

SLIDE SCRIPT FOR PRESENTATION ON CTAG PROPOSALS

Slide 1: Welcome to Pesticide Safety for the 21st Century!

For more than a year now, the Certification and Training Assessment Group -- CTAG -- has been conducting a review of pesticide education and safety training programs for pesticide applicators. This presentation outlines CTAG's proposals to direct the future of the program.

Slide 2: The pesticide program, as well as applicator and public needs, have changed since the C&T program was established 25 years ago. However, the national C&T program has not adapted to fit these changing needs. Over the years, there have been attempts to evaluate the program and change the regulations. CTAG was established in 1996 to review previous evaluations and propose changes to the program.

Slide 3: CTAG is co-chaired by EPA and USDA, and its membership covers the range of federal and state regulators and pesticide safety educators, with representatives from EPA Headquarters and EPA Regional Offices, USDA and the Cooperative Extension Service (CES), Pesticide State Lead Agencies, Tribes, the Armed Forces Pest Management Board (AFPMB), the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO), the Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials (ASPCRO), and the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE).

CTAG members would like for this group to remain as a standing body to provide a forum for addressing the changing needs of the program.

Slide 4: The changes that CTAG is proposing could result in changes to the national C&T program through a variety of means -- statutory changes to FIFRA, changes to the regulations (40 CFR 171), and changes in EPA and USDA activities or their activities in conjunction with states, tribes, and territories.

Any long-term national program changes ultimately made through FIFRA or the regulations would also require a round of similar changes to state, tribe, and territorial laws and regulations.

Slide 5: CTAG's preliminary report, "Pesticide Safety for the 21st Century," proposes changes in five goal areas. Some of the proposals entail major program changes that will require extensive dialogue and feedback with stakeholders. These proposals are marked with an arrow in this presentation to help highlight them. Proposals are subject to change or elimination, or may be added as a result of feedback received. Both the report and its executive summary are available at: <http://aapse.ext.vt.edu>.

Slide 6: CTAG's five goals are the following:

1. Reduce risks to the public from pesticide use.
2. Provide high quality pesticide education and safety training programs.
3. Maintain the consistency, integrity, and validity of the certification and recertification programs and processes.
4. Ensure that adequate and equitable funding is available for pesticide safety education, training, and certification programs.
5. Improve the efficiency of program organization and operations.

I'd now like to go through CTAG's proposals under each of these goals.

Slide 7: The first goal is to ensure that all pesticide users, including homeowners, have access to appropriate pesticide safety education materials or training, and that pesticide applicators have also received adequate training. The proposals in this area are probably the most far-reaching in scope and controversy of any of the goals. They include:

1.1 First: **Initiate a National Consumer Education Campaign** targeted to consumers and/or homeowners to educate them in the safe and effective use of pesticides. This proposal recognizes that homeowner and small farm operation uses of non-RUP products contribute significantly to the risk equation. Although many states, tribes, and territories provide pesticide safety information to the public, this would be a national voluntary program meant to encourage and give recognition to such efforts.

1.2 Second: **Expand the regulatory scope of the program** from its current focus on applicators of restricted use pesticides (RUPs) to include regulatory coverage of ALL pesticide applicators who apply pesticides as part of their occupational responsibilities or activities. This would bring under the regulatory umbrella applicators applying pesticides in areas where the public could be exposed through direct contact -- e.g., food processing and/or handling establishments, day care centers, schools, hospitals, etc. The regulatory expansion would also include provisions for the certification of dealers of "occupational use" pesticides, and it could allow for certain exemptions for small businesses and other situations.

As many of you know, this proposal would require revising both FIFRA and EPA's regulations. Among the concerns that make this controversial is the difficulty of gaining support for reopening FIFRA and the fact that official expansion of the program would overburden an already underfunded program.

Slide 8: 1.3 A third proposal is to **integrate EPA’s Worker Protection Standard** training requirements into the C&T program, so that pesticide safety education and training are provided for all pesticide user communities, from agricultural workers and handlers to the full spectrum of pesticide applicators.

1.4 Fourth, as a result of expanding the scope of the program to reflect current realities of pesticide use and application, CTAG proposes that EPA **consider some method of classifying pesticides in tiers**, based on the toxicity and assessed risk of the active ingredient and/or uses [and possibly the amount of the product to be used]. The requirements for safety training and certification/licensing should then be aligned with the classification of the product.

One example of a tiered classification might be:

Level 1: consumer/homeowner use products;

Level 2: general or unclassified pesticide products for occupational use;

Level 3: restricted use pesticide products [based on current RUP criteria] for occupational use; and

Level 4: restricted “prescription” use products for occupational use.

[The “prescription use” category would be reserved for specific risk mitigation situations, and could be one possible approach to preserving certain minor-crop uses of “high risk” pesticide products. By only allowing specified uses based on a particular training and certification level of the applicator, this approach would mitigate the impacts of FQPA and groundwater protection restrictions.]

1.5 A fifth proposal is to **change the name of the program** to reflect both the certification component and the scope and extent of pesticide education and safety training activities. One name that has been suggested is the PESTAC Program, for “Pesticide Education, Safety Training, and Applicator Certification.” Other suggestions are welcome!

Slide 9: CTAG’s second goal is to ensure that all pesticide education and safety training programs meet national standards for content and quality. Pesticide safety training coordinators must possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to deliver effective and up-to-date training. There are six proposals in this area.

2.1 First: **Update core training requirements** to reflect the current needs and desired competency standards for pesticide users, and **establish a National Model Curriculum**. The curriculum could include, for example, coverage of Integrated Pest Management (both agricultural and non-agricultural/urban IPM) and the ethics of pesticide use decisions and professionalism in dealing with the

public. The national model curriculum could be mandatory or voluntary.

2.2 Second: **Coordinate the development and review of training materials.**

States have noted that they are increasingly relying on training materials produced by independent groups, which may have incorrect or inadequate information, and which they have to spend resources reviewing. CTAG therefore recommends that EPA, USDA, AAPSE, and AAPCO form partnerships among states, tribes, territories, industry, professional organizations, and commodity groups to coordinate the development of higher-quality training materials, and that EPA, USDA and possibly AAPSE create a national review board for oversight of these materials as well as a mechanism for end-user reviews. The idea is to raise the standard of quality for all training materials.

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2.3 A third proposal is to **provide mechanisms to improve the skills of trainers and educators**, through such things as periodic training workshops to promote exchanges between senior/junior educators, or possibly, through regional or national “Pesticide Education and Safety Training Centers” for trainers and educators.

2.4 Another proposal is for the NPOs and AAPSE to **establish a network of subject matter and technology experts and specialists** to help develop new or updated training materials in each subject matter area. Experts would be needed in precision agriculture, agricultural engineering, program design, and the appropriate use of advanced technology.

2.5 Next, the NPOs should ensure that developers of training materials use **modular and electronic formats** to facilitate sharing and updating information.

2.6 Finally, the NPOs and AAPSE should support **development of a national Web site** with information on available materials so as to share and avoid duplication of materials.

Slide 11:

The third CTAG goal is to ensure that all pesticide applicators being certified or recertified meet national competency standards. This involves upgrading continuing ed programs and tightening up the certification requirements. Proposals include:

3.1 First, **establishing prerequisites for certification**, such as a minimum age requirement, the ability to read and comprehend English, and related job experience.

3.2 Next, requiring all states, tribes, and territories to **establish continuing**

education programs as part of applicator recertification. National standards might be set for continuing ed credits, units, or hours.

3.3 Third, **requiring a written exam** for all applicators who seek to be certified through a state, tribe, territory, or federal program to use restricted, general use, or unclassified pesticide products.

3.4 Fourth, require states, tribes, and territories to **use a validation process for all certified applicator exams**. Exam validation means that the exam is legally defensible and will reliably test the knowledge needed to perform the job of an applicator. (EPA, by the way, will be holding a workshop for states, tribes, and territories on how to use the exam validation process.)

3.5 And fifth, **facilitating reciprocity agreements** across states, perhaps through workshops or a workgroup that would focus on long-term program changes to help states work around their different laws to allow for reciprocity.

Slide 12: CTAG has offered another 8 proposals under this goal, which I will quickly run through. They are:

3.6 To establish a **national 5-year maximum recertification period**; which means that states, tribes, and territories would be able to establish a certification period of five years or less.

3.7 To **upgrade the content of the certification exam** to an accepted minimum standard, for example, the content of the federal standards for private and commercial applicators.

3.8 To **update exams** along with training manuals and materials.

3.9 To establish a **national, secure database of examination questions that are a result of the exam validation process**.

Slide 13: 3.10 To fund the **purchase of electronic grading machines** (or other exam-related equipment) so that applicator testers can receive exam feedback.

3.11 To **maintain information on licensing software** and facilitate the adoption by states, tribes, and territories of computerized tracking technology for certification.

3.12 To encourage each state, tribe, and territory to offer, or become part of, a **Web page on pesticide applicator certification programs**. [Currently, two pesticide coordinators have received a grant to work with programs to update or

create Web pages.]

3.13 And finally, to encourage states, tribes, and territories to **share policies and experiences on American Disabilities Act** and regarding accommodations provided to potential applicators with disabilities.

Slide 14: Goal 4 is directed at funding -- ensuring that pesticide education and safety training is adequately funded and equitably distributed based on program workloads and outputs. CTAG proposes changing the federal funding formula for SLAs and for CES, in the following ways.

4.1 First, for **State Lead Agencies**, CTAG is interested in reviewing the entire formula with stakeholders, but is particularly concerned with replacing the 5% factor that is currently based on the number of farms. This should be replaced with a factor that more adequately reflects program workload and best serves all programs, such as the number of all applicators including registered technicians, the number of commercial applicators, or other combinations.

NOTES FOR PRESENTER

The grant regulations at 40 CFR 35.115(k) require EPA to base the C&T funding formula on the number of applicators and farms, so implementing this proposal would most likely entail regulatory revision. It is possible, however, that this proposal could be implemented in the short term by using a flexible definition of “farm” or by reducing the weight applied to number of farms.]

Current SLA Funding Formula:

EPA awards approximately \$3 million to pesticide State Lead Agencies each year.

Current funding formula:

- \$23,000 to the Pacific Islands
- \$17,000 to Colorado to administer the state commercial applicator certification program
- \$57,000 to EPA Region 8 to administer the Colorado private applicator certification program
- \$22,000 to each state (except Colorado and Wyoming), the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The remaining funds are awarded according to the following formula:

- 5% based on # of farms
- 40% based on # of private applicators
 - (10% for # initially certified in the fiscal year
 - 10% for # of private applicators holding a certification in the fiscal year
 - 20% for # recertified in fiscal year)
- 40% based on # of commercial applicators
 - (10% for # initially certified in the fiscal year

- 10% for # of commercial applicators holding a certification in the fiscal year
- 20% # recertified in fiscal year)
- 15% for EPA Regional discretionary funds

4.2 A second funding proposal is to reexamine the **federal funding formula for Cooperative Extension Service (CES)** program offices. CTAG is proposing that USDA change its formula for distributing C&T funds. Again, the entire formula should come under review, but of particular concern is replacing the 20% factor for farms with a factor based on the number of acres treated, agricultural acres, or pounds of active ingredient used.

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Current CES Funding Formula:

EPA passes approximately \$2 million to USDA CES via an inter-agency agreement to support applicator training. USDA does not contribute any funds for the same purpose.

Current USDA formula for distributing EPA funds to CES:

- \$15,000 base for each state or territory
- 10% based on # of private applicators trained since inception of the program
- 10% based on # of commercial applicators trained since inception of the program
- 40% based on # of commercial applicators currently certified on record
- 20% based on # of private applicators currently certified on record
- 20% based on # of farms]

4.3 Third, CTAG recommends that EPA **assess a fee on pesticide registrations** to help cover part of the costs of the pesticide education and safety training and applicator certification programs. [The fee could be established on a tier system whereby restricted-use pesticide fees would be higher than for general or unrestricted pesticides.]

4.4 A fourth proposal is to **explore non-traditional sources for program funding**, such as “fee-for-service” options and industry and trade-association partnerships.

4.5 A fifth proposal is to **expand USDA's leadership role** in pesticide management by providing funding to the CES Program Offices for pesticide education and training programs outside the scope of PAT. This would benefit farm worker training, pesticide record keeping programs, and health care professionals, and help address the problems of pesticide misuse in urban and suburban settings.

- Slide 15: Several additional proposals include:
- 4.6 Providing information to states, tribes, and territories on the **use of EPA regional discretionary funds.**
 - 4.7 Clarifying and adopting a **common definition of certified applicators** for reporting purposes since these reporting numbers affect future funding levels.
 - 4.8 And **sharing information on how programs are generating supplemental funds.**
- Slide 16: Finally, goal 5 is intended to ensure efficient operations, cooperation among implementing agencies, and consistent evaluation, management, and marketing of the program. Proposals include:
- 5.1 Developing a national tool or process, such as a survey instrument, to **measure and evaluate program success** in terms of applicator knowledge and behavioral change.
 - 5.2 Improving **capabilities for assessing program effectiveness**, for example, by directing coordination among training coordinators, pesticide regulatory officials, and appropriate insurance representatives to determine compliance issues that should be addressed in training.
- Slide 17: Other proposals include:
- 5.3 Improving program **cooperation among implementing agencies**, for example, by having the NPOs and EPA regions encourage regular meetings with SLAs and CES.
 - 5.4 **Funding pilot projects** that explore innovative evaluation mechanisms for C&T programs that could be used as models for other states' programs.
 - 5.5 Encouraging programs to **monitor certification and recertification training meetings** for content and delivery to ensure effective quality training.
 - 5.6 Requiring an **annual review of state plans** by EPA regional offices to build an annual program review and evaluation into each program.
 - 5.7 And last but not least, **effective marketing of the C&T program** so that internal and external audiences understand the scope and importance of the program and its accomplishments.
- Slide 17: The overall objective of CTAG's proposed program changes is to help EPA fulfill

its mission of protecting human health and the environment, and adequately safeguard the public, especially children, from the risks resulting from pesticide application.

CTAG welcomes comments and feedback on its proposals. Once comments are received, the proposals will be revised and a new report prepared for presentation at the National Pesticide Applicator Training Conference in Portland, Maine in August.

Thank you for your time and attention, and please do participate in this important process by providing your comments and ideas.

(Script provided by EPA and USDA for CTAG. January 1999)