

Reviewing Pesticide Issues

Historically, agricultural activities have been the focus of investigations into pesticide impacts on water bodies. In recent years, however, pesticide use in urban areas is increasingly being examined as a potential source of aquatic pollutants. Although applications of pesticides in urban areas are typically on a small scale, the wide variety of chemicals used and the frequency of applications can result in a substantial amount of pesticides used. Urban-use pesticides can move off application sites and enter storm drains which route surface runoffs into urban creeks. These pesticides can also end up in urban sewage which then travels to wastewater treatment plants.

A recent example of media coverage on this topic is *The San Francisco Examiner's* article (March 29, 1998) titled "New Threat to the Bay — Poisons from Home." The article quotes Kelly Moran, manager of Palo Alto's water pollution prevention program. "It's scary. We're not worried about what's coming from farmers in the fields. It's coming from houses." Bart Brandenburg, engineer at the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District indicated, "We're trying to make people aware of the connection between pesticide use in homes and gardens and the impact on water quality."

The *San Diego Business Journal* outlined the new challenge to the San Diego Bay as non-point source pollution, "particularly storm water runoff, something that's a national crisis." The San Diego Port Authority's director of planning indicates, "It's not just up to the government to solve this problem. It's going to take everybody's effort. And it starts with the pesticides at our homes and where we change our oil." Several examples of newspaper articles on pesticide issues are provided in the Appendix.

The source of the problem may be getting larger as more and more consumers discover the joys of home gardening. According to *Home Improvement Market* magazine, consumers spent almost \$26 billion on lawn and garden goods in 1994, up more than \$4 billion from the 1993 survey. The four areas that saw the largest increase were flower gardening, landscaping, vegetable gardening and lawn care — all practices that employ pest management.

The growth is being attributed to the baby boomers. The study defined the average target consumers as college-educated, with professional or business occupations and annual household incomes exceeding \$30,000. Studies show that these 30- to 49-year-olds are interested in environmental stewardship, and may help make some social and environmental issues mainstream topics of interest.

So, the issues related to pesticide use, whether correctly defined by the media or not, increase in urgency as government and civic organizations focus attention on the dangers of improper residential pesticide use and disposal. The opportunity for POTWs to take the lead in public education is tremendous. As professionals who have a stake in water quality, and as a prime connection with consumers, POTWs have the chance to play a large role in pesticide public education campaigns.

According to the DPR survey of POTWs, a large percentage indicated that they were uncertain as to how significant a problem is posed by various pesticide uses. It is interesting to note that the perception of the pesticides problem among those surveyed. When queried as to the source of the pesticide problem in their service area, POTWs responded that the following chemicals were “very significant” or “somewhat significant.”

The difference between all respondents and those who are located in the San Francisco Bay Area are:

	All	Bay Area
Copper-containing pesticides	20.9%	39.4%
Diazinon	16.2%	27.3%
Tributyltin (TBT)	13.6%	30.0%
Chlorpyrifos (Dursban)	9.0%	12.1%
Other	23.5%	26.7%

Review Your Previous Campaigns or Educational Efforts

The first part of the assessment process is reviewing what types of public education activities your facility has completed. The review should focus on both your successes and failures. Often you learn a great deal about programs when they don't succeed. Look at these as an important part of the learning process and incorporate them in your review.

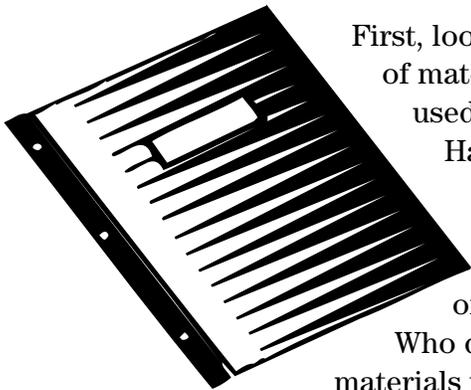
Set aside time to review past materials. Select a place where you can spread out the materials and have room to view them. Choose a date when you can devote uninterrupted time to the review process. Invite other people to be part of the process, especially if they know about past campaigns or educational efforts. (See the section entitled "Gaining Employee Support.") Having other people take part in the review process may allow you to see things from new angles.

like to try in the near future. Keep these things in mind as you work at creating your pesticide public education campaign.

Next, look at the messages that were used in the campaign. Did you have an overall slogan or unifying theme? Was there a clear and consistent message used throughout the materials? Which messages do you think were well received or successful, and why? List those characteristics of messages you thought were successful. Keep this list handy as you develop messages for your new campaign.

For future reference, keep all of your public education materials in one place. You can compile them in a folder, envelope or binder, as long as they all are kept together. Make sure there is a date and an explanation of use on all materials. Doing this will eliminate the guesswork involved in determining where and when the materials were used. This will make it easier to plan for all future campaigns.

After reviewing all of your previous materials and efforts, look at what still needs to be done. Have you created a great partnership program with a retailer but haven't done any media relations? Have you used bill inserts to inform consumers but been out in the community to educate homeowners? Try to determine not only what has been done, but also what elements are deficient, or what you'd like to do in the future.



First, look at what types of materials you've used in the past.

Have there been flyers, brochures, pamphlets, or bill inserts?

Who did you send the materials to? What did the materials look like and how did you identify your agency (logo, address or phone number)? Once you've analyzed the materials, determine what has worked well for you in the past. List tactics that you haven't tried but would

Review of Other Programs

In the process of developing your own public education campaign, you will undoubtedly come across information and materials from other campaigns that you would like to incorporate into your program. We have even used some of these programs such as Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's project as examples of successful programs. An overview of Central Contra Costa Sanitary District's campaign is included in the Appendix.

 **Reviewing other campaigns on pesticide use and environmental programs will give you the opportunity to see the variety of ways in which a campaign can be constructed.**

Keep a file of flyers, pamphlets and fact sheets that you like.

Determine what elements you find most appealing, and keep these in mind as you construct your own campaign.

While it is advantageous to gather information from similar campaigns, it is wise to use caution when attempting to pattern your program after those conducted by others. Don't assume just because a program has been implemented in the past that it was 1) successful and 2) based on good science. Great graphics and catchy slogans should never be a substitute for valid and important information.

 **Simplicity in conveying a few very specific messages is a mark of a good campaign. Remember, your customers will probably be reluctant to change long-standing household or business practices, and they certainly don't want to wade through a complex scientific lecture to find out how important their actions are to the environment. Short and to-the-point statements related to the "bottom line" will make the case.**

DPR conducted an extensive review of other programs and while they are used throughout the workbook as examples of various elements, we have designed the themes, logos and written materials around the most important messages for California residents.

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