



**Strategic Program Assessment
of Applicator Training Needs & the
Pesticide Safety Education Program**

**Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee Meeting
October 2004**

Agenda

Strategic Program Assessment of the Pesticide Safety Education Program

30 minutes – Bill Diamond, U.S. EPA

Overview: rationale, process, schedule, participants, initial perspectives, next steps

10 minutes – Burleson Smith, U.S.D.A.

Progress on USDA fiscal management issues

20 minutes – PPDC Membership

Questions, discussion and response to presentation

Assessment Rationale & Goal

PPDC Role

- Raised at last meeting & encouraged assessment

Rationale's multiple drivers

- Good government = good program management
- Increased audience demands = operational issues
- Budget cuts = program & priority assessment
- Increased need for accountability measures
 - OMB PART, President's Management Agenda, GPRA, Statutory requirements

Goal

- Assemble practitioners perspectives on full range of critical concerns to inform EPA/USDA deliberations

Pesticide Applicator Certification & Training Program Basics

- EPA establishes, by regulation, national standards for certifying applicators competency to apply restricted use pesticides. Certification is administered by regulatory agencies in states, tribes, and territories to ensure safe and effective use of pesticides.
- Effective training is a key means to help ensure applicator competency. There is a wide range of training forms & sources.
- **Historically**
 - PSEP/CES w/ existing infra-structure is critical component
 - Over 30 years variable EPA grant funding (\$700,000 to \$5,000,000). Until recently: stable for 5 yrs. @ \$1,880,000

Assessment Process

- **Involve diverse practitioner representatives**
- **Distribute background material**
- **Hold two discussion meetings**
- **Identify assessment areas: goals, activities, measures, operations, future directions**
- **Develop mission and critical questions for assessment group**
- **Compile perspectives on critical questions**

Assessment Stakeholder Group

- Rebeckah Freeman – American Farm Bureau
- Bob Rosenberg – National Pest Control Association
- Tom Hall – CropLife America
- Tom Delaney – Lawn Care Association of America
- Andrew Moore – National Agricultural Aviation Association
- Jack Peterson – Arizona Department of Agriculture
- Carl Martin – Arizona Structural Pest Control Commission
- Win Hock – AAPSE
- Joanne Kick-Raack – Ohio SCES
- Zane Helsel – CES/ECOP
- Paul Craig – Pennsylvania County Agent
- Monte Johnson – USDA CSREES
- Brad Rein – USDA CSREES
- Ralph Otto – USDA CSREES
- Jeananne Gettle – EPA Region 4
- Kevin Keaney – EPA Certification & Worker Protection
- Bill Diamond – EPA Field and External Affairs

Timeline

- **June** EPA /USDA collaborate on process, focus, participants
- **July 21-22** First meeting
- **July-Sept.** EPA collects requested data
- **Sept. 16-17** Second meeting
- **Sept. 23** EPA distributes critical questions
- **Sept.-Oct.** Stakeholders develop written perspectives
- **Oct. 8** Perspectives submitted to EPA
- **Oct. 21** PPDC presentation
- **Next Steps** Compile submissions.
Analyze for commonalities.
Develop final report.
Identify & prioritize actions for EPA; USDA;
Stakeholders to implement.

Critical Questions

1. **Program Mission:** Is the mission clear & understood by all critical stakeholders?

Is the scope appropriate, broad enough, consistent with statute, & regulation, consistent with program needs?

2. **Program Activities:** Are current activities appropriate?

What are the training needs, priorities, audiences, gaps? Who are the training providers? What should be program partners' roles?

3. **Program Accountability:** Are there clear, meaningful measures of program success?

Are current measures appropriate/accurate? What measure characteristics (type, depth, quantity, ability to implement) should be considered? How do we balance accountability & reporting burden? How can we work together to improve measures?

Critical Questions

4. **Program Operations:** Is the program operating as efficiently and effectively as possible?

How can we improve management of funds; coordination between state lead agencies & training providers; & other program operations? What other resources should be explored?

5. **Future Direction:** Is the program moving in the right direction or are changes needed?

What should be the program focus in the short-term & long-term?

6. **Other**

How can we work together to implement assessment findings? What input can you offer for areas we have not covered?

Critical Question # 1: Program Mission - Scope, Statute, Regulation, Needs

Issue: There may not be a clear, common understanding of the appropriate goals that are critical to the success of the program.

Some Initial Perspectives

- **Mission:** Training component of the national applicator certification program should be to help ensure initial and continued competence of all pesticide applicators so that, when appropriate, pesticides can be applied safely and effectively.

- **Scope**
 - include general use pesticides in program scope to achieve mission of protecting human health & environment vs. retain existing scope
 - stress split between education vs. regulatory – teaching risk minimization practices vs. competency determination by exam
 - flexible scope for states to address specific needs vs. national standard for consistency and state reciprocity

Critical Question # 1: Program Mission - Scope, Statute, Regulation, Needs

Statute/Regulation

- expand beyond RUPs to include other occupational users, handlers, retailers, health & school officials
- retain current statutory mandate for RUP coverage vs. “mission creep”

■ Needs

- EPA actions generate training needs
- require & provide resources/support for “other” training topics (drift, endangered species)
- need outreach/training stressing that safe & proper applications benefit consumers & environment
- need applicator demonstration of practical knowledge of pest control

Critical Question # 2: Program Activities - Audience, Providers, Priorities, Mechanisms, Content

Issue: There may not be agreement among the stakeholders concerning the appropriateness of current and planned/future program activities.

Some Initial Perspectives

■ Audience

- occupational users & use in public areas vs. keep it as it is,
- too many re-certification training activities vs. PSEP main focus is re-certification activities
- limit resources for programs where there are low # of applicators vs. “potential risk” model for targeting resources
- audience should be identified & addressed by CES & SLA

■ Providers

- CES certified trainer program for private sector trainers vs. “train-the-trainer” program for CES
- applicators should teach applicators
- university faculty & staff, SLA staff, industry professionals

Critical Question # 2: Program Activities – Audience, Providers, Priorities, Mechanisms, Content

■ Priorities

- maintain core functions (variously defined) – status quo
- focus on initial certification training vs. focus on re-certification
- target users with greatest misuse/incidents
- direct funds/effort to greatest need – not only RUP applicators

■ Mechanisms

- need national training resources (on-line, etc.)
- need most cost-effective methods for training delivery.

■ Content

- stress best management practices
- stress technologies for safer use

Critical Question # 3: Program Accountability

Issue: There is lack of agreement on what constitutes clear, meaningful measures of success

Some Initial Perspectives

- Accountability is critical to program operations & success
- Measures should be meaningful, understandable, acceptable, implementable
- Measures should be based on outcomes, not on outputs
 - Outcomes are program results compared with their intended purpose --- reduction in number of pesticide poisonings, increased occupational competency
 - Outputs are activities or products --- number of applicators trained, number of applicators certified, number of states using the core exam

Critical Question # 4: Program Operations - Management, Coordination, Improvement, Opportunities, Resources

Issue: Conflicting perspectives on how publicly funded programs can best operate efficiently & effectively

Some Initial Perspectives

- **Management**
 - maintain current system, but make it more efficient vs. develop alternate funding mechanism (through SLA)
- **Coordination**
 - mandate CES/SLA coordination through grants, reviews of annual reports, advisory boards vs. do not mandate CES/SLA interaction
- **Improvement**
 - target training towards areas with high violations
 - Eliminate redundancy (coordinate training material development)
- **Opportunities**
 - seek funding from USDA, endangered species, water quality, homeland security
 - EPA should not provide all funding

Critical Question # 4: Program Operations - Management, Coordination, Improvement, Opportunities, Resources

■ Resources

- **USDA/CES should provide infrastructure and funding vs. EPA should provide fixed amount as main source**
- **SLAs should provide funding for material development, training to educators**
- **state CES should charge registration fees - but should not have to rely on them vs. programs should be sustained by fees**
- **states have responsibility to fund program beyond federal regulations**
- **non-RUP training should be funded by industry & trade associations**
- **government rules = government funds**
- **public/private partnerships needed**

Critical Question # 5: Future Directions - Short Term, Long Term, Process

Issue: How should publicly funded programs best serve the public good to meet evolving needs

Some Initial Perspectives

- **Short-term**
 - stabilize funding at \$1.88M +
 - coordinate programs & materials nationally/regionally
 - develop accountability measures
- **Long-term**
 - implement program evaluation studies
 - Implement accountability measures
 - conduct needs assessment to focus training efforts
- **Process**
 - ongoing assessment groups (CTAG, non-CTAG)

Critical Question # 6, Other Comments

- Government resources for training add strength and credibility to programs & save enforcement/regulatory costs
- Outreach needed to the media and to the public on the utility of education in protecting human health and the environment

Possible Discussion Question

- What are your initial thoughts on, or reactions to, the initial perspectives?
- No universal agreement on all issues, but general agreement that change is necessary
 - Rapid? Gradual? Slow?
- Any preference for focus among the critical areas discussed?
- Process to move forward
 - Final report
 - Ongoing, comprehensive stakeholder group?
 - Tailor participation/process to specific needs?