



NEWS COLUMN

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North Central IPM Center receives additional support to continue programs

URBANA – The U of I has been awarded \$712,000 by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for continued support of the North Central Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Center. This is in addition to the \$3.9 million grant that has provided pest management coordination for the North Central region during the past four years.

Susan Ratcliffe, Director of the North Central IPM Center, said this award will allow the Center to continue to invest in regional pest management programs, including support of Tribal IPM programs, competitively funded working groups and invasive species educational outreach. In addition, the Center will continue to collaborate with the USDA-NIFA funded state-based IPM coordinators that provide pesticide usage and pest management information to USDA and EPA programs.

It is one of four Centers in a national network established to strengthen the USDA's connection with production agriculture, research and extension programs and agricultural stakeholders throughout the United States. Its projects strive to improve economic benefits of adopting IPM practices and to reduce potential risks to human health and the environment. The Center's headquarters are currently co-hosted by the U of I and Michigan State University.

“Our Center has provided leadership on important pest issues, including soybean aphid, West Nile virus, soybean rust and many other invasive species issues through educational outreach programs,” Ratcliffe said.

Ratcliffe added the Center provides economic benefits to producers in the region through its Working Group Grants Program.

“For example, in 2010 the efforts of Ohio IPM program staff in collaboration with the Center's NRCS-IPM Working Group resulted in the awards of Environmental Quality Incentive Program contracts that provided \$374,000 to 16 producers who included IPM strategies in their crop production practices.”

The North Central IPM Center has sponsored three competitive grant programs to assist the region in addressing IPM issues. In addition, two special grants were awarded to provide program evaluation. These projects provided support for an evaluation specialist and purchased audience response systems for regional IPM programs.

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