

THE BULLETIN OF THE MAINE BOARD OF PESTICIDES CONTROL



News for producers that use pest management products



Pest management products.... what does that mean? You may say, "I don't use pesticides", but the term pesticide includes **any** product that controls, repels or prevents any pest including bacteria, weeds, insects, fungi, rodents, birds or deer. The product could be natural, organic, biological or synthetic and yes it does include herbicides too. It doesn't matter how the product is derived, all pesticide products are regulated by the same set of laws and regulations. If you produce some kind of agricultural commodity (honey, vegetables, Christmas trees, ornamentals, meat, etc.) using any pesticide product either organic or synthetic, **you must comply with rules established by both the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Maine Board of Pesticides Control.** This newsletter outlines some of those rules. We hope you will take the time to become familiar with these standards.

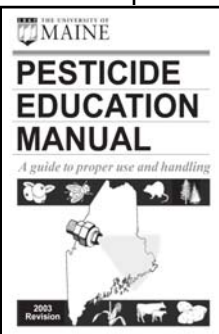
Getting a pesticide applicator license teaches you to outsmart pests.

- ◆ Do customers ever ask you about the pesticides you use on your crops?
- ◆ Have you ever wondered about how pest control products might affect you or your family?
- ◆ Do you have persistent pest problems that you just can't seem to manage?

The answers to these persistent questions can be found through the pesticide applicator licensing program at the Maine Board of Pesticides Control and University of Maine Cooperative Extension. Getting licensed as a private pesticide applicator will help you better understand what pesticides are, how to decide when to use them, how to use them efficiently and effectively and most important, how to apply them properly.

Do you realize a pesticide label is a legal document and not following the label carefully can create risks for you and your customers and put you in the uncomfortable position of being a "law breaker"?

Do you understand the terms "days to harvest", "worker protection standard", "REI" and "plantback restrictions"? Not knowing any one of these terms could result in your misuse of a pesticide, too much residue on your crop and the possible condemnation of your crop as unfit for human consumption.



What's the solution? Get in the educational loop. It starts by ordering training materials from the University of Maine Pest Management Office (1-800-287-0279). The materials needed for licensing as a private pesticide applicator are available there for less than \$50. Some are even downloadable for free from their internet site at <http://pmo.umext.maine.edu/patrain/prices.htm>. You will need the Pesticide Education (Core) Manual and another manual covering the major commodity that you grow, e.g., potatoes, blueberries, vegetables, Christmas trees, small fruits, etc.

After you've studied the manuals, you can arrange to take the two required exams by calling the Board of Pesticides Control at 287-2731. We will send the exams to the Cooperative Extension office nearest to your farm or garden. If you pass each exam by scoring at least 80% on each multiple choice test, we will send back an application for the private applicator license. The license costs \$15 for up to a three-year term. After that you need only attend a couple of hours of continuing education programs each year to stay eligible for licensing.

These programs will keep you up to date in your area of pest management and help you avoid the previously mentioned pitfalls.

Most licensees agree that the cost of the license is very small compared to the knowledge acquired and the improvements they see in their pest management efforts. If you have questions, please contact Gary Fish at 287-2731.

If you want to know more about the Board's private applicator licensing requirements, visit our web site at <ftp://ftp.state.me.us/pub/sos/cec/rcn/apa/01/026/026c032.doc>.



Pesticide labels are legal documents

They are not just recommended guidelines. Right under the "Directions for Use" statement you will always find the following words: "It is a violation of Federal Law to use this product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling!"

That's right, a violation of Federal Law. It's also a violation of State Law. Why so might you ask?

Pesticides are risky. No pesticide is completely safe. Even products approved for use by certified organic growers are potentially toxic. The risks to you, your family, your customers, your neighbors or the environment are minimized by following the product labeling. Veering from the label even in minor ways can result in major problems. Some growers have experienced this fact the hard way. Burning their skin because they didn't wear the right protective clothing or killing their crop with too strong a mix of materials. Others have mixed two products together and ended up with a gooey mess.

Taking that extra five minutes to read the entire product label can save your health, protect our water and often improve your profits.

If you grow trees or plants and have employees, you need to know about the WPS

The federal Worker Protection Standard (WPS) applies to any farm, forest, nursery or greenhouse that has employees and uses pesticides (even organic ones) in the production of crops or timber. If this sounds like you, you'll want to make sure you're up to speed with federal requirements. The WPS has been in place since 1994 and it's now being strictly enforced on all farms.

Among other things, growers need to ►

- ◆ Display an approved pesticide safety poster
- ◆ List the phone number and address for the nearest emergency medical facility
- ◆ Post a detailed list of all pesticide applications made within the last 30 days
- ◆ Provide employees with approved pesticide safety training by a qualified trainer
- ◆ Prohibit employees from entering treated areas during the restricted entry interval
- ◆ Notify employees when pesticide applications are made
- ◆ Supply wash up stations near the work area
- ◆ Clean and maintain personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ◆ Require employees to wear **all** the PPE required by the pesticide label
- ◆ Provide transportation in the event of possible pesticide poisoning

For more information on the WPS, visit www.thinkfirstspraylast.org.

Help Keep Maine's Waters Clean

Maine BPC has occasionally detected low levels of pesticides in private drinking water wells near agricultural pesticide use sites. Small streams in Maine



agricultural areas have also shown low levels of pesticides after rain events.

Although human health effects are unlikely at these levels according to EPA health advisory levels, possible environmental effects are not clear.

Help keep pesticides out of water resources by following these tips:

- ◆ Find out if the pesticides you use have high solubilities and half-lives and are able to leach into groundwater or run off the land to streams by calling BPC, 287-7593, or using this helpful website <http://extoxnet.orst.edu/pips/ghindex.html>
- ◆ Choose a pesticide less likely to leach or run off the land
- ◆ Avoid applying pesticides just before a rain storm
- ◆ Evaluate surface drainage patterns and leave an untreated dense vegetative buffer in areas where water drains from fields
- ◆ Improve buffer quality with thicker ground vegetation to avoid erosion since many pesticides stick to the soil and enter waterways with the soil
- ◆ Plant grass in drainage ditches to intercept soil particles
- ◆ Minimize pesticide use by practicing IPM (for example, scout fields for weeds and other pests and match the management approach to the specific problem)
- ◆ Rotate pesticides where feasible
- ◆ If interested, monitor

your well water or nearby stream after a rain event by sending a water sample to a qualified laboratory (may cost about \$150 per sample)

- ◆ Determine if any wells are located near pesticide use areas and avoid applying, mixing or loading pesticides near those wells
- ◆ Besides BPC, contact your local Cooperative Extension and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for additional information.

Pesticide Record Keeping

Did you know all persons producing commodities for sale must keep records of their pesticide use? Even organic growers! No matter where you purchase those pesticide products. Maine law requires growers to keep track of their pesticide use just in case there are problems with specific products and to help growers develop better pest management programs. It is hard to remember one season to the next what products worked and which ones failed. Detailed records can often improve the grower's bottom line profit. They also are a must in the event an accident happens and you end up in court. **Those that have no records have no leg to stand on in a liability suit situation.**

Knowing what information to keep in your application records is simple. Just purchase a logbook from the University of Maine Pest Management Office for \$2.00 and fill in the blanks. There is a column for all the required information categories. There is even a section to record sprayer calibration. If you want to know more about the Board's record keeping requirements, visit our web site at <ftp://ftp.state.me.us/pub/sos/cec/rcn/apa/01/026/026c050.doc>.



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