

## **Closing Key Pest Control Centers Puts American Crops at Risk**

### **Congress Built Defenses**

Invasive crop pests cost agriculture **\$14.5 billion dollars annually**. Congress has built a cadre of pest management experts to defend US agriculture. In 1998, Congress created four Regional IPM Centers. At the critical early stages of an invasion, the Centers bring together USDA, state, and farm organization pest experts to develop a common strategy.

### **The \$300 Million Soybean Rust Success Story**

In 2004, Asian Soybean Rust (ASR) first threatened soybean production. The four Regional IPM Centers brought together over 100 experts from universities, producer associations, state departments of agriculture and federal agencies. The group developed ipmPIPE, a strategic protection plan. Soybean farmers, co-ops and dealers have accessed the Soybean ipmPIPE website thousands of times for real-time pest information. The Soybean Rust protection effort now operates as an independent working group.

According to the USDA's Economic Research Service, savings attributable to the use of *ipmPIPE* during the 2005 season alone were as high as \$299 million.

### **Protecting Agriculture by Amassing Science-Based Information**

The regional IPM centers now lead in the development of Pest Management Strategic Plans (PMSPs). The EPA relies on PSMPs as it develops pesticide use standards required by the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA). PMSPs are developed by growers, university scientists, commodity organizations, crop consultants and other stakeholders. Without the PMSPs, the EPA may rely on poor data. For example, in March the EPA had nearly finalized the Re-registration Eligibility Document (RED) for permethrin. The Western Regional IPM Center appointed a comment coordinator who found that the reduced rates would have removed permethrin as a viable tool to manage certain Hawaiian pests.

The Western Regional IPM Center also convened a working group which found that the seven member states were individually being asked for FQPA related data. The Western IPM Center funded a PNW Comment Coordinator so that the seven states no longer have to individually search out data to answer duplicate requests from USDA and EPA, saving valuable time and money.

### **Independent Review Calls Centers "impressive" and "model" for Future Programs**

An independent review team found that the four regional IPM Centers have shown an *impressive use of limited resources to maximize output* of projects. In 2006, the review team advised USDA to use IPM Centers as a model for future programs.

### **IPM Investment Pays Dividends Beyond Agriculture**

Lessons learned from agricultural IPM are being applied to develop IPM plans for school cafeterias and public housing projects, reducing cost and maximizing the cost-effectiveness of the IPM investment.

### **IPM Program Funding at Risk**

The IPM budget is being cut at three times the rate of other comparable programs.

See: <http://www.ipmcenters.org/>. This fact sheet prepared by IPM Voice, <http://www.ipmvoice.org/>. Jim Cubie: 843-928 3702, [jimcubie@gmail.com](mailto:jimcubie@gmail.com).