

NRCS and IPM Working Group Conference Call Notes from June 5, 2009

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

Workgroup listserv: EQIP@LIST.MSU.EDU

Corrections/additions to Amrita Batra at abatra@ipminstitute.org

Next Call: Friday, August 7, 9:00 Central/10:00 Eastern.

Participating (7): Lynnae Jess (NC Pest Management Center), John Lundvall (ISU), Tom Green (IPM Institute), Amrita Batra (IPM Institute), Lea Woodard (IPM Institute), Michael Brewer (MSU) and Regina Hirsch (UW).

Attachments:

1. Conservation Activity Plans-Draft Work Plan

Agenda:

1. Update on the Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs):

- i. 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 11 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).
- ii. Only four of the original ten states are currently offering IPM CAPs to their growers: California, Maine, Rhode Island and West Virginia. States unable to implement IPM CAP this FY plan to offer in FY 2010.
- iii. The IPM Institute has submitted mini-grant proposals to the North Central and Northeastern IPM Centers. The proposed funding will support the development of a national IPM CAPs working group, train private-sector Technical Service Providers (TSPs) to qualify to write CAPs, conduct outreach to recruit growers and producers and work with Kathy Murray (Coordinator, Maine IPM Program) to adapt the NE vegetable IPM planning tool.
- iv. On June 3, the IPM Institute organized a conference call to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the national IPM CAP working group. There were 13 participants on the call, including NRCS and regional IPM center representatives.

1. The IPM Institute has hired an intern to recruit members to the national CAPs working group and research state-wise developments, such as training models for other CAP pilots.
 2. The NRCS could help with the IPM CAPs but cannot lead or offer the training that will be essential to make CAPs a success for IPM. It's up to the IPM community to step up and take advantage of the CAPs opportunity.
 3. Training provided by the national CAPs working group could serve as a prerequisite to the NRCS modules for TSP training on AgLearn (<http://techreg.usda.gov/Training.aspx>).
- v. Challenges to ensure success of IPM CAP pilot:
- i. *TSPs*:
 1. CAPs are more extensive and require more training for TSPs to be able to write effective plans.
 2. Unlike 595 plans, where the NRCS is partially involved in writing the plans, private- sector TSPs will be entirely responsible for CAPs.
 3. State conservationists will be much less likely to choose IPM CAPs if qualified TSPs are not available.
 - ii. *Extension*: In certain states Extension assists in writing 595 plans for growers. We should provide Extension the opportunity and training to write CAPs. CAPs may be a good opportunity for Extension to receive some dollars and work with new growers to implement IPM. Glenn Koehler (Maine Extension) has expressed an interest. Regina Hirsch (UW) raised the concern that given the recent budget and personnel cuts, Extension may not have the resources to significantly contribute to writing CAPs.
 - iii. *Incentives for IPM*: Mike Brewer (MSU) raised the concern that the extensive requirements for CAPs could make providing incentives through NRCS for IPM more difficult. Also, the current rates for CAPs vary widely. The rate for Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan CAP is set at \$16,000/plan vs. a much lower rate for the IPM CAP which is set at \$1398/plan.
 1. A Maine crop consultant will be testing his ability to write an acceptable plan for that rate which represents three days at his fee schedule.

2. Update on Iowa mini-grant (John Lundvall):

- i. On May 21, 13 Iowa NRCS technical staff and Iowa state tech management specialists met to discuss joint educational opportunities for organic specialty crops. Preliminary discussions at the meeting will enable the group to review how to best move forward.