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

IPM Voice Update

June 6, 2012

Farm Bill Offers Multiple Opportunities for IPM

In addition to the authorization of the USDA Regional IPM Centers, the 2012 Farm Bill (S. 3240) reported by the Senate Agriculture Committee contains several sections related to pest management. The bill is expected to be on the Senate floor in the next few weeks. The House of Representatives is also moving forward on farm bill legislation.

This memo summarizes the elements of the Senate Farm Bill that affect pest management, providing IPM Voice's assessment of their significance. The official Committee Report, which provides more background on specific elements of the bill, is not yet available. This memo is divided into three sections: 1) Major Opportunities, 2) Problems and 3) Minor Matters.

1) Major Opportunities

Authorization of the USDA Regional IPM Centers

Section 7308 of the Senate bill authorizes the establishment of four USDA Regional IPM Centers. Language within Section 7308 was submitted to the Committee by IPM Voice; interestingly, the "Section-by-Section" summary document of the Senate bill refers to it as a "reauthorization." Section 7308 presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to provide legal authority for the Centers. We must do all that we can to ensure the authorization is included in the House bill - to find out how you can help, contact Jim Cubie, jimcubie@gmail.com, 843-928-3702.

Pulse Health Initiative

Section 7207, entitled "High priority research and extension initiatives," includes subsection (f) which establishes a "pulse health initiative." Pulse crops include dry beans, dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas or garbanzo beans. Critical needs that subsection (f) addresses include "pest and disease management, including resistance to pest and diseases, resulting in reduced application management strategies."

This section would appear to offer a new opportunity for IPM funding. Pulse crops are important in Michigan so this proposal may be included in the final law as Senate Ag Committee Chairwoman Stabenow represents Michigan.

Additional Authority under the State Specialty Crop Block Grants

In addition to the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI), there is a program which makes block grants to state departments of agriculture for activities related to specialty crops. Some of these funds have been used for IPM in the past. The Senate bill includes language providing funding for multi-state projects involving "plant pests and diseases." This would seem to be an ideal opportunity for interstate initiatives such as the IPM PIPE projects.

2) Problems

Removal of 10% Minimum Requirement for Pest Management in SCRI

Section 7305 of the Senate bill eliminates the requirement for SCRI to designate at least 10% of total funds

for each of the five SCRI focus areas, one of which focuses on "efforts to identify and address threats from pests and diseases." Some growers are more interested in marketing initiatives (another SCRI focus area) than IPM; if this is the case, removing the removing the 10% minimum requirement may result in less emphasis on IPM.

3) Minor Matters

Agricultural Management Assistance, Risk Management Education

Under existing law funding can be provided for activities that mitigate financial risk through resource conservation practices, including integrated pest management. Senate Farm Bill language follows the existing law. The Risk Management Agency has delegated to NRCS the management of this section of the statute. These funds are available only in states that have a low utilization of crop insurance - such as Maryland and Pennsylvania. NRCS, for reasons of administrative convenience, operates it as if it were a part of the EQIP program.

Reauthorization of the Office of Pest Management Policy

Section 7307 of the Senate bill reauthorizes the Office of Pest Management Policy through 2017.

Conservation Security Program Renamed "Conservation Stewardship Program"

In the Senate bill, a "resource conserving crop rotation" continues to be described as a rotation that "interrupts pest cycles." This is existing law.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Pest management continues to be eligible for payments under EQIP.

IPM Voice Needs Your Support!

Please join or renew your IPM Voice membership for 2012 by visiting <http://www.ipmvoice.org/join.htm>.

IPM Voice is an independent, non-profit organization advocating for integrated pest management (IPM) that is genuinely progressive and seeks continuous improvement of environmental, social and economic conditions through application of accepted scientific principles. IPM Voice was formed in 2010 by more than 35 professionals working to expand the benefits IPM has provided to agriculture and communities for more than 40 years.

IPM Voice, Inc. / 4510 Regent Street Madison, Wisconsin 53705 / 608-232-1410

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