

IMPACT

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IR-4 Priority Setting Tool for New Pest Management Projects

The Situation

The IR-4 Project is the largest petitioner to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the registration of specialty crop pesticides. Over forty years, the program has logged more than ten thousand requests for uses on crops as diverse as Avocados, Bananas, Carrots and Zucchini. All these requests fit within the Federal Crop Groupings as established in CFR 40-180 and detailed in *Food and Feed Crops of the United States* (Markle et.al, 1988).

Each year resource limitations dictate starting only fifty to seventy of these requested projects nationally. The IR-4 Program consists of four geographic regions (Northeast, Southern, North Central, and Western) whose growers vie for the initiation of their specific projects.

The IR-4 project selection process must balance:

- Regulatory requirements
- Regional needs
- Multiple requests
- Budget limitations
- Scientific merit of projects

The Western Region covers thirteen states west of the Rockies including Hawaii and Alaska and the territory of Guam. Tracking and prioritizing the diverse needs of the western states specialty crops, including those needs of Idaho specialty crop producers, prompted the Priority Setting Tool's (PST) development by the Western Region IR-4 Program.

The primary purpose of the tool is to organize the plethora of projects well before the national Food Use Workshop. This workshop brings together several hundred growers and specialists from across the nation to determine exactly which projects IR-4 will initiate for the upcoming growing season. The competing needs and numerous projects have historically made this process quite challenging for all involved. The need for concise, well organized information to support western stakeholders was the driving need behind the development of the PST.



Figure 1. Sample page from the IR-4 National Database.

Our Response

The PST was initially developed in 2004 to integrate information from the national IR-4 database with data and input from western region stakeholders. The input for Idaho specialty crop pest management needs comes from commodity representatives, researchers and University Extension personnel. The

input is coordinated by the University of Idaho IR-4 liaison then submitted to the Western Region PST. Input details include information regarding the project's importance to Idaho growers and the western region, efficacy data and any relevant hurdles that might hinder project completion.

The national IR-4 project maintains a database (Figure 1, <http://ir4.rutgers.edu/FoodUse/foodUse2.cfm?Prnum=08645>) which uniquely identifies all IR-4 requests by commodity and chemical. The database also tracks the project's priority rating (A, B, C, etc.) current status, and progress to date.

Throughout a given year, two western region teleconferences are held with stakeholders to obtain PST database input. In addition, there are many personal communications and email exchanges which provide further input. These results are publically available on the Western Region IR-4 website and updated throughout the season.

Final updates are made to the PST just prior to the national Food Use Workshop. All "A" priority projects from the national workshop will be initiated in the coming season. "B" projects can be started as resources permit. "C" and lower priority projects will not be started.

The PST combines online technology with old fashioned personal communication to increase the transparency of a key public decision making process.

Program Outcomes

The Western Region comes to the national Food Use Workshop with a succinct list of relevant projects. This project list is backed by Western Region stakeholders along with supporting data.

This collaborative effort to coordinate project information from Idaho and other western states helps the Western Region to advocate for, and support regional needs on an ongoing basis. The tool represents a collective memory of projects and details used for current and future priority discussions.

This effort has enhanced our ability to participate at the national level and meet the needs of Idaho

growers. At the 2008 national Food Use Workshop, three research projects requested by growers were given top priority for research in the 2009 research season. The three projects are: (1) develop Teff as a recognized crop in Crop Group 15 (Small Grains), (2) conduct residue trials on difenconazole for use in potato storage for control of storage diseases, and (3) conduct residue trials on mocap for mint insects.

References

Environmental Protection Agency, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 40, Part 180. Accessed 10/10/2008. http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&sid=565aacba076dc257b4eb51cb191840c5&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title40/40cfr180_main_02.tpl

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For More Information

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10/08