

Vegetable Working Group NRCS Project Activities Summary

November 2007.

Year 1: 1) Developed contacts and initiated working relationship with NRCS agencies in all of the northeastern states, 2) Presented an IPM workshop and discussion forum at NRCS's annual regional technical conference in Rhode Island, and 3) Organized and hosted a two-day collaborative meeting in Harrisburg, PA December 2005 attended by 35 participants representing IPM programs, federal and state agencies, the farming community, the Vegetable IPM WG, and NRCS representatives.

Year 2: 1) Cooperated with two related grant projects funded: Building Bridges Project (Project Leader: Carrie Koplinka-Loehr, NE IPM Center) and Conservation Innovation Project (Project Leader: Craig Hollingsworth, UMASS), 2) organized a workshop at NRCS Technology Conference in VA April 2006. 3) worked with NE IPM Center to develop NRCS and IPM website (<http://northeastipm.org/nrcs.cfm>). 4) organized farm tours in MA and ME for NRCS staff, farmers, Extension, ag support reps.

Year 3 (Current Project):

Objective 1. Demonstrate and improve understanding among NRCS, educators and farmers, on how IPM fits within the framework of farm conservation planning and implementation.

- **Organized workshops** to showcase IPM and conservation practices, underscore how IPM fits within conservation planning. **Developed and shared educational materials:** Handouts, agendas, speaker lists, descriptions of hands-on activities, photos, and examples of publicity materials and methods shared region-wide.
 - **Progress:** Workshops held in 2007 (ME, RI, MA)
 - **Still to do:** more workshops in 2008. Potential cooperators: 1) Ed Rajotte PA, 2) Jean-Paul Courtens NY, 3) Kathy Murray ME, 4) JoAnne Whalon, Kate Everts, Luke McConnell MD and DE, and 5) Ruth Hazzard MA.

Objective 2. Test the utility of tools designed for use in the development and assessment of the IPM plan component of a farm conservation plan.

- **Progress:**
 - Developed 'IPM Practices for Vegetable Production Guidesheet'
 - Updated sweet corn IPM guidelines and added environmental impacts measures (SWAPA)
 - Developed Sweet Corn IPM Scouting Guidelines
 - Identified other tools and training curricula available from various NRCS state programs.
- **Still to do:** Test the tools. Get more input from NRCS. Demonstrate their utility at 2008 workshops. Offer training. Put all tools on NE IPM Center's 'IPM and NRCS' website.

Objective 3. Demonstrate and educate farmers about the process and requirements of participating in NRCS conservation programs.

- **Progress:** NRCS staff presented information and demonstrated methods at workshops held in ME, RI and MA (see Obj. 1).
- **Still to do:** more of the same at 2008 workshops.

Impact Evaluation

- Collect and compare NRCS EQIP cost-share data before and after this initiative and among states. Summarize and compare data over the 3-year period begun in 2005 to determine the impacts of these NRCS/IPM projects. Track changes in numbers of acres, numbers of farms, and dollars allocated from NRCS EQIP programs for IPM.
- Pre- and post-workshop participant questionnaires administered at workshops plus another post-workshop questionnaire sent to participants 6 months after workshops. The numbers of participants at each workshop will also be used as a measure of impact.

Written by Kathy Murray, Maine Dept of Agriculture, November 2007