

University of Arizona - Maricopa Agricultural Center's PESP Strategy

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

The purpose of our program is to facilitate the education and implementation of IPM into schools and child care facilities. We have a core program in the Phoenix metro area with several outlying districts throughout the state. We are currently exploring ways of maximizing outreach and communication with additional school districts using the Arizona Children's Environmental Health Coalition (ACEHC). This is a stakeholder group whose members include several partnering state agencies, pest management industry representatives, activists, children's environmental health advocates, and schools in various stages of voluntary IPM adoption. The ACEHC is the primary mode by which school IPM outreach and education is being pursued state-wide.

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

Maximizing electronic communications within the ACEHC has proven to be increasingly difficult with evolving SPAM settings. To work around this, we are revisiting the Urban IPM website (reorganization and redesign) to make current materials available to stakeholders online, and utilizing partner websites (the Arizona Pest Management Center) for appropriate postings. We are also exploring the option of switching e-mail communications over to a listserv for the ACEHC. As a last option, due to resource limitations, we are capitalizing on opportunities to provide in-person IPM presentations in situations where our state agency partners are conducting stakeholder workshops.

Goal 1 and Tactics

Maintain and expand the existing Arizona Children's Environmental Health Coalition (ACEHC).

We are maintaining and expanding our ACEHC membership through several means: monthly updates, bi-monthly fact-sheet-style newsletters, and an annual combined workshop/meeting. These meetings/workshops promote education and awareness of integrated pest management (IPM) methods in schools, child care facilities, and at home. They provide opportunities to share: school district and pest management industry updates; any applied IPM research results from University of Arizona; explain changes in state law governing pest management practices; and hear input from stakeholders on urban/school IPM issues.

The 2007 ACEHC meeting addressed critical information on techniques and resources for proper honey bee remediation, and clarified changes in state laws designating honey bee colonies in the public health (county) domain. Additionally, bat IPM was covered, which included hands-on viewing of bats and inspection techniques. A questionnaire was

drafted to poll attendees on the need for further bat IPM and rabies awareness needs in school environments.

Goal 2 and Tactics

Meet the needs of Arizona stakeholders with school IPM.

Vertebrate pests are often overlooked by school IPM programs. Known exposures of humans to lab-confirmed rabid animals have reached an all-time annual high in Arizona as of September, 2007. Preventable or inappropriate staff/student interactions with wildlife on school grounds poses significant health concerns, and in some cases negatively impacts urban-wildlife relationships and local conservation efforts. Bats are among the leading state-tested and confirmed rabid animals in Arizona, and are among the most commonly encountered wild vertebrates in schools.

Recently, we became aware of significant confusion and concerns regarding bats on school grounds (prevention, proper handling, state conservation laws, etc.). This has prompted us to address bats and bat conservation in the context of school IPM. This effort is already underway with an Extension Bulletin and partnerships within Arizona Game & Fish Department. We have also polled Coalition members on their bat and rabies informational needs. Additional bat IPM reference materials and in-person presentations covering ecology and proper exclusion will occur in 2008, pending requested state funds.

Goal 3 and Tactics

We intend to expand our school IPM program to include areas along the US/Mexico border.

We are spearheading school IPM implementation along the Arizona/Sonora (Mexico) border. We are currently forming a border coalition with members from focus areas (Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora). This project is being conducted with the support of EPA funds and partnership with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. Several pilot schools are currently being selected in both Arizona and Sonora.

In 2008, implementation efforts will kick off with several on-site inspections, workshops (train-the-trainer style), and the development of informational resources. Schools on the northern side of the US border are located considerable distances from metropolitan resources and to date have not been significantly involved in school IPM opportunities. Schools along the Sonora, Mexico side of the border face multiple obstacles on an ongoing basis (lack of supplies, desks, etc.), such that pest management is anticipated to be largely overlooked or misaddressed there.

Indeed, a significant component of this border project will be discovering what government and community resources currently exist in Mexico to support and sustain school IPM, and what types of pest/pesticide issues the Mexico schools need assistance with. All reference and education materials - Spanish and English versions - developed on this project will serve as state-wide and national bi-lingual and bi-cultural IPM resources.

Goal 4 and Tactics

Continue national sIPM implementation efforts via regional working group and involvement in the sIPM Pest Management Strategic Plan.

We will continue leadership of the Western Region School IPM Implementation and Assessment Work Group. This group was funded by the Western IPM Center (USDA) for 2007 to assemble an eclectic representation of IPM implementers throughout the West, and to identify and collate key school IPM resources, among other objectives.

A proposal for funds through 2009 will support continued efforts by this group to conduct comprehensive membership expansion throughout the West, fold in new western school IPM resources from these states, promote regional and national opportunities among members, and conduct an assessment of implementation resources online via utilization of extension.

We are also involved in the National School IPM Pest Management Strategic Plan (PMSP) - a first of its kind PMSP. This document is set to be made available to the public in 2008. Toward this end, we have set up a strategic planning meeting at the upcoming Entomological Society of America meeting (San Diego, CA, Dec. 2007).