B-26 Implications of use of excess coir dust mulch in pineapple cultivation on the mealybug wil disease of pineapple

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Mealybug wilt disease is a major constraint in profitable pineapple production. The pink mealybu *Dysmicoccus brevipes* Cockerell, causes the wilt disease. Ants attending on the mealybug colonies play major role in the build-up of the disease. The impact of 3 common weed management practices: (1) clea weeding, (2) slash weeding and (3) mulching with excess coir dust, on the ant/mealybug incidence, wa studied.

Results showed that the tending ant population was high in the coir dust mulched plots (48.3/trap/week) i comparison to the clean weeded (26.3/trap/week) and slash weeded (39.1/trap/week) plots. Consequently mealybug numbers were high in the coir dust mulched plots (479.7/week/plot) in comparison to the clea weeded (263.8/week/plot) and slash weeded (415.7/week/plot) plots.