

Texas Pest Management Association's PESP Strategy

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

The goals of Texas Pest Management Association to address the risk posed by agricultural pesticides has remained virtually unchanged since the organization was founded during the 1970's. These goals include, but are not limited to:

1. Reducing pesticide risk by promoting the use of established, sound IPM principles by farm growers.
2. Education of farm growers and others about IPM concepts will remain paramount to the Texas IPM Program. The organization will continue to work to promote educational programs that offer the latest information about current and emerging IPM technologies.
3. Provide other educational opportunities through research and demonstration. The organization will work to promote applied research and demonstration projects that move technologies from field trials to on-farm applications. TPMA will also continue to work to promote education of "next generation" IPM program consultants.
4. Provide educational and demonstration programs that focus on the safe storage, use and handling of farm pesticides, and help growers to better understand the mode of action of various pesticides.

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

Texas Pest Management Association envisions the continued use of education and demonstration to promote the safe use of farm chemicals. Growers must be afforded the opportunity of becoming better educated about the use of pesticides, and the environmental effects and other consequences caused by the misuse of farm applied chemicals. In most all instances, farm growers have shown a willingness to become better educated about the risks posed by pesticides. However, the time requirements necessary to produce a productive and profitable crop often limits the farm grower's time to individually research and study alternative pest control techniques and strategies. TPMA and its cooperators will continue to work together to design and implement educational programs that reach a large number of growers in a timely and efficient manner. TPMA will continue to solicit the participation of other farm organizations and state and federal agencies to promote sound IPM programs within the Texas. It is understood that it is only through the combined efforts of many and various groups that real progress may be attained. The organization will continue in a leadership roll to encourage cooperation and coordination of these various groups to promote the Texas IPM program.

Goal 1 and Tactics

TPMA's efforts in regards to reducing pesticide risk through the use of sound IPM principles, includes encouraging growers to consider using a combination of IPM tools that offer pest control advantages without the use ... or with reduced use ... of costly and environmentally harsh pesticides. Growers will be continually encouraged to use cultural, biological and other tools that offer substantial pest control with reduced cost and environmental consequences.

As an example, cotton farmers have learned that the early destruction of cotton stalks after harvest helps to rob the cotton boll weevil of a needed food supply to help it survive winter hibernation. Reducing weevil numbers that emerge in the spring helps to reduce the need of pesticide applications at that time, and this concept has been central to the state's effort to eradicate the pest.

In other crops, farmers have learned that periodic crop rotation helps to reduce and maintain pest numbers below economic thresholds that would otherwise require the use of pesticides.

We will continue to monitor the success of this effort through open communication with farm growers and periodic IPM surveys. Past surveys have indicated that growers have been able to reduce their applications of pesticides and increase their profit margins through the use of IPM technologies.

The EPA possibly could help promote the use of IPM concepts through general informational packets that encourage grower participation to reduce pesticide risk.

Goal 2 and Tactics

Growers must be continually kept abreast of changes in technology that offer pest control opportunities without the use of chemical pesticides, or at least with reduced pesticide use. As an example, crop genetics that offer natural pest resistance offer a viable alternative to the increased use of pesticides.

TPMA will continue to facilitate the transition of new pest control technologies to growers, using all available means to transition from field trials to on-farm applications.

In addition, TPMA will continue to offer IPM crop scouting that educates farm growers about how to monitor for crop pests and beneficial insects, how to analyze scouting data and determine economic thresholds. The program will continue to keep growers abreast of currently occurring pest problems as well as possible emerging problems from a local, regional and statewide standpoint.

We will continue to monitor the success of this effort through open communication with farm growers and periodic IPM surveys.

The EPA possibly could help promote the use of IPM concepts through general informational packets that provide basic IPM pest control strategy information that include the use of biological controls.

Goal 3 and Tactics

TPMA will work to educate farm grows through the expansion of result demonstration projects. Farmers have increased their demand for demonstration projects to show those IPM tools that are most effective and efficiently applied, with a resultant risk reduction to the environment that surrounds their families and their neighbors. Growers are interested in new crop genetics that offer natural pest control mechanisms and that do not require intensive use of crop pesticides.

It has been shown that new genetic technologies that accent pest control through crop resistance offer substantial advantages when used in combination with other IPM tools. It is important that growers are able to evaluate various IPM alternatives through applied research and demonstration projects.

As a part of this education goal, TPMA will continue to work to solicit funding for an IPM Intern Program that helps to train interested college students about IPM principles and concepts. The program will provide a “hands on” opportunity to help train a new generation of IPM technologists to work with farm growers in the future to ensure the continued success of the Texas IPM Program.

We will continue to monitor the success of this effort through open communication with farm growers and periodic IPM surveys.

The EPA possibly could consider helping to sponsor internships either through TPMA or Cooperative Extension. Any federal funding could possibly be used to leverage matching state funding.

Goal 4 and Tactics

TPMA will continue to promote educational programs that focus upon the safe use of pesticides, their mode of action, minimizing pesticide drift, and reducing environmental and health impacts caused by the misuse of farm pesticides. Educational programs will be provided through grower meetings, turn-row gatherings at field tests, and through the use of the Internet.

During these educational opportunities, growers will be offered continuing education units (CEUs) that are necessary to their maintaining a viable pesticide applicators license. These courses will include the use of course tests and surveys to determine the grower’s understanding of the presented educational material.

We will continue to monitor the success of this effort through open communication with farm growers and periodic IPM surveys.

The EPA could consider building Internet based programs/courses where farm growers and others could obtain CEU credits. EPA could disseminate web based information that could be used to qualify for pesticide applicator license requirements.