



## Media Release

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### **Fewer Pesticides in Schools?**

**Pest control companies begin to incorporate integrated pest management strategies, according to NC State University report**

Pest control companies are beginning to rethink the way they manage pests in schools, according to a report to be released this Friday by school integrated pest management experts at North Carolina State University.

Based on comparisons between answers to telephone surveys of 73 respondents from North Carolina pest control companies first in February 2002, and then again to 102 respondents in October 2006, 35 percent fewer companies reported using pesticides alone (with no alternative) to control cockroaches, and 25 percent fewer reported applying those pesticides on school days. About five percent fewer companies reported applying pesticides on a monthly basis, and ten percent more recommended change in cultural practices such as sanitation and structural repairs to help control pests.

Dr. Godfrey Nalyanya, head of the School IPM Program, designed the survey to evaluate how IPM training workshops conducted by the project contributed to changes in pesticide use. Nalyanya and his colleagues conducted approximately six workshops every year from Asheville to Wilmington between November 2002 and November 2006. Workshops focused on reducing the frequency of pesticide in school buildings and increasing the adoption of integrated pest management (IPM). IPM is a common sense approach of controlling pests that does not rely on scheduled pesticide applications but combines methods and tactics to control current pest problems and prevent future recurrence.

“The results seem modest,” said Nalyanya. “But these changes take time and affect thousands of students, teachers and staff. I am pleased that changes are taking place and are continuing to take place.”

Workshop attendees received a training manual, brochures and a Web site address where they could learn more about IPM methods.

“We’re trying to get the pest control companies to use pesticides as needed instead of applying on a monthly schedule,” said Nalyanya.

According to the 2006 survey, 85 percent of companies reported that they provided notification before a scheduled spray. And 97 percent of respondents answered that they considered children’s health first when deciding on a pest control product.

Only companies with pest control contracts with school districts were surveyed, and based on contract turnover, 35 percent of the companies surveyed in 2006 did not receive a survey in 2002. Eighty-two percent of the companies that received a telephone interview agreed to participate. The Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services of NC State University conducted the interviews.

Nalyanya has already planned to start more workshops in the fall. Based on encouraging survey results, he wants to expand the training to include information about the Schoolchildren's Health Act and widen the scope from the building to the school grounds and athletic fields. And because some pest control companies have recently begun to contract with schools, Nalyanya says he will find new training locations to make attendance easier.

"We have to continue the training because it works," he said.