

**SRIPMC Advisory Council meeting
November 9, 2009**

Present: Harold Lambert, Jim Criswell, Doug Johnson, Conrad Lavender, Joe LaForest, Paul Smith, Pat O’Leary, Ames Herbert, Steve Toth, Bob Bellinger, Mike Weaver, Don Parker, Tom Brennan, Pat Parkman, Carlos Bogran, Fudd Graham, Pat Zungoli, Russell Duncan, Mike Fitzner, Dave Close, Jim VanKirk, Ron Stinner, Lora Lee Schroeder, Harold Coble, L. Washington Lyons

Updates

Budgets: IPM Center budgets are safe and will continue. Budget for IPM Centers is slightly under \$1 million a year.

NIFA Update

There are a lot of changes in the structure of the new Institute. There will be four Institutes:

- Food production and sustainability
- Bioenergy, climate and environment
- Food safety and nutrition
- Youth and community development

There will be a Center for International Programs that will be attached. It will be a national institute, like the National Institute for Health.

Question: where will pest management go? Pest management is part of all of them.

All of the programs are still around. The agency will get a 9.8 percent increase in their budgets in 2010. There is still a focus on research, education and extension. NRI has become AFRI. Hatch funds will not change.

Under Secretary is Dr. Rajiv Shah. NIFA Director is Roger Beachy. He came from the National Academy of Sciences and spent a lot of his career in the biotech arena.

Five priority areas:

- Bioenergy
- Climate change
- Nutrition and health
- Food safety
- International food security

Scale: fewer, bigger projects

Impact: make a difference

They are switching to a federally-driven model.

Ames: fewer, bigger projects mean fewer institutions and may leave out some of the smaller institutions.

NIFA IPM Programs

Extension IPM: Out this week, due Jan. 12

RIPM: due Dec. 17

PMAP: out Dec. 14, due Feb 1

AFRI is now up to 262,482 million. New web address: www.nifa.usda.gov

ipmPIPE

Soybean rust is going on a small shoestring from USDA and the soybean associations to pay for most of the monitoring. Some of the states will get money from their state soybean associations.

Pecan and cucurbits had a 3-year grant and have one year to go. Soybean aphid will probably go away. Legume piece is going on but is more heavily research-oriented than grower-oriented. There are a couple of privately funded PIPEs.

Doug: is the aphid page going to go away? Jim: It's up to the aphid group and the ipmPIPE contacts. The reason the aphid PIPE is shutting down is that the soybean entomologist group doesn't want to maintain it.

Center Directors meeting: During the National IPM meeting, we found out the EIPM fostered a lot of collaboration in the southern region, but in other regions it caused competition (Pat Parkman).

Regulatory Update: Information is included in the handout.

EPA has changed the way they communicate the information about topics, and now they put everything on the Federal Register and expect people to go there. The reason for doing that was to have more transparency. Mike Weaver: the problem is that once you go to regulations.gov, you have to sift through a whole lot of information that is not just about pesticides.

IPM Elements: Mike W. described IPM elements. Jim Criswell: can EPA take those and attach them to a label? Steve T. they are not regulatory documents.

EPA update:

Lora Lee:

- In region 4, we have an acting regional administrator
- Drift PR notice is out for comment.

- EPA is working on a general permit for people applying pesticides on or near water in the US. Part of the discussion involves the scope of the permit. Some of the possibly inclusions are cranberries, streams in cropland and drift.
- Soil Fumigant Risk Mitigation: over the next 2 years there will be a lot of changes.
- No carbofuran will be released after January 1, 2010.
- Region 4 has been working with the team working on resistance management issues. We will hopefully be briefing management soon on how to address resistance management.
- SAI still has a grant program. The RFA isn't out yet. Lora Lee will release the date when she finds it out.

Tom B:

- PRIA2 grants will be out in November/December, Biodemonstration will be out in the spring.
- We have a new labeling initiative with antimicrobial designed for the environment. If the ingredients are lower toxicity, they get a green label.
- Steve Owens is now the assistant administrator. There is a commitment to community IPM and transparency.
- We are trying to add a 30 day comment period to the schedule.

IPM for *P. Chinensis* (Zungoli)

The project was funded in 2006. The Asian needle ant (*P. chinensis*) is endemic to parts of southeast Asia. It came to researchers' attention about 3 years ago.

The goal was to increase awareness of the species, look at the range, define important aspects of habitat and build a foundation for a pest management program.

Increasing awareness:

- Prepared a two-page extension fact sheet for county agents, PMPs, and entomologists
- Website at bugs.clemson.edu/urban/pachy.htm

Geographic range:

- Trap catches increased from April 07-Sept 07, with a rapid decline in September.
- They are in Tennessee and Alabama

Seasonal swarmer activity:

- Swarmer peaks and worker peaks happen almost at the same time.

Habitat:

- Nests are found in disturbed and undisturbed habitats and not in open habitats.
- They are not in the same environments as fire ants.
- They like nesting under objects on the soil.

- They prefer urban environments but are also found in forests.

Potential strategies for IPM:

- Talstar PL and DeltaGard resulted in 60% mortality, and they performed better than other granular products. Other products resulted in less than 50% mortality.
- The ants are attracted more to protein baits than carbohydrate baits. Hydramethylnon and indixicarb had a 90% effectiveness.
- Granular and toxic baits had variable results. Products with the same active ingredient did not yield the same results.
- For Tempo Ultra SC treatments, perimeter-only treatments were marginal but targeted treatments were more effective. The problem is that there are so many nest sites that it's difficult to know where they are.

Management recommendations:

- Reduce conducive habitat by removing objects in contact with the soil.
- Thin mulch layer and remove leaf debris.
- Apply targeted treatments after mean temp is over 15 degrees C but before population significantly increases.
- Pest control industry is finding that they can reduce the population by the end of the year if they hit potential sites early in the season.

State Contacts Issue

History of the issue: At the last meeting, we raised the question about whether or not we should keep the State Contact projects. Of the four regional IPM Centers, we are the only Center that still funds State Contact projects.

Why we are comparing ourselves to the other Centers: All 4 Centers get the same amount of money, cover about the same number of states, and we reply to the same number of RFAs. We are looking at what we've done historically and discussing if we want to change.

We have 13 states and 2 territories. We fund up to \$25,000 per state for a state contact. Florida gets an extra \$15,000 to cover the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. At one time we funded Tennessee \$15,000 more to cover Kentucky. We are not funding SC, GA, LA, MS, and AR. The State Contact funding alone costs us about \$189,000.

What are we getting for the money? The reason I'm bringing this up is that we're trusted with a budget and objectives, and it's our job to ask if we're doing it well. Originally the Center's mission was to serve as the contact for regulatory inquiries. Last year, we had 3 of those inquiries. It's not that the state contacts are not doing their job; it's that the job isn't valuable. It's only part of the job and maybe the other parts of the job are more valuable.

Comments:

- State Contacts answer questions that don't go through the system
 - Response: then they're not being documented.
- Don't compare the South to the Northeast and West; maybe compare to the North Central region.
 - Response: We get similar types inquiries to the west.
- If the state contacts aren't there, the Center won't have a presence in the states. No one will answer a call from the Center.
 - Then they're not serving their growers. Even LA and MS answer calls from the Center, and they're not funded.
 - State Contacts aren't the only advocates for the Center
- Maybe you could pick out fundable pieces of the state contact job.
 - The job needs to have sustainable funding. The state contacts funding is sustainable.
- NIFA doesn't want to pay for the same thing twice. It sounds like state contacts are doing the IPM coordinators' job.
- The information requests will be starting again at some point.
 - The question is, how do we answer those questions efficiently?
- The Center has to establish an information network. We have state contacts, but we don't need to do it that way. However, we have to have a process for the regulatory activities.
- If you don't fund state contacts, they'll have to find another funding source and will have to answer to that source.
- Maybe you should describe the job differently. See what's working and what's not working.
- It's not about the number of questions; it's about the impact of the responses. Some responses have actually changed EPA Policy (e.g. EPA risk assessment on buffer zones)
- Look at what this group does and find people who want to develop answers to the questions.

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Added today: Eric Young, Tom Melton, Ron Diem, Caydee Savinelli, Yulu Xia

IPM Voice

This latest idea goes back to the IPM Symposium in Portland where some people noticed that there were a diverse group of people interested in IPM. The IPM Voice is a new group aimed at focusing support for IPM nationally.

Two key items in the mission statement:

- we support progressive IPM
- we span a broad range of where we're coming from to IPM.

The next step is a facilitated workshop in Phoenix in December. The Center for IPM is sponsoring the first meeting.

Comments:

- Think about what IPM offers organic growers
- In the sentence containing the phrase “adopting new techniques,” it’s really about old techniques that have not yet been adopted.
- We have to convince people that when they see IPM, it’s a good thing.
- Best lobbyists are people who can call their representatives.
- This would be a good professional society
 - Lobbying idea won’t go away
- It’s a good thing because IPM has been around longer than organic but is less recognizable.

GMO Seed Research (Elson Shields, on phone)

The issue involves the inability to purchase seeds for research or publish data that is negative. There are serious implications with regards to resistance management and off-target impacts. This applies to all GM crops and all field-oriented science. Companies claim that research is threatening patents.

Some scientists don’t want to do research; others are trying to alter the research, and others are doing the research anyway.

Comments:

- Universities may not be able to be involved because industry supports them.
- Industry can’t have bad press when they’re rolling out a product in the next year.

PRIME Database

Amrita from IPM Institute demonstrated the PRIME database.

Discussion:

- Does the database take sensitive areas into account?
 - Google can give you the distance, but the user has to characterize the site.
- Do you account for drift?
 - Yes, and it adds wind speed
- Is there an overall risk index that summarized this for a grower?
 - The summary output and mitigation slide shows one way to summarize the output.
- When will you have all of the data in for all crops?
 - All registered pesticides will be loaded by late January. Public launch will be end of January. We’re hoping for a final product in the next year.
- How about variable rate?
 - That will be taken into account in terms of the total amount of pesticide.
- This could be a good teaching tool but could take a lot of time for a grower.
- What is the cost?

- Initial use will be free. For a space, that'll be \$4.00. for a producer with 100 growers, the price might be higher.

Plant Health Labeling

The concern to plant pathologists has been the whole idea of plant health labels.

What is plant health? This example is from the marketing literature for Headline fungicide:

- controls yield-robbing diseases
- help plants grow more efficiently
- reduce the impact of stress

The products work at controlling diseases. The red flag is the reducing the impact of stress.

Claims include improved growth efficiency, excellent disease control, and enhanced tolerance to stress conditions such as drought, heat, cold temperatures and ozone damage. The label states that in the absence of disease, there is still a benefit to using the fungicide.

Many of the studies were done in greenhouse studies, and those don't really translate to the field.

- Does an EPA-approved label mean that a product is effective?
- Is this a judicious use of pesticides?
- Is EPA abandoned its mission with approval of this label?
- Is a new precedent being set?
- What are the long-range impacts of this?

BASF claims that the data prove the benefits. However, southern region researchers don't see these types of effects. Clayton has four years of tests on corn, and no test gives him any of these effects.

Discussion:

- The new label doesn't mean it's effective
 - But it's implied
- It may cause resistance problems.
 - Rotation is still required under the EPA label
- Some growers are spraying for increased yield
 - Growers already spray in response to one spore of soybean rust

IPM Evaluation

The AC last time recommended that the Center pursue evaluation. We talked briefly with Bill Coli, but another opportunity has presented itself.

About 5 years ago, the NRCS had the opportunity to survey farmers about what they were doing in terms of conservation efforts. They agreed to include IPM questions in their survey. We now have about 20,000 data points in all types of cropping systems, mainly field crops. They have divided up into 40 cropping systems. They've also divided it up into 12 ecosystem areas across the country. We had to provide a ranking system on IPM practices depending on how important they were. We have added a score system to corn. Now we have to do the same type of ranking system for all of the other cropping systems. Then we're going to choose IPM people to send them out to practitioners. NRCS will have to determine where to put our money to get the biggest bang for our buck.

Surveys were conducted 2004-07.

One of the exciting things about this is that we've struggled to work with NRCS. One of the reasons is that we're structured very differently. NRCS money is paying for the CEAP work. We're making some new connections and strengthening other relationships.

We're also going to be managing the transition documents. We're going to revisit very old IPM surveys and see what's changed. Danesha Seth Carley will be leading that effort.

Homescapes Initiative

The idea is to use the resources that are already available along with developing new databases. At this point it's in the hands of the eXtension leader to suggest people and lead a workshop. The leader is Rick Durham from Kentucky.

Elections

Carlos Bográn was nominated as the Chair elect.

Future meetings

Jim asked about making one of the meetings a conference call.

There was no support for meeting just once a year. Some were OK with meeting remotely once a year. Mike F suggested trying webinar technology.

Jim asked if we could do away with the June meeting, but most were in favor of keeping it.

DECISION: Keep the June meeting but perhaps have a conference call in March.

Revisit of the State Contact Issue

We can't get rid of the regulatory network, but we can change it.

Issues:

- Maybe support things that are pest-related in the states.
- Not everyone needs to do the same thing; do what benefits the growers
- Reports should tell a better story of what the networks do—be outcome-oriented.
- Value of a network is hard to define.
- NIFA still supports networks because there's collaboration. The Center should encourage collaboration between states in IPM; maybe some of the network addresses pesticide use requirements and others develop documents.
- Need a better reporting plan for the state contacts
- The position description should be the kinds of things you want from the program.
- You don't need a position; you need the components.
- Maybe we should take a bunch of requirements away and see who makes a case about what they will do with the project.

Doug made a motion to let the Director make the best decision based on the input from the committee, and the meeting was adjourned.