

Regional IPM Centers: PNW Partnerships, Washington's Role and the New Funding Paradigm

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Structure of the Centers

- Four regional IPM Centers: Northeastern (Penn State), Southern (NC State), North Central (Michigan) and Western (UC Davis.)
- All have been funded by competitive 4-year grants through USDA-CSREES, specifically the AREERA Section 406 program.
- Once the prime grants are awarded, each IPM Center then releases a series of request for applications (RFA) to solicit state contacts who then provide information to EPA or USDA; develop crop profiles or pest management strategic plans; form or continue functional workgroups; or, address critical issues in the region.

Washington's Role

- The WSPRS office has received competitive funds from the Western IPM Center since it was formed; we act as a state contact for USDA or EPA.
- We participate in a PNW Workgroup, which is regionally based rather than topic-based as are other workgroups. Because WA, OR, ID, UT, MT, and AK share many facets of crop production it is more natural for us to work as a regional workgroup to address pest management topics relevant to the six states.
- This workgroup has been the most productive one in the Western Region and through this network we have been able to leverage resources and expertise. For example, state contacts in WA, OR, and ID each applied for competitive funds to partially pay one person; by working as a team we have been able to produce between 4 and 6, high quality, regional PMSPs per year.
- Through participation in this workgroup our office has initiated other competitive projects, such as the Comment Coordinator position, which is so admired nationally that EPA asked other regions to emulate it. They have and we are going to provide training this summer. Our office has also participated in two individual projects with OR and ID, namely the Integrated Soil, Nutrient, and Pest Management (iSNAP) modules for NRCS-TSP training, and development of the pest management module of the OnePlan, an NRCS conservation planning tool.

New Funding Paradigm

- In June, the Western IPM Center will issue its last RFA for the previous 406 prime grant; it will be effective during the 2006 calendar year. There have been some budget rearrangements within CSREES, which have in turn triggered program rearrangements. The current one moves the IPM Centers out of the

Section 406 category and inserts them under the management of the National Research Initiative or NRI program. (Mission statement:

"The purpose of the NRI Program is to support research, extension, and education grants that address key problems of national, regional, and multistate importance in sustaining all components of agriculture (farming, ranching, forestry including urban and agroforestry, aquaculture, rural communities, human nutrition, processing, etc.). Providing this support requires that NRI advance fundamental sciences in support of agriculture and coordinate opportunities to build on these discoveries.")

- There have been questions raised about the wisdom of moving the program. Incidentally, the Water Quality and Food Safety components of Section 406 are also under the NRI as of now. The Water Quality leads are very concerned about the move. I'm not familiar with the Food Safety group so can't tell you their views on this move.
- NRI has a good history of managing research-based programs, but no history of managing information networks, which basically, is how the IPM Centers function. We have expressed our concern, through the flyer sent earlier this year, to everyone we can. Our intent is to have NRI held under such scrutiny that they will be sure to carefully run the IPM Center program. At this point we know the following things:
 - There will still be four regions which will correspond to four IPM Centers.
 - The IPM Centers must secure competitive funds through a prime grant to manage their region. These grants will likely be multi-year, although in the transition phase we are not sure whether they will remain four-year grants.
 - The Centers would continue to operate regional competitive grants programs. State or regional networks would remain a priority for at least the next several years.
 - There are no predictions past the next three years for IPM Center structure.

Washington Benefits During the Last 5.5 years

- PNW Workgroup- network and shared projects
- 18 crop profiles/ PMSPs for 15 crops
- Input into 36 chemical reviews by EPA affecting more than 80 minor crops or uses

