

IMPACT



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Spanish Pesticide Safety Training for Pesticide Handlers

The Situation

The Spanish speaking population in Idaho is growing. The primary language of many pesticide handlers and farm workers in the Treasure Valley is Spanish.

Spanish speaking farm workers have historically been underserved by the pesticide safety training programs offered by the University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System. The need for training conducted in Spanish was magnified in the summer of 2005 when numerous farm workers in Canyon County fell ill as a result of pesticide exposure due to a series of communication failures.

Spanish speaking pesticide handlers and farm workers need opportunities to increase their knowledge of proper pesticide safety as it relates to row crop and orchard production.

Our Response

A University of Idaho Critical Issues Grant proposal was submitted and approved to conduct pesticide safety training for Spanish speaking farm workers. Grant funds were used to support travel for instructors, to pay for printing and distribution of advertisements, and to provide lunch and refreshments for class participants.

The cooperators organized a meeting site and prepared a full day workshop that contained the following topics: Safety Training, Pesticide Safety in Orchards, Spray Drift, Pesticide Storage and

Disposal, Chemigation, and Potato Tuberworm. All class topics and literature were presented in Spanish. In addition, a folder containing pesticide safety materials was given to all attendees.



Spanish speaking Pesticide Handlers Workshop.

Program Outcomes

The workshop was conducted on March 14, 2006 in Canyon County. Thirty-four farm workers, primarily from Canyon and Washington County, attended the event and were instructed on pesticide safety issues. At the conclusion of the program, each participant received an EPA Pesticide Handler Verification Training Card.

Program participants also completed a class evaluation. The evaluation results clearly show that the subject matter taught can be used by participants to make their jobs safer and will make them more

valuable employees. Following is a summary of the evaluation results:

1. Would you recommend this program to others?
Of 29 respondents, 29 said yes.
2. Would you attend future trainings in Spanish?
Of 29 respondents, 29 said yes.
3. List three things that you learned today that you can use in your work.
 - How to take care of pesticides, how to recognize pests.
 - Protect the chemicals, guard against drift, and calibration of equipment.
 - Managing pesticides, personal protection, and proper application of pesticides.
 - Be careful with pesticides, take care of empty containers.
 - Spray drift and how to prevent it.
 - Store pesticides in a safe place, how to protect myself from pesticides, how to transport pesticides.
 - Use appropriate clothing, read labels.
 - Equipment, what to do in case of emergency, how to understand labels.
 - How one acts in case of contamination, take all precautions.
 - Use the necessary equipment to fumigate.
 - How to recycle pesticide containers.
 - To ask my employer for necessary equipment, and how to manage chemicals.
 - What to do in case of an accident.

Studies¹ have shown that safety training and safety information helps farm workers and their families protect themselves from the adverse effects of pesticides. A common route of pesticide exposure to farm worker children is through residues brought into the home on the clothing and skin of farm workers. Farm workers are not aware of the dangers of carrying home pesticide residues. The type of information learned from this workshop helps to educate farm workers about these risks and ultimately protects them and their families from the adverse effects of pesticides.

¹Loewenherz C, Fenske RA, Simcos NJ, Bellamy G, Kalman D. "Biological Monitoring of Organophosphorus Pesticide Exposure Among Children of Agricultural Workers in Central Washington State." *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 1997. 105:1344-53.

The Future

Through this training, Spanish speaking pesticide handlers and farm workers were educated about pesticide safety and proper use. Based on the evaluation comments, this workshop is appreciated and needed in the Treasure Valley. Following this successful workshop introduction, all collaborators agreed to offer this training on an annual basis. As participation increases, additional class dates and locations will be offered.

Cooperators

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