

NC IPM Working Group
Grower Incentives for IPM
Mini-Grant Final Report
Indiana
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The IPM Program at Purdue University collaborated with Indiana NRCS personnel to improve the financial and technical support for specialty crop growers through NRCS' EQIP pest management standard. To support that effort, we received a \$5000 mini-grant from the "Grower Incentives for IPM" working group funded by the NC IPM Center. Our approach was to: 1) Conduct a meeting for grower representatives of the various specialty crop industries in the state to generate feedback on the current pest management standard and to discuss revisions that would be necessary to make the program attractive to specialty crop growers; 2) Meet with Indiana NRCS personnel to evaluate the results of the grower meeting and determine how to best implement the suggested improvements; 3) Publicize the opportunities for participation by specialty crop growers in the EQIP through presentations to grower groups.

- 1) **Grower Panel:** Our grower panel meeting was conducted at the Indiana NRCS office in Indianapolis on December 5, 2008. It was attended by 13 specialty crop growers, 6 Purdue IPM specialists, and 3 NRCS employees. During the 5 hour meeting, Mike Brewer from Michigan State University made a presentation regarding successes in increasing IPM implementation through the EQIP program in Michigan. Tony Bailey from NRCS made a presentation about the EQIP in Indiana. The remainder of the meeting was for growers to provide their input as to how the EQIP could be used to further IPM adoption in Indiana. The growers represented tree fruit production, wine grape production, small fruit production, vegetable production, and processing tomato production. Each group of growers had the opportunity to address the specific IPM concerns for their industry and how the EQIP might be used to further adoption of those practices.

In general, the growers were very interested in furthering their adoption of IPM. Most of the growers on the panel were early adopters of IPM and other technologies but all had opportunities for increased adoption. All of the growers were interested in the EQIP program and the potential for incentive payments for adoption of additional IPM practices. Some possible incentive payments floated by Purdue and/or NRCS were in the neighborhood of \$30/acre for vegetable crops and \$60/acre for fruit crops. Many of the growers indicated that their acreages were so small that these incentive figures would not be attractive to them. For example, a wine grape grower with 15 acres of grapes (a fairly good sized grower in Indiana),

could only receive a maximum of \$900 in incentive payments. Most growers would not want to bother with the paper work for a sum that small. The general consensus was that the incentives would have to be considerably larger to generate much interest among specialty crop growers. There was considerable discussion about incentive payments for the adoption of more efficient spray technology that would reduce pesticide use by targeting spray only at the crop and not at bare ground between plants. Again, many growers expressed an interest in adopting this technology if the incentive payments were sufficient to defray a large portion of the cost of the technology.

- 2) On January 9, 2009, a meeting was held on the Purdue campus between Purdue IPM personnel and Indiana NRCS personnel. The feedback received from growers at the Dec. 5 meeting was discussed at some length. Although not officially adopted until much later, the incentive payments were as follows:
 - a. Precision application equipment- \$202/acre for maximum payment of \$2,020 with eligibility up to three years
 - b. Pest Management – IPM orchards - \$60/acre with a maximum payment of \$3000 with eligibility up to three years.
 - c. Pest Management – IPM Vegetable/Truck Crops - \$30/acre with a maximum payment of \$1,500 with eligibility up to three years.
 - d. Invasive Species Control - \$77/acre with maximum payment of \$3100 with eligibility up to three years.
- 3) Rick Foster made a presentation to specialty crop growers at the Indiana Horticultural Congress in Indianapolis on Jan. 21, 2009 that outlined the possibilities for growers receiving incentive payments for adopting IPM practices. Shannon Zezula from Indiana NRCS was also in attendance at the session and responded to some questions from growers. The session was well attended with over 40 specialty crop growers present. Again, interest was high but concerns about the amounts of the incentive payments were paramount. At this time, the incentive payments outlined previously were not yet finalized.

Results

Overall, the results in terms of adoption of Specialty Crops IPM practices were disappointing. The number of acres for each of the programs listed previously are as follows:

- a. Precision Application Equipment – 0 acres
- b. Pest Management – IPM Orchards – 1.5 acres
- c. Pest Management – IPM Vegetable/Truck Crops – 118.4 acres
- d. Invasive Species Control – 1290.8 acres

There are at least two reasons that adoption was not greater in 2009. First, the state technical committee was late in determining what the incentive program would look like for 2009. Since these were new practices, growers were not as aware of the opportunities as they will be in the future. The Purdue IPM program was hesitant to publicize the program until the technical committee finished its

work and by then the growing season had begun and growers were too busy. In 2010, although the details of the program may change, we at least have a starting point and can publicize the opportunities to growers early in the winter season. This should allow more growers time to sign up for the programs.

Second, the per acre rates approved by the technical committee may have been too low to generate much interest among specialty crop growers. Hopefully, the technical committee will take a second look at these rates and re-evaluate whether they provide a sufficient incentive for growers to adopt IPM practices.