

Vegetable IPM Working Group

Report and Communications 2002

This is a report on the first meeting (3/14/02)

NE PMC's Vegetable Commodity Working Group (CWG) held its first meeting in March to address the concerns and challenges of the northeastern vegetable industry. The group, led by Ruth Hazzard (University of Massachusetts) and Curt Petzoldt (Cornell University), discussed how it could best contribute to successful vegetable IPM in the region. The group's members come from 10 of the 12 northeastern states and represent diverse stakeholders including growers with a range of types of markets, processors, consultants, environmental groups, marketers, regulators, and researchers. These participants are working to ensure that the Center is responsive to the needs of all those concerned with integrated pest management for vegetables throughout the region.

The vegetable CWG had a very positive discussion, during which the group identified several common goals and discussed what its role should be. The group sees a need for incentives that would encourage growers to adopt IPM and integrated crop management (ICM) tactics. These incentives might include the availability of on-farm scouts, who could bring timesaving expertise that would help growers plan effective pest management strategies. They decided to collect and document the existence of IPM "elements" or "growing protocols" that define IPM methods and can thus help producers assess their practice of IPM. The CWG will identify elements in each northeastern state and examine how these elements can be used to help vegetable farmers in the northeast improve their economic return and environmental stewardship. The vegetable CWG also sees a need to inform growers about available IPM resources and determine what other types of information resources would be useful.

Finally, the group recognized the importance of pest management strategic plans (PMSP), which can be used to establish future goals for research, education, and regulation in specific crops. As a region-wide group, they are in a unique position to look for common issues across all the northeastern states. The Vegetable CWG decided that it would like to participate in the development of a PMSP for a crop grown throughout the northeastern region. They identified several criteria that could help determine which crop(s) would be their focus, and intend to work with other groups in the region to find the most appropriate crop for a PMSP.

Attachment B. Vegetable Commodity Working Group

Maritime Institute, Baltimore, MD—March 14, 2002

Present: Curt Petzoldt, Ruth Hazzard, Luke McConnell, Kathy Murray, Iliana Rivas, Dave Marchant, Ken Gauen, Skip Kaufman, Henry Dubois

Prioritizing Actions for Vegetable IPM Commodity Working Group (CWG):

The vegetable CWG grouped the priorities of the industry and then voted on which to take action.

Vote Score	Action
Coordinator role:	
Required	Identify IPM protocols/elements (score based) for each state and each crop
Required	Identify IPM guides/practices for each state and each crop
Required	Find information on what has been done to market IPM in states.
Communication role:	
INSIDE the ag community	
	1) Foster interaction and dialog between organic and conventional growers. View as a continuum.
1	2) Inform growers of available IPM resources. Identify and evaluate existing publications and resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What else is needed? ○ Who could write new publications? ○ Let growers know what is available.
2	3) Incentives to adopt IPM and ICM—use of on-farm scouts and what other incentives?
OUTSIDE the ag community	
	1) Market IPM to the public
	2) Work with NRCS and groups like Ducks Unlimited to sell the value of IPM.
Research and Extension Priorities role:	
1	Crop profile/PMSP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Set priorities for NEPMC Information network projects and influence membership of PMSP teams through discussion with appropriate people from each state.
4	2) Take leadership of pest management strategic plan (PMSP)
1	Expand scope of IPM to include ICM, soils, bio-based, water quality. Push for technology that can be used by organic growers such as seed treatments. Help establish new standards of evaluation for trials of bio-based control products.
Pilot projects:	

Other comments and concerns from the CWG regarding pest management:

- Vegetable farming profitability
- The diversity of the vegetable industry makes communication and collaboration across region difficult but it is still important.
- Translation of IPM elements/guides to farm and non-farm audience. How can this value be translated?
- Make it known that guidelines are site and crop specific and cannot be generalized across the NE region.
- Use documentation/evaluation of IPM through elements/guides for self evaluation and education
- Give growers “credit” for the practice of IPM—explore this as a possibility.
- Can we capitalize on the “regional” nature of the CWG?
- Vegetable CWG becomes a clearinghouse of information. Create awareness of the group as regional.
- What credibility does this group have? Grant applications rated higher if the priorities of this group are met. Veg CWG = stakeholders.
- Evaluate IPM definitions to include soil and nutrient management.
- Expand evaluation of cultural and conservation practices to include multiple values (e.g. beneficials increase or multiyear effects of weed management). Consider the impact of IPM using a “systems” approach.
- Survey growers to determine if there is a market advantage from IPM and how would labeling of an IPM product work (certification? Define market advantage. What markets are most responsive to IPM labeling.)

Prioritized Action Steps—due by April 15, 2002:

1. Document and delineate resources for vegetable IPM.
 - Find protocols/elements (score based) for all crops in your assigned state including:
 - Title, bulletin number and information on how to order OR Order and send to NEPMC
 - Find scouting guides/practices for all crops in your assigned state and send information (as above).
 - Find what is being done in each state regarding consumer marketing of IPM, on which crops, who is doing this work and how.
 - Send gathered data to: Liz Thomas
NEPMC
630 W. North St.
Geneva, NY 14456-0462

Responsible	State
Gordon Burson	Connecticut
Curt Petzoldt	New York & Rhode Island?
Ruth Hazzard	Massachusetts & Rhode Island?
Kathy Murray	Maine

Skip Kaufman	West Virginia
Luke McConnell	Maryland
Ken Gauen	Delaware
Henry Dubois	New Jersey
Iliana Rivas	-
Dave Marchant	Vermont
Shelby Fleischer	Pennsylvania
George Hamilton	New Hampshire

2. By summer this information will be compiled and put on the NEPMC website.
3. Set priorities for research, education and regulation through sponsoring a PMSP.

Criteria for choosing a crop for a PMSP:

- Grown region-wide
- Losing control materials.
- Limited recent research base
- Used in both fresh and processing markets.
- No overlap with existing PMSP plans.
- Rising star crop i.e. becoming more popular to grow.
- High number of growers and acreage in production.
- Already has a crop profile.

5 crops nominated for PMSP, peppers is the crop chosen:

potatoes met 4 of the above criteria
sweet corn 4
cucurbits 8, but too many to choose from
tomatoes 6
peppers 7

General Concerns and Challenges of the Vegetable Industry:

- Difficulty incorporating IPM into a highly diversified small farm.
- Keep chemical use to a minimum through scouting and conservation measures
- Not enough crop consultants
- Extension is stretched too thin. More service is needed either for free or a fee to convince growers to adopt IPM programs
- Now chemical sales people are making pest control recommendations.
- Need for increased IPM program funding.
- IPM is not reducing pesticide use due to lack of effective bio-based methods.
- Globalization vs. the small farm and the cheap food policy of the US.
- Lack of US farm subsidies for vegetables drives sourcing to low-paid, developing countries.
- Lack of profitability in agriculture in part due to tobacco and grain land going into vegetable crops. Prices are stagnant and the competition is high. Not much youth coming into the business.
- Cheap competition from California and Canada.

- Competing against value-added products such as salad in a bag, baby carrots, prepared foods
- FQPA does not apply to food crops in other countries.
- Politicians do not understand agriculture resulting in a loss of resources.
- Commodification of agriculture.
- How to get consumers to listen to yet another marketing message. Educate non-ag community about grower's use of IPM. Public understands the term "organic", but not IPM.
- "real value" of farming vs. the value in the marketplace
- Urbanization vs. agriculture
- Environmentalists have clout, conservationists do not.
- The public perception that large-scale farms are poor environmental stewards where sometimes small farms cannot afford conservation practices.
- Regulations cut into profits e.g. nutrient management, tax for water
- National organic standards are too bureaucratic hurting farmers in the long run.
- Nutrient management laws apply even to very small farms.
- Labor issues.
- Energy and youth involved in community supported agriculture (CSA), sustainable ag, and organic movement and are not communication with traditional growers with knowledge and experience.
- Only 25 hours in a day to accomplish goals.