Organic pest management solutions through the New Agriculture Network

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The New Agriculture Network
Farmers, researchers and educators teaming up for sustainable and organic ag solutions in the Great Lakes Region

The New Agriculture Network (NAN), www.new-ag.msu.edu, was established in 2004. This three-state network (Michigan, Indiana and Illinois) enables farmers, land grant universities (Michigan State University, Purdue and University of Illinois) and Extension educators to address organic vegetable and field crop issues. A community of practice was formed, supporting organic and transitioning farmers through cooperative inquiry for systematic learning about organic nutrition and pest control in Midwest field crop and vegetable systems.

Similar to growers, Extension educators and university researchers interested in organic options find limited resources for scientifically-based advice that is scattered among universities and grower groups. NAN provides timely information for Midwest conditions through its stakeholder forum.

Bimonthly conference calls are conducted for field crop and vegetable organic farmers connecting farmers as advisors with researchers and educators. Each conference call is followed with production of an on-line newsletter. It includes timely articles written by researchers along with farmer reports from each state.

As a result of farmer/researcher interactions, on the New Ag Network, several spinoff grants have been written to answer pertinent questions raised by organic producers.

Illinois: NCR-SARE Research/ Education grant (submitted)
Indiana: NCR-SARE Producer grant (submitted)
Michigan: USDA/CSREES Integrated Organic Program grant (awarded)

In 2004, university specialists wrote 41 articles and the site received 5,099 hits. In 2005, specialists produced 43 articles and more than 7,500 hits occurred.

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