
More on Regional Pest Management Centers

The United States Department of Agriculture, through CSREES (Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service), has designated four regional Pest Management Centers in the U.S. The centers will strengthen USDA's connection with growers, research and extension programs and other stakeholders, by providing a pest management information network responsive to the needs of the public and private sectors. Issues such as regulatory restrictions, pest resistance, invasive species, biotechnology and pesticide use will be addressed. This is the third in a series of articles highlighting each regional center.

The Western Region Pest Management Center **By Rick Melnicoe and Linda Herbst**

The Western Region Pest Management Center (WRPMC) was created in 2000 by funding from USDA/CSREES. This funding also provided for three other pest management centers. Each center responded to a Call for Proposals in slightly different ways allowing for individuality in structure and management.

The WRPMC is governed by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives of other USDA programs (IR-4, IPM, Sustainable Ag, ARS), state lead agencies, food processors, fresh fruits, tree fruits, livestock, and urban interests. This diversity has proven beneficial in identifying issues across a broad-spectrum of pest management.

State participation has been enabled by subcontracts to each state in the west and the Pacific Islands. All states, except Nevada, have received subcontracts. At the state level, Advisory Committees help identify local pest management priorities and potential collaborative efforts.

Recently, several collaborative events have taken place in the west. First, the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington have met to discuss ecologically based issues of joint concern. These states are in the process of identifying joint projects that can be addressed through shared resources.

Secondly, Oregon State University hosted a workshop entitled, "agroECOLOGICAL Regions: The Application of Watershed, Basin and Ecoregion Analytical Tools to Pest Management." Representatives from Alaska, California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington attended. The objectives of the workshop were: to discuss the concept of the agroecological region as it may apply to pest management problems in the Western Region (particularly the Pacific

Northwest), to review programs and analytical approaches of direct relevance to the development of pest management systems at agroecological regional scales, to identify priorities for method development in the Western Region, to identify potential collaborators within the region (e.g. owners of data, technical specialists, stakeholder groups), to build capacity within the Western Regional Pest Management Center for addressing pest management issues at the crop matrix, cropping system and agroecoregion scales, and to develop a technical resource, through publication and outreach, that might benefit other regional centers.

These efforts to approach pest management (and potentially other issues) from an ecologically based model fit nicely with the vision for the pest management centers put forth by USDA. These efforts will bring together all the relevant pest managers, programmatic people, and the resources to address the problems. It is hoped that additional resources will become available to fund these efforts directly from the pest management centers. Until those funds arrive, existing programs such as USDA's grant and research programs and private organizations will be highlighted as sources for funding these stakeholder-driven efforts.

The WRPMC has completed a number of crop profiles and is well underway with developing Pest Management Strategic Plans (PMSPs). IR-4 has been most eager and helpful in preparing background information and attending meetings. Planned and underway PMSPs include: Pacific NW Potatoes, California Central Valley Cotton, Arizona-California Desert Cotton, California Avocados, Cherries, Fresh Tomatoes, Kiwifruit, Melons, Nectarines, Pears, Plums, Prunes, Strawberries and Table Grapes. PMSPs provide the USDA and the USEPA with valuable information on pests that drive pest management decisions and the need for suitable control measures, both chemical and non-chemical. These documents also identify the top "To Do" lists for research, regulatory and educational needs. Minor crop research needs identified as a high priority during a PMSP should be submitted to IR-4. These will be given special consideration at the Food Use Workshop.

The WRPMC's web site is www.wrpmc.ucdavis.edu. On this site are issues of interest including funding opportunities, news, links to pest management issues, and soon a link to each states' program in the west. The national pest management centers' web site is www.pmccenters.org. A wealth of information is available at the national web site including crop profiles, Pest Management Strategic Plans, databases and links to other sites.

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