



*Advocating for progressive integrated pest management to improve environmental, social and economic conditions through the application of scientific principles.*

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Dear Dr. Broussard,

Re: Introducing IPM Voice, Request Regarding the FY 2012 IPM Budget

We are contacting you to introduce our organization to you and to urge that the Department take certain actions as it implements the IPM budget for FY 2012.

**IPM Voice** is a new organization, formed in 2010 and incorporated as an independent nonprofit in 2011. Founders include more than 35 professionals who believe we need an ongoing advocate for IPM to continue and expand the economic, environmental and health benefits IPM has provided for more than 40 years. Its membership includes IPM professionals, organizations and IPM users. IPM voice was organized because of the dramatic cuts in IPM funding in recent years.

During the past two months we have worked actively to build support for the FY 2012 IPM budget within the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees, the Agriculture Committees and with individual members of the House and Senate. We organized farm organizations, consultants and other IPM advocates to work together in support of IPM funding. We were glad to see that in the final action the Appropriations Committee accepted the President's proposal to consolidate IPM programs and funded the IPM program at very close to the budget request for "Improved Pest Control," IPM Extension and the Regional IPM Centers. (We assume that the USDA will follow the allocations in the Senate Appropriations bill.)

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In our advocacy of IPM funding we pointed out during the period 2000-2011 IPM funding had been cut 30% while NIFA's overall budget increased by 36%. We note that much of the decline has been in the IPM-related research lines. IPM research feeds the outstanding IPM Extension efforts. IPM Extension, in turn, requires a widely distributed network of IPM professionals to address the local nature of pest problems and build system-level programs over a period of years. Funding models should accommodate this situation. Further cuts threaten to dismantle this network, and every effort should be made in coming years to restore IPM-specific funding to at least 2009 levels.

The present level of IPM funding is not commensurate with the benefits it provides to both the users of IPM and the taxpayer. We do not accept that the present low level of funding is warranted. IPM has a long record of benefits to farmers and the public. For example, the President's budget pointed to the importance of the Asian Soybean Rust (ASR) initiative. Indeed, an ERS review concluded that the savings to farmers from IPM PIPE for ASR has saved as much as \$300 million in a single year. This is more than the total investment in IPM over the last 10 years.

IPM is now less than 1% of the NIFA budget. It can be strengthened financially with virtually no impact on the NIFA budget as a whole. We look forward to working with NIFA to remedy this situation.

In particular, it is very important that the RFAs for both the AFRI and the SCRI programs clearly state that IPM activities are encouraged and are eligible for funding. For example, within SCRI, pest management is the second of five focus areas. As such it merits a dedicated item in the RFAs supported by SCRI. IPM is also an ideal tool to assist AFRI in meeting its mandate to commit 40% of its funds to applied research.

As noted above, we advocated for the consolidation of IPM programs. The final bill provides \$3.915 million for IPM under 'Improved Pest Control.' Since this is a small amount we suggest that these funds should be managed by NIFA and distributed through intra-regional competition overseen by Regional IPM Centers, much as the RIPM program has been managed in recent years.

We would like to schedule a conference call with you and others at NIFA to further discuss how IPM can be an integral part of both the AFRI and SCRI programs. We look forward to your response.

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Sincerely yours,



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