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News Release - 1974-04-30

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30 April 1974

WASHINGTON D C--Rep Kika de la Garza today asked the chairman of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee to give immediate consideration to providing funds for a research program looking to control a pest that threatens the future of the infant South Texas sugar industry and the destruction of improved pastures in the area.

In a communication to Chairman Jamie L Whitten (D-Miss), Rep de la Garza warned that the pest, a spittle bug known as "mosca pinta" or paint fly, already has devastated thousands of acres of improved pastures and sugar cane in Mexico. He said the spittle bug has now spread to within 50 miles of the Texas border.

"U S scientists are working with Mexican entomologists on surveys to determine the extent to which the pest is spreading, damage being done to pastures and sugar cane, and the present status of control measures," the South Texas Congressman reported. "The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station reallocated \$30,000 of its resources to support research this year, and the U S Agricultural Research Service has made available \$50,000 to aid cooperative field research in Mexico."

While these funds will support the research program for the 1974 season, Rep de la Garza wrote Chairman Whitten that "it is of the utmost urgency that a longer range program with a more stable base of funding be established as expeditiously as possible."

Failure to control the pest, the Congressman said, might well disrupt the new sugar industry and cause disastrous economic losses to South Texas cattle producers.