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Subject: EPA-funded Biopesticide/Organic Database Launched by IR-4

Press release below on the USEPA Region 2 P2-funded project for a 'Biopesticide/Organic Database' courtesy of Audrey Moore, USEPA Region 2 Regional Ag Policy Specialist. This press release includes details on how the database works, funding for it, biopesticides, and IR-4.

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IR-4 Launches Searchable Database for Biopesticide and Organic Pest Management Solutions

May 17, 2007, Princeton, NJ - The Interregional Research Project No. 4 (IR-4), headquartered at New Jersey's Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers University, announced today the launch of its Biopesticide / Organic database on the IR-4 website. The database, which is searchable by crop, pest, and state, will assist commercial and home growers of specialty crops. Specialty crops include fruits, vegetables, ornamentals and turf, but IR-4 also includes minor pests that are found on major row crops in this database. IR-4 Biopesticide Manager, Dr. Michael Braverman explained, "This project was conceived out of the observation that most growers or homeowners were unaware of the variety of today's biopesticides. There are a few Biopesticides that show up on conventional product websites, but there isn't a database for just biopesticides and organics. Creating this database is a tool for helping growers find answers to their pest problems."

How it Works: locate the database at: www.ir4.rutgers.edu/Biopesticides/LabelDatabase/index.cfm and click on the "Find Answers" prompt. Once opened, the database enables growers to input their crop, pest and state and it responds by providing a list of EPA registered product labels that fit their criteria. It also supplies the manufacturer contact information and other pertinent data. "Of course it is ultimately the responsibility of the end user to follow label directions," Braverman continued. "Organic growers will find this particularly useful too, as the database can limit the search to organically approved pest management products."

Why Biopesticides?

Biopesticides are primarily natural products or organisms that are compatible with integrated pest management. They have broad modes of action which avoids resistance problems that may exist with some conventional products. Biopesticides often work best in rotation with conventional products so that optimal pest management can be obtained.

Most biopesticides have no restricted entry interval requirements. Whereas conventional products often limit the time growers can return to the fields following a treatment. This can hamper pruning, weeding, irrigation or other cultural practices. Homeowners as well may have difficulty keeping children and pets off treated areas, using biopesticides can alleviate these concerns. Another advantage of biopesticides is reduce time to harvest. If a late season pest is discovered close to harvest or if a field contains a crop with multiple harvests, there may not be a conventional product option - biopesticides can fill in that gap.

Buyers and consumers are becoming increasingly selective in their purchasing habits. Illegal residues can result in loss of markets, fines, and consumer avoidance. Biopesticides often contain natural food products that are normally consumed and do not have residue concerns.

There are still many pest problems that conventional products do not address. Since biopesticides are, in general, broadly labeled, growers of minor crops with obscure pest problems may find a biopesticide can provide a solution to their needs.

Funding for Database

Part of the funding for this database was made possible through a grant from EPA Region 2. Technical assistance was provided by those at EPA headquarters and many Biopesticide Industry Alliance manufacturers. Additionally, many individual companies contributed their information to help create the database. "We will be updating the data continually and welcome user comments. We hope this resource will be a valuable tool for our stakeholders," concluded Braverman.

About IR-4

For over forty years, the IR-4 Project has been the major resource for supplying pest management tools for specialty crops by developing research data to support registration clearances. To date, IR-4 has facilitated over 10,000 food use registrations and 10,000 registration expansions on nursery/ornamental crops

IR-4 operates as a unique partnership between the State Agricultural Experiment Stations, the USDA (ARS and CSREES), specialty crop growers and the crop protection industry to accomplish its goal. It uses an extensive stakeholder driven process to prioritize research ensuring the most critical pest management needs are being addressed.

Over 80% of IR-4's research effort has involved new pest management technologies with biopesticides and lower risk chemistries

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