



Training for Specialty Crop IPM Plan Developers Offered March 14 in London

LONDON, Ohio -- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Ohio State University's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program are teaming up to offer a workshop on IPM conservation plan writing for specialty crop growers, March 14, in London, Ohio.

“This workshop is designed for certified crop advisors, independent crop consultants and technical service providers who have an interest and preferably some experience working with vegetable, tree fruit or small fruit production,” said Jim Jasinski, and OSU Extension educator and IPM specialist. “Once trained, these individuals will be hired by and work directly with the producer to develop a site- and crop-specific IPM conservation plan for that operation.”

For the past three years, specialty crop growers have been eligible to compete for NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funds, which provide financial assistance to help them adopt specific IPM practices on their farms. NRCS is encouraging more specialty crop growers to apply for these funds and have an IPM conservation plan written to accompany their EQIP applications.

“Having an IPM conservation plan will increase the grower's ranking and likelihood of getting a contract to carry out those practices,” explained Mark Scarpitti, an NRCS state agronomist. “Currently, there are very few people in the state qualified to write these plans, which is why we are offering this training to broaden the pool of qualified plan writers.”

Scarpitti will kick off the workshop by reviewing the components of a generic IPM plan and demonstrating how the Ohio IPM Activities Workbook template will be used to select practices for each plan. Next, Ohio State specialists will cover specific IPM information on key pests of vegetable, tree fruit and small fruit crops that will be relevant when writing the IPM conservation plan.

The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the NRCS Field Office in London, located at 831 U.S. 42 NE.

Cost for the workshop is \$50, which includes lunch and a three-ring binder containing five current pest management and production publications that cover vegetable, tree fruit and small fruit crops. The workshop is limited to the first 25 registrants. The deadline to register is March 5; walk-in registrations will not be accepted. To register, go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/nrcsplan>.

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