

SYSCO Corporation's PESP Strategy

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

SYSCO's Sustainable/Integrated Pest Management Program was initiated to promote environmental stewardship in partnership with our SYSCO Brand canned and frozen fruit and vegetable suppliers. The program is intended to protect ecologically sensitive areas, improve air, water and soil quality, reduce, reuse and recycle resources, conserve energy and minimize agrochemical inputs.

Our canned and frozen suppliers participate in an annual third-party, on-site audit that includes not only their processing facilities but also their raw material suppliers. In addition, suppliers annually reports environmental indicator information such as pesticide and nutrient applications and recycling and reuse activities.

We have shared our program and performance with PESP partners and others in an effort to contribute more broadly to stewardship within the food industry including our competitors.

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

Progress on 2006 Activity 1

Over the past two years, SYSCO has developed a new Sustainable Agriculture initiative. The program, developed with input from our food processor suppliers, growers and others, currently involves all canned and frozen fruit and vegetable production for SYSCO. More than 75 suppliers representing 375,000 acres of production in the US and internationally have developed written sustainable agriculture programs incorporating practices such as IPM, record keeping, recycling, and energy, soil and water resource conservation. These suppliers have undergone a first annual on-site audit by an independent third party and completed an annual performance indicator self-report.

Since 2004, SYSCO has expanded its Sustainable Agriculture initiative to enroll over 600,000 acres of production internationally and in the US in the program. This expansion is largely due to additional eligible products and raw material suppliers including potatoes to the program and increased grower compliance to reporting. Nearly one million pounds of pesticide active ingredient has been avoided through IPM tactics such as scouting, adhering to pest threshold numbers, weather monitoring, adjusting planting dates and more. Suppliers involved in other sustainable agriculture practices including recycling and energy, soil and water resource conservation continue their annual on-site audits by an independent third party.

Progress on 2006 Activity 2

We will work with our suppliers, auditors and EPA, the USDA IPM Program, the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and others to increase awareness and understanding of our Sustainable Agriculture initiative, and of Federal education, technical assistance and incentive programs designed to improve the sustainability of production for SYSCO and others. We will share success stories from our supplier programs and from interactions between SYSCO, our suppliers and Federal agencies and programs.

During 2007, we continued to use our advisory council made up of federal agencies, processors and academia to provide input into the program. We also conducted the second SYSCO IPM Conference that was attended by over 100 suppliers and other interested parties, with 98% of participants indicating the event was valuable and that they would attend again. We also updated our audit based on feedback from suppliers, our advisory council and others. We developed two annual program reports and summary brochures including performance metrics and participant testimonials.

Goal 1 and Tactics

We will continue to improve and execute our annual audits for our Sustainable Agriculture initiative to increase the quality and number of suppliers in the program. In 2007 alone, 72 frozen and canned fruit and vegetable suppliers in 160 processing locations representing 4,179 growers and over 600,000 acres were approved for the program after undergoing their on-site audit. This level of involvement avoided over 370,000 pounds of active ingredient pesticide applications in this year alone, a 22% increase from 2006. The number of processing locations decreased slightly due to industry consolidation.

How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?

Participants are scored on their progress along the IPM continuum including understanding key pests, identifying and implementing multiple strategies to prevent pest damage, systematic pest and crop monitoring, use of thresholds to determine when control actions are economically justified, managing pest resistance to pesticides, managing drift and environmental emergencies, selecting least-toxic pest control options, and tracking and setting goals for pesticide use and hazard reduction.

How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?

We will measure number of suppliers, crops and acres participating, audit scores on each of the more than 30 IPM-related elements in the audit, pesticide use efficiency (e.g., lbs. of active ingredient used per acre or other unit of production) and pesticide use avoided by using IPM.

Goal 2 and Tactics

We will continue to work with our suppliers, auditors and EPA, the USDA IPM Program, the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and others to increase awareness and understanding of our Sustainable Agriculture initiative, and of Federal education, technical assistance and incentive programs designed to improve the sustainability of production for SYSCO and others. We will also continue to share success stories from our supplier programs and from interactions between SYSCO, our suppliers and Federal agencies and programs.

How does this activity reduce pesticide risk?

Many Federal programs are specifically designed to reduce pesticide use, costs and hazards to workers, beneficial and non-target organisms and soil, air and water resources. By maximizing supplier awareness and access to these programs, we will be more effective in increasing adoption and effectiveness of practices which improve impacts on health, environment and economics specifically related to pesticide risks.

How will you measure the risk reduction gained from this activity?

We will measure auditor and supplier participation in trainings implemented as part of our initiative, and supplier and grower participation in other training and topics covered. We will also survey suppliers for participation in Federal programs and impacts generated as part of the annual supplier self-reporting.