

F7-P

## DEVELOPING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR RETAIL STORES THAT SELL PESTICIDES

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Employees of retail stores that sell pesticides are often a primary source of pest management information to homeowners. However, a survey of 650 retail stores indicated that the level of employee training in pest management was somewhat limited. Only 34% of the retail stores provided any employee training related to pesticide use. The use of integrated pest management (IPM) was seldom included as a topic and less than 10% of the stores used university or USDA publications as references.

Using a grant from USEPA Region 5, educational programs were conducted in 2001 and 2002 at six different locations in Illinois. The three-hour program provided a general overview of pest identification, pesticide safety, and making pest control recommendations with an emphasis on IPM techniques. Each participating retail store received a package of University of Illinois Extension publications at no cost. Program evaluations were very favorable with pesticide safety topics and IPM references receiving the highest overall ratings.