

ESA SME Liaison to EPA OPP Report
Prepared by Allan Felsot for November 10, 2020 SPC Meeting

In mid October I attended another virtual meeting of the PSEP (Pesticide Safety Education Program) National Stakeholder's Meeting. The agenda for these meetings typically covers issues facing PSEP coordinators, mostly associated with universities in non-tenure track positions but some State agency regulatory staff are also involved. This meeting highlighted the PSEP coordinators from the University of Tennessee and the University of Kentucky.

Notable was the discussion of the plans for National Pesticide Safety Education Month that will take place during February 2021. Items discussed include...

- Targeting of 40+ organizations as potential sponsors of the education month, including agrichemical manufacturers/registrants, retailers, and professional associations;
- Preparation of media releases for university offices and other agencies;
- Preparation of short informational bulletins on subjects like pesticide storage best practices; disinfectants; signal words on product labels; and miscellaneous other topics related to safe use practices;
- Encouraged members to resend tweets about the month-long events;
- Considering hosting an educational event using either the platforms on GOOGLE or YouTube; presently lining up speakers that will cover topics associated with the informational bulletins for the topics above;
- The PSEP Coordinator website has a form for making contributions.

Other items discussed included a notation that a Charter for the PSEP Stakeholder's organization is in development. The issue perhaps of greatest importance to SPC is the relationship between PSEP coordinators and IPM coordinators at our land grant universities. A survey was conducted by the University of California system coordinator for PSEP that was sent to all 50 States PSEP Coordinators. The response rate was 94%. The draft report, prepared by analyzing the open-ended interview questions, was focused on three areas:

- Relationships between PSEP Coordinators and IPM Coordinators;
- Interviews with IPM Center Directors and the potential development of engagement plans;
- Service of PSEPs to the State IPM coordinators, including current interactions and possible funding of joint projects.

Report findings highlighted in the meeting covered the following information.

- In six of the responding States, the PSEP Coordinator and IPM Coordinator are the same person;
- In four of the six States the Coordinator had applied for extension funds in the IPM Programs funding allocations; competitive funding but funding level has been flat and the funds are controlled through the IPM Centers;
- Eight of the States with separate IPM coordinators had applied for IPM funds, but the IPM Coordinator of that State had to be the PI;
- Many respondents saw opportunities to build new relationships between the PSEP and IPM programs (i.e., from the extension side);
- Capacity funding has been lacking with loss of many university funded positions and resources despite the same or increased workload (in some cases more responsibilities have been given to new people already in the organization rather than hire new staff);
- Structural organization issues for cooperation include different campus locations of PSEP and IPM coordinators, or personnel are located in different departments on the same campus;
- Difficult for PSEP Coordinators to be granted PI status (unlike the IPM Coordinators likely because many PSEP coordinators are in non-tenure track positions (i.e., contractual faculty));

- Recommendations included a need to identify structural impediments to better coordination between PSEP and IPM programs and a need for more outreach about PSEP programs and their value for IPM programs.