

Review Team Report – IPM Program, Michigan State University

The Review Team firmly believes that IPM at Michigan State University is poised to be one of the top programs of its kind in the United States. The diversity of Michigan agriculture coupled with the existence of major urban areas presents nearly unlimited opportunities for IPM implementation in both agricultural and non-agricultural settings. MSU has a long and distinguished history of involvement in IPM research, extension, and outreach activities and a large number of faculty and staff are presently active in the arena. This combination of opportunity and program experience has the potential to lead to even greater achievements in the future.

The National IPM Roadmap (www.csrees.usda.gov) identifies three major focus areas: a) production agriculture, b) natural resources and recreational environments, and c) residential and public areas. In addition the National IPM Goals include: a) improve economic benefits, b) reduce human health risks and c) minimize environmental risks. Michigan State University has chosen, based on its resources, to concentrate in the plant arena. In addition the IPM Program has indicated their intention to focus on the Goals: a) improve economic benefit and c) minimize environmental risk. The Review Team concurs with this focus.

The Review Team was charged to provide recommendations 1) on the current scope of IPM/IPCM Program services and future vision : clientele identification and degree of service, scale of interactions with Program partners and Program emphasis areas, 2) on Program oversight, including staff appointment structure and review, reporting mechanisms, and strategies to obtain Program input, and 3) that are consistent with funding obligations of CSREES and Project GREEN, the National IPM Roadmap, and the MSU IPM planning session. Furthermore, we were asked to look at integration and coordination. Dean Armstrong in the initial session articulated his vision that MSU would be “The Place to Go” for IPM information. In order for MSU to realize this bold vision, ***there must be a timely administrative plan to address strategic recommendations made later in the report.***

A well conceived program needs a visionary roadmap, the development of which engages multiple expertise and stakeholders in a focused and directed approach in order for MSU to achieve its vision. The December Planning Conference with stakeholders and MSU field and campus based staff provides an important first step for a strategic planning process. The IPM Program is commended for convening the December discussion session. The output of that session provides a starting point for the development of a robust strategic plan which in its development needs to involve input from a broad community of IPM expertise in order to articulate a relevant vision, scope and goals. ***We recommend there be a timely, facilitated planning process that utilizes outside expertise and to proceed to this end as expeditiously as possible.***

The totality of MSU IPM activities is far broader than the current content of the IPM Program under review. The current IPM Program identity, scope and infrastructure appears to be identified primarily by funding sources and reporting lines rather than programmatically and thus does not portray the true nature and scope of IPM at MSU. The strategic plan should reflect the scope of MSU IPM activities. To identify the breadth of IPM at MSU the administration should consider developing a new identifier that more accurately encompasses the scope of the IPM activities. ***We recommend that consideration be given to a name change, for example, the MSU Institute for IPM.*** Additionally, ***we recommend that a direct interface be created between the IPM Coordinator and the yet to be named Associate ANR Extension Program Director and Associate Dean and Director of Experiment Station to facilitate and enhance the program.*** The Review Team observes a need for permanence in the administrative level responsible for oversight of the IPM Program.

The Review Team believes that the present administrative structure has placed the IPM Program Coordinator, as a non-tenure track appointee, in an untenable situation with respect to program coordination and implementation. The nature of the appointment of the IPM Coordinator is not commensurate with the expectations of the position. ***We recommend that the IPM Coordinator be an academic tenure-track faculty member.***

The Review Team concurs with the uniformly high praise from internal and external partners and co-workers for the critical roles played by the Communication and Integration Staff. The high quality of

their performance, dedication, professionalism, and enthusiasm is to be commended. ***We recommend that these critical positions be continuing appointments for program growth and sustainability.*** Additionally, we recognize the desirability and value of appointing additional integrators (with continuing appointments) as a means of enhancing the program. We believe this approach will surface in the development of an implementation approach for a strategic plan. Further, in the planning and development planning process, consideration should be given to the current practice of cofunding integrator positions with a commodity group as this approach could potentially significantly limit service to key areas have need for IPM services.

AoE (Area of Expertise) Teams are playing critical roles in integration and represent a valuable resource for the statewide IPM Program. The AoE Team concept is an excellent way to engage people across disciplines, clientele groups, expertise and needs. The Review Team did not, however, detect the anticipated or necessary degree of involvement or participation of needed expertise such as social science in IPM programming or AoE Teams. The MSU Agricultural Administration, at the highest level, needs to widely articulate the value of the AoE Team approach as a way to encourage participation of research and extension faculty and staff. ***The Review Team encourages periodic review of the AoE Team structure and performance to insure relevance to current and future statewide needs as it relates to the IPM Program.***

The IPM Alliance is a unique and valuable asset for program development, stakeholder engagement and resource support both through their direct investment and their involvement with decision makers, state and federal legislators. The IPM Alliance recognizes the value of MSU agriculture and strongly supports the IPM program. ***The Review Team recommends that MSU agriculture and the IPM Alliance jointly seek a broadened base for this support group e.g. involving agribusiness, independent crop consultants and Certified Crop Advisors (CCA's), organic grower groups and public interest groups.***

In meeting with statewide IPM clientele and interest groups, the Review Team perceives that membership in the IPM Alliance may become a key determinant in deciding which clientele groups receive IPM assistance. This will hopefully not be the case. Some clientele groups are small in constituency, poorly organized and financially unable to provide meaningful funding to the IPM program. The involvement of and service to these groups is crucial and needs to be considered when prioritizing IPM programming. Their involvement and support (whether financial or philosophical) is fundamental to the relevance and ultimate success of the overall IPM Program. ***We recommend that there be a review and a plan for strengthening this aspect of the IPM Alliance.*** There is also a need for a strong working relationship among campus faculty and staff along with extension field staff.

The Review Team compliments the IPM Program for the high quality and diversity of print and electronic products that address key pest management needs. ***We recommend the development of a strategic plan for the comprehensive marketing of MSU IPM services, branded products, a plan that includes mechanisms for financial returns to product developers as an incentive and to be utilized for continued program enhancement.***

The Review Team applauds efforts in sharing expertise and information across states, regions and nationally. ***We recommend a strategic plan be developed to identify where and how this can be further enhanced***

The Review Team appreciates the broad enthusiasm of faculty, staff, clientele and supporters throughout the review process.

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