

Northeastern IPM Center – IPM Partnership Grants – 2010

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PROJECT TITLE New England IPM Collaboration Working Group

PROJECT TYPE IPM Working Groups

2B. PROJECT SUMMARY

The New England IPM Collaboration Working Group is a short-term ad hoc project to increase communication among the Cooperative Extension IPM Programs of the six New England states. We will organize a day-long workshop among the New England IPM Coordinators, state liaisons from the 2001–2009 PRONewEngland Pest Management Network, and up to two additional IPM program staff from each of the six New England states.

A regional IPM program census survey will be sent to participants before the workshop. At the workshop, a representative from each state will present a concise profile of IPM program staff, structure, funding, topics, and delivery methods for their state. The profiles and a summary of the regional IPM program census will be prepared before the conference and made available along with a discussion summary in a proceedings document published after the conference.

The bulk of the conference will consist of a facilitated group discussion of shared needs and available resources and capabilities; exploration of opportunities to harmonize existing activities or to add new coordinated components to existing IPM programs; and brainstorming on opportunities for new multistate IPM programs, publications, products, and other ways to synergize parallel activities in neighboring states to facilitate IPM funding, program operations, and outcomes.

The intent of the Working Group and of workshop is to plant seeds for regional collaboration among New England states for delivery of existing IPM programs and grant proposals for new efforts. At the close of the day, participants will complete a questionnaire to evaluate changes in awareness of ways to pursue those objectives. One year after the conference, a follow-up survey will be sent to participants to measure what activity has resulted from the information shared and personal networking done at the workshop. In addition, one year after the workshop we will repeat the New England IPM program census to acquire an updated status report that will be compared to the first census to see if changes have occurred.

The New England IPM Collaboration Working Group final report will include the workshop proceedings as described above, results from the initial and one-year follow-up participant evaluation surveys, results from the follow-up regional IPM program census, and a list of collaborative program activities and grant applications generated at least in part from the IPM Working Group activities.

2C. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The New England region is smaller than many single U.S. states, with many shared IPM needs. Geographically, New England can be imagined as a single state, and the current state boundaries as county lines. For each state to work independently in delivering programs for IPM education and implementation constrains what topics can be addressed and what services and products can be delivered. It is likely that more efficient and effective programs can be achieved through greater cooperation across state lines. And as dedicated “hard money” positions are replaced by competitive grant funding to run research and Extension IPM programs, small states working independently are at a competitive disadvantage at acquiring funds.

Working cooperatively, we can make best use of regional expertise and other resources, compete more effectively for IPM funds, help our clients more effectively implement IPM, and thereby achieve IPM benefits such as reduced pest damage, management costs, and hazards to human health and environmental integrity; improved economic sustainability of agriculture, tourism and other industries with significant pest issues; and improved overall quality of life for New England citizens.

Cooperation occurs on a continuum that begins with knowing what other people are doing, and familiarity with shared needs, interests, capabilities and resources. Cooperation also requires personal familiarity and networking with potential partners. A one-day workshop among representative New England IPM programming staff, beginning with a session to share IPM profiles for each state, followed by a facilitated discussion of collaborative possibilities will go a long way to increasing knowledge of different IPM program structures and delivery methods, and will provide a forum for personal networking.

As a beginning level, there may be opportunities to harmonize current efforts so that evaluation and other reporting from individual states can more easily be combined or compared. This could provide greater understanding of IPM needs and practices at a regional level. Besides being inherently valuable as more comprehensive knowledge than parallel but distinct reports from each state, such information could be useful in grant applications.

A second level of cooperation already exists to some degree, but is not being fully utilized. There are already successful existing cooperative efforts such as New England crop production guides and multistate programming such as the annual tri-state (ME-NH-VT) greenhouse conferences. In a time of tight budgets, it would be prudent and profitable to focus attention on what other cooperative possibilities are available for multistate IPM programming efforts.

It is impossible to ordain what other possible forms greater networking and cooperation across state lines may take. The point of this project is to provide an information platform and a forum for exploring possibilities. What possibilities will emerge, and more importantly what ideas are acted upon is unknowable. But one thing we do know is that we won’t know until we look.

Similar to the role played by USDA Regional IPM Centers to gather information concerning the status of IPM, and to coordinate the development and adoption of IPM practices within their respective regions, the New England IPM Collaboration Working Group will address one particular aspect of that broad domain, focusing on enhanced cooperation among state programs. It is a short term project to explore possibilities, with the potential to yield significant benefits from enhanced IPM programming for the 14.2 million citizens of New England.

IPM priority lists are focused on specific needs within a given topic area, and do not IPM programming itself as a topic. Thus, there are not as many explicit IPM priority list citations available. However, the New England IPM Collaboration Working Group will address the following goals in the National IPM Roadmap (USDA, 2004), along with other priority listings as follows:

- * Increase communication and efficiency through information exchange among IPM practitioners and service providers.
- * Enhance collaboration and coordination to expand program investment for implementation and adoption of IPM.
- * Leverage resources to implement collaborative projects
- * Publicize the existence and success of implementation models, demonstrations, and programs (Northeastern IPM Center, 2005).
- * Develop a region-wide IPM labeling/identification program for both agricultural crops and community IPM settings (Northeastern IPM Center, 2006).

2D. OBJECTIVES AND ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Objective 1 – Increase knowledge of IPM program staff in each New England state about IPM needs and resources and how Extension IPM support programs are structured and delivered in the other New England states.

Impacts 1 – Better understanding of IPM needs and resources and how IPM programs are structured and delivered in neighboring states with similar client needs can help IPM staff improve efficacy and efficiency of the programs they operate in their home state, and may reveal opportunities for greater cooperation across state lines.

Objective 2 – Organize a New England IPM Collaboration Workshop as a forum to explore possibilities for increased coordination between single-state IPM programs, and for multistate IPM program efforts in New England.

Impacts 2 – Potential generation of integrated regional datasets for use in describing and measuring IPM needs and accomplishments, with potential utility in future grant applications. Potential for enhanced program efficacy and efficiency, as well as new programs not currently viable without multistate cooperation.

Objective 3 – Provide documentation to support future efforts to enhance collaboration in IPM programming in New England.

Impacts 3 – Historical reference for understanding and improving IPM program definition, delivery, and accountability reporting, especially as regards changes in cooperation across state lines.

2E. APPROACH AND PROCEDURES

1a. Conduct a census of Extension IPM needs, resources and IPM program structure, funding, staffing and delivery in each of the six New England states. Compile information collected from each state into a regional status report on IPM programming in New England. Make the IPM Census available to participants at New England IPM Collaboration Workshop to provide foundation for informed discussion and networking,

1b. Create a template for presenting concise state IPM profiles at the workshop. Create a fill-in- the-blank PowerPoint file to facilitate each state reporting on what and how IPM education and support is delivered in their state.

2. Preliminary collaborative arrangements for hosting the workshop have already been done in preparing this proposal. Complete preparations for recruiting participants, setting agenda, hotel logistics, create information packets for participants and evaluation questionnaire.

3. Compile discussion notes, IPM census and state IPM profiles into a proceedings document and send to all workshop participants and other interested parties. Conduct follow-up IPM census and workshop evaluation survey, compare differences between initial and follow-up status. Include proceedings, along with follow-up census and evaluation survey in final project progress report.

2f. EVALUATION PLANS

1. At the end of the workshop, participants will answer a questionnaire about how the discussion affected their knowledge or awareness of IPM program funding, structure, staffing, and delivery in their own and in neighboring states; shared IPM needs and resources in New England; ways to harmonize current activities or to add new coordinated components to existing IPM programs; and ideas for new multistate IPM programs, publications, products, or other ways to synergize efforts across state lines.

2. One year after the workshop, a follow-up questionnaire will be sent to workshop participants to assess how knowledge gained and networking done at the workshop has affected IPM program delivery, planning, or grant applications.

3. One year after the workshop, the IPM census will be repeated. Changes in coordination between single-state IPM programs, multistate programs, single and multistate IPM grant acquisition will be tabulated by comparing the original and follow-up IPM census reports.

2g. COOPERATION, INSTITUTIONAL UNITS, AND KEY PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Glen Koehler and James Dill of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension will be responsible for conducting the IPM census, and a one year follow-up census; organizing a workshop to learn about IPM program structure, funding, staffing and delivery in each of the six New England states; conducting evaluations at the workshop and a one year-followup; to compile a proceedings document from the workshop including a discussion summary, compiled state IPM profiles, and results from the initial IPM program census; and filing progress reports and other project management duties.

All of the IPM Coordinators in the six New England states have agreed to participate in a workshop to explore possibilities to enhance regional cooperation. Each IPM Coordinator will be asked to invite two additional IPM programming staff from their state (crop specialists and other persons involved with defining and delivering programs to promote IPM implementation.)

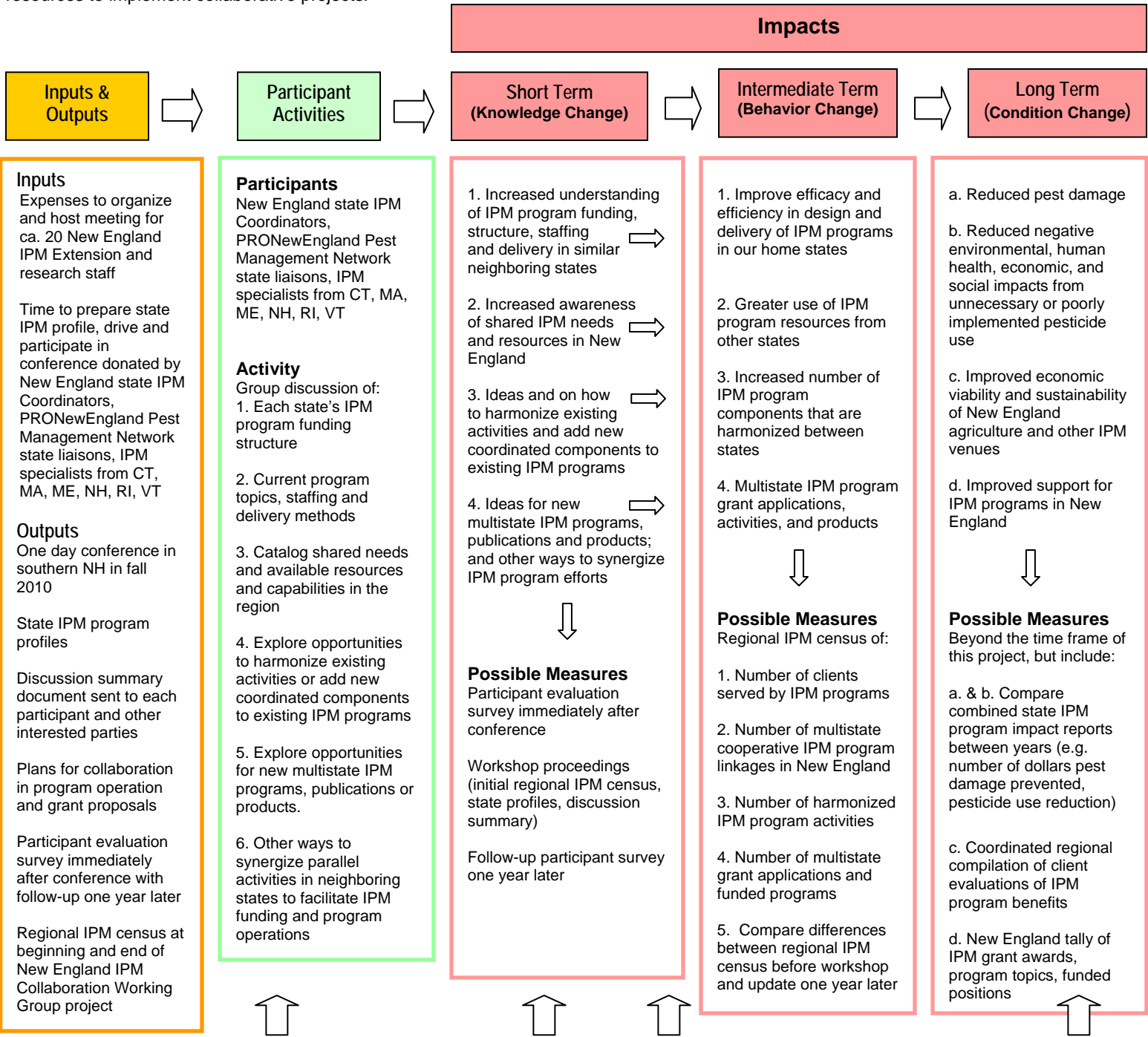
The state liaisons for the 2001–2009 PRONewEngland State Network Project all agreed that the PRONewEngland group should continue to work together on cooperative ventures around IPM needs in New England, and that a joint meeting with the IPM Coordinators would be a productive way to pursue enhanced cooperation across state lines.

References Cited:

- Northeastern IPM Center. 2005. Priorities for Community and Urban IPM
http://northeastipm.org/priority/2005_urban_conf.htm
- Northeastern IPM Center. 2006. General IPM Priorities for the Northeast.
<http://northeastipm.org/priority/2006/generalpriorities.htm>
- USDA. 2004. The National Road Map For Integrated Pest Management.
http://northeastipm.org/whatis_ipmroadmap.pdf

Situation: The New England region is smaller than many single U.S. states, with many shared IPM needs. Functioning as small separate programs introduces inefficiency and disadvantages in competing for IPM funding. Working cooperatively, we can make best use of regional resources, compete more effectively for IPM funds, and help our clients more effectively achieve IPM goals.

National IPM Roadmap Goals: Increase communication and efficiency through information exchange among IPM practitioners and service providers. Enhance collaboration and coordination to expand program investment for implementation and adoption of IPM. Leverage resources to implement collaborative projects.



Assumptions (Similarity of agricultural and other IPM venues in New England is essentially factual, not assumption.)

IPM program staff, and state Coordinators in particular, are not constrained by state lines and fiefdom mentality. Funding constraints generate a "hang together or hand apart" more than an "every person for them self" attitude.

Organizational structures do not prohibit cooperation. Multistate involvement will continue to be advantageous in IPM funding proposals

Parallel activities in neighboring states create opportunities to harmonize evaluation and other IPM program activities so that information collected can be compared between states and combined into more meaningful regional representation of IPM needs and implementation.

External factors

Even with advances in communication technology and relatively small size of New England states, geographic distance is still an impediment to coordinate field visits and other IPM activities across state lines.

University policies, such as multilayered overhead on grants with subcontracts or insurance coverage for staff working across state lines, can impede the competitiveness and efficiency of multistate cooperation.

"Group viscosity." The more people cooperating on a project the more effort required for programmatic communication and organization in addition to directly addressing client needs. IPM program staff enjoy the creative freedom, operational flexibility, and pride of ownership that comes with working independently.