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Collaborative Training Results in Safer, Wiser Pesticide Use

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Collaborative Training Results in Safer, Wiser Pesticide Use

Abstract

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Integrated Crop Management NEWS



Collaborative Training Results in Safer, Wiser Pesticide Use

By Paul Brown, Assistant Director Agriculture and Natural Resources

With crop out of the fields and snow in the air, farmers and Iowa State University Extension are turning their focus to winter trainings. ISU Extension provides the educational component required to become state certified manure and pesticide applicators.

“The pesticide applicator trainings that start showing up on ISU Extension calendars in December are the result of collaboration between Extension and Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship,” said Gerald Miller, director of ISU Extension to Agriculture and Natural Resources. “The trainings are planned centrally and delivered by ISU Extension specialists at locations convenient to the applicators.”

Certified private pesticide applicators – people who apply a restricted-use pesticide in the production of an agricultural commodity on land they manage – must meet educational requirements to maintain their certification. Extension field agronomists provide training in all of Iowa’s counties. In 2007, Extension held 290 private pesticide continuing instructional courses, training more than 17,000 applicators.

Commercial pesticide applicators – people who enter into contracts or agreements to receive payment for applying a pesticide or who are employed by such an entity – meet their certification educational requirements by attending video conferences and Web casts that feature campus-based ISU Extension specialists. Last year, ISU Extension trained nearly 8,000 commercial applicators.

To learn about private pesticide training opportunities, contact an ISU Extension county office or [visit the ISU Extension calendar](#) and select the appropriate pesticide applicator training category. The Pest Management and the Environment Web site [lists the commercial applicator trainings](#). Information about [pesticide testing is available at the IDALS site](#).

“Farmers take very seriously their responsibility to protect Iowa’s soil and water and Extension’s effort to make sure applicators have the most up-to-date information is vital,” Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey said. “The training materials clearly outline the current regulations that are in place to promote safety, environmental protection and efficient and appropriate use of pesticides.”

As a direct result of educational material presented during trainings, Iowa applicators know and are practicing proper recycling of used pesticide containers. In the state that ranks fourth in the number of pounds of empty containers, proper handling of material that would otherwise be considered hazardous waste has tremendous rewards.

“We are also seeing a better use of pesticides; atrazine is a great example,” said Miller. “We are seeing changes in use patterns of atrazine as a result of targeted training. At one time, there were high instances of residual atrazine in ground and surface waters because of heavy usage. In trainings, we talked

about geographic considerations, where to and where not to apply atrazine, and the effectiveness of lower application rates. We now have about the same amount being applied in Iowa, but at lower rates and in more appropriate geographic areas – and the result is less evidence of residual atrazine in the environment.”

Paul Brown is the Extension to Agricultural and Natural Resources, assistant Director.

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