

Project Synopsis

The University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program (UC IPM) and the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) have recently completed a series of benchmark discussions on how integrated pest management (IPM) can be more effectively understood and delivered in urban and rural settings in California. We plan to continue this type of dialogue to increase the understanding of risks associated with pests and pesticides in all communities.

Assumptions

Pests are part of the human experience. Pest management is needed for preventing disease, protecting structures, producing food and fiber, and using our natural lands. Californians are served well by using IPM to reduce risks associated with managing pests.

Project Goals

1. To articulate the diversity of pest management needs and perceptions of risk at the field, research, regulatory, and policy levels.
2. To suggest policy, innovation, and communication approaches that provide decision support tools and increased adoption of IPM.
3. To equip leaders with this broadened knowledge in order that all stakeholders might consider and utilize more IPM-based approaches.
4. To establish ongoing and productive dialogue between diverse stakeholders in IPM.

Scope of the Project

The Pests, Pesticides, and IPM Project (PPI) is a California Department of Pesticide Regulation-funded project (Agreement 16-C0001) to enhance dialogue about pest management across a variety of IPM settings: landscape, structures, and agriculture. Practitioners, scientists, and consumers will identify common themes and concerns to make specific recommendations to agencies, institutions, and stakeholders. Policy, innovation, and communication as drivers of change and continuous improvement will be included in the group exchange.

Examples of questions we discussed during the research phase:

- *Regarding pests, the use of pesticides, and IPM, what are the risks you face?*
- *How are your perceptions of risks from pests, pesticides, and IPM formed or changed?*
- *What are specific ways UC IPM and DPR can better address your concerns about risk?*
- *What have we learned about successful IPM in your sector and what do we still need to know?*
- *What are specific ways in which DPR and UC IPM can support increased adoption of IPM?*
- *How can we use research and technology most effectively to enhance IPM decision-making?*
- *How can diverse stakeholders establish ongoing, productive dialogue about IPM and pesticides? What would this look like?*

Background

The project began as a way to discuss the challenges pests pose for society and the controversies surrounding pesticide risk. Conflicts may arise over use of rodenticides, fumigants, and organophosphate and neonicotinoid insecticides, with specific concerns about misuse and exposure to people, pets, and wildlife. UC IPM and DPR agree there is a need to explore ways in which IPM can be better understood by the public, and more quickly adopted.

We convened seasoned thought leaders, researchers, extension personnel, IPM practitioners, people that use pesticides, people impacted by pesticide use, retailers, regulators, and others throughout this process. In addition, because this project has been designed to establish benchmarks for future IPM leaders, a significant portion of interest group participants were young or emerging professionals. This approach provides an effective means to bridge the gaps between pest management and society's concerns going forward.

Activities

- Appointed an Advisory Board to provide insights on key issues regarding pests, pesticides, and IPM (2016)
- Mined the expertise of diverse stakeholders in professionally facilitated "think tank" sessions focused on specific sectors (2016)
- Organized a one-day symposium to share findings and perspectives collected throughout the project with a broad audience (April 17, 2018)
- Synthesized the discussions into a white paper and non-technical summary to document and share the information (White paper October 2018)
- Made specific recommendations to DPR and UC IPM to optimize communication about pests and pesticides (2018)
- Establish the Pests, Pesticides, and IPM Project as a sustainable program to offer training, and tools for public dialogue about IPM

For More Information...

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