

August 25, 2010

House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,  
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

**RE: Restore USDA NIFA budget to Section 406 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Centers**

Dear Representative,

We write to you as public and occupational health experts and environmental advocates, to urge Congress to oppose the proposal in the President's budget for USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to eliminate the Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program (Section 406) research programs, including the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Centers.<sup>1</sup> As health and environmental experts, we understand first-hand the adverse impact that hazardous agrichemicals can have on human health, wildlife, and ecosystem integrity. Many of us have published scientific research articles on this issue, and some of us are clinicians that regularly see patients whose health is impaired following pesticide exposures.

These proposed cuts to the regional IPM Centers, totaling approximately \$4 million (\$1 million for each of four regional IPM Centers) will devastate programs that provide effective strategies to reduce or eliminate the unnecessary or improper use of hazardous agrichemicals. The IPM Centers are associated with the following Universities: Michigan State, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, UC Davis, Colorado State, North Carolina State, and Cornell. They provide critical information in a timely manner so as to prevent and treat pest problems using a combination of monitoring and record keeping, establishing pest thresholds, and employing non-chemical control methods.

We understand that the funds for these programs have been diverted to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), which offers competitive grants for many worthy issues, but that the program itself will not be transferred, resulting in its elimination. We urge Congress to preserve the actual program. The loss of the staff, science advisors, resources, stakeholder groups, conferences and grant-making programs provided by these programs would result in a big step backwards for USDA's efforts to help growers adopt environmental stewardship practices, particularly with regards to pest management.

IPM Center successes include the following:<sup>2</sup>

- Delivering resources, training, and education to low-income urban residents to provide cost-effective reduced-risk treatments for cockroaches, mice, bed bugs, etc., while avoiding the unnecessary use of hazardous pesticides.

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<sup>1</sup> USDA NIFA FY2011 President's Budget Proposal.  
[http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/offices/budget/fy2011\\_budget.pdf](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/offices/budget/fy2011_budget.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See IPM Success Stories website from the North Central Region Extension Publication.  
<http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/ncr/599/>

- Developing a national Pest Management Strategic Plan for IPM in schools to avoid unmanaged pest infestations, the unsafe and illegal use of pesticides, and harmful pesticide exposures.
- Developing and maintaining an up-to-date, publicly-accessible, searchable database where growers can go for immediate advice on IPM strategies that are crop and region specific.<sup>3</sup>
- A national warning system for soybean farmers to protect their crops from Asian Soybean Rust that includes mobile scouting, diagnostics, and sentinel plot networks.<sup>4</sup> It was estimated to provide savings of \$299 million in 2005, and was considered so successful that components were added for cucurbits and pecan nuts in 2008.<sup>5</sup>

We hope you will provide strong leadership in rejecting the proposed loss of this critically important and widely supported program.

Respectfully,

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ipmcenters.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://sbr.ipmpipe.org/cgi-bin/sbr/public.cgi>

<sup>5</sup> <http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/>

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