

## NRCS and IPM Working Group – Conference Call Notes from April 3, 2009

Workgroup url - <http://www.ipm.msu.edu/work-group/home.htm>

Workgroup listserv: [EQIP@LIST.MSU.EDU](mailto:EQIP@LIST.MSU.EDU)

Corrections/additions to Brenna Wanous at [bwanous@ipminstitute.org](mailto:bwanous@ipminstitute.org)

**Next Call:** Friday, May 1, 9:00 Central/10:00 Eastern.

**Participating (10):** Joe Bagdon (WDC NRCS), Tony Bailey (IN NRCS), Amrita Batra (IPM Institute), Alice Begin (ME NRCS), Paul Duffner (MO NRCS), Tom Green (IPM Institute), Regina Hirsch (UW-Madison CIAS), David Lamm (NC NRCS), Kathy Murray (ME Dept. of Ag), Brenna Wanous (IPM Institute).

### Attachments:

1. Current/phased out EQIP 595 Pest Management Standard;
2. New/enhanced EQIP 595 Integrated Pest Management Standard;
3. Integrated Pest Management CAP criteria;
4. IPM TSP training criteria;
5. Organic Plan criteria;
6. Organic CAP training criteria;
7. Forestry CAP criteria;
8. Forestry TSP training criteria;
9. Grazing CAP criteria;
10. Grazing TSP training criteria;
11. TSP Training Curriculum Outline (for working group's review).

### Agenda:

1. **Update on where 596 stands** (*see the attached current 595 standard and draft of updated 595 standard*)
  - a. The NRCS conducted extensive internal discussion regarding the proposed 596 *Pesticide Risk Mitigation* standard which was released in November 2008. Feedback from NRCS personnel and additional individuals from other sectors suggested the proposed standard would not take enough of a preventative approach to reducing pesticide use and protecting natural resources.

- b. In March 2009 596 was dropped in favor of enhancing the current 595 *Pest Management* standard to retain many of the IPM techniques and include a number of the larger goals 596 identified.
  - c. The enhanced 595 *Integrated Pest Management* (note the name change) standard is in draft status. Working Group members are welcome to review the draft (attached) and provide feedback to your NRCS state resource conservationist, water specialist, agronomist, etc.
2. **Key differences between current 595 standard and enhanced:**
- a. Current 595 requires NRCS field staff and growers to manage for pest damage prevention, minimize pest resistance and prevent risks to natural resources and humans (techniques include scouting and monitoring, use of thresholds, use of least toxic materials, etc.).
  - b. In addition to this procedure, the updated standard mandates that if the pest management plan is not enough to address specific resource concerns (e.g., pesticide transport to nearby surface water, nearby pollinator habitat), the grower is required to undergo a secondary, more intensive IPM planning that will mitigate those specific concerns.
  - c. The enhanced standard provides a more inclusive and explicit list of plan requirements, including record keeping and plan updates. The enhanced standard also provides a reference to a list of IPM Elements and Guidelines, as well as the *Guide to IPM Elements and Guidelines* document for conservation planners (<http://www.ipmcenters.org/ipmelements/index.cfm>).
3. **NRCS Conservation Activity Plan Pilot**
- a. NRCS created a new pilot program for “Conservation Activity Plans” (CAPs), available during the 2009 growing season. The pilot allows each state to choose one or more (up to eight) of 15 types of plans that they will help fund on a local level, including IPM, forestry, organics, energy and others (see <http://techreg.usda.gov/RptActivityPlans.aspx> for the full list).
    - i. Ten states have selected IPM: California, Massachusetts, Maine, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont and West Virginia;
      - 1. Note four states in the Northeast and two in the North Central region that have selected IPM; it would be worthwhile to pull together IPM and NRCS people from these states to share information and address questions regarding the pilot to maximize its success.

- ii. 26 states have chosen forestry management (there may be potential for IPM work regarding invasive species within these plans);
  - iii. 13 states have chosen to not participate;
  - iv. Other IPM opportunities may lay in the Organics and Grazing Activity Plans.
- b. If states choose IPM as one of the CAPs they will fund, ca receive 75% cost share to have a pest management plan written for them; in the future, growers applying for EQIP 595 may need to have a CAP plan.
- c. This program has the potential to provide a missing link in the EQIP 595 sign up, execution and reporting requirements by providing the infrastructure and funding required in writing the plans.
- d. It will be critical to have support from individuals and working groups like ours to help generate a number of well-written plans this year in order for the program to expand for future growing seasons.
- e. Challenges the program will face during the pilot year:
  - i. Getting a critical mass of growers interested in having a plan written for their farm; the NRCS offers a 75% payment rate to growers to help fund the plan development but growers will need to provide for the rest of the cost.
  - ii. NRCS needs feedback from IPM specialists regarding what the actual costs for writing pest management plans per state are so they can offer accurate payment rates to growers.
  - iii. The goal of the pilot is to bring in additional technical expertise that the NRCS does not have, and therefore the CAPs must be written by Technical Service Providers (TSPs). The NRCS requires a higher level of training and certification to write CAPs, but is not able to coordinate and provide such training and relies on the private sector for this.
    - 1. See the attached PDFs for the IPM, Organic and Forestry TSP training criteria.
    - 2. TSPs are able to work across state lines but are designated a “home state”; all states that the TSP works in must report back to the home state the work that TSP did.
  - iv. TechReg (<http://techreg.usda.gov/> - NRCS listing of registered TSPs for current programs such as EQIP 595) will need to provide a list of specific individuals in each state that are certified and can be contacted to write CAPs in order for the program to take hold.

1. How do we increase the exposure and linkage between the registered TSPs and those certified to write IPM CAPs?
- v. Ideally, a few IPM CAPs will go through for the 2009 growing season in order to work out any of the kinks in the program. However, the timing for the process is very tight:
  1. TSPs need to become certified to write IPM CAPs (applications are accepted year round);
  2. Growers need to sign up for the pilot;
  3. Growers need to find a TSP qualified to write the plan by the next cropping season;
  4. TSPs need to write plan;
  5. Growers must implement plans within one year of signing the contract.

#### 4. **Pest Management Plan Writers Training Curriculum**

- a. Traditional TSPs (i.e., Certified Crop Advisors or Agrochemical dealers) will face a significant challenge when trying to become certified for the IPM CAPs because the level of expertise required in plan writing is considerably higher.
- b. Our working group may be able to help close that training gap. See the attached “*Curriculum Outline 040709*” for the draft of the working group’s training curriculum.
  - i. Please send suggestions for the curriculum to Brenna Wanous at [bwanous@ipminstitute.org](mailto:bwanous@ipminstitute.org).
- c. *Suggested resource*: University of Tennessee put together a course on Nutrient Management Plans which TSPs could attend to meet training requirements.

#### **Activities for Follow-Up:**

1. Tom Green and Kathy Murray to contact IPM Centers to inquire about support to work on making these CAPs successful (i.e. CAPs conversations between IPM and NRCS people, creation of resources, trainings, etc.);
2. Working group to modify the apple pest management plan template to fit other fruit, vegetable and field crops;
3. Recruit TSPs and growers willing to participate in the pilot;
4. Develop a TSP training curriculum to provide the additional expertise TSPs will need to become certified to write the CAPs;

5. Provide financial assistance to growers unable/uninterested in paying the 25% cost-share to have the plans written;
6. Look at Forestry, Grazing and Organics CAPs (attached) and other CAPs to identify potential for IPM work;
7. Put together a step-by-step guide for states enrolled in or considering selecting the IPM CAPs (i.e., how to train TSPs, how to recruit growers, etc.).