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## Integrated Pest Management Poster for Farm Markets

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## Integrated Pest Management Poster for Farm Markets

### Abstract

Unlike organic producers, who widely advertise their produce as organically grown, very few farmers using IPM practices advertise their produce as IPM grown. An IPM poster was developed for farmers asking for help in educating their customers. The posters were displayed in 10 farm markets in New Jersey. The posters and accompanying fact sheets stimulated public interest. Additionally, the poster was well received by the participating growers, and there have been many inquiries about further distribution or availability. The poster is general enough to be used in other states and is available through the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office of Pest Management.

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## Introduction

In 1993, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Food and Drug Administration worked together to develop and initiate a plan to have IPM practices in use on 75% of the total crop acreage in the United States by the year 2000. Efforts were made to educate the agricultural community to assist with the implementation of this plan. In addition, conservation grants were made available to agricultural producers through the Farm Service Agency to promote the adoption of IPM methods.

Farmers use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices to employ responsible tactics when controlling insect, disease, weed, and other pests in crops. Many farmers realize the economic, food safety, and environmental aspects of practicing IPM methods. Additionally, farmers would like their customers to be aware of the efforts made to reach these goals. The general public needs to be educated on the benefits of IPM. Farmers also need the tools to notify their customers about the strides they make to practice safer pest management practices.

## The Idea

Past and current work has focused on providing an IPM service to farmers and teaching the agricultural industry about how to deliver IPM programs. Over the years, farmers have clearly seen the impacts of using IPM related to improved pest control, efficient and economical pesticide use, and the increase in quality of crops. Farmers want to expand the benefits of utilizing IPM from the field to their markets.

Farmers are always looking to improve marketing tactics for their products. Produce from other states and other countries have made the wholesale industry extremely competitive. Additionally, the improved quality and diversity of fresh produce supermarkets offer has hurt retail sales at seasonal farm markets. Therefore, farmers may be able to find a marketing edge by promoting IPM to entice consumers to buy produce fresh from the farm. A marketing tool was needed that would catch the eye of the consumer visiting the farm stand.

In order to develop an IPM marketing tool for farm markets, members of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Vegetable IPM Working Group applied for and received a \$1,000 grant from the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. This grant funded the development of a poster and correspondence related to the project.

A brainstorming meetings were held and resulted in the development of a poster titled "What is IPM?" (Figure 1). The group sieved through their collections of photos to choose examples that could best tell the message of IPM practices. The poster was meant to be easy to read; word structure was chosen to be to the point; and colors were strategically placed to catch the attention of farm market visitors.

**Figure 1.**  
The "What Is IPM?" Poster



### Description

The general use poster was developed in March of 2000 to provide farmers with a tool to inform their clientele about IPM practices used on the farm. The poster highlights the use of pest resistant varieties, cultivation, pest monitoring, natural controls, and responsible chemical use as common tools of an IPM program. Three bullets at the bottom of the poster point out why consumers should care about IPM on the farm. This section mentions that IPM conserves the environment, produces quality crops, and helps to maintain farm profitability.

The poster was printed in color, was laminated, and measured 2 foot by 3 foot to draw the attention of customers. It was mounted on a corkboard to be easily hung in a prominent space in the farm market. Also included in a holder next to the poster was a fact sheet also titled "What is IPM?" If consumers voluntarily picked up this fact sheet, they also found a pre-posted questionnaire card attached. This method was used to measure public response.

### Distribution

Due to limited funding for this project (\$1,000), 10 farm markets throughout the state of New Jersey were selected to test the poster's impact. Because New Jersey is often divided into three regions of North, Central, and South, an even distribution of posters was established. Three posters were displayed in farm markets in the Northern region, 3 in the Central region, and 4 in the Southern region. Sixty survey cards per poster, for a total of 600, were distributed to the farm markets. Team members from this project visited the farm markets in their region on a regular basis to evaluate the dissemination of the IPM information. Additionally, the team members communicated with the farmers about the effectiveness of the poster.

### Assessment

Of the 600 questionnaire cards distributed, the return rate was a 7.8%. Thirty-three people surveyed were aware of IPM before viewing the poster. Ninety-five percent of the customers did not realize that the farm they visited used IPM practices. Ninety-seven percent felt that IPM was a positive practice for farmers. Ninety-eight percent said the poster helped them to better understand IPM. Seventy-five percent replied that they would like to learn more about IPM, and 47% indicated that they would prefer to purchase IPM produce.

Farmers who received the IPM posters and fact sheets were pleased with the success of the materials and felt that the information generated a heightened awareness among their customers. They are unsure about whether or not it increased sales of IPM produce; however, they believe it has created a more loyal and informed customer base.

Since the initial 10 posters were developed and displayed, more farm market operators have become interested in purchasing the posters and fact sheets to use in their sales areas. The poster and fact sheet are general enough to be used in any farm market selling IPM produce. It is now available to other states. Distribution of the poster is being handled by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office of Pest Management <<http://www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/>>. To order a poster, email [stopek@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:stopek@aesop.rutgers.edu).

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