

Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP)

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Comprehensive Report for FY 2002 – 2004



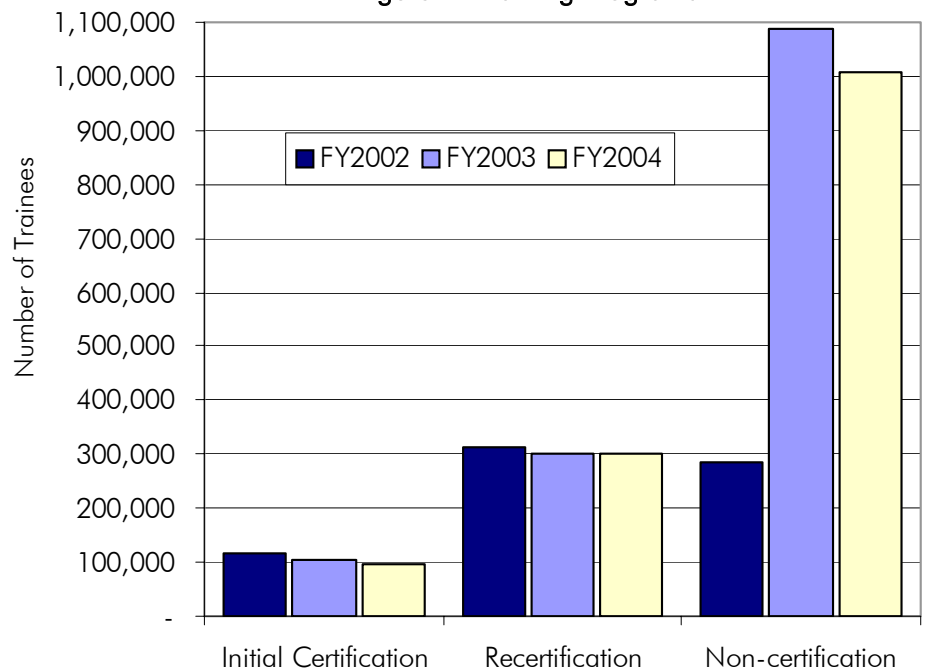
The mission of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service's (CSREES) Pesticide Safety Education Program is to ensure the safe use of pesticides through education and training.

Pesticides are one of the many tools used to manage pests like insects, weeds, and diseases. Today there is greater awareness of how important it is to maintain and protect food and other farm products as well as our homes and landscapes. The situation is even more complex due to the growing problem with exotic and invasive species and the threat they pose to our quality of life. Pesticides help us to protect our quality of life such as control of disease-carrying mosquitoes. While pesticides prevent or reduce the damage from pests, there is also potential risk to humans, non-target organisms or the environment if they are used improperly. This is why PSEP training and educational programs are so important.

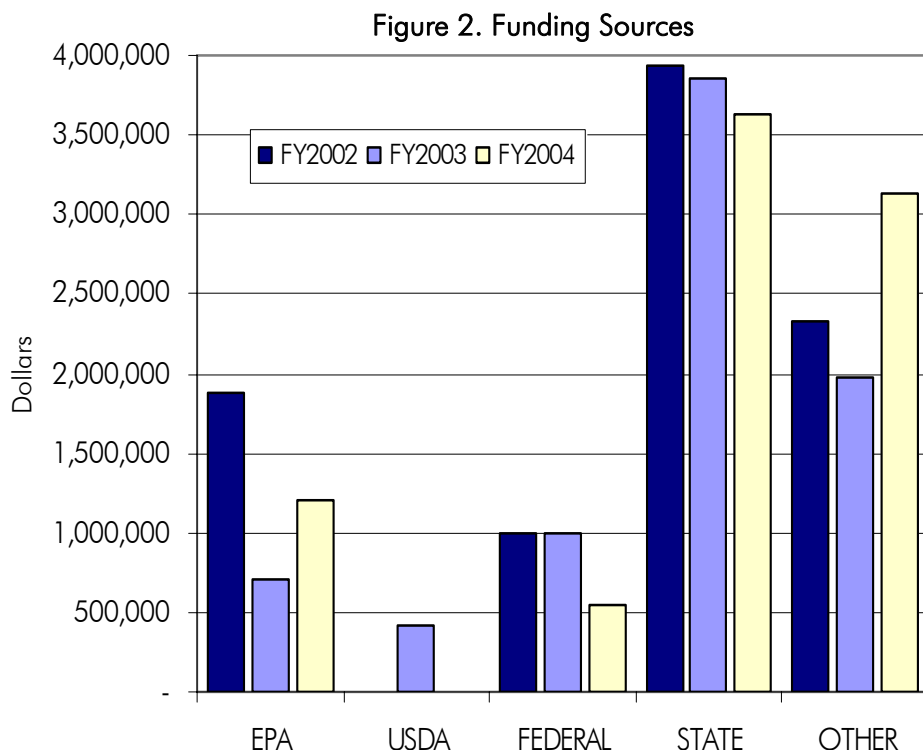
State agencies certify those who pass the training requirements. Certified applicators are responsible for recertification, usually every three to five years (Figure 1). Homeowners don't need to be certified to apply general-use pesticides purchased at garden centers, hardware stores, or grocery stores. However, these products can also be harmful if used improperly. The PSEP also provides educational sessions for non-certified applicators such as

homeowners (Figure 1). It is notable that typically over half of the trainees planned to adopt pesticide safety and risk management practices, potentially preventing many accidents from occurring. PSEP training sessions also address Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies, encouraging the use of alternatives to pesticides when appropriate.

Figure 1. Training Programs



Pesticide safety education is coordinated by the Cooperative Extension Service at land-grant universities and funding comes from a variety of sources (Figure 2). Until recently, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has typically provided close to \$2 million each year. These funds are administered by the CSREES through an interagency agreement at no cost to the program. In FY 2003, USDA contributed \$425,000 to the program to offset budget shortfalls at the EPA. Additional support is provided by competitive federal grants, state governments, and other sources funds such as registration fees and training material sales.



For more information on PSEP and a listing of PSEP Coordinators, please visit the PSEP website at: www.csrees.usda.gov/pesticides.html

People are an important PSEP asset. In FY 2002, all the funding for the PSEP supported the equivalent of about 411 pesticide education professionals. Due to reduced funding in FY 2003 and 2004, those numbers dropped to 78 and 64 respectively. In addition, there are typically more than 1,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs) from PSEP cooperators

(not paid, but cooperate on PSEP programs as part of their job). Also, over 6800 volunteers (not paid; cooperate on PSEP programs, but not as part of their job) assisted with PSEP efforts in FY 2004 (Figure 3).

An important objective of PSEP Coordinators is to revise or develop new training and educational materials. In each fiscal year, PSEP Coordinators developed approximately 1000 educational resources in both printed and electronic formats. PSEP Coordinators also participated in thousands of activities to increase their impact at the state level, especially for public policy and decision-making on pesticide issues.

