

Safe Management Practices for School Grounds –Fact Sheet

To ensure the safety of school children from hazards and the proper management of school grounds the following approach are utilized by knowledgeable experts. Credentialed experts who have the support of the leading professionals through the University system use the following steps:

- **Set Action Thresholds:** Decide at what point pest populations (insects, weed hazards) or conditions require action.
- **Record-Keeping**, which tracks pest identification and treatment.
- **Monitor and Identify Pests:** Identify pests and their risk accurately, in order to take appropriate action when thresholds are reached.
- **Evaluation**, identify the level of pests that require action.
- **Prevention:** Control pests before they become a problem through proper maintenance, sanitation and cultural practices.
- **Control:** When an action threshold is identified and preventative measures are no longer an option, effective pest control options are thoroughly evaluated. These include biological, mechanical and chemical options. The most effective control for the problem pest control are chosen with thoughtful evaluation of potential impact to the pest as well as children. If further monitoring, identifications and action thresholds indicate that controls are not working, then additional pest control methods would be evaluated and employed.

Beyond Pesticides, an organization that strives to remove the use of pesticides identifies six similar essentials for IPM programs:

- **Monitoring**, including regular site inspections and trapping.
- **Action Levels**, which identifies the level of infestation that requires action.
- **Prevention**, the primary means of pest control in an IPM program.
- **Tactics Criteria**, including the use of least-toxic materials that are applied to minimize any effect on humans or non-target organisms.
- **Evaluation**, conducted to determine the program's success.^{cccxcvi}

The **Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)** outlines the same principles in its "Standards for Organic Land Cart" (5th edition, January 2011). The Pest and Disease Management section states the following:

- "The best way to manage pests is to prevent the pests from reaching damaging levels."^{cccxcvii}
- "Pest control requires a pest management plan, which should include regular monitoring of plant health and pest density."^{cccxcviii}
- "Maximize the effectiveness of the material so that the amount and the number of applications can be kept at a minimum."^{cccxcix}

The NOFA approach does allow for the use of pesticides after habitat modification and non-chemical methods have failed. They do not allow for synthetic pesticide use.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Defined

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an "effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices." The EPA states, "IPM takes advantage of all appropriate pest management options including, but not limited to, the judicious use of pesticides."^{cd} The IPM approach used by organic farming follows the same principles. Here's a closer look an IPM approach that includes pesticide use and one that does not. The basic approach is the same.