

Trac Software Workshops Annual Report for Smith-Lever Funded Projects

Project Title:
Trac Software

Principal Investigator:
Juliet Evelyn Carroll

Project Start:
10/1/2011

Project Term:
9/30/2014

Plan of Work Area(s):
Agriculture/Natural Resources Business Management
Agriculture/Natural Resources Production Practices
Food Safety

Progress Summary:

Six workshops on Trac Software were held in the spring of 2012, hosted by Extension Educators Tim Weigle and Kevin Martin, Lake Erie Regional Grape Program; Deborah Breth and Alison DeMarree, Lake Ontario Fruit Program; Alice Wise, Suffolk County Cornell Cooperative Extension; Steve McKay, Hudson Valley Fruit Program; and Hans Walter-Peterson, Finger Lakes Grape Program. In addition, one training session covering TracBerry Software for berry growers was hosted by Laura Biasillo, Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension for her Berry School. A total of 171 people were reached, primarily apple and grape growers, but also a few educators, conservation district officers, and industry personnel.

Workshops were promoted through regional fruit program newsletters and through the Trac Software distribution mailing list. NYS DEC pesticide applicator recertification credits were awarded for attending the workshops, 2.50 credits in each of categories 1a, 10, and 22. An outline for the 2.5-hour-long workshops and two handouts, the "Trac Software Manual" and "Obtaining Trac Software", information on obtaining and downloading Trac Software from the Cornell Center for Technology and Enterprise Commercialization (CCTEC), were developed and distributed at the workshops.

Workshop Outline (software manual page numbers)

9:00-10:00 AM – Using Trac Software, the Basics

Opening Trac, Enabling Macros (pg 4) and Saving Files (pg 5)

Protecting Your Software (pg 14) and Hidden Rows (pg 18)

Excel Shortcuts (pg 7) and Trac Tips (pg 8)

Setting Up Your Information in Trac – NameAddress (pg 9), Applicators (pg 9), SiteLists (pg 10-11)...how to enter data.

ChemTable (pg 12-13), Inventories and Tank Mixes (pg 16-18)

Keeping Records in Trac, SprayData (pg 14), FertData and HarvestData (pg 18)

EPA WPS Central Posting Form (pg 19-20), Applicator Records
Creating and Printing Reports with Trac (pg 20)
Updating Trac from the Previous Year (pg 16),

10:00-10:10 AM – break

10:10-11:10 AM – Advanced Features of Trac Software

More about SiteLists (pg 10-11)
Advanced ChemTable Features (pg 12-13)
Customizing Trac Software...adding sheets, adding formulas, hiding columns
Create Report Files to Submit Electronically (pg 20)
Working with Data, Filtering and Sorting (pg 21-23)
Where to Access Technical Support

11:10-11:20 AM – break

11:20AM-12:00PM – Question & Answer Discussion Session

In this session the floor will be open to questions and discussion from the audience. Questions will be taken throughout the Workshop, but those of a more individual or highly advanced nature will be addressed during this session.

Due to reductions in the project budget, a programmer could not be hired to work on software improvements. Interest in smart phone app's is increasing and professional improvement opportunities were attended to learn more about this rapidly advancing technology. The cost to develop an "app" for Trac Software was estimated at \$20,000 which was beyond the scope of this project. However, some of the suggested improvements in Trac Software programming made by those attending the workshops may be implemented in year two of this project and released as a software upgrade.

Expected and Observed Impact/Outcome:

Most attendees were new to Trac Software and, as a result, many purchased Trac Software following the workshop. Through grower education on Trac Software we have succeeded to increase its effective and efficient use. From a prior survey (2007) we know that using Trac Software improves the farm business bottom line primarily through improved office staff efficiency. Many of the farmers attending the workshops verbalized this and recognized the benefits of maintaining records in Trac Software as the workshop progressed and their concerns were addressed. Most were impressed at the end of the workshop with how easy Trac Software is to use for record-keeping - improving accuracy, streamlining reporting, and helping meet reporting requirements. The majority of farmers using Trac Software continue using it; the key to learning is to continue routine use. Suggestions made during the workshops that would foster Trac Software use included placing a computer and printer in the "spray shed" where pesticide applications are being calculated, placing the program on a flash drive to allow transport to another computer in the office, and creating an app that resides on a smart phone or tablet which communicates directly with Trac Software on the farm business' main computer.

Improved pesticide application record-keeping and reporting is the documented outcome of Trac Software use. An outcome from one of the workshops was a suggestion from a regulator to seek US EPA funding to improve the software. Farm workers will benefit from a computer-generated US EPA Worker Protection Standard Central Posting form that automatically calculates safe re-

entry and is easy to generate and read. NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, food processors, brokers, marketers, etc. will benefit from timely, accurate farm reports. Indirectly, consumers seeking fruit grown locally and sustainably will benefit because the farmer will be better able to produce appropriate documentation records.

Communication(s):

Trac Fruit Software www.cctec.cornell.edu/express%20licensing/software/tracsoftware/ also available at nysipm.cornell.edu/trac/downloads/, website for fruit farmers interested in obtaining Trac Software, website visits and software orders increased after the workshops.

Presentation(s):

TracBerry Workshop, Hudson Valley Fruit School, Kingston, NY, 02/16/2012, 2.5 hr, presenter, fruit farmers, industry, CCE educators & faculty, 58 attendees.

TracGrape & TracApple Workshop, LIHREC, Riverhead, NY, 02/17/2012, 2.5 hr, presenter, fruit farmers, soil & water, CCE educators, 15 attendees.

TracGrape Workshop, CLEREL, Portland, NY, 02/21/2012, 2.5 hr, presenter, fruit farmers, industry, & CCE educators, 14 attendees.

TracApple Workshop, Niagara County CCE, Lockport, NY, 02/22/2012, 2.5 hr, presenter, fruit farmers & CCE educators, 6 attendees.

TracApple Workshop, Wayne County CCE, Newark, NY, 03/2/2012, 2.5 hr, presenter, fruit farmers & CCE educators, 21 attendees.

TracGrape Workshop, NYSAES, Geneva, NY, 04/10/2012, 2.5 hr, presenter, fruit farmers, industry, & CCE educators, 17 attendees.

Organic Guides and TracBerry record-keeping software from the NYS IPM Program, Berry School, Binghamton, NY, 03/13/2012, 0.75 hr, presenter, fruit farmers & CCE educators, 40 attendees.

Other (policies, procedures, manuals, etc)

Carroll, J.E. 2011. *Trac Software Manual*. <http://nysipm.cornell.edu/trac/tracsoftwaremanual.pdf>, Cornell, NYS IPM Program. Also available at

http://www.cctec.cornell.edu/express%20licensing/software/tracsoftware/TracManual_v2011.pdf