The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has positioned itself to benefit U.S. agriculture with a collaborative network of Overseas Biological Control Laboratories (OBCLs), saving the ag industry millions.

OBCLs focus primarily on invasive species.

Invasive species are estimated to cost the U.S. agriculture industry more than $100 billion per year.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL AGENTS are introduced natural enemies that are used to fight invasive species that severely damage crops.

OBCL collaborators can often find BIOCONTROL AGENTS in countries not easily accessible to the U.S.

Five Overseas Laboratories work directly with ARS at locations throughout the U.S.

ARS expenditures for FY2021:

- Montpellier, France: $3,109,068
- Thessaloniki, Greece: $581,213
- Hurlingham, Argentina: $417,712
- Brisbane, Australia: $92,066
- Beijing, China: $1,527,500

For every $1 spent on biological control there is a net benefit of $23.

MELALEUCA

- Threatened Everglades National Park and invaded California and Puerto Rico
- Three biocontrol species discovered by scientists at the Australian Biological Control Laboratory
- Biocontrol damaged trees produce 1% of the seeds formed by undamaged trees

GIANT REED

- Shoot-gallung wasps from France were introduced along the Rio Grande River to control the Giant Reed
- Water savings valued at $4.4 million/year
- 54% decline in live biomass along the Rio Grande River, with partial recovery of native plants
- Wasp is now established in Central Valley, CA

WATERHYACINTH

- Seriously chokes waterways throughout Southern US
- Spread through Florida, Louisiana, California, Puerto Rico
- Four biocontrol species discovered by scientists from the Argentine Laboratory
- Return of investment estimated $34 benefit for $1 investment of biocontrol

ALLIGATORWEED

- Seriously chokes waterways throughout Southeast US
- Three biocontrol species established 1964-1971 discovered by scientists in Argentina
- By 1982 alligatorweed was only a minor problem
- No longer an important weed throughout much of historic range

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