



UK College of Agriculture
Invasive Species Working Group

University of Kentucky
Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment

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Edited by
Songlin Fei and Laura Lhotka

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Preface

Invasions of non-indigenous species are a significant problem, reaching epidemic proportions and costing the American public billions of dollars each year. The health and longevity of many of our ecosystems are at risk due to significant invasion by exotic plants, pathogens, insects, and animals resulting in extraordinary loss of native species, loss in crop yield, deterioration of ecosystem services, and degradation of the environment. Due to its unique geographic location, Kentucky has become the regional epicenter of exotic plants, pathogens, insects, and animals acting both as a source and sink for many invasive species.

To better combat this increasing problem, we organized a statewide invasive species conference for the first time. The purpose of this conference is to demonstrate a sense of urgency regarding the threats posed by the most significant invasive species in Kentucky and to propose and share possible solutions. This conference intends to help to create linkages within and across organizations to capitalize on funding, research and applied opportunities.

The conference was well attended by university researchers, natural resource management experts, and landowners both within and outside Kentucky. Two major sessions were conducted during the conference. The first session (Friday, Dec. 12) focused on the problems from research and management points of view. Nationally renowned experts, including Randy Westbrooks from the U.S. Geological Survey, Robin Usborne from Michigan State University, Kerry Britton from U.S. Forest Service, and Daniel Simberloff, gave keynote presentations on invasive threats and management. Successful experiences were shared by experts from New York and Illinois. Within the state, speakers from six state agencies and four universities provided much needed research and management information. About 130 people attended the first session. The second major session (Saturday, Dec. 13) was targeted toward natural resource managers and landowners and was designed to demonstrate what the problem is and how to handle it. Real-life examples were presented by land managers on how to successfully manage and control invasive species. About 60 people attended the second session.

The conference was sponsored by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Associate Dean of Research Office, University of Kentucky Invasive Species Working Group, Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment, and Kentucky Exotic Pest Plant Council. Funding support for the conference was provided by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture Associate Dean of Research Office, University of Kentucky Office of the Vice President for Research, and Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment. Joyce Bender, Steve Bullard, Songlin Fei, Carol Hanley, Laura Lhotka, John Obrycki and Stephanie Shrewsbury served on the planning committee. We wish to express our appreciation to all individuals who helped to make the conference successful.

S. Fei

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