

Financial Sustainability of State Cooperative Extension Pesticide Safety Education Programs and State Pesticide Certification and Training Programs

**Adopted by the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE)
August 2004**

In the United States, pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc.) are used to control public health threats and to mitigate pest damage on a variety of sites (crops, commodities, landscapes, structures, etc.). Maintaining the availability of pesticides as one possible mitigation strategy is very important to pest managers, including those who adopt integrated pest management (IPM) programs.

The American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE) believes that the judicious use of pesticides is dependent upon pesticide applicators' comprehension of pesticide labels, their knowledge of proper pesticide application techniques, their understanding of pesticide regulations and policies, and their modification of handling practices based on the acquired knowledge and understanding. By implementing these learned skills and by demonstrating competency, pesticide applicators (professional pesticide applicators, growers, farm workers) and consumers optimize the benefits of pesticide use while minimizing adverse consequences, thereby contributing to public health and environmental protection.

To achieve and maintain these goals, AAPSE believes that both the state Extension Pesticide Safety Education Programs (PSEPs) and the State Lead Agency (SLA) Certification and Training (C&T) Programs are necessary and that, ideally, both programs in each state should work together to address their specific pesticide training and certification needs. Each state-directed program -- PSEP and C&T-- contributes to the federal mandate for training and certifying applicators who use restricted use pesticides (RUPs). In response to demands by federal and state government agencies; state legislatures; agricultural, industry, and advocacy groups; and the general public, most PSEPs and C&T programs have expanded beyond their original missions. For many state PSEPs and C&T programs, training and certification for the use of RUPs is part of a comprehensive effort. Additional components often include outreach to the staffs of schools, parks, and other public facilities, to health care and emergency response professionals, and to the general public.

Each year, SLAs receive some funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) budget for C&T, endangered species, groundwater programs, and worker protection. Through fiscal year (FY) 2002, EPA provided a total of approximately \$1.88 million annually to state PSEPs in partial support of their base programs, which typically include outreach and education to applicators and others on all of these issues. EPA funding for state PSEPs has been administered by passing it through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to the states, territories, and commonwealths. For comparison purposes, the historic level of PSEP funding from EPA -- \$1.88 million -- is about 16% of the amount EPA allocated to SLAs in FY2004 (not including enforcement funds). Most state programs (both PSEP and C&T) have leveraged the EPA funding to increase their budgets through some combination of state appropriations, fees, and grants.

With the exception of one year, FY2003, USDA has not directly contributed funds to state PSEPs. However, USDA has maintained salary support for a PSEP National Program Leader, has charged no overhead for administering the EPA pass-through funds, and has occasionally offered competitive grants to the state PSEPs.

Following is AAPSE's position:

(a) The process of educating and certifying applicators who use RUPs supports a federal mandate over which EPA has authority. Further, training and certification extend knowledge and skills acquisition to a very broad base of applicators who use general use pesticides. This contributes even more to the health and safety of the general public and to the preservation of the nation's environmental resources, all of which EPA is mandated to protect. Base funding for both Extension PSEP and SLA C&T programs should be protected items in EPA's budget. Program personnel and infrastructure cannot be maintained

without a dependable source of funding.

(b) Pesticide applicator education and training above and beyond the minimum standards set for RUPs help protect the U.S. food supply, maximize agricultural productivity, and protect natural resources, thereby contributing to USDA's mission. USDA should recognize the contribution made by PSEPs to production agriculture and should provide additional funding directly to the state Extension PSEPs.

(c) Both the state Extension PSEP and the SLA C&T program contribute to compliance with state pesticide laws, regulations, and policies as well as federal regulations. Some level of state support of both programs is appropriate and desirable.

(d) Individual users, pesticide application businesses, and pesticide manufacturers and distributors benefit from pesticide safety education. In states where fees for Extension- or SLA-generated educational materials and programming are legal, it is appropriate for these programs to assess fees on these groups to offset some of the overall program costs.

(e) Both state PSEPs and SLA C&T programs should seek to obtain additional funding through grant support when available.

In summary, the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators supports the concept of stable federal base funding for state PSEPs and C&T programs, and encourages supplementation of this funding through fees, grants, cooperative agreements, and other innovative sources of funding.