

National Pesticide Safety Education Dialogue

Background

The National Stakeholder Team for Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) Funding was formed in October, 2012 to address the crisis facing the program in a growing number of states. The team has more than 100 members from 96 organizations, and is exploring every opportunity for financial and other types of support (<http://psep.us/>).

In November of 2013, the National Stakeholder Team submitted the attached statement on "The Critical Need for IPM Support of Pesticide Safety Education" to the Federal IPM Coordinating Committee and several key organizations, and requested a national dialogue. Most organization leaders agreed to participate in the dialogue when individual invitations went out in 2014. However, there was a very significant delay in gaining EPA commitment to participate, due to organizational changes.

The first and most important dialogue will be held on December 9 from 9 AM – 12 PM, at EPA, the morning after the full SFIREG meeting. We expect EPA to reserve a room at Potomac Yards in Arlington. Priority topics will involve the first 8 of the 24 points in the attached statement, because they focus on IPM Emphasis and Leadership and will determine the success of the rest.

This is expected to be a one-time meeting for **most** of the attendees. Numerous action steps will hopefully result from this first meeting, and be delegated to others working "in the trenches" of IPM.

Sonny Ramaswamy and most of the other presidents/chairs have now confirmed that the date works for them, so the date is firm. It is a face-to-face meeting, there will be an agenda and background information, and Jim Burnette (co-lead of the National Stakeholder Team representing AAPCO) will moderate the meeting. The organizations are listed below:

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
USDA Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, Plant Protection Division
USDA Office of Pest Management Policy
Federal IPM Coordinating Committee
American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators
Association of American Pesticide Control Officials
Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials
Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy
Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
EPA Field and External Affairs Division

A Statement of the National Stakeholder Team for PSEP Funding November 11, 2013

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Pesticide Safety Education (PSE) both face funding challenges in the current fiscal environment. However, regardless of budget constraints, there is a great need, and responsibility, to champion pesticide safety education within the various IPM programs, projects, and outreach efforts at the national, regional, state, and IPM Center levels.

Safe and judicious pesticide use to protect human health and the environment is an important component of a comprehensive IPM plan, and is critical to achieving effective, sustainable, integrated pest management by “land managers, growers, structural pest managers, and public and wildlife health officials” as described in the [National Road Map for Integrated Pest Management](#).

We strongly believe that pesticide safety education must be better incorporated into IPM guidance and efforts at the national, regional, state, and IPM Center levels. This will help with priority setting for IPM grants, grant panel selection, guidance and reviews, program collaboration, and leveraging of resources and expertise. IPM should serve as a key influencer in advancing pesticide safety education as an essential element of the chemical component of IPM.

The National Stakeholder Team for Pesticide Safety Education Program Funding requests that a national dialogue take place on the following recommendations. This dialogue must include groups that have significant influence on IPM and PSE; e.g. the Federal IPM Coordinating Committee, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA Office of Pest Management Policy, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, US Environmental Protection Agency, American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators, Association of American Pesticide Control Officials, Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials, and Extension Committee on Organization and Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

IPM Emphasis

1. That all components of IPM be given proper attention, including the safe and proper use and timing of pesticides.
2. That IPM and pesticide safety education not be treated as mutually exclusive.
3. That the priorities for IPM include PSE – and that this not be defined as IPM training of pesticide applicators with only a minor PSE component permitted.

IPM Leadership

4. That the Federal IPM Coordinating Committee and IPM Center Stakeholder Committees tasked with setting priorities are well-balanced, understand the importance of PSE in protecting human health and the environment, and contain strong advocates for PSE.
5. That USDA, the Regional IPM Centers, and the state IPM Coordinators actively work to advance PSE in Center/Coordinator activities and IPM grant criteria.
6. That more State IPM Coordinators and State PSE Program Coordinators work together to advance core principles of PSE as part of IPM educational materials, and to advance core principles of IPM as part of PSE educational materials.
7. That the planned Federal Agency Core IPM Certification Training Program includes PSE as a key component, and that strong advocates for PSE be part of the development and implementation teams.
8. That State IPM Coordinators get appropriate support and credit for PSE done in association with or in support of the PSE Program Coordinator.

IPM Procedures

9. That the priorities of the IPM Centers be well-communicated to all stakeholders.
10. That the required content of new and revised Crop Profiles includes information on high priority and unique pesticide safety education needs for current products and alternatives.

11. That the guidelines for creating Pest Management Strategic Plans be modified, going forward, to include an actual pesticide safety education component, rather than only specifying the need to “*identify* effects on beneficial organisms and pollinators...*highlight* RM issues...*identify* environmental issues...and *identify* critical issues for research, regulatory, and education.” All components of IPM, including PSE, should be covered in the critical issues and priorities.

12. That Pest Management Strategic Plans do not require “priorities for research, regulatory activity, and education/training programs needed for transition to alternative pest management practices” without also requiring priorities for PSE for the large number of IPM programs that do not or cannot transition to alternative pest management practices.

IPM Grants

13. That more IPM grants support development of educational materials that help advance PSE as a critical component of IPM. There are examples where IPM grants have given exemplary support to the advancement of PSE.

14. That more IPM grants support research projects that help advance PSE, because of its important role in reducing potential human health risks and adverse environmental effects from pests and from the use of pest management practices (goals of both the USDA National Roadmap for IPM and the Extension IPM Coordination and Support Logic Model).

15. That IPM grants and outreach focus as much attention on reducing pesticide risk as on reducing pesticide usage. Both goals are often expressed, but the actual focus is more often on reducing pesticide usage as the means to reduce risk. For the many IPM programs that utilize pesticides, proper pesticide use learned through PSE is the primary way to reduce risk.

16. That IPM grants which “enhance IPM understanding among pesticide applicators” do not exclude or minimize PSE as part of that IPM training.

17. That IPM grants support more joint projects between IPM coordinators and PSE Program coordinators to develop outreach materials and courses having a strong focus on all components of IPM, including PSE.

18. That, with the exception of the Pest Management Alternatives Program, IPM grant introductory language does not specify an objective to “adopt alternative pest management practices” (automatically excluding PSE).

19. That more IPM grants focus specifically on enhancing national PSE efforts.

20. That all IPM grants clearly indicate the types of PSE proposals that are eligible.

21. That IPM grant schedules (Requests for Applications or RFAs) and content be well-communicated to all stakeholders.

IPM Education

22. That IPM education reinforces all of the basic principles of safe pesticide use.

23. That IPM education concerning PSE never be relegated to brief directives (e.g. follow the label, practice judicious use) or misleading statements (e.g. select least toxic pesticides, use pesticides as a last resort).

24. That IPM education not promote certain cropping methods (e.g. organic) as more sustainable than others. IPM, safe pesticide use and sustainability are not restricted to any particular cropping method.

Pesticide safety education teaches applicators to use pesticides properly, and re-certification is the only existing mechanism that guarantees this ongoing training. Strong IPM support of pesticide safety education translates to strong support of IPM.