

School IPM Outreach and Research Activities, NYS IPM Program, 2012

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Abstract: Integrated pest management in schools is needed to reduce risks to children and others from both pests and the overuse of pesticides. The NYS IPM Program was involved in several outreach activities at and for schools in 2012. We continued on-site assessments of the pest management programs of three NYS school districts that are interested in being IPM Institute STAR re-certified. We organized eight IPM workshops, held throughout the state, which targeted, wholly or partially, school personnel and participated in two school IPM webinars. We worked with several school districts on specific issues including demonstrations and other projects with yellowjackets and cockroaches. In 2012, NYS IPM Program staff organized a meeting of the Statewide School IPM Committee. We also finished preparation of a repeat of the statewide survey of school pest management policies and practices and collaborated regionally and nationally toward the goal of having verifiable IPM in all of the nation's schools by 2015.

Background and Justification: Pest management in schools has received increased attention in New York State and nation-wide. This is due to the critical need to decrease pesticide use to protect our children, who, by nature of their size and developmental stage, are at greater risk than adults. Yet, at the same time, we cannot compromise the quality of pest control because pests represent an equally important health hazard. Schools are especially challenging to manage because they include such varied settings as classrooms, cafeterias, laboratories, auditoriums, theaters, playing fields, playgrounds, and gardens. These areas are heavily used for a variety of purposes, including after-hours public meetings. Visitors, staff, and students are frequently in direct contact with the lawns, athletic fields, flowers, trees, playgrounds, and buildings on the school grounds. The New York State (NYS) pesticide notification law and recently passed "Safe Playing Fields" act have resulted in additional pressure on schools to

reduce pesticide use. There is a concerted nationwide effort to have verifiable IPM in all of the country's schools by 2015.

On-site School Assessments: Together with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell's Entomology Department, and Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) districts, NYS IPM Program staff worked with school districts to upgrade pest management. Intensive team-based on-site assessments have been conducted over the past several years of the pest management programs of ten school districts. Six of these districts were awarded the IPM Institute's STAR School IPM certification. These districts joined a select group of schools and daycares nationwide that have been recognized for achieving this high-level of IPM implementation. Certification lasts for three years. In 2011, IPM staff started working with three districts to become re-certified and a fourth district to become initially certified. In 2012, one district was recommended to the IPM Institute for re-certification. In early 2013, a second district will be recommended.

School IPM Workshops and Demonstration Projects: Eight IPM workshops that targeted, wholly or partially, school personnel were organized throughout the state in 2012. Additionally, we made school IPM presentations at five workshops/meetings organized by other organizations within the state. NYS IPM Program staff provided input into the EPA, Region 2 webinar, "*Outdoor and Field School IPM*" and co-organized/presented a Facilities Masters webinar, "*Birds and Bats: Pest Management Tips for the Educational Environment.*" We worked on-site with six different school districts on issues involving bedbugs (see below), turf management, cockroaches, yellowjackets, and woodchucks.

As a result of this outreach, more than five hundred school personnel are better informed and able to implement IPM in their schools including in the context of the state's new "Child Safe Playing Fields Act". Specific IPM-related practices that workshop participants indicated they plan to implement include overseeding, adjusting mower height, record keeping, stakeholder communication, irrigation, and IPM policy development. Over six hundred people registered for the bird and bat management webinar. After the webinar, we responded on-line to thirty-six questions raised by the participants. We also contacted fifty-five participants who indicated that they wished more information about the NYS IPM Program. Intensive interaction with a Long Island school district on a significant cockroach problem has resulted in improved building management. NYS IPM Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension staff also cooperated with a district on a project seeking to reduce yellowjackets in the vicinity of compost dumpsters.

Statewide School IPM Committee: The NYS IPM Program organized a Statewide School IPM Committee in 2002. The tenth meeting of the committee was held in November 2012 at the Albany headquarters of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Participants were from Cornell University, the DEC, state department of health, state education department, NYS Teachers Association, school districts, and industry. Presentations and discussions included bed bugs in schools, US EPA and school IPM (led by EPA's Sherry Glick calling in), and multiplying school IPM implementation within NYS.

Statewide School IPM Survey: In 2001 and partnering with the NYS Health Department and the NYS Department of Education, the NYS IPM Program surveyed all of the state's public school districts and BOCES districts concerning their pest management policies and practices. The results have been helpful in guiding school IPM outreach activities. In 2011, we began planning a repeat of the survey in order to update

this important database. To be administered during 2013, the on-line survey will gather information on pest management policies and plans, food policies, educational outreach and training, frequent pests, pest management techniques, turf management techniques, pest and pesticide-related complaints and incidents, pest management costs, Neighbor Notification Law, "Safe Playing Fields" Act, and sources of information.

Northeast School IPM Working Group: A NYS IPM Program staff member serves as co-chair of this multi-state, USDA-funded group. In conjunction with the National School IPM Steering Committee and the other three regional working groups, we are organizing school IPM demonstration projects and state coalition projects. Funds from an EPA grant were used for school IPM outreach workshops (reported above) in New York State and for recruiting school districts in the state to participate in a nation-wide survey of asthma/IPM metrics in schools. The Working Group (WG) also recently finished a project assessing and expanding the impact of existing K-12 IPM teaching tools throughout the region <http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/school-ipm-curriculum/index.htm>. One outcome has been the draft of a K-12 IPM Literacy Strategic Plan. In 2012-13, the WG is developing an "environmental systems management" workbook in conjunction with asthma coalitions. The workbook will be piloted at workshops including New York State.

The WG's annual meeting was held October 24 & 25, 2012 in Rockville and Hanover, MD. We reviewed our 2012 accomplishments/status, interacted with a USGBC architect about school IPM & LEED standards, and visited a local school to discuss their IPM program. We also made began revising the Northeast school IPM priorities and planned for 2013. The WG also continued its monthly conference calls and began having special speakers as a "value-added" feature.

Other Outreach: The NYS IPM Program funded ten Community IPM grants. All had relevance for school IPM, and three directly included school audiences. These three were entitled:

- 1) "Alternatives to Pesticides Workshops for County, Municipal, and School Properties";
- 2) "Community Compost Education Project 2012";
- 3) "Sports Turf TAG (Turf, Athletic & Grounds) Team".

Along with people from several other states, NYS IPM Program staff received an EPA PestWise IPM Innovator Award for involvement in school IPM demonstration projects. There were 70 nominees for these awards, and the National School IPM Demonstration Project was one of three awarded.