

Pesticide Education Program

Status: NIFA REVIEW

Project Director

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Organization Project Number

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Accession Number

7002088

Start & End Date

10/01/2020

Organization

University of Massachusetts

To Project / Program

"Pesticide Education Program"

Primary Critical Issue

Environmental Stewardship

Fiscal Year

2022

In 2-3 sentences, briefly describe the issue or problem that your project addresses.

Pesticides are vital tools for controlling pests and maintaining an adequate food supply. If used improperly, pesticides can also threaten human health and the natural environment. Inexperienced applicators, accidents, inadequate protection and equipment continue to be areas of concern that increase the potential for negative personal and environmental impacts from pesticide exposure.

The Pesticide Education Program works closely with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources to educate pesticide users about safe application, state regulation and proper use of pesticides in Massachusetts.

This program helps agricultural and green industry businesses stay competitive and relevant through education on environmental issues that affect their industry and continued notice of updates to local and federal laws and regulations

Briefly describe in non-technical terms how your major activities helped you achieve, or make significant progress toward, the goals and objectives described in your non-technical summary.

The UMass Extension Pesticide Education Program in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources is responsible for providing initial and continuing education to Massachusetts licensed and certified pesticide applicators.

Approximately 2446 pesticide exam study manuals were distributed by the Program to approximately 800 individuals preparing for the state administered pesticide exams.

The Pesticide Education Program conducted sixteen Zoom workshops to help individuals prepare for the Massachusetts state pesticide license exams. The workshop covers a variety of topics, including: pest identification, pesticide types and formulations, toxicity of pesticides, first aid for pesticide poisoning, pesticide label comprehension, personal protective equipment, environmental fate of pesticides, integrated pest management, and state and federal laws and regulations. Individuals received practice exam to use as a pesticide exam study tool.

The program also offered twenty online Zoom pesticide recertification training workshops to individuals that have pesticide licenses and certifications. Topics covered in the series included: Massachusetts Pesticide Laws and Regulations, Pesticides and Impacts on Wildlife, Fungicides Modes of Action, Pesticide Applicator Safety, Pesticide Respirator Fit Train the Trainer, Special Topics for Pesticide Applicators, Pesticides and Pollinators Update, Groundwater Protection, Neonicotinoids Modes of Action, Safe Handling of Pesticides, and Risk and Toxicity of Pesticides. There were 2,194 individuals who participated in the workshops.

Briefly describe how your target audience benefited from your project's activities.

The program was able to offer 16 pesticide exam prep workshops over the course of three consecutive mornings using Zoom video conference. This optional workshop gives individuals an opportunity for further instruction in order for them to successfully pass the MA state pesticide applicator exam. Feedback given by the participants indicate that the workshop was indeed helpful in passing the pesticide exams.

The program was able to continue to distribute over 2246 pesticide exam manuals to approximately 800 individuals who wanted to prepare for the MA state pesticide exams.

The Program scheduled 20 pesticide recertification training workshops to assist licensed and certified pesticide applicators to obtain pesticide continuing education contact hours in order to maintain their pesticide licenses,. Because of the pandemic, all of these workshops were given using Zoom video conference. This system was new for most of the participants and Zoom tutorial workshops were offered.

Briefly describe how the broader public benefited from your project's activities.

Pesticides are vital tools for controlling pests and maintaining an adequate food supply. If used improperly, pesticides can also threaten human health and the natural environment. Inexperienced applicators, accidents, inadequate protection and equipment continue to be areas of concern that increase the potential for negative personal and environmental impacts from pesticide exposure.

The Pesticide Education Program works closely with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources to educate pesticide users about safe application, state regulation and proper use of pesticides in Massachusetts. The public can directly benefit from experienced pesticide applicators. Pesticide applicators can manage pests that damage structures, spread disease, harm plants, damage crops.

Comments (optional)

- Pesticide Applicator State Exam Preparatory Workshops (16) - 298 Participants
- Pesticide Exam Study Manuals Distribution (2246) - 800 Participants
- Pesticide Recertification Training (20) - 2194 Participants