

August 25, 2010

Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

**RE: Restore USDA NIFA budget to Section 406 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Centers**

Dear Senator,

We write to you as public and occupational health experts and environmental advocates, to urge Congress to oppose the proposal in the President's budget for USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to eliminate the Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program (Section 406) research programs, including the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Centers.<sup>1</sup> As health and environmental experts, we understand first-hand the adverse impact that hazardous agrichemicals can have on human health, wildlife, and ecosystem integrity. Many of us have published scientific research articles on this issue, and some of us are clinicians that regularly see patients whose health is impaired following pesticide exposures.

These proposed cuts to the regional IPM Centers, totaling approximately \$4 million (\$1 million for each of four regional IPM Centers) will devastate programs that provide effective strategies to reduce or eliminate the unnecessary or improper use of hazardous agrichemicals. The IPM Centers are associated with the following Universities: Michigan State, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, UC Davis, Colorado State, North Carolina State, and Cornell. They provide critical information in a timely manner so as to prevent and treat pest problems using a combination of monitoring and record keeping, establishing pest thresholds, and employing non-chemical control methods.

We understand that the funds for these programs have been diverted to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), which offers competitive grants for many worthy issues, but that the program itself will not be transferred, resulting in its elimination. We urge Congress to preserve the actual program. The loss of the staff, science advisors, resources, stakeholder groups, conferences and grant-making programs provided by these programs would result in a big step backwards for USDA's efforts to help growers adopt environmental stewardship practices, particularly with regards to pest management.

IPM Center successes include the following:<sup>2</sup>

- Delivering resources, training, and education to low-income urban residents to provide cost-effective reduced-risk treatments for cockroaches, mice, bed bugs, etc., while avoiding the unnecessary use of hazardous pesticides.

---

<sup>1</sup> USDA NIFA FY2011 President's Budget Proposal.  
[http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/offices/budget/fy2011\\_budget.pdf](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/offices/budget/fy2011_budget.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See IPM Success Stories website from the North Central Region Extension Publication.  
<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/ncr/599/>

- Developing a national Pest Management Strategic Plan for IPM in schools to avoid unmanaged pest infestations, the unsafe and illegal use of pesticides, and harmful pesticide exposures.
- Developing and maintaining an up-to-date, publicly-accessible, searchable database where growers can go for immediate advice on IPM strategies that are crop and region specific.<sup>3</sup>
- A national warning system for soybean farmers to protect their crops from Asian Soybean Rust that includes mobile scouting, diagnostics, and sentinel plot networks.<sup>4</sup> It was estimated to provide savings of \$299 million in 2005, and was considered so successful that components were added for cucurbits and pecan nuts in 2008.<sup>5</sup>

We hope you will provide strong leadership in rejecting the proposed loss of this critically important and widely supported program.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Sass, Ph.D.  
 Senior Scientist, Health and Environ Program  
 Natural Resources Defense Council, and  
 Professorial Lecturer, Dept Occup Environ Health,  
 George Washington University

Supported by:

Charles Benbrook, PhD  
 Chief Scientist, The Organic Center

Scott Hoffman Black  
 The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Asa Bradman, PhD  
 Center for Children's Environmental Health Research  
 School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley

Patty Clary  
 Californians for Alternatives to Toxics

Theo Colborn, PhD  
 TEDX, The Endocrine Disruption Exchange

Lin Kaatz Chary, PhD MPH  
 Indiana Toxics Action Project

Aimee Code  
 Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ipmcenters.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://sbr.ipmpipe.org/cgi-bin/sbr/public.cgi>

<sup>5</sup> <http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/>

Caroline Cox  
Center for Environmental Health

Kathleen A. Curtis, LPN  
Policy Director, Clean New York

Tracey Easthope  
Ecology Center, Environmental Health Project

Jeannie Economos  
Farmworker Association of Florida, Pesticide Safety and Environmental Health Project

David Egilman MD, MPH  
Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine  
Brown University

Michael Fry, PhD  
American Bird Conservancy

Christopher Gavin  
Executive Director, Health Child Healthy World

Bernadette Giblin  
Safeground Organic Landcare, Northampton, MA

Robert M. Gould, MD  
President, SF-Bay Area Chapter  
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Thomas A. Green, PhD, CCA, TSP  
President  
IPM Institute of North America Inc.

Jamie Harvie  
Institute for a Sustainable Future

Dona Hippert  
Oregon Toxics Alliance

James Huff, PhD  
Assoc Director for Chemical Carcinogenesis  
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Larry Jacobs  
Jacobs Farm / Del Cabo

Sarah Janssen, MD, MPH, PhD  
Natural Resources Defense Council and  
Assistant Clinical Professor, University of California San Francisco

Bill Jirles, MPH  
President, American Federation of Government Employees,  
AFL-CIO Local 2923  
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Susan Kegley, PhD  
Principle and CEO, Pesticide Research Institute

Matthew Keifer, MD, MPH  
Professor, Environ Occup Health  
Professor, Internal Medicine  
Adjunct Professor, Global Health  
University of Washington Medical Center

Caroline Kennedy  
Senior Director of Field Conservation  
Defenders of Wildlife

Joseph LaDou, MD  
Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco

Moira McKernan, PhD  
American Bird Conservancy

Pam Miller  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Tirso Moreno  
Farmworker Association of Florida

Frederica Perera, DrPH  
Professor of Public Health  
Director, Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health Sciences  
Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University

Margaret Reeves  
Pesticide Action Network North America

Jeanne Rizzo, RN  
Breast Cancer Fund

Rachel Roisman MD MPH  
Assistant Clinical Professor, Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
University of California, San Francisco

Virginia Ruiz,  
Senior Attorney, Farmworker Justice

Ted Schettler, MD  
Science Director, Science and Environmental Health Network

Heather Spalding  
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)

Paul Towers  
Pesticide Watch

Barbara Warren  
Citizens' Environmental Coalition

Mark Whalon, PhD  
Director, Pesticide Alternatives Laboratory  
Michigan State University

Carol Westinghouse  
Informed Green Solutions