

## Patricia D. Hastings

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**From:** "Patricia D. Hastings" <hastings@AESOP.RUTGERS.EDU>  
**To:** "NJinPAS Network" <NJinPASNetwork@AESOP.RUTGERS.EDU>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 04, 2003 3:22 PM  
**Subject:** EPA-USDA Advisory Committee on FQPA Transition Issues Recommendations

EPA currently has three advisory committees on pesticides issues, including the EPA-USDA **Committee to Advise on Reassessment and Transition (CARAT)**. CARAT was established in 2000 to provide a forum to **consult with and make recommendations to the Administrator of EPA and the Secretary of Agriculture** regarding strategic approaches for **pest management planning** and **tolerance reassessment** for pesticides as required by the **Food Quality Protection Act**. See <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/carat/> for details on how CARAT was formed. Its ultimate purpose was to advise EPA and USDA on how to best help growers in transitioning to FQPA.

An Advisory Work Group within Carat was formed to draft recommendations for consideration of the full CARAT body for submittal to EPA and USDA. See [http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/carat/2003/carat\\_trans\\_wkggroup\\_recomm\\_draft7-18-03.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/carat/2003/carat_trans_wkggroup_recomm_draft7-18-03.pdf) for draft recommendations. A USDA CSREES summary of the recommendations posted by Ed Rajotte to the PAIPM listserv follows:

**"CARAT Advisory Group Presents Recommendations.** An advisory work group, led by the Meridian Institute, finalized a series of recommendations on safer and more efficient pest management techniques, including calls for better coordination of such efforts within the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture on October 1, 2003. The group drafted the recommendations for the Committee to Advise on Reassessment and Transition (CARAT), a panel that advises EPA and USDA on pest management planning and tolerance reassessments for pesticides. John Ehrmann, senior partner with the Meridian Institute and the group's facilitator, said the final version would be presented to the CARAT panel at the conclusion of the two-day meeting on Oct. 2.

CARAT was established in 2000 to help the agencies, the agricultural industry, and others through a transition toward tougher pesticide safety requirements under the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. Under the act, EPA was required to reassess the risk of all registered pesticides under far more stringent standards.

The CARAT work group recommended a **larger role for Pest Management Strategic Plans**--which identify alternative approaches to currently used pesticides for specific crops--and better coordination with groups such as USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and the CSREES funded Regional Integrated Pest Management Centers. Those centers received particularly high marks from the work group for developing high quality research and in reaching out to local and state agricultural, environmental, and academic groups.

The **integrated pest management** approach, designed to control pests while minimizing health and environmental risks, also deserves a **more stable funding source through USDA**, the work group said.

The work group also called on the **USDA to thoroughly review whether its various programs**, which range from research and education to the funding of locally run cooperative extension programs, are working in tandem to promote more efficient and safer pest management practices. The group also urged **EPA to better coordinate its own pesticide programs** with other agency programs addressing water quality, air quality, and worker safety.

Many of the work group members voiced **concern over whether there will continue to be adequate funding for many of the programs they are lauding through the recommendations** since many states are battling budget deficits. While the USDA helps fund the local cooperative extension services, for example, some counties and universities are considering layoffs and even closing some offices due to budget deficits.

"Some of these counties have already moved to de-fund those extension agents," a move that would eliminate some of the very officials who could be pushing safer and more economical pest management techniques directly to growers, according to Dan Botts, a representative from the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association.

For example, the University of California's Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources in August said it was eliminating jobs to make up for a 25 percent cut to the university's Cooperative Extension program in

addition to a 10 percent cut to its Agricultural Experiment Station.

Some CARAT work group members however expressed optimism over a number of new grants that because available under the 2002 Farm Bill, such as Conservation Innovation Grants. That program provides up to 50 percent in matching funds toward university and other programs that develop and implement conservation efforts, including those that incorporate innovative pest management techniques."

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