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The Value of PMSPs Free Workshop Offered April 9

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In the March 2000 issue of *Agrichemical and Environmental News* (Issue No. 167, <http://www.aenews.wsu.edu/Mar00AENews/Mar00AENews.htm>), I introduced readers to the concept of Pest Management Strategic Plans (PMSPs). These plans were, at that time, a relatively new tool developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Pest Management Policy (USDA OPMP). In that article ("Pest Management Strategic Plans: Transitioning from Transition Strategies"), I explained that PMSPs were a way for stakeholders representing a given agricultural commodity to position themselves to negotiate with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the event of the cancellation of a chemical control important to their industry. By proactively gathering data about key pests, possible alternatives to current uses, and the influences of various alternatives on existing IPM programs, and by estimating the time necessary to effect a transition (should one be necessary), industry can be prepared to conduct a productive dialogue with EPA. The alternative could be a loss of effective tools, or even a loss of some minor crops.



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PMSPs are voluntary documents initiated by stakeholders: growers, processors, researchers, and other industry leaders. The experience of the last two years has shown that the ideal mechanism for launching and hammering out the details of a PMSP is in a facilitated, face-to-face meeting. In order to cover all the bases, such a meeting can take a full day or two. Why such a formal process, and why face-to-face? Because it works. The issues that arise in the course of these discussions are numerous and complex, and they require open, yet structured, discussion.

No one should be in business without a plan. Most of us know from experience that formally prioritizing our needs is a critical first step toward focusing our efforts and our resources. A PMSP can be one part of the larger, overall business plan routinely developed by any industry. The more complete your business plan, the better your industry is able to withstand a changing marketplace, which includes current and forecasted changes in the regulatory arena.

Besides serving as blueprints for the industry they represent, PMSPs are used by EPA in their review of pesticides as mandated by the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. Industries that have produced a PMSP find that they have a myriad of other practical uses as well. Karen Ross, President of the California Wine Grape Growers Association, feels that their PMSP was an excellent use of time and resources that has returned many dividends to their industry.

Are you interested in learning more about these plans? Washington State University, along with USDA and the Washington State Department of Ecology (WDOE), are sponsoring a workshop to explain PMSPs in detail. This three-hour workshop will feature speakers from USDA's Western Region Pest Management Center and from EPA's Biological and Economic Effects Division, who will discuss exactly what PMSPs are and explain how they are used now by USDA and EPA in the review of pesticides. WDOE's speaker will discuss how PMSPs will be used by their department. Karen Ross will explain in detail how this document has helped the wine grape industry focus efforts and obtain resources to address their pest management needs. My part of the program will cover how you can initiate a PMSP and what resources are available to assist that effort.

There is no charge to attend the workshop, but it is important to register if you are interested in attending so that we don't have to turn anyone away by renting a too-small room. Your attendance is not a commitment to participate in a PMSP; the purpose of this workshop is simply to discuss their value and explain how your industry might initiate one if and when you feel it is appropriate.

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In order to share resources, this workshop is being held in Spokane April 9, 2002, in conjunction with the WDOE Fourth Annual Nonpoint Pollution Conference. The shared registration form for the PMSP workshop and the Nonpoint Pollution Conference can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/conference/cleanerwater/index.html> . You need not attend any of the WDOE conference in order to attend the free PMSP workshop (listed on the registration form as "Pesticide Workshop") on April 9.

Representatives from every Washington State agricultural industry should really consider attending this workshop to learn about a voluntary program that can assist your industry in prioritizing and focusing efforts and resources and to address your critical pest management needs. Please feel free to contact me at (509) 372-7495 or cdaniels@tricity.wsu.edu if you have any questions about PMSPs or the workshop.

Dr. Catherine Daniels is the Pesticide Coordinator for Washington State University. She manages the Pesticide Information Center (PIC), which is located on the Tri-Cities branch campus (<http://picol.cahe.wsu.edu>), and is Managing Editor of AENews.

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