

Mint Industry Research Council's PESP Strategy

Describe your Organization's Five-Year Goals Related to Pesticide Risk Reduction

To reduce production costs while improving the quality/quantity of a commercial mint crop through the development/implementation of pest management strategies which use integrated methods including biological and cultural which can reduce the use of pesticides and maintain ecologically balanced methods of mint production.

What do you envision doing (broadly) to try to resolve your major issues?

New methods and technologies of pest control and crop production can be developed with emphases on research and information disseminated by education. The obstacle to the implementation of new pest management strategies and methods is economics. Federal government farm programs and policies are obstacles to both the development and implementation of new pest control technologies. An good example is where a cultural practice such as crop rotation that could used to break weed, insect and disease cycles and also provide soil fertility is not an economically viable option due to current farm program subsidies and commodity prices (i.e. corn/ethanol). A long- term ecological sustaining vision and policy needs to be developed and implemented by the federal government before crop growers can realistically implement and practice new and innovative pest control solutions.

Goal 1 and Tactics

To fund and conduct the research necessary to identify safer "reduced risk" pesticides that are efficacious and economical which can be implemented into mint pest and IPM programs.

Solicit researchers by sending out Request for Research Proposals (RFPs) which state the intent of the request.

The EPA can keep the Mint Industry informed of newly developed and/or registered pest control products which may be good candidates in mint.

Goal 2 and Tactics

Fund and coordinate research which study and look at new/innovative ways of controlling pests in mint including biological and new methods/ways of using existing registered products.

Our EPA liaison can communicate the success other commodities may have had or report on literature searches regarding new application methods and/or rate reductions.

Success can be measured by the results obtained from funded research studies and implementation by growers.

Goal 3 and Tactics

Develop a new website for members which include an extensive searchable research database, IPM decision-based support systems and programs and various other information resources.

Success can be determined upon the completion of the website and keeping record of the number of users/visitors. Conducting surveys for website users can also be used to measure and document objectives.

Goal 4 and Tactics

Fund a varietal improvement research program to develop and evaluate new commercial mint varieties which exhibit disease and pest resistance.

Greenhouse and field evaluations will be used to determine successful candidates for further varietal evaluations.

Since commercial mint varieties are sterile clones which are vegetatively propagated - traditional breeding techniques can not be utilized thus restricting the available methods.