

MEMO

To: IPM Advisory Committee
From: Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator
Date: January 6, 2015
Subject: Background on some of the issues proposed as 2015 priorities for the Committee

Below I have listed some of the proposed priorities with accompanying background information.

1. Explore posting in parks/open space for pesticide applications

Note that the County has a pesticide use posting policy. Please see the attached.

2. How does the County decide which non-native species to address?

The California Department of Agriculture has developed a rating system for invasive pests which determines the level of action to be taken by the State and by the County Departments of Agriculture. This ranges from mandatory action to action at the discretion of the County Agricultural Commissioner. (See http://www.cdafa.ca.gov/plant/PPD/nematology/nema_ratings.html for more information on the rating system for all organisms.) Currently County staff are managing only noxious weed species; however, the Agriculture Department addresses many other non-native species in its surveillance and trapping programs.

3. Change IPM Committee bylaws to prohibit former IPM Committee members from contracting with the County on IPM issues

The County's structural IPM contractor is required by Committee bylaws to send a representative to sit on the IPM Committee. Currently the representative is Carlos Agurto from Pestec. No former IPM Committee member has contracted with the County nor has any former member expressed interest in contracting with the County.

4. Evaluate Audubon Society's list of concerns regarding the Agriculture Department's in-house trial of live trapping of ground squirrels

See notes below under #6 "Explore using contractors for rodent trapping".

5. Integrate pollinator protection ideas into County landscape practices

See the accompanying Federal "Supporting the Health of Honey Bees and other Pollinators" and "How to Attract and Maintain Pollinators in Your Garden" (more specific information for California and the Bay Area).

6. Explore using contractors for rodent trapping

- After an in-house study in 2012, the Agriculture Department determined that trapping for ground squirrels along County roads is not effective because ground squirrels from the surrounding population quickly move back into the burrows left vacant by the trapped squirrels. A professional trapper consulted by the Department confirmed that he has seen this phenomenon where surrounding ground squirrel pressure is high. (See also the attached "Contra Costa County Staff Responses to Issues Raised by the Public". The Department's final report on live trapping can be read at <http://cchealth.org/ipm/program.php> under the paragraph entitled "Agriculture Department".)
- The Agriculture Department consulted with 2 trappers for estimates for trapping grounds squirrels along County roads.
 - a. Using the cost information provided by the professional trappers and the numbers of squirrels trapped during the trial, the Department estimated that the cost for a professional trapper would be between \$12,524 and \$16,700 per linear mile.
 - b. PfSE quoted a rate of \$25/squirrel, which would cost the County \$16,720 per linear mile.

- c. The actual cost to the Department for trapping in their study was \$5,074 per linear mile, considerably less than the professional trappers. Note that ground squirrel baiting costs \$220 per linear mile.
 - d. The Department is responsible for around 925 linear miles of road.
- Special Districts currently uses a professional vertebrate pest management specialist for trapping gophers and moles.
 - The Grounds Division has occasionally trapped gophers in County landscapes, but has largely ignored them (they have not used rodenticides). Now that they have purchased a CO₂ device to kill gophers, they will be addressing the gopher problems more vigorously.

7. Obtain expert advice on trapping

See notes above under #6.

8. Consult with other agencies on trapping costs

- The IPM Coordinator has discussed ground squirrel trapping with Santa Clara Regional Parks personnel and with their trapper. Trapping is used in a very limited area, near park structures and not along roadsides. (For more detail, see the attached "Contra Costa County Staff Responses to Issues Raised by the Public".)
- The IPM Coordinator has discussed ground squirrel trapping with the Santa Clara Valley Water District. Note that the Santa Clara Valley Water District also uses rodenticides for ground squirrel control.
- The IPM Coordinator has discussed ground squirrels with county personnel in both Marin and Napa. They reported that they have nowhere near the large ground squirrel populations that Contra Costa has, especially in East County, and consequently have no need to manage them.

9. Are 2nd generation rodenticides used in the County?

No 2nd generation anticoagulant rodenticides are used in the County. Orkin, the County's former structural pest control contractor, used bromadiolone for rats around County buildings. Currently the County would not use rodenticides for rats or mice unless a public health emergency were declared, and rodenticides were deemed to be necessary. If that emergency did arise, only 1st generation rodenticides would be used. Pestec was hired in 2010 and manages rats and mice in and around County buildings with traps, sanitation, and pest exclusion. No 2nd generation anticoagulants have been used by the County since 2009.

10. Focus on all costs of spraying herbicides

The cost figures for herbicide spraying from the Public Works Roadside and Flood Control Maintenance Division that are published in the IPM Annual Report include labor, materials, equipment costs, and overhead, which includes training, permit costs, and habitat assessment costs. Licensing costs for staff are paid by the individual and not by the County.

11. Conduct study of rodenticides vs. trapping

The Agriculture Department conducted a study in 2012. See notes above under #6 "Explore using contractors for rodent trapping".