

Helping people use pesticides safely

CSREES Pesticide Safety Education Program • 2001-2002 annual report

- **A lawn care technician who takes care of your yard**
- **An exterminator who treats your house for termites**
- **A home gardener applying a weed control product**
- **A nurseryman who grows the trees, shrubs and flowers that you buy**

All are users of pesticides. And all are among the millions of consumers and professionals reached each year through the Cooperative Extension Service and the United States Department of Agriculture to safely use pesticides and minimize risks.

Pesticides are one of many tools used to manage pests like insects, weeds and potential disease-causing organisms. The high quality of food we enjoy is a direct result of benefits from pesticides. Although these benefits prevent or reduce the damage pests may cause, there is also potential risk to humans, animals or the environment if these tools are used improperly. This is why PSEP training and educational programs are so critical.

State agencies certify those who pass the training requirements, and certified applicators are responsible for recertification, usually every three to five years (Fig. 1).

Homeowners need not be certified to apply general use pesticides that can be purchased at the garden center, hardware store or grocery store. But these products, too, can be harmful if used improperly. The PSEP (Fig. 1) provides training that helps ensure these are not misused. This publication highlights four state programs that demonstrate the commitment to excellence shared by most PSEP programs.

The mission of the Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) is to ensure the safe use of pesticides through education and training



Photo courtesy Virginia Tech Pesticides Program

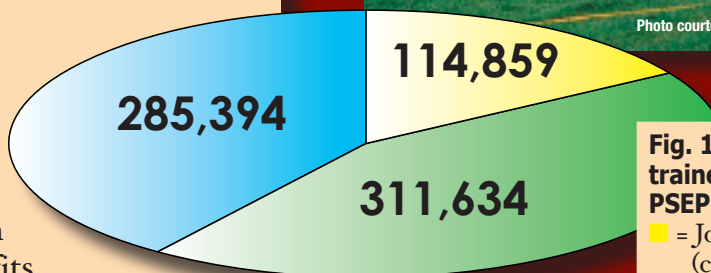


Fig. 1 Individuals trained nationally by PSEP

- = Job-related training (certification)
- = Job-related update certificate (re-certification)
- = Homeowner or other training (non-certification)



Photo courtesy Penn State Pesticide Education Program



INDIANA'S Pesticide Safety Education Program

Purdue's **Fred Whitford** provides sound advice to homeowners concerning hiring an exterminator.

Hiring an exterminator to deal with a pest problem in your home can be a harrowing experience. But Indiana homeowners have an advantage with an experienced mentor like Fred Whitford. Fred has accumulated knowledge and skills from direct participation in solving pest management problems over many years. The quality of Indiana's PSEP has been recognized by:

- Pest Control Technology (PCT) magazine, where Fred has authored articles on the pest control industry;
- Attendees at the internationally recognized Annual Purdue Pest Control Conference;
- Responding to criticisms of the pest control industry; and
- Providing Cooperative Extension Service county agents with tips on how to improve pesticide safety education programs.

Fred and the Purdue Pesticide Programs make a commitment to their customers—extension educators, scientists, government officials, business operators and consumers by:

- Producing the best publications;
- Offering the best training;
- Giving the best presentations; and
- Providing the best answers as a valuable source of information for consumers.

The Indiana Pesticide Safety Education Program has:

- Initially trained 686 and recertified 7,992 pesticide applicators during 2002, and
- Provided educational sessions for 1,787 people with interests in pesticide issues. These groups included school personnel and students, Master Gardeners, consumer groups and educators, among others.

Indiana's PSEP website is:
<http://www.btny.purdue.edu/PPP/>

NORTH CAROLINA'S Pesticide Safety Education Program

North Carolina State University's **Wayne Buhler** conducts a regional Pesticide Safety Education Center for regulators and educators.

The Southern Region Pesticide Safety Education Center (PSEC) is a train-the-trainer program designed to provide hands-on training and educational resources for county extension agents and state regulatory inspectors in a 13-state/territory USDA Southern Region. The program consists of two phases: an 'on-line' phase available on the internet (created by **Mike Weaver**, PSEP coordinator for Virginia), and hands-on training in Raleigh, N.C. Three-day hands-on training sessions are typically held in March and October each year. The PSEC has four goals, including:

- Improving and increasing training materials and raising professional standards;
- Reducing pesticide risks by providing more effective training and education programs;
- Increasing awareness of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), water quality/pesticide issues and human health/pesticide issues; and
- Increasing coordination and cooperation between state extension organizations, tribes and regulatory agencies.

Wayne has also initiated plans with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture to conduct a series of training programs for North Carolina pesticide dealers. Five day-long sessions will be given in various parts of the state to specifically address the concerns of dealers by encompassing anti-terrorism precautions, transportation regulations and recordkeeping, among other issues.

The North Carolina Pesticide Safety Education Program has:

- Initially trained about 1,800 and
- Recertified approximately 12,200 pesticide applicators during 2002.

North Carolina's PSEP website is:
<http://ipm.ncsu.edu/pesticidesafety/>

PENNSYLVANIA'S

Pesticide Safety Education Program

Pennsylvania's Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) has made great strides in addressing urban concerns about pesticide issues.

Led by **John Ayers** and **Kerry Richards**, the program acquired a grant to survey consumers on knowledge of basic pesticide safety. This provided information used to direct new pesticide safety educational programming.

The program has been involved with a variety of activities including:

- Industry trade shows such as the Philadelphia Flower Show;
- Safety day camps, including Fairmont Park's Arbor Day Festivities; and
- Presentations at the Philadelphia County Fair and National Kids Day.

Along with developing a series of consumer pesticide safety education fact sheets, Kerry created D.B. Pest, a cartoon character developed to provide pesticide safety education outreach to young people. Concepts included with the D.B. Pest materials include:

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM);
- Alternatives to pesticide use; and
- Safe use of pesticides when they are necessary.

With recent concern over West Nile Virus (WNV), the program has created a WNV web page, and leads the Penn State WNV Coordinating Committee. This effort received a Northeast Extension Director's Award of Excellence honorable mention for its outreach education program.

The Pennsylvania Pesticide Safety Education Program has:

- Initially trained 5,229 and recertified 25,625 pesticide applicators during 2002, and
- Provided educational sessions for approximately 45,500 people with interests in pesticide issues. These groups included consumer groups, 4-H youth, school children, Master Gardeners and educators, among many others.

Pennsylvania's PSEP website is:

<http://www.pested.psu.edu/default.asp>

WASHINGTON'S

Pesticide Safety Education Program

Washington State University's **Carol Ramsay** and **Carrie Foss** conduct an active urban Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP).

Washington's PSEP has devoted personnel and strong support to the Washington State University Community IPM Program.

The components of this program promote ecologically sound pest management practices through education and certification of landscape and turf maintenance professionals. Components of the program include:

- An IPM Certification Program for Landscape and Turf Professionals;
- Pesticide Pre- and Recertification for the Professional Urban Clientele; and
- A Hortsense Web Site (<http://pep.wsu.edu/hortsense/>) and CD-ROM.

The Washington PSEP's continual goal is to deliver affordable, high-quality pesticide safety and pest management training. Much of the training is targeted for urban clientele, including lecture-based training and formal workshops. The Hortsense website contains approximately 850 home and garden plant problem fact sheets outlining the biology and integrated management of insect, disease and weed pest problems common in Washington. Hortsense has proven to be an extremely useful resource for non-chemical and chemical management recommendations by:

- County agents,
- Master Gardeners, and
- Home gardeners.

Other components of the program include:

- Urban Pest Management and Pesticide Safety Manuals and Fact Sheets;
- An Urban Pesticide Education Strategy Team (UPEST); and
- Partnering with the Master Gardener Program.

The Washington Pesticide Safety Education Program trained over 12,000 pesticide applicators during 2002.

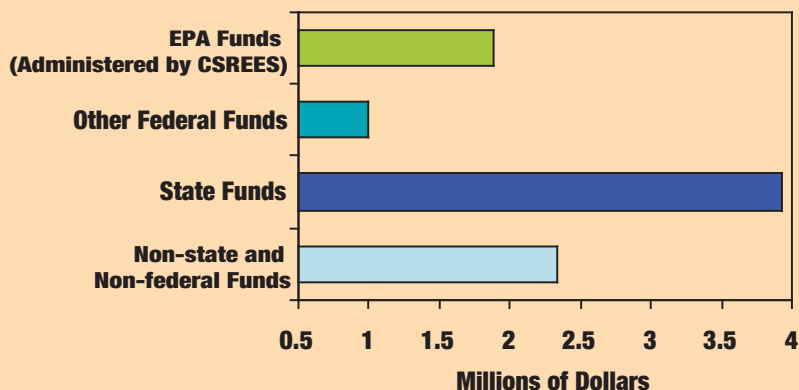
Washington's PSEP website is: <http://pep.wsu.edu>

CSREES/USDA, EPA, States, and Land-Grant Universities: Working together to protect human health and the environment

Pesticide safety education training is coordinated by the Cooperative Extension Service at state land-grant universities. The funding to provide this comes from a variety of different sources (Figure 2).

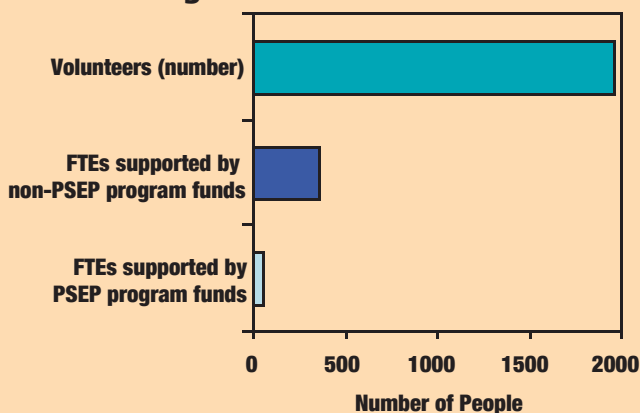
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides federal funding that is administered by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). CSREES parcels out these funds according to a pre-determined formula and is responsible for its accountability. Most state PSEP programs are also supported by their state government and their university. The \$1.88 million PSEP investment by the federal government is leveraged by the individual state programs at nearly a four-to-one ratio to fund a national program in excess of \$9 million (Figure 2).

Figure 2. PSEP Funding Sources



As with most nationwide efforts, people are an important PSEP asset. The federal PSEP program supports the equivalent of over 50 pesticide education professionals. State, university and other funds support another 356 full-time equivalents (FTEs). Nearly another 2,000 volunteers support these efforts (Figure 3).

Figure 3. PSEP Personnel



For More Information:

CSREES and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have produced an educational booklet entitled "Help Yourself to a Healthy Home: Protect Your Children's Health." A portion of this booklet covers storing and using pesticides safely around the home. This publication can be accessed at www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/.

You can link up with your state's PSEP program on the internet through the national PSEP website: <http://www.reeusda.gov/pestmgmt/psep/coverpsep.htm>, or by visiting your county extension office.

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