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EVALUATION OF RACE AND COPPER TOLERANCE OF *XANTHOMONAS CAMPESTRIS* PV. *VESICATORIA* FROM PEPPER FIELDS IN SOUTHWEST GEORGIA FROM 2004-2006.

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Bacterial leaf spot (BLS) on pepper is caused by the gram-negative bacterium *Xanthomonas campestris* pv. *vesicatoria* (XCV). In 2004 a region wide BLS epidemic occurred in the Southwest Georgia pepper growing region. This epidemic caused millions of dollars of losses to growers and prompted an investigation into the epidemiology of the disease. In 2004 thru 2006, isolates were taken from pepper fields with BLS and tested for race and copper tolerance. Forty-

eight isolates of XCV were race typed on 5 differential cultivars of pepper, races 10, 9, 8, 7, 4, and 3 were found. 91.7% of the *Xanthomonas* isolates race typed caused disease on plants with the Bsr2 gene (the Bsr2 gene is found in most commercially available BLS resistant pepper cultivars). The XCV isolates were also tested for copper sensitivity. Out of 63 total isolates, 90% were found to be copper tolerant.