



For Immediate Release

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October 27, 2008

WSSA Asks Congress to Rescind Farm Bill Change that Threatens Extension Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programs

(LAWRENCE, Kansas) — Today the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) petitioned Congress to rescind a last-minute change to the recently approved 2008 Farm Bill that threatens Extension Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programs throughout the United States.

Extension IPM programs run by the nation's land grant universities make an essential contribution to the common good. They provide training and advice to help us protect our food supply, minimize human health risks, promote judicious pesticide use, conserve environmental resources and improve the profitability of the nation's farmers.

Historically, this national network has been funded by the Farm Bill at an average of approximately \$135,000 per state each year. This modest investment produces far-reaching results by enabling a nationwide IPM infrastructure that supports seamless information sharing and knowledge transfer.

But a last-minute amendment to the 2008 Farm Bill threatens the very existence of many of the extension programs that support farmers and homeowners across the country. For the first time in the 30-year history of Extension IPM, funds will not be allocated to universities in each state on a proportional basis. Instead, a limited number of grants will be awarded competitively by the Secretary of Agriculture.

This change erodes the national nature of the IPM network and is expected to leave entire regions of the country without the grower training and outreach needed to manage pests and weeds effectively or to address problems that are unique to a particular region or locale.

"The new funding model reduces our capacity to respond quickly and effectively to emerging pest threats," said Lee Van Wychen, WSSA science policy advisor. "That

means critical expertise will wither away in states that lose funding, leaving entire regions of the country vulnerable to insects, diseases and weeds that know no geographical boundaries.”

Visit the Weed Science Society of America’s website (www.wssa.net) for further background on the change and what you can do to help.

About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit professional society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Weed Science Society of America promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, and fosters awareness of weeds and their impacts on managed and natural ecosystems. For more information, visit www.wssa.net.

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Sidebar:

Examples of Effective Extension Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Initiatives

- *As the result of IPM training in Iowa, six out of 10 soybean farmers used an economic threshold analysis to help them cost-effectively manage yield-robbing soybean aphids.*
- *Kentucky’s Integrated Weed Science Group has won state, regional and national awards for its work, which is directly tied to a dramatic increase in wheat yields within the state.*
- *IPM specialists in South Dakota coordinated an effort to collect and redistribute 1.8 million flea beetles to combat the noxious weed leafy spurge. This tactic is credited with an 18,000-acre reduction in leafy spurge in northeast South Dakota.*