

## **Electronic agricultural atlas of insect pests and other harmful organisms of the Former Soviet Union**

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Modern geographic information system (GIS) tools allow spatially explicit data on living beings to be assembled, digitized, georeferenced and placed into a framework that can be accessed by a wide audience. As a result of international cooperation, the *Ecological Atlas of Russia and Neighboring Countries: Economic Plants and their Diseases, Pests and Weeds* is now nearing completion. This project is the first attempt to construct a bilingual information and decision support system on the economic plants and the organisms that harm them, across the territories of the Former Soviet Union. Three Russian institutes and the USDA Agricultural Research Service are cooperating to develop the Atlas, which consists of species distribution maps, biological descriptions, (including photographs), climate and agroecological maps, along with easy to use GIS exploratory software. Of interest to entomologists, the Atlas presents 222 maps reflecting the distribution of harmful insects and mites. There are a total of 640 maps describing the distribution of organisms harmful to economically important plants. The maps are based on an extensive review of literature, as well as original surveys of various national collections. Pest, disease and weed distribution zones reflect levels of severity, usually high, moderate and low. Maps can be reviewed at <http://www.agroatlas.ru/>. Because many of these species have trans-continental and even cosmopolitan distribution, it is of interest world-wide. Researchers, teachers, agronomists and amateurs are now using the freely available published data, maps and pictures to support their own activities. The Atlas is supported by a grant from the USDA, ARS Former Soviet Union Cooperation Program, managed by the ARS Office of International Research Programs, U.S. State Department Non-Proliferation/Proliferation Threat Reduction, and the International Science and Technology Center.