

# Certified Pest Control Operators of Florida's PESP Strategy

## **Describe your Organization's Five-Year Goals Related to Pesticide Risk Reduction**

The Certified Pest Control Operator's Association of Florida (CPCO) has always been a leader in educating the industry in Florida. CPCO seeks to reduce exposure to pesticides, and the risks associated with the misuse of pesticides, by providing training seminars and materials to promote the proper storage, use, and disposal of pesticides as well as the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods of pest management to reduce the reliance on pesticides. For example, one aspect of the training that is sorely needed in Florida is that of proper pesticide stewardship and spill control. This training would be a priority issue. This type of training, to be effective, should be accomplished by hands-on participatory programs involving real world situations. Many other aspects of the proper stewardship of pesticides are also best communicated in this fashion. The promotion of IPM has been a hallmark of CPCO's efforts for many years and will be an essential part of our efforts. Many aspects of IPM can also be taught in a participatory type program. A program to accomplish this training would have to be multi-level and spread over a period of years.

## **What do you envision doing (broadly) to try to resolve your major issues?**

In order to gauge our effectiveness, CPCO would incorporate this training into our state-mandated technician training programs as well as our special seminars. This will allow us to monitor the progress and retention of the participants on a year-to-year basis. It will also allow re-evaluation after five years or any other desired interval. For business owners and supervisors, CPCO will incorporate the training into our Continuing Education (CEU) seminars conducted in six cities, three times per year. CPCO is an organization of individual certified operators, not companies, and as such it uniquely represents the smaller and medium sized companies as well as the supervisors of large companies. CPCO therefore, is in a position to deliver information to where the "rubber meets the road". CPCO has conducted programs in the past with the University of Florida and UF IFAS and will continue in the future. EPA can assist CPCO by providing up to date information to our office concerning environmental stewardship. The appointment of a liaison to contact is most helpful. CPCO has been providing quality training programs since 1994. CPCO has produced safety, training and human resource manuals that have been sold to pest control companies all over the country. Our goal is to reach out beyond our membership base.

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## **Goal 1 and Tactics**

The overreaching goal, of course, is to promote the environmental stewardship of pesticides. As stated above, efforts to reduce the exposure to pesticides have not been given the priority they deserve. We have promoted spill control programs with UAP, and included this training in our OSHA compliance manual and step-by-step Technician Training Workbook. The Spill Control training must be part of every company's *basic training* for technicians. This training could be combined with sessions dealing with the topics listed below. Information regarding the participants in these activities, their documentation, test results where applicable and other information is kept on file and computerized. Computer checks can be made to determine what training was received by whom and when. Pre and post testing can be used to verify results.

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## **Goal 2 and Tactics**

Another goal is to promote the level of label comprehension, mixing and storage of pesticides. Again, this training is lacking in many cases. In our technician training classes we frequently find applicators with little knowledge of labels and proper dilution methods. Proper calculations for treatment need to be taught. These topics are best conveyed in a hands-on problem solving atmosphere and can be incorporated into our existing technician training programs. Follow-up and documentation would be handled using our existing systems. The same procedures as detailed above would be used.

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## **Goal 3 and Tactics**

Another topic in need of attention is the calibration of application equipment and the actual application process. This is, of course, a prime candidate for a hands-on seminar with exercises in operating real equipment. Again, this can be incorporated into our tech training and CEU courses and the results monitored as above. As part of a multi-year program these tactile learning sessions can be made more complex each year, at the same time maintaining the entry level courses for new personnel. Success as noted above can be determined by pre and post tests, as well as monitoring violations for misapplications.

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## **Goal 4 and Tactics**

It is vital to increase the industry's acceptance and utilization of IPM principles and methods. Again, CPCO has taught these concepts for years. CPCO has cooperated with Dr. Faith Oi and Rebecca Baldwin at the University of Florida regarding their acclaimed

school IPM program. Our goal is to expand this knowledge to a much larger portion of the industry. This includes our members outside of Florida. As detailed above, CPCO can incorporate IPM into our training programs and monitor the results. Because CPCO's training efforts encompass employees representing potentially several thousand companies, we think we can make a real difference.

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CPCO believes these goals are attainable, and by expanding on our present programs and methods, that tangible results can be achieved. CPCO is ready to take on this challenge and is looking forward to working with EPA to meet its goal of increasing awareness of and compliance with the principles of environmental stewardship.