

## *Doing business better*

### **Cooperation. Efficiency. Getting things done.**

Not words often associated with government work. They are now, at DPR.

“Our vision is to make our information simply and easily accessible, our decisions clear and understandable, and our service streamlined and convenient,” said DPR Chief Deputy Director Paul Gosselin. “Reducing paperwork translates to lower costs, so more of our scarce resources are spent on delivery of services. That means we can improve services to all segments of the population, whether they use the Internet or not.

“In short, we want to be well-known for being efficient – and accountable,” Gosselin said.

California is a unique environment for pesticides, Gosselin said, “so there are things we need to do our way. No other state has our mix of more than 300 fruit, vegetable and nut crops, grown in dozens of different microclimates, with lots of workers in the fields, and cities close to farms.”

And no one has the same statutory mandates to collect and analyze pesticide data and strictly control pesticide use. “The challenge is to do our job both effectively and efficiently,” said Gosselin. “We’ve been doing a great job of ensuring the safe use of pesticides for some time. Now we’re catching up in the efficiency department.

“Just one example is our worksharing partnership with U.S. EPA, which allows each agency to focus on what each does best,” said Gosselin. (See story on this project, page 6.)

More data and better information technology have dramatically increased opportunities to improve government processes and access to information, Gosselin said. Staff access to the Department’s product, chemistry, pesticide use, residue, and other databases via DPR’s Intranet has resulted in significant increases in productivity.

Working toward providing all Californians with this kind of access to information, DPR has enhanced its Web site, placing several major databases online, including those on pesticide use, residues in surface water, and in fresh produce. Query-based access is next, with the pesticide use data the first to be available in user-customized formats, in 2003.

“We have created a centralized system to track enforcement actions taken at the county level,” Gosselin said. DPR staff use the online database to review the compliance history of licensees before approving or renewing a State pesticide license, and information on fines is available on DPR’s Web site.

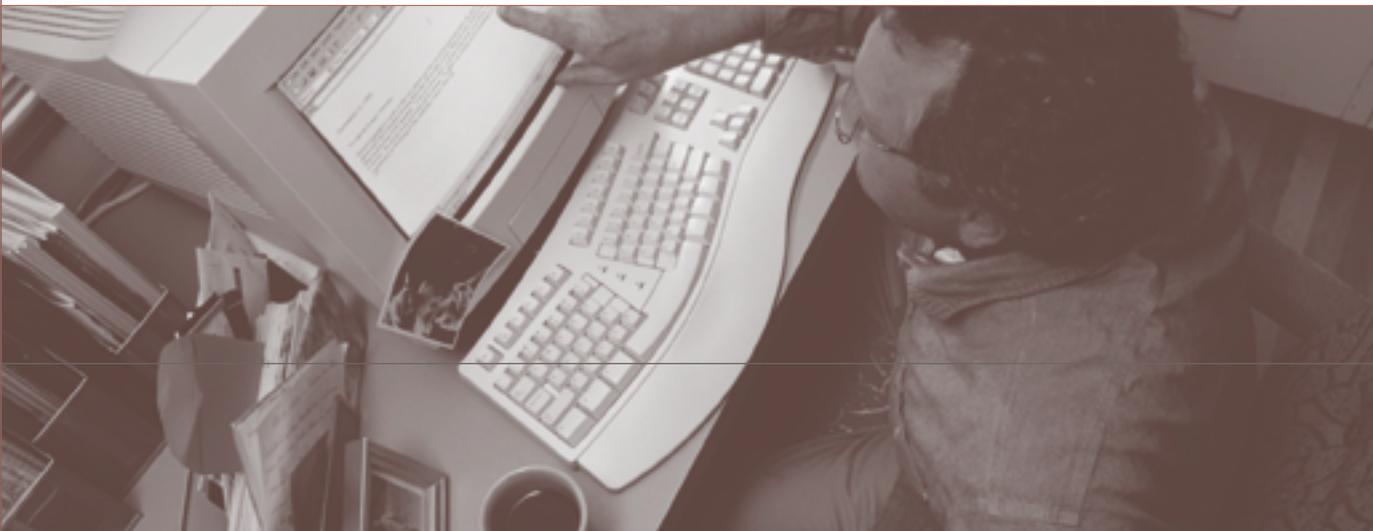
“We are also taking the first step toward establishing concrete measures of our success,” Gosselin said, “by participating in the State’s EPIC project.” EPIC – Environmental Protection Indicators for California – is a collaborative project of Cal/EPA, the Resources Agency, and the Department of Health Services. Key to its success is developing specific and meaningful measurements that track California’s environmental conditions over time.

Several business process reengineering projects have also improved DPR efficiency and service. In 2000, DPR asked a consulting firm to analyze its business practices and recommend ways to improve them using cost-effective and accessible information technology. By mid-2002, DPR had completed dozens of “quick-return” operational improvements and others are scheduled to be completed by mid-2003. The consultant’s report (available on DPR’s Web site) also details a number of major initiatives that will be studied for implementation as funding and resources become available.

The process of evaluating and registering pesticide products – a particularly complex function, involving interaction of several DPR branches and thousands of stakeholders – is a natural for reengineering. From 1997 through 2000, DPR’s Registration Branch used information technology to streamline product licensing and renewal, document intake, the chemical information system, data index, and data circulation system. In 1999, a Web-based tracking system was developed and installed on DPR’s Intranet for the 6,000-plus pesticide registration actions handled yearly. In 2003, the Registration Branch will launch a program to automatically notify registrants of the review status of their applications for registration. New transactions will automatically trigger e-mail messages to applicants detailing the status of submissions.

Working to eliminate bureaucratic requirements that were unnecessary to protect health and the environment, DPR in 1999 began waiving the submission of some human health effects data and all data on fish and wildlife effects for certain low-risk pheromone products. The following year, DPR adopted regulations exempting certain kinds of minimum-risk pesticides from registration requirements, paralleling an earlier U.S. EPA action.

In 2000, DPR put its Registration Desk Manual online to assist applicants and others in understanding California’s pesticide registration process. The same year, DPR formed a Business Process Workgroup with key registrants – the people who bring pesticides to market in California – to exchange ideas for using information technology to improve how DPR conducts business.



**TIMELY RELEASE OF REPORTS:** In 1999, DPR made a commitment to stakeholders and followed up by successfully concentrating its efforts toward timely release of pesticide data and reports, including the annual summary of use report data, pesticide illness surveillance report, and the pesticide residue monitoring data summary. These data and reports are critical to many projects and programs pursued by universities, public interest groups, registrants, and production agriculture.

**HOW-TO SEMINAR IN OCTOBER 2002:** 75 representatives of pesticide companies attended a DPR workshop designed to give them practical how-to information about registering sanitizers, disinfectants, and other antimicrobial products. Speakers discussed details of the registration process, scientific data requirements, use enforcement, and illness reporting requirements. This is the first of what DPR hopes is a series of periodic workshops to help companies better understand California's regulatory program.

**COLLECTING THE MILL FEE:** In 1999, DPR formed an internal task force to address concerns about illegal Internet and mail-order pesticide sales. Legislation clarified DPR's authority over Internet pesticide sales and in 2003, the Department plans to establish a new branch responsible for all mill assessment activities. Effective and efficient collection of this fee – which funds the greater portion of the pesticide program – was hampered with functions spread across several branches. The new unit brings together mill assessment collection and disbursement, auditing, and field investigations of unregistered sales, and for the first time, will conduct statistical analysis of mill revenues to improve overall budgeting processes.

**SERVICES FOR LICENSEES:** In November 2001, DPR and the State's Enterprise Business Office launched a pilot project for online county registration of pest control licensees, beginning in six counties and expanded to 13 in February 2002. Licensed pilots, pest control businesses and agricultural pest control advisers must register annually with the agricultural commissioner in each county where they do business. Being able to initiate this electronically enhances the quality, timeliness and efficiency of the process. Pest control businesses, pilots, and advisers in other counties – about 5,000 in all – can also use the system to access information about their own licenses. Agricultural commissioners can check license status, review enforcement histories, and conduct an online dialogue with applicants to expedite the registration process.

DPR is also working with the e-Business Office on "i-License," an online license renewal system. Once it is operational (budget constraints will slow the process), it will allow licensees to view and update contact information; check license and certificate renewal status; update continuing education hours; and calculate and pay fees. DPR's goal is to reduce the time for preparation, submission, and processing of renewal applications for approximately 26,400 licensees. (DPR licenses and certifies individuals and businesses that apply, sell, or recommend pesticides in California.)