

Annual Report for Smith-Lever Funded Projects

Project Title: Trac Software Workshops
Principal Investigator: Juliet Carroll, Fruit IPM Coordinator, NYS IPM Program
Project Dates: 10/1/2011 to 9/30/2013

Executive Summary

Farmers must produce pesticide records on demand, for EPA Worker Protection, NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, food safety audits, food processors, produce brokers, eco-markets, organic certifiers, etc. Trac Software has been documented to improve pesticide application record-keeping and to facilitate generating reports. Since its development in 2003, over 500 fruit farmers in New York have obtained Trac Software and 98 percent say they will continue using it. A prior survey of Trac users found 76 percent would like training sessions. Eleven Trac Software workshops were presented, effectively educating 208 people in the fruit-farming community to expand their pesticide record-keeping and reporting capacity and ultimately enhance the stewardship of their lands.

Progress Summary

During the project, a total of 11 workshops on Trac Software were presented, seven in 2012 and four in 2013. Trac Workshops were 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 and Michael Fargione, Hudson Valley Fruit Program; Laura Biasillo, Broome County Cornell Cooperative Extension; Hans Walter-Peterson, Finger Lakes Grape Program; Kevin Iungerman, Northeastern NY Fruit Program; and Laura McDermott, Capital District Vegetable and Small Fruits Program. A total of 208 people were reached, primarily fruit farmers, but also Extension 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, 2.5 credits in each of the 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.

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.

One-on-one trainings and demonstrations were provided to several grape growers who stopped in to the IPM House with their laptops and TracGrape files, as well as to a visiting scientist, Dr. Brent Black, Utah State University.

Due to reductions in the project budget, objectives 2 and 3 were not pursued. The cost to develop an “app” for Trac Software was estimated at \$20,000. Suggested improvements in Trac Software programming made by attendees were noted during the workshops and will be taken into consideration for a possible 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 attendees 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. One suggestion from a regulator was to seek US EPA funding to improve the software.

Improved pesticide application record-keeping and reporting is the documented outcome of Trac Software use. 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 safety auditors, food processors, produce brokers, eco-markets, organic certifiers, 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.

Communications

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

Presentations

Carroll was the organizer and presenter for the workshops. Workshop duration was 2.5 hours. County and regional Extension personnel organized the meeting location and assisted with workshop promotion.

Date	Title	Location	Audience	# people
2/16/2012	TracBerry workshop	Kingston, NY	Fruit farmers, industry, CCE educators & faculty	58
2/17/2012	TracGrape & TracApple workshop	Riverhead, NY	Fruit farmers, soil & water, CCE educators	15
2/21/2012	TracGrape workshop	Portland, NY	Fruit farmers, industry, & CCE educators	14
2/22/2012	TracApple workshop	Lockport, NY	Fruit farmers & CCE educators	6
3/2/2012	TracApple workshop	Newark, NY	Fruit farmers & CCE educators	21
3/13/2012	Organic guides and TracBerry record-keeping software from the NYS IPM Program	Binghamton, NY	Fruit farmers & CCE educators	40
4/10/2012	TracGrape workshop	Geneva, NY	Fruit farmers, industry, & CCE educators	17
3/25/2013	Trac Software workshop	Plattsburgh, NY	Fruit growers and educators	7
3/26/2013	Trac Software workshop	Highland, NY	Fruit growers and educators	9
3/27/2013	Trac Software workshop	Troy, NY	Fruit growers and educators	6
4/22/2013	Trac Software workshop	Geneva, NY	Fruit growers and educators	15

Other

Trac Software Manual <http://nysipm.cornell.edu/trac/tracsoftwaremanual.pdf>, a hard copy of the 23-pg manual was provided to all workshop attendees, also available at www.cctec.cornell.edu/express%20licensing/software/tracsoftware/TracManual_v2011.pdf

Project Conclusion

Trac Software has been documented to improve pesticide application record-keeping and to facilitate generating reports. Since its development in 2003, over 500 fruit farmers in New York have obtained Trac Software and 98 percent say they will continue using it. A prior survey of Trac users found 76 percent would like training sessions.

During the project, 11 Trac Software workshops were presented in County and Regional Extension Program offices across New York State. A total of 208 people attended, primarily fruit

farmers. Two and a half NYS DEC pesticide applicator recertification credits were awarded for attending the workshops in three categories. The 2.5-hr-long workshops covered the basics of using Trac Software, advanced features of Trac Software and a question & answer discussion session. Each attendee received the Trac Software Manual and information on obtaining and downloading Trac Software. Most attendees were new to Trac Software and, as a result of the workshops, many purchased Trac Software.

Through grower education on Trac Software we have succeeded to increase its effective and efficient use. Farmers recognized the benefits of maintaining records in Trac Software as the workshop progressed and their concerns were addressed. Attendees were impressed 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.

Improved pesticide application record-keeping and reporting is the documented outcome of Trac Software use. Farm workers benefit from a computer-generated US EPA Worker Protection Standard Central Posting form that automatically calculates safe re-entry. NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, food safety auditors, food processors, produce brokers, eco-markets, organic certifiers, etc. will benefit from timely, accurate farm reports. Indirectly, consumers seeking fruit grown locally and sustainably will benefit because the farmer will have the capacity to produce documentation. Eleven Trac Software workshops were presented, effectively educating 208 people in the fruit-farming community to expand their pesticide record-keeping and reporting capacity and ultimately enhance the stewardship of their lands.