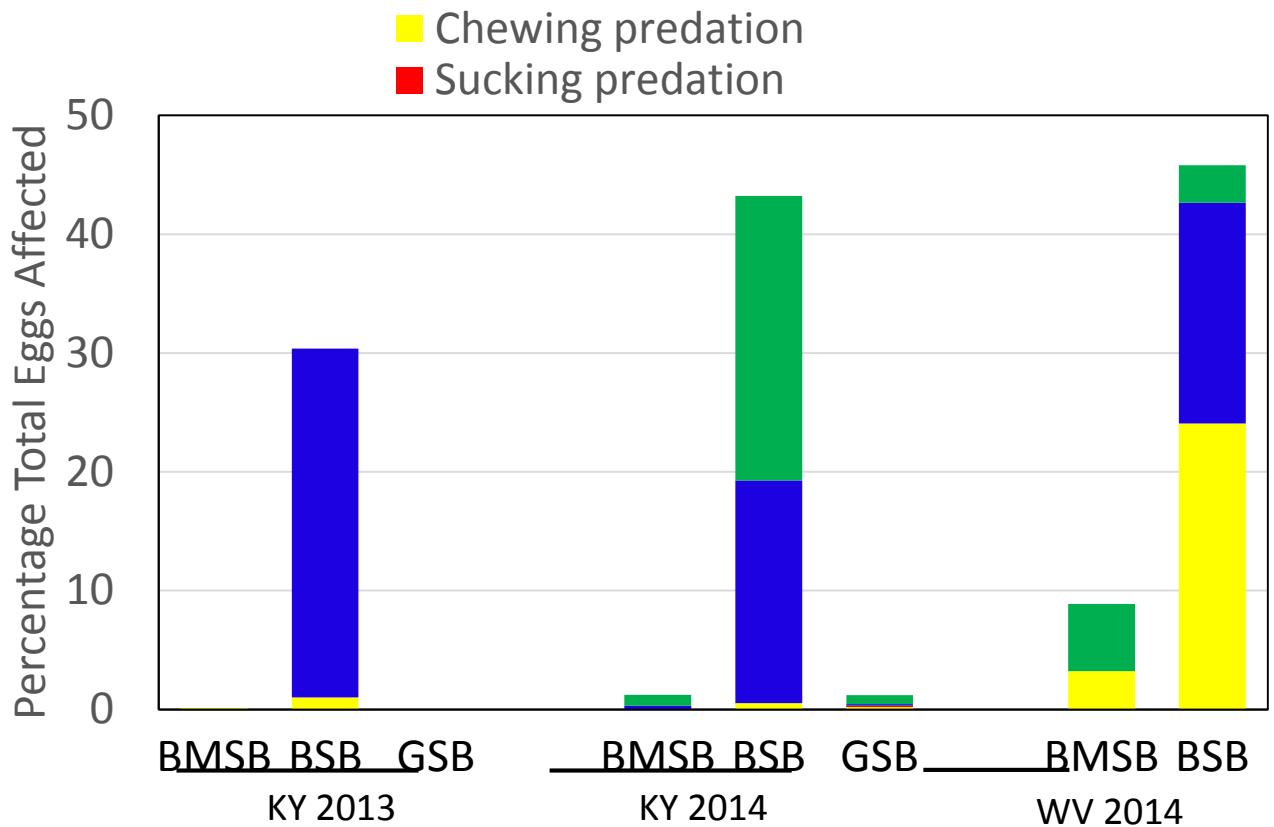
# Beneficial insects on yellow sticky cards in screened and unscreened plots of peppers



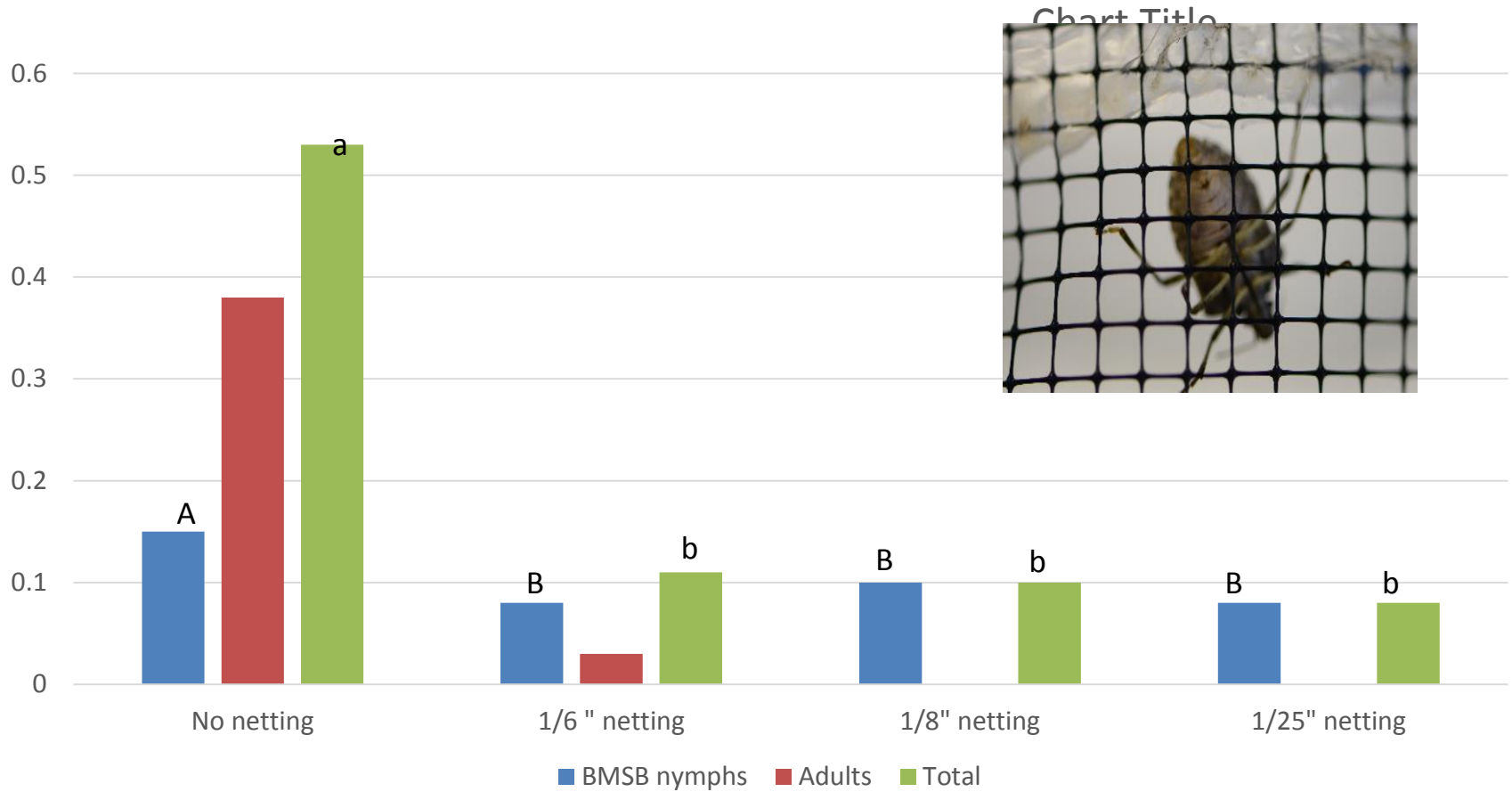
\*In 2014, aphids were a problem under the 1/25" netting in two plots in Kentucky.



# Sentinel Native Brown (*Euchistus servus*) and Green (*Acrosternum hilare*) stink bug vs BMSB egg predation and parasitism



# BMSB in screened and unscreened plots of peppers, Tennessee 2013 and 2014



# Percentage of marketable fruit from screened and unscreened plots, 2013 and 2014 combined

Percentage

