

## IPM Program Helps Schools manage pests safely Survey report of School maintenance Directors

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RALEIGH, NC - Since the passage of the Schoolchildren's Health Act in 2006, North Carolina public schools have been finding safer and more effective ways to reduce pests on school grounds, according to a report by school integrated pest management experts at North Carolina State University.

Based on a 2007 survey of state public school maintenance directors and facilities supervisors, 61 percent of school districts have adopted integrated pest management programs. Over 71 percent of North Carolina school districts apply pesticides only as needed for pest problems, and 80 percent notify parents, guardians and staff whenever a pesticide will be applied on school grounds.

Telephone surveys of public school maintenance directors and facilities supervisors were conducted in June and July 2007. Out of 115 school districts in North Carolina, 114 participated in the survey. The Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services at N.C. State University conducted the interviews.

Passed in July 2006, the Schoolchildren's Health Act (HB 1502) mandated North Carolina public schools to notify parents, guardians and school staff at least 72 hours in advance of pesticide applications to school grounds. In addition, the bill required schools to adopt an integrated pest management policy and IPM program by Oct. 11, 2011. Integrated pest management (IPM) is a comprehensive approach that combines biological, cultural and chemical control tactics to prevent and solve pest problems.

Dr. Godfrey Nalyanya, head of the School IPM Program in the Department of Entomology, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University, designed the survey to assess the status of IPM implementation in North Carolina public schools. North Carolina school pest management practices have not been surveyed since 2003, two years before the School IPM Program began training on IPM implementation in schools.

According to the report, 71 percent of the school districts with IPM programs adopted them between 2006 and 2007. Nearly all respondents to the survey said they were aware of the Schoolchildren's Health Act, and 95 percent said they knew about the IPM training program at N.C. State University.



“It is clear that the Schoolchildren's Health Act gave many school districts the impetus to implement IPM programs, as seen by the significant increase in the number of school districts that adopted IPM programs in 2006 and 2007,” Nalyanya says. “Training workshops and educational materials available from NCSU's School IPM Program have provided the necessary information and technical support that enable school districts to adopt IPM programs more easily.”

For indoor pest problems, 82 percent of school districts incorporate non-chemical pest control methods into their pest management plans. The most popular tactics are glue boards, caulking and cleaning up clutter. In fact, 54 percent of respondents said that pest control contractors often recommend additional measures such as repairs and sanitation practices to keep pests to a minimum. Nearly all respondents using IPM tactics reported that they were effective.

Most respondents reported that they used pesticides in classrooms and hallways as the situation warranted, rather than relying on monthly treatments. The exception was in food preparation areas, where most schools still use monthly and bi-monthly treatments.

For weed control, respondents reported that their weapon of choice was mowing, followed by herbicides. When pesticides are used, most school districts apply them on weekends or after school hours.

“There is significant progress in implementing IPM programs, reducing pesticide use and in changing the patterns of pesticide use on school property. These actions are definitely helping to provide a better quality of school environment for children to learn,” Nalyanya says.

The report concludes with recommendations to continue IPM training and education, expand training efforts to IPM for outdoor pests and weeds and encourage more school districts to formalize their IPM programs. A copy of the report can be found at <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu/documents/2008SurveyReport.pdf>.

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