

PestWise - an EPA Voluntary Program PPDC Update

During the December 2013 meeting, the PPDC requested an update on the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP), an EPA voluntary program implemented by the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP).

PESP was established in 1994 with six member organizations and has grown to over 314 members. While most PESP members are entities that are pesticide end-users, several others are organizations which focus on training, educating, or influencing pesticide users.

To become a PESP member, an interested organization submits an application and a five-year strategy. The strategy outlines how environmental and human health risk reduction goals will be achieved through the implementation of IPM, or through educating others on IPM. The program encourages members to track progress towards IPM goals in three areas: reducing unnecessary pesticide use, cost savings, and knowledge shared about IPM methodologies.

These reporting requirements triggered the Paperwork Reduction Act which stipulates that federal agencies must obtain Office of Management and Budget approval before collecting similar information from the public. In 2011, OPP undertook an effort to obtain this approval through an Information Collection Request (ICR).

During the time the ICR was pending approval, PESP was unable to enroll new members and was unable to collect member strategies or tracking reports. The Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division (BPPD) used this time to evaluate the program's brand and marketing. As a result, BPPD is looking to rebrand PESP as PestWise, a simpler, clearer brand. The PestWise ICR, approved in late 2013, will allow BPPD to collect data to establish program membership, develop stewardship strategies, measure progress towards stewardship goals, and develop award incentives.

BPPD is preparing to restore PESP data reporting requirements in 2014. Members will be required to report on the new program measures approved in the ICR.

The incentive structure of PESP is based upon members' submission of IPM information and reports on the resulting environmental outcomes. For example, members advance tiers (bronze/silver/gold) based on the self-reporting of sustained efforts to reduce pesticide risk and to increase IPM implementation. Qualifying data will be collected through members' annual reports (also referred to as 'surveys' in PestWise). These reports will enable EPA and PestWise members to track progress being made in implementing IPM activities and reductions in pest and pesticide risks to human health and the environment.

PestWise member benefits include information sharing among members, technical assistance (provided by EPA, PestWise members, or outside experts), and marketing/logo use incentives.

BPPD is seeking approval of a new PestWise logo to complete the rebranding. We believe the new program and brand are simpler and will encourage increased stakeholder participation.

Next Steps

In early summer, BPPD will launch a pilot with nine PestWise members to get feedback on the: 1) membership application instructions, 2) new PestWise name and logo, and 3) overall membership experience. By late summer, BPPD will launch the new PestWise program complete with the new logo and implement the new members reporting requirements. In the meantime, organizations are welcome to join PESP under an interim framework.